

**SPTP: RISE OF SOCIAL COMPLEXITY**  
**SOCA 493X; SPRING 2008**  
**WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY**

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*Lectures:* T-TH 2:30-3:45 PM G10 Oglebay Hall

*Office Hours:* T-TH 10:30-11:30 AM & by appointment; feel free to talk to me before or after class

**Course Description and Objectives:**

“Rise of Social Complexity” is an awkward title for a complex subject: the study of the roots of the unique form of social organization we live within to today, the “state.” Defining “the state” and its cultural origins is a journey filled with ruins, tedium, spectacular archaeological finds, and conflicting ideas over just what constitutes a “state.” This course examines the history of the inquiry into the origins of social complexity, current theories and models of the emergence of social complexity and “collapse,” the data necessary for evaluating the theories and models, and the implications of both social complexity and social “collapse.” As case studies we will consider the six early “states” (Sumer, Egypt, the Indus Valley, China, Mesoamerica, and the Andes) as well as one case where “states” did not emerge (North America).

**At the conclusion of this course, I expect students to be able to (learning outcomes):**

- 1) Identify and describe core terms and theories relating to the study of social complexity in the archaeological literature;
- 2) Critique the notion of “civilization” and “progress” in popular and academic conversation regarding ancient cultures, cultural change, and the emergence of social complexity;
- 3) Identify and describe key categories of archaeological data related to the study of social complexity;
- 4) Summarize and compare the trajectories of early case studies of cultural change leading to—and not to—significant social complexity;
- 5) Generalize the implications of cultural “collapse”;
- 6) To develop and apply core skills of identifying applicable research literature, summarizing key themes, preparing an annotated bibliography, and arranging research themes in a short literature review essay.

**Required Supplies:**

- The following textbook should be available from the bookstore; a copy is also available on reserve in the library. Eleven additional readings are required for this course and can be found online through the WVU libraries or are on e-Reserve in the library as indicated in the schedule at the end of the syllabus. **The textbook is: Wenke, Robert J. and Deborah I. Olszewski. 2007. *Patterns in Prehistory: Humankind’s First Three Million Years*. Oxford University Press, New York. ISBN: 0-19-516928-X**
- At least eight (8) sheets of plain or lined paper.
- Twenty-two (22) 3x5 note cards (lined cards preferred but not required).

**Grading:**

Your final grade will be based on a combination of exams, small assignments, and a two-part, medium-sized writing assignment, as follows:

Exams	200 points
Chronology chart	45 points
Note cards	25 points
Annotated bibliography	50 points
<u>Review Essay</u>	<u>80 points</u>
 Total	 400 points

**Examinations:** Each examination will consist of a combination of multiple-choice, matching, and true-false, identification, and essay questions. Each exam will be worth 100 points. The questions for each exam will be based on material from both readings and lectures (including all discussions, and films). Each exam will emphasize the material immediately preceding the exam in question; however some material builds in this course and the final exam will have accumulative dimensions. A study guide with grading criteria will be provided for each exam.

**Examination policies:** Basic examination policies follow; other policies may be added as necessary.

- Once the first exam has been completed and turned in by a student, no new exams will be passed out to latecomers.
- No student will be allowed to leave the room and return once the exam is passed out and allowed to return. Once you leave the room you are considered to have finished the exam.
- All personal effects must be stowed below or behind your desk.
- Hats must be turned backwards or taken off during exams.

**Make-up examination policy:** Students absent from regularly scheduled examinations **because of authorized University activities** will have the opportunity to take them at an alternate time.

**Documentation is required.** Such make-up exams will be of comparable difficulty to the original examination. These make-up examinations will be held during the regular semester on Fridays from 2:30 to 4:30 pm in the Division of Sociology and Anthropology (a sign by the elevators on the third floor of Knapp Hall will provide the exact location). In order to have a make-up examination available to a student, **the instructor must be notified of the need for a make-up in advance of the exam or within 48 hours of missing the exam.** You should take your make-up exam within one week of your missed exam (e.g., the following Friday). You must show your Student ID and sign in to take the make-up exam. Failure to take the make-up examination in accordance with these guidelines will result in a 0 score for that exam. In order that final grades may be submitted in a timely fashion, arrangements for University authorized excuses need to be made ahead of the final exam.

***I am not required by the Division of Sociology and Anthropology to provide a make up examination for any reason other than a documented, authorized University activity.*** Make up examinations are inherently unfair to students who take the in-class exam. Should a make-up be necessary for an extreme but unauthorized reason (e.g. military deployment, extended personal hospitalization, death of a close family member), the exam will be more difficult, it will be all essay format, it will not be curved, and it will be worth 90% of the in-class exam. Make ups for reasons other than authorized University activities are limited to one per student.

**Chronology Charts:** Eight of the chapters from the Wenke and Olszewski textbook describe cultural changes in a particular region of the world (chapters 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15). You are to create a chronology chart for each region using the dates and prompts provided by the textbook authors. The chart rows are the time periods; the columns are the data provided by the textbook (“Period,” Cultural

Name(s),” and “Core Data for Period”). Include your name and signature on each chart. An example will be provided in class. Each chart is due at the start of class on the day the reading is assigned; no late charts will be accepted for credit. You should keep a copy of the chart or a second chart for use in class after turning in the original chart. Six (6) of the 8 charts are to be turned in for credit; each chart is worth 7 points (the top 6 scores will be added to your grade). A seventh chart may be turned in for 7 points of extra credit. All plagiarized charts will receive 0 points. Each chart will be graded as follows:

7 points = complete chart with detail

4 points = incomplete chart lacking details

0 points = incomplete chart with minimal details/lack of effort or nothing turned in

**Note cards:** In addition to the chapters from the textbook mentioned above, eleven additional readings from the archaeological literature are provided for the course. For each reading you are to create a 3x5 note card that contains your name (both printed and a signature), the complete bibliographic citation of the article (using APA format), a one-sentence summary of the article, and a question that you had as you read the article that might be useful to discuss in class. Each note card is due at the start of class on the day the reading is assigned; no late note cards will be accepted for credit. You should keep a copy of the note card or a second card for use in class after turning in the original card. An example will be provided in class. Nine (9) of the 11 note cards are to be turned in for credit; each note card is worth 3 points (the top 9 scores will be added to your grade). A tenth note card may be turned in for 3 points of extra credit. All plagiarized note cards will receive 0 points. Each note card will be graded as follows:

3 points = complete note card with detail

0 points = note card indicating lack of effort or nothing turned in

**Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review Essay:** A