

Prehistory of Europe and the Mediterranean II

Code: 106860
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Archaeology	OB	2

Contact

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Teachers

Marcello Peres Castellani

Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

Prerequisites

The course "Prehistoric Archaeology" (100740) devoted to Neolithic societies and the origin of the State, or its equivalent in other universities, should have been passed.

Objectives and Contextualisation

Understanding of the main social, economic and political changes of Later Prehistory in the Near East and the Mediterranean.

Key aspects to be considered are the economic and social impact of metallurgy, the "secondary products revolution" (mainly the introduction of wheel, plough and horse riding), the "step migration" of the 3rd millennium BCE (sometimes also called "Yamnaya migration"), the "4.2 k event", the first known spread of plague, the beginning of organised warfare, and the importance of "cooperative affluent societies" in history. All these changes and events took place in the Mediterranean and Pontic regions between c. 4000-2000 BCE.

This course is conceived as the continuation and extension of the first year course "Prehistoric Archaeology" (100740)

Learning Outcomes

1. CM10 (Competence) Recognise the economic, social and environmental impact of the main processes of change in the prehistory of America, Europe and the Mediterranean, and the situations of conflict, transformation and resilience that they caused.
2. CM11 (Competence) Analyse the prehistory of America, Europe and the Mediterranean from an inclusive perspective, with the ability to incorporate a gender perspective into the main economic, social and political processes.
3. KM16 (Knowledge) Analyse prehistoric American, European and Mediterranean societies and their processes of change, identifying the main contributions of archaeology and understanding the different explanatory proposals.
4. KM17 (Knowledge) Associate different types of materials and archaeological structures to periods, geographical areas and specific processes of the prehistory of America, Europe and the Mediterranean and assess their relevance to history and heritage.
5. KM18 (Knowledge) Analyse sources of information (reports on archaeological projects, archaeological maps, reports on the analysis of archaeological materials, planimetry and graphic representations of archaeological sites and materials, case studies, summary publications, specialised articles) on the different archaeological problems of American, European and Mediterranean prehistory, its limitations and its potential to solve study questions.
6. SM18 (Skill) Recognise the different social and cultural processes throughout American, European and Mediterranean prehistory, identifying the circumstances in which they took place, in order to be able to combine a global perspective with the identification of the different particular historical contexts.
7. SM19 (Skill) Analyse the main problems of the prehistory of America, Europe and the Mediterranean, from the Palaeolithic to the end of recent prehistory, based on archaeological information.

Content

TOPIC 1: Understanding pre-capitalist societies: evolutionist typologies and new alternative approaches.

TOPIC 2: The development of metallurgy: technology, origin(s) and transfer.

TOPIC 3: Varna and the first metallurgical societies in Eastern Europe (5th millennium BCE).

TOPIC 4: Economic intensification and social re-structuring during the 4th millennium BCE: the wheel, the plough and the derived products.

TOPIC 5: The emergence of individualised power and violence in the Caucasus and the Circumpontic region during the 4th millennium: Maikop and the northern peripheries of Uruk.

TOPIC 6: New forms of power and social relations at the time of the "Ice Man": the circumalpine region ca. 3300-2500 BCE.

TOPIC 7: Africa and the Mediterranean during Later Prehistory: Independent or sheared trajectories?

TOPIC 8: The society of the Cyclades during the 3rd millennium BCE: Production of wealth through exchange.

TOPIC 9: Rise and decline of the first Aegean State: the Minoan society.

TOPIC 10: The Corded Ware Group and the "Bell-Beaker Phenomenon" (ca. 2750-2200 BCE): Materials, settlements, burials rites and ancient DNA.

TOPIC 11: The Copper Age of the Iberian Peninsula (ca. 3100-2200 BCE).

TOPIC 12: The El Argar society in the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula (2200-1550 BCE).

TOPIC 13: The peripheries of El Argar I: The Early Bronze Age of La Mancha (2200-1550 BCE).

TOPIC 14: The peripheries of El Argar II: The Ibero-Levantine Early Bronze Age (2200-1550 BCE).

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Theory and methods.	32	1.28	
Type: Supervised			
Analysis of published and archaeological sources.	28	1.12	
Type: Autonomous			
Completion of a research joint project on a topic of the syllabus.	40	1.6	

- a. Lectures on theoretical issues, assisted by TIC and debates.
- b. Seminars devoted to the discussion on epistemology in archaeology, historical notions and interpretative models.
- c. Study and discussion of archaeological information and publications.
- d. Accomplishment of specific exercises.

Assignments c and d consist of different exercises, both group-based and individual:

Exercise 1: Design of an archaeological record sheet to collect geographical, architectural, and economic information from excavated (and published) settlements.

