

## **Evolution of American Indian Culture (ANTH 423)**

### **Fall Semester 2009**

**Lectures:** 118 EES  
4:15-5:30 pm, Tuesday & Thursday

**Instructor:** George R. Milner; 119 Carpenter; 865-1268; OST@PSU.EDU  
Office hours: 10:00-12:00 Tues & Thurs, and by appointment

**Purpose:** Students are introduced to the prehistoric Native American cultures of eastern North America, with an emphasis on those of the Midwest and Southeast. Topics of special interest include the initial peopling of the Americas; terminal Pleistocene extinctions and the debated overkill of megafauna by Paleoindian hunters; adaptations to resource-rich river valleys; agricultural origins, including the cultivation of native and introduced plants; variation in the intensity of warfare; the origin of chiefdoms in the Southeast and southern Midwest; and population decline and cultural change upon the arrival of Europeans.

**Requirements:** Comprehension of lecture topics and reading materials is assessed through four exams. Regular class attendance is encouraged – it is necessary for a good grade.

*Tests.* Four tests will be administered to evaluate student comprehension of topics raised in class and the reading materials. The exams include essay, short-answer, and fill-in-the-blank questions. They also have a geographical component: the identification of major landscape features (such as rivers) and sites. Tentative dates for exams are indicated below (they are subject to change). Dates for exams will be confirmed in class well in advance of the tests, and changes to those dates will be posted on ANGEL. The three exams during the semester will be held in the same room and at the same time as a normal class. The fourth test will be held during Exam Week. The university schedules the room, date, and time for the final (fourth) exam. This information is posted by the university later in the semester.

*Participation.* Active participation in classroom discussions and debates will contribute to a student's successful completion of this class. Individuals who participate heavily with substantive comments can earn extra credit.

**Performance Evaluation:** Comprehension is assessed through your performance on four exams. The grading policy is designed to help students achieve the highest grade possible. It takes into account poor performance that might be attributable to a "bad" day.

In each exam, the highest grade, regardless of what it is, receives a score of 100. Therefore, there will always be at least one student who scores 100% on a test. All other student scores are scaled accordingly; that is, they are bumped upwards.

For each student, the exam with the lowest score will contribute least to the course grade. The three best scores each make up 30% of the final grade (collectively 90%). The worst test, whichever one it happens to be, contributes only 10% to the overall grade. This procedure minimizes the impact of a student's poorest performance on a test. Thus, the grading policy is

specifically designed to help students recover from a low grade they might earned early in the semester.

Course grades corresponding to points earned for the combined test scores are listed below (numerical equivalents for grades of A to F). Students can calculate their standing in the class by the following formula where G is the course Grade, L is the Lowest test score, and O designates the Other three tests (in no particular order):  $G = (L \cdot .1) + (O \cdot .3) + (O \cdot .3) + (O \cdot .3)$ .

A	100-92	C+	79-78
A-	91-90	C	77-70
B+	89-88	D	69-60
B	87-82	F	59-0
B-	81-80		

Extra credit can add up to five points to the total class score, so it is possible, although unlikely, for someone to acquire as many as 105 points. For example, if a student has earned a score of 89 (B+) on the basis of the four tests plus 3 extra credit points for good class contributions, that individual's overall course grade is 92 (A).

To earn extra credit, be aware that quality, not quantity, counts – questions and comments must move discussions and debates forward, not simply fill time. So extra credit is only awarded for substantive contributions to class. Student participation scores are summed at the end of the semester, and extra credit, if earned, will be calculated relative to the highest performance total. In other words, you are ranked against your peers in terms of contributions to class.

**Class Materials:** There is one textbook for this course. Articles and various supporting materials are also assigned.

*Textbook.* Milner, G.R. (2004) *The Moundbuilders*. Thames and Hudson, London.

*Articles.* Additional reading materials supplement the book by providing focused discussions of topics that elaborate points raised in the text and lectures. These readings are intended to provoke discussion, and they illustrate the difficult process of making sense of archaeological materials. They are available as PDF files through Penn State Library's LIAS system, often on JSTOR.

*Supporting Materials.* Various other materials will be posted on ANGEL for your use. They include a PDF file, *Introduction to Eastern Woodlands Prehistory*, listing references that provide additional information about topics raised in class. Keep in mind that this list is only an introduction to a vast body of literature, and additional references can be found in the bibliography of your text. It is not required for class, although students interested in any particular topic are encouraged to begin with these sources. [Incidentally, graduate students taking this course (those focusing on eastern North America) should be familiar with this material, and much more, by the time of graduation. This is a good time to begin looking at these publications.] There is also a PDF map of *Eastern North America* that can be downloaded. Use it to jot down the locations of sites, environmental features, and the like. It is recommended that

you download *Lecture Notes*, also in PDF format, before class. These Powerpoint slides will guide you through what will be covered in class, introducing you to specialized terms and basic concepts before the lecture. Having the Powerpoint printout means you will not be distracted by making sure you have the correct spelling of a site, etc. You should, however, take your own notes during lecture because the Powerpoint slides only cover basic points, often in outline format. The notes on ANGEL, by themselves, are not an adequate substitute for attending class, paying attention to lectures, asking questions, and benefiting from discussions initiated by your fellow students. It follows that you should not expect that everything on a test is included on the Powerpoint slides.

