

**Anthropology 2C03**  
**Archaeology of Environmental Crisis and Response**

**Office:** Chester New Hall Rm. 508

**Telephone:** (905) 525-9140 ext.23912

**Office hours:** Wednesday 11:30-12:30, or by appointment **Email:** [cannona@mcmaster.ca](mailto:cannona@mcmaster.ca)

**Classes:** Tuesday 3:30-5:20, Thursday 3:30-4:20, Rm. ETB 235

This course examines the responses of past societies to environmental circumstances and crises, and the way those responses vary depending on culture, social organization, subsistence economy and settlement pattern. It will also consider the role and impact of human activity in environmental degradation and the cultural and social capacity to mitigate the effects of environmental crises. The capacity and basis for alternative interpretations of existing evidence will be a theme throughout the course.

**Required text:**

Middleton, Guy D.

*2017 Understanding Collapse: Ancient History and Modern Myths*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Grading:**

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Critical Documentary Reviews (2 @ 25% each) | - 50% |
| Weekly Reading Questions                    | - 10% |
| Mid-term exam                               | - 20% |
| Final exam                                  | - 20% |

**Critical documentary reviews:** Throughout the course we will view and discuss four video documentaries that present examples of social collapse that are attributed by some scholars to environmental causes. Each of you will select two of the four for a critical written review that will look at alternative ways of viewing the evidence and will critically evaluate the way it was presented and interpreted in the documentary. You will be required to consult original academic papers in preparing your review. Each review will be an organized and well-written discussion and evaluation of the documentary and its presentation of the case study in comparison to the presentation in the text and in original scholarly papers on the topic. Papers will be 6-8 pages (double-spaced) in length (10 pages maximum). An outline and schedule for this assignment will be distributed and discussed in class.

**Reading questions:** Weekly readings are chapters from the text, which cover a wide range of case studies from around the world. For each chapter, you must present a full and clear question relating to some specific aspect of the chapter presentation and case study. The questions must be submitted online through Avenue to Learn, and are due by 12:00 pm Monday of the week for which the reading is assigned.

**Mid-term exam:** The mid-term will focus on the first five case studies as presented in the text and discussed in class. Short-answer questions will test general knowledge and understanding of the circumstances, evidence and outcomes of the case studies. Short paragraph-answer questions will ask for a comparative analysis and evaluation of alternative explanations for developments described for specific case studies.

**Final exam:** The final exam will follow the same format as the mid-term, but will focus on the second set of five case studies covered in the readings from the textbook.

**Penalties will apply for all late and missed assignments unless an MSAF is filed.**

## SCHEDULED TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS

**Sept. 3-5** – Introduction: the place of environmental crises in archaeological histories and explanations.

**Sept. 10-12** – Understanding collapse.  
READING: Middleton 2017: Ch. 1.

**Sept. 17-19** – Egypt - Old Kingdom.  
READING: Middleton 2017: Ch. 2.

**Sept. 24-26** – Akkad, Mesopotamia.  
READING: Middleton 2017: Ch. 3.

**Oct. 1-3** – Minoan Crete.  
READING: Middleton 2017: Ch. 5.

**Oct. 8-10** – Mycenaean Greece.  
READING: Middleton 2017: Ch. 6.

**Oct. 15-17** – **Mid-term recess.**

**Oct. 22-24** – Classic Maya.  
READING: Middleton 2017: Ch. 10.

**Tues. Oct. 29** – **Mid-term Exam:** Old Kingdom Egypt, Akkadian Empire, Minoan Crete, Mycenaean Greece, Classic Maya.

**Oct. 29-31** – Teotihuacan, Mexico.  
READING: Middleton 2017: Ch. 9.

**Nov. 5-7** – Andes.  
READING: Middleton 2017: Ch. 11.

**Nov. 12-14** – Easter Island.  
READING: Middleton 2017: Ch. 13.

**Nov. 19-21** – Indus Valley.  
READING: Middleton 2017: Ch. 4.

**Nov. 26-28** – Angkor and the Khmer.  
READING: Middleton 2017: Ch. 12.

**Dec. 3** – Review.  
READING: Middleton 2017: Ch. 14.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process.

Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at [Academic Integrity](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca). For further information, consult McMaster University’s Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

### **Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

The University recognizes that, on occasion, the timing of a student’s religious, Indigenous, or spiritual observances and that of their academic obligations may conflict. In such cases, the University will provide reasonable academic accommodation for students that is consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code. Please review the [RISO information for students in the Faculty of Social Sciences](#) about how to request accommodation.

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

### **Privacy Protection**

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. Similarly, grades for assignments for courses may only be posted using the last 5 digits of the student number as the identifying data. The following possibilities exist for return of graded materials:

1. Direct return of materials to students in class;
2. Return of materials to students during office hours;
3. Students attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with assignments for return by mail;
4. Submit/grade/return papers electronically.

Arrangements for the return of assignments from the options above will be finalized during the first class.

### **Course Modification**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

### **McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF)**

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work". Please note these regulations have changed beginning Spring/Summer 2015.