





Anthropology (ANTH) 277

The Archaeology of Us: First Humans to First Civilizations (Revision 6)

Status:

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

Delivery mode:

Individualized study online 

Credits:

3

Areas of study:

Arts or Social Science

Prerequisites:

None

Precluded:

ANTH 277 cannot be taken for credit if credit has already been obtained for ANTH 276 or ANTH 207.

Challenge:

ANTH 277 has a challenge for credit option.

Faculty:

[Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) 

Overview

This introductory-level anthropology course is designed to provide students with an understanding of world prehistory, from the time of the split between human and chimpanzee lineages four to six million years ago (or possibly earlier), to the rise of the first cities and civilizations roughly 5,000 years ago.

Note: For students who are further interested in the development of early cities, states, and civilizations in prehistory, Athabasca University's course [Anthropology 320 Ancient Cities & Civilizations](#) offers a comprehensive look at the earliest development of cities and archaic states (primary civilizations) and the subsequent appearance of secondary civilizations around the world. Additionally, a more in-depth look at the archaeology of prehistoric and historic North America is offered in [Anthropology 377 Ancient Cultures of North America](#).

Learning outcomes

1. Explain the processes, both natural and cultural, involved in the rise of modern humans (Us) and our dispersal throughout the world, as recorded in the archaeological and paleoanthropological records.
2. Describe how we first adapted to and lived in diverse environments around the world, as attested through human-altered material culture and landscapes.
3. Debate the different ways we came to live primarily in cities and civilizations, through comparison of archaeological cultures around the world.
4. Value the lessons found in the past and their use in understanding the present and shaping the future by engaging critically with archaeological research.
5. Recognize that archaeology is a systematic way to learn about past cultures and our pluralistic world, enabled by the cooperative stewardship of archaeological sites, artifacts, and Indigenous knowledge.

Outline

The course consists of the following four units:

Unit 1: Introducing “Us” and “The Past”

- 1.1: Our Questions of Time and Ethics
- 1.2: The Archaeology of Us
- 1.3: How We Put it All Together

Unit 2: Our Beginnings

- 2.1: Our Early Ancestors
- 2.2: Almost Us: Homo Erectus to Neanderthals
- 2.3: Understanding Ourselves: Modern Humans
- 2.4: The Great Diaspora: How and Why We Spread Around the World

Unit 3: How We Survived

- 3.1: Where and How We Lived
- 3.2: What We Ate and Did
- 3.3: How We Diversified

Unit 4: The Complexity of Us

- 4.1: Our Complexity Without the State
- 4.2: Choose your own Adventure! The Rise of Our First States & Civilizations
- 4.3: Coming Full Circle: Archaeology and Us Today

Evaluation

To **receive credit** [↗](#) for ANTH 277, you must complete ten discussion activities, two quizzes, two essay assignments, and you must write the mid-term examination and the final examination. You must achieve a minimum of **D (50 percent)** [↗](#) on both the mid-term and final examinations, and an


overall grade of D (50 percent) for the entire course. The weightings for the course activities are as follows:

Activity	Weight
Discussion Activities 1–5	5%
Assignment 1	15%
Quiz 1	7.5%
Midterm Exam	20%
Discussion Activities 6–10	5%
Assignment 2	20%
Quiz 2	7.5%
Final Examination	20%
Total	100%

The **midterm and final examinations** for this course must be requested in advance and written under the supervision of an AU-approved exam invigilator. Invigilators include either ProctorU or an approved in-person invigilation centre that can accommodate online exams. Students are responsible for payment of any invigilation fees. Information on exam request deadlines, invigilators, and other exam-related questions, can be found at the [Exams and grades](#) section of the Calendar.

To learn more about assignments and examinations, please refer to Athabasca University's [online Calendar](#).

Materials

Chazan, Michael. *World Prehistory and Archaeology: Pathways Through Time*. 5th ed. Routledge, 2021.  (Print)

Other Resources

All other learning resources will be available online.

Challenge for credit

Overview

The challenge for credit process allows you to demonstrate that you have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, intellectual and/or other skills that would normally be found in a university-level course.

Full information about [challenge for credit](#)  can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Evaluation





ANTH 277 has a Challenge for Credit option consisting of Assignment 1 (20%), Assignment 2 (20%), mid-term exam (30%), and final exam (30%).

Activity	Weight
Assignment 1: 4 Short Essays	20%
Assignment 2: Research Paper	20%
Final exam	50%
Total	100%



Challenge for credit course registration form

Important links

- › [Academic advising](#) 
- › [Program planning](#) 
- › [Request assistance](#) 
- › [Support services](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

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View [previous revision](#) 
