

Degree programme	Type	Course
Archaeology	OP	4

Contact lecturer

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Teaching staff

Laura Mameli Iriarte

Group languages

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

Prerequisites

Those that are considered in general procedure for the Grade in Archaeology

Objectives

This course intends to provide knowledge of human history in the American continent, from the arrival of the first populations, millennia ago, to the emergence of state societies. It will emphasize the diversity that has characterized societies, as well as the processes of change, analyzing their causes and presenting the observable effects in the archaeological record, from which we know the dynamics of societies and their transformations. For this purpose, the course will be based on the presentation and discussion of archaeological evidence on the different hunting and gathering societies that inhabited extremely dissimilar environments with different economic and social strategies. Likewise, the economic, technological and social transformations that led to the sedentary lifestyle of some human groups will be discussed, documenting the origins of farming and herding. From the appearance of sedentary and life, new forms of social organization were established, becoming more complex until the appearance of ceremonial centers, kingdoms, States, and Empires, which co-existed in time with hunter-gatherer societies. In some cases, empires, complex societies, and hunter-gatherer societies coincided in time and space. A majority of sessions will be devoted to the study of complex societies of two areas: Mesoamerica and Central Andes, where highly complex societies developed until their end with the arrival of Europeans to the New World. In the chronological tour of the pre-Columbian history of America, we will emphasize the most significant causes, processes and social effects that gave rise to new forms of life over millennia.

The goal is to offer a panorama about the heterogeneity of those American societies from their very beginnings but also to the diverse approaches to archaeological research. Fundamental concepts and notions are expected to be learned, offering to students suitable methodological criteria and a critical and analytical

capacity both. The objective is to know the American Indians social history and its social diversity, characterizing by means of concrete examples the different periods in its development throughout the continent and emphasizing the diversity of the historical processes.

Learning outcomes

1. Identifying the context of the historical processes.
2. Identifying the characteristic methods of Archaeology and its relationship with the historical analysis.
3. Using the specific interpretational and technical vocabulary of the discipline.
4. Recognising the importance of controlling the quality of the work's results and its presentation.
5. Applying both knowledge and analytical skills to the resolution of problems related to their area of study.
6. Transmitting the results of archaeological research and clearly communicating conclusions in oral and written form to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
7. Applying proper techniques and analytical tools in case studies.
8. Interpreting material sources and the archaeological record.
9. Mastering the diachronic structure of the past.
10. Mastering the processes of change produced in Prehistory.
11. Critically assessing the sources and theoretical models.
12. Knowing the main archaeological debates on Prehistory.

Contents

Block 1 : The first human presence on the American continent: Population, the Paleo-Indian period.

he history of America is more than 500 years old. General panorama of the American pre-Hispanic societies. Topics regarding America and the study of its history.

Archaeological context. Heterogeneity of the American archaeological record.

Geographical background and ecological diversity of the American continent. End of Wisconsin glaciation, advances and retreats of ice. Pleistocene-Holocene transition, paleoenvironments, oscillations and environmental change. Who populated America and when? Accepted theories. Diversity of research approaches; high and low antiquity, intermediate proposals. Hypotheses of accessing the new continent and expansion of groups. Archaeological evidence. Archaeological evidence for the first hunter-gatherers. The Paleo-Indian Period, representative sites throughout the American continent. Subsistence of first human populations; big game hunting of Pleistocene animals. Technology Clovis, Folsom, Fish tail. Paleo-American. Archaeological analysis of Pleistocene archaeological record in North, Central and South America. The extinction of the American megafauna; theories about the role of human groups in massive animal extinctions.

Block 2 : Transformation of resource management by evolved human populations: the Archaic period

The Archaic Period in America: Colonization of new habitats and use of new foods. Exploitation of marine and coastal resources, small game hunting, collection of coastal fauna, use of plant species. Technological innovation and diversification in subsistence systems.

The Chinchorro culture at the Atacama Desert.

Hunter-gatherers and hunter-fishermen-gatherers. Archaeological examples in North America. Ethnographic and archaeological examples in South America. The case of the Yámana society.

Block 3. Sedentary life. The Formative or neolitization process.

Towards food production. Colonization of new habitats and use of new foods. Plant and animal domestication centers. Problems, theories of the causes that led to agriculture and archaeological evidence in various regions. Cases from Mesoamerica, Central Andes and Amazon Lowlands.

The plant foods that America gave to the world.

The emergence of sedentary life.

Block 4: Ethnic Interrelations, Towards Greater Social Complexity

The expansion of agriculture in America. The first forms of urbanism.

The origin of ceramics and other technologies, textiles and agriculture. The case of Valdivia-Real Alto in the Northern Andes.

Social complexity in the two nuclear areas: Central Andes and Mesoamerica.

Block 5. Complex societies: chiefdoms, chiefdoms and states.

The emergence of complex societies in the Americas. The appearance of ceremonial centers, political, economic and social organization in Mesoamerica and the Central Andes.

Development in Mesoamerica: Olmecs, Zapotecs, Teotihuacan, urban life, writing, calendars and state cities. The Mayan States, the Aztec Empire.

Development in Central Andes: Caral, Chavín de Huantar, Paracas, Nazca, Moche, Tiahuanaco, Wari, Chimor, the Tawantinsuyu Empire. Alliances, subjugation, militarism and expansion.

The impact of the European conquest in Mesoamerica and the Central Andes.

Block 6. Oral presentations by students (individual or in group) about subjects decided in common between students and lecturers

Learning activities and methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Text reading and understanding	88	3.52	1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Practical work and seminars optional	6	0.24	5, 7, 8
Theoretical sessions	50	2	1, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

The teacher will provide support if necessary and requested, both during office hours and by email. Activities are

TARGETED ACTIVITY

Attendance to theoretical classes explained by the teacher.

SUPERVISED ACTIVITY

Preparation of oral presentations

SELF-EMPLOYED ACTIVITY

Personal study.

Comprehensive reading of texts.

Realization of reviews, works and analytical comments.

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.

Assessment

Continuous assessment activities

Title	Weight	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Written test first thematic block	40	2	0.08	1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Oral presentation Block 6	30	2	0.08	1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Written test second thematic block	30	2	0.08	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

The course will be evaluated using the following procedures:

Two individual written midterm exams: the first accounts for 40% of the final grade, and the second accounts for 30% of the final grade. An oral presentation (individual or group) will account for the remaining 30%.

Students will receive a grade of "not evaluable" if they have not completed at least 30% of the assessment activities.

To pass the course, students must earn a grade of 5 or higher on both written exams and the oral presentation. If a student scores below 5 on either the written exams or the oral presentation, they must take a final make-up exam on a date set by the Faculty's Academic Administration. If the oral presentation is failed, it may be retaken in writing. If either part of this assignment remains below a 5, the course will be considered a failure, even if the overall average is above a 5. Passing half of the course is not a requirement for passing the entire course.

Exchange students who request to take an exam early must submit a written document from their home university to the instructor justifying their request.

In this course, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is permitted in a critical and constructive manner, provided that students acknowledge their use and have demonstrated the technology's suitability. Any work that includes AI-generated passages without acknowledgment or critical analysis will be considered a breach of academic integrity.

Bibliography

SPECIFIC BIBLIOGRAPHY WILL BE OFFERED FOR EACH TOPIC IN A DRIVE FOLDER, AVAILABLE FROM

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TEMA 6:

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Software

Not necessary

Course groups and languages

The information provided is provisional until November 30. After this date, you will be able to consult the language of each group through this [link](#). To access the information, you will need to enter the course CODE