Spring 2013

Stony Brook University
Department of Sustainability Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
EHM 314: Civilizations and Collapse
This course satisfies the DEC category J
This course satisfies the SBC category GLO
Course Instructor: Elizabeth Terese Newman
Section: 01
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1-3 pm and by appointment
Office: SBS 3-349
Email: Elizabeth.newman@stonybrook.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
A comparative study of the development and collapse of New World civilizations. Civilizations and Collapse draws on archaeological and anthropological data from prehistoric and modern non-western groups to increase students understanding of the diverse ways in which people around the world organize society and respond to external pressures. Changing case studies drawn from prehistoric and historic societies in the Americas provide students with an in-depth understanding of the ways in which two non-Western cultures were affected by and attempted to cope with environmental change. Students will learn to think critically about these processes and will complete the course with an increased awareness of the diversity of human responses to climactic change.

Course Pre/co-requisites
U3/U4 Status

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Course draws on archaeological and anthropological data from prehistoric and modern non-western groups to increase student’s understanding of the diverse ways in which people around the world organize society and respond to external pressures. For example, the study of modern hunter-gatherers explores concepts of reciprocity and social equality, as well as the rejection by these peoples of modern western values.

2. Comparative explorations of the development of agriculture in four major world regions introduces students to social responses to this innovation and challenges students to question the wisdom of constructing a civilization based on sedentary agriculture. Changing case studies drawn from prehistoric and historic societies in the Pre-Columbian Americas provide students with an in-depth understanding of the ways in which two non-Western cultures were affected by and attempted to cope with environmental change.

3. Students will learn to think critically about these processes and will complete the course with an increased awareness of the diversity of human responses to climactic change.

Students will demonstrate their developing understanding through weekly reading journals, and will demonstrate their mastery of the subject with an in-depth examination of one culture NOT studied in class. They will present their research in both verbal, in class form, and in an 8-10 page paper.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance and Make Up Policy
For each unexcused absence, you will lose 3 points from your final grade. Two late arrivals equal one absence. If you accumulate three unexcused absences or six late arrivals, you will automatically fail the course. There are no exceptions to this policy. If you are ill, you must email me within 24 hours of the absence and provide medical documentation at the next class. This is the only acceptable form of documentation for an excused absence. I realize that special considerations may cause an absence, so I will excuse one absence or two late arrivals with no penalty and no documentation. These excused absences will, however, count against your total allowed.

If you are absent, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO FIND OUT WHAT YOU MISSED. Assignment due dates, test dates, etc., can and will change. If you are not in class, you must contact me, your TA, or one of your classmates to stay on top of these changes. I will not accept a failure to do so as an excuse for missing an assignment or being unprepared for an exam.

All assignments must be completed on their assigned due date. Late assignments will not be accepted after the due date.

Description and schedule of Required Readings and/or Assignments.

1. January 24th and January 26th Introduction—Civilizations and Environment
   a. Civilization—What is and isn’t a Civilization?

2. January 31st and February 2nd Hunters and Gatherers and the Origins of Agriculture
3. **February 7**th and February 9**th** Development of Social Complexity—Does Ecology Matter?
   a. Theories and Definitions of Social Complexity
   b. The Archaeology of Social Complexity—Mother Cultures and Sister Cultures (The Olmec and Zapotec)

4. **February 14**th and February 16**th** Collapse and the Role of the Environment
   a. Collapse versus Change: Do Societies Collapse?
   b. The Role of the Environment in the Collapse of Civilizations—Easter Island

5. **February 21**st and February 23**nd** Paper Topics Due.
   Readings: No readings this week. Each student will present their paper topic to the class and discuss initial research on Tuesday. As a class, we will form panels for final presentations.

**CASE STUDY NUMBER ONE—TEOTIHUACAN**

6. **February 28**th and March 1**st** Origins and Development of Teotihuacán—Environmental Disaster as Catalyst for Development?

7. **March 6**th and March 8**th** Classic Period Teotihuacán

8. **March 13**th and March 15**th** The Collapse of Teotihuacán

**CASE STUDY NUMBER TWO—THE CLASSIC PERIOD MAYA**

9. **March 20**th and March 22**nd** Origins and Development of Maya Civilization

**PANAL READING ASSIGNMENTS DUE**
10. **March 27**th and March 29**th** Classic period Maya City States
Reading: Chase, Arlen F. and Diane Z. Chase *More than Kin and King: Centralized Political Organization among the Late Classic Maya* in *Current Anthropology* (December 1996) 37:803-810.