**Academic Integrity:** Cheating is not tolerated. *Copying part, or all, of another student's test will be rewarded with the grade it deserves – failure in the course. Cheating is, in short, theft of intellectual property.* Students unsure about what constitutes academic dishonesty (cheating and plagiarism) are referred to the College of the Liberal Arts web site: <http://www.la.psu.edu/CLA-LAUS/integrity/plagiarism.shtml>.

**Students with Disabilities:** Penn State encourages qualified persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. Notify me immediately if special accommodations are needed in lectures or exams; it is your responsibility to do so.

**Contacting and Meeting with the Instructor:** Email will be checked Tuesday and Thursday mornings, and irregularly at other times. Use my university email address (ost@psu.edu). Do not use the email function on ANGEL, as it will not be checked routinely. I will make every effort to be in the office (119 Carpenter) or lab (104 Carpenter) during office hours, although departmental meetings and other irregularly scheduled university-related tasks mean that I might not be available on a particular day. So it is best to confirm a meeting time in class. Office meetings can also be arranged by appointment.

**Sequence of Topics and Reading Assignments (several are listed more than once under relevant topics):**

*Overview:* Milner Chapter 1, Delcourt et al. (1998)

*Paleoindian and Early Archaic:* Milner Chapter 2, Anderson and Gillam (2000)

*Middle to Late Archaic:* Milner Chapter 3, Gremillion (2004), Kidder (2002), Saunders et al. (2005), Smith (2007), Zeder (2006)

*Early and Middle Woodland:* Milner Chapter 4, Gremillion (2004), Smith (2007), Zeder (2006)

*Late Woodland:* Milner Chapter 5

*Mississippian & Cahokia:* Milner Chapter 6, Anderson et al. (1995), Beck (2003), Cobb and Butler (2002), Schroeder (2004)

*Other Late Prehistoric Cultures:* Milner Chapter 7, Schroeder (2004), Warrick 2000

*Warfare & Norris Farms:* Milner et al. (1991)

*Contact:* Milner Chapter 8, Snow (1996)

**Tentative Test Dates:**

*Test 1.* Through Archaic.

October 1

*Test 2.* Early Woodland through Late Woodland.

October 27

*Test 3.* Mississippian and Late Prehistoric.

November 19

*Test 4.* Warfare and Contact.

Exam Week (to be announced)

### Article References:

- Anderson, D.G., and Gillam, J.C. (2000) Paleoindian Colonization of the Americas: Implications from an Examination of Physiography, Demography, and Artifact Distribution. *American Antiquity* 65:43-66.
- Anderson, D.G., Stahle, D.W., Cleaveland, M.K. (1995) Paleoclimate and the Potential Food Reserves of Mississippian Societies: A Case Study from the Savannah River Valley. *American Antiquity* 60:258-286.
- Beck, R.A. (2003) Consolidation and Hierarchy: Chiefdom Variability in the Mississippian Southeast. *American Antiquity* 68:641-661.
- Cobb, C.R., and Butler, B.A. (2002) The Vacant Quarter Revisited: Late Mississippian Abandonment of the Lower Ohio Valley. *American Antiquity* 67:625-641.
- Delcourt, P.A., Delcourt, H.R., Ison, C.R., Sharp, W.E., and Gremillion, K.J. (1998) Prehistoric Human Use of Fire, the Eastern Agricultural Complex, and Appalachian Oak-Chestnut Forests: Paleocology of Cliff Palace Pond, Kentucky. *American Antiquity* 63:263-278.
- Gremillion, K.J. (2004) Seed Processing and the Origins of Food Production in Eastern North America. *American Antiquity* 69:215-233.
- Kidder, T.R. (2002) Mapping Poverty Point. *American Antiquity* 67:89-101.
- Milner, G.R., Anderson, E., and Smith, V.G. (1991) Warfare in Late Prehistoric West-Central Illinois. *American Antiquity* 56:581-603.
- Saunders, J.W., Mandel, R.D., Sampson, C.G., Allen, C.M., Allen, E.T., Bush, D.A., Feathers, J.K., Gremillion, K.J., Hallmark, C.T., Jackson, H.E., Johnson, J.K., Jones, R., Saucier, R.T., Stringer, G.L., and Vidrine, M.F. (2005) Watson Brake, A Middle Archaic Mound Complex in Northeast Louisiana. *American Antiquity* 70:631-668.
- Schroeder, S. (2004) Current Research on Late Precontact Societies of the Midcontinental United States. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 12:311-372.
- Smith, B.D. (2007) Niche Construction and the Behavioral Context of Plant and Animal Domestication. *Evolutionary Anthropology* 16:188-199.
- Snow, D.R. (1996) Mohawk Demography and the Effects of Exogenous Epidemics on American Indian Populations. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 15: 160-182.
- Warrick, G. (2000) The Precontact Iroquoian Occupation of Southern Ontario. *Journal of World Prehistory* 14:415-466.
- Zeder, M.A. (2006) Central Questions in the Domestication of Plants and Animals. *Evolutionary Anthropology* 15:105-117.