Answering the historical questions posed requires archaeological information from various settlements (or occupation sites) that is comparable in terms of quality. In order to have criteria for selecting information and to understand its heuristic value (≈ the degree to which evidence can serve as a clue or indication in a reasoning process, even if it does not guarantee an absolute conclusion), it is necessary to be familiar with certain prior publications (mandatory).

Exercise 2: In-class discussion of methods for searching and systematizing archaeological and geographical evidence from Chalcolithic and Bronze Age sites.

Exercise 3: Collection of geographical, architectural, and economic information from excavated (and published) settlements.

Each working group will be responsible for extracting information from the excavations of their chosen region and period.

Exercise 4: Introduction to the socio-economic analysis of archaeological data

In class, the possibilities and procedures for comparing geographical, architectural, and economic data across the studied settlements, regions, and periods will be discussed.

Exercise 5: In-class presentation of group results based on the study of excavated sites from each region and period

Each group will give a presentation in class on the Copper or Bronze Age settlements studied in a specific region (see below). Presentations will be 10 minutes long, and the PowerPoint will be shared with the entire class.

Exercise 6: Data analysis and socio-economic interpretation

The goal of the final individual assignment is to answer the initial question using all the information collected in class (not only from the region and period studied by each group). The text must not exceed 2,000 words (excluding bibliography), but the number of graphs is flexible as long as they are discussed in the text. This exercise will be assessed as part of the final exam.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

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Assessment

Continuous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Analysis of published and archaeological sources.	20 %	12	0.48	CM10, KM16, KM17, KM18
Exams	40 %	3	0.12	CM10, CM11, KM16, SM18, SM19
Practical exercises	35 %	25	1	KM17, KM18, SM18, SM19
Presentations and active participation in class	5%	10	0.4	CM10, CM11, SM18, SM19

The subject will be assessed based on the following exercises:

- a. Active participation in the theoretical classes and seminars (5%).
- b. Completion of a chronological diagram (max. DIN-A3) in which a summary of the substantial contents of the subject is reflected (optional).
- c. Completion of an essay on a specific topic emerging in class (20%).
- d. Completion of a research project on a topic of the syllabus (35%).
- e. Final written or spoken test (40%). It is indispensable to pass the exam in order to pass the subject.

The reassessment implies the submission or revision of all scheduled assignments (points c. and d.), as well as the completion of an additional test. In the event that tests or exams cannot be taken onsite, they will be adapted to an online format made available through the UAB's virtual tools (original weighting will be maintained). Homework, activities and class participation will be carried out through forums, wikis and/or discussion on Teams, etc. Lecturers will ensure that students are able to access these virtual tools, or will offer them feasible alternatives.

At the time of completion/delivery of each assessment activity, the teacher will inform (Moodle, SIA) of the procedure and date of revision of the grades.

SINGLE ASSESSMENT: This course offers the possibility of a single assessment which will consist of taking a written exam and handing in all the course work on the same day and time of the final written test.

Note: In the event of a student committing any irregularity that may lead to a significant variation in the grade awarded to an assessment activity, the student will be given a zero for this activity, regardless of any

disciplinary process that may take place. In the event of several irregularities in assessment activities of the same subject, the student will be given a zero as the final grade for this subject.

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TOPIC 2: The development of metallurgy: technology, origin(s) and transfer.

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TOPIC 3: Varna and the first metallurgical societies in Eastern Europe (5th millennium BCE).

CHAPMAN, J., HIGHAM, T., SLAVCHEV, V., GAYDARSKA, B. & HONCH, N. (2006), "The Social Context of the Emergence, Development and Abandonment of the Varna Cemetery, Bulgaria", *European Journal of Archaeology*, 9, pp. 159-183 (DOI: 10.1177/1461957107086121). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461957107086121>

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TOPIC 4: Economic intensification and social re-structuring during the 4th millennium BCE: the wheel, the plough and the derived products.

SHERRATT, A. (1981), "Plough and pastoralism: aspects of the secondary products revolution", en HODDER, I., ISAAC, G. & HAMMOND, N. (ed.), *Patterns of the Past*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 261-306.

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TOPIC 6: New forms of power and social relations at the time of the "Ice Man": the circumalpine region ca. 3300-2500 BCE.

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TOPIC 7: Africa and the Mediterranean during Later Prehistory: Independent or sheared trajectories?

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TOPIC 9: Rise and decline of the first Aegean State: the Minoan society.

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Software

ON LINE RESOURCES

- Campus Virtual
- Prehistoria Activa

<http://seneca.uab.es/prehistoria/PREHISTORIA ACTIVA 3>

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	1	Catalan	second semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	1	Spanish	second semester	morning-mixed