11. April 3rd and April 5th NO CLASSES—SPRING BREAK!!

12. April 10th and April 12th The Collapse of the Classic Maya


13. April 17th and April 19th

   b. Student Presentations start April 19th
   Reading: Assigned by student panels.

14. April 24th and April 26th Student Presentations
Reading: Assigned by student panels.

15. May 1st and May 3rd Student Presentations
Reading: Assigned by student panels.

**Exams**

There are no exams for this course. For grading, see below.

**GRADING:** Breaks down in the following ways. See Table 1 for grade ranges.

- **Reading Journal** (30% of final grade) You will be expected to keep a reading journal to reflect on the assigned readings. Please bring the journal to every class. You will be expected to write and/or reflect on the course materials at each class. You may refer to your readings while writing, so bring your texts to class, as well. Readings journals will be collected and checked without advance notice throughout the semester, so please be sure to have it with you and up to date.

- **Group Presentation and Short Paper** (10% of final grade each; 20% total). Students working in groups of three or four will take responsibility for running one week of class. The groups will present the readings, including any necessary background, and will moderate class discussions. They will also be expected to provide five discussion questions for students to respond to in journal writings to the professor via email by 8 pm the Sunday before their presentation week. Each group member will be required to hand in a short paper analyzing the assigned readings in response to one of the journal questions assigned by the group. The paper must be independently written.

- **Final Research Paper/Presentation** (40% of final grade). Students will choose one New World civilization and produce an in-depth exploration of the factors leading to either its development or collapse. Final grade in this category will be based on an assessment of the following three components: Conference Abstract and preliminary bibliography (due Tuesday February 21st); Panel Presentation—10-15 minute presentation to class exploring topics of civilization and collapse as dealt with in final papers (Due during the last two and a half weeks of class); Final paper, 8-10 pages in length. Due during the scheduled final exam on Friday, May 11th no later than 4:45 pm. YOU MUST MAKE YOURSELF AVAILABLE ON THIS DATE DURING OUR FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE! IF WE NEED ADDITIONAL TIME FOR CLASS PRESENTATIONS, WE WILL BE SCHEDULED DURING THE FINAL EXAM PERIOD. ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED!

- **Participation** (10% of final grade): Everyone in class starts out with a 75 for their attendance and participation grade. You may raise this 75 by taking active, vocal participation in the class, you may keep it at a 75 by simply attending class regularly, or you may lower it by sleeping, talking, texting, surfing the web, etc. I do take notice of such activities, and your grade will reflect them!

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MEETING SCHEDULE
See Schedule of Required Readings and Assignments.

CLASS PROTOCOL
Class discussions and exercises can be productive only in a climate of respect for the opinions and beliefs of all. A healthy exchange about issues may include disagreement about ideas but it must not demean the character or background of the individuals holding those ideas.
Similarly, you must respect the classroom space and the instructor by focusing your attention on the course during our class meetings. Class is not a place for catching up on missed meals or missed sleep. You must turn off all cell phones before entering the classroom, and you are not permitted to take calls in the classroom. You will be asked to leave the room and will receive an unexcused absence for the day if you violate these policies.

CLASS RESOURCES (examples below)
All readings for this course, as well as all paperwork, have been posted on the university Blackboard site.
Because writing is a primary component of this class, all students who are

The University Senate Undergraduate and Graduate Councils have authorized that the following required statements appear in all teaching syllabi (graduate and undergraduate courses) on the Stony Brook Campus. See also http://www.stonybrook.edu/provost/facultyinfo/Syllabus%20Statement.doc

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS) STATEMENT (must be the following language)
If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services, ECC (Educational Communications Center) Building, room128, (631) 632-6748. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.

In addition, this statement on emergency evacuation is often included, but not required:
Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Support Services. For procedures and information go to the following website: http://www.stonybrook.edu/ehs/fire/disabilities

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT (must be the following language as approved by the undergrad council):
Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/

CRITICAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT (must be the following language as approved by the undergrad council):
Stony Brook University expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, or inhibits students' ability to learn. Faculty in the HSC Schools and the School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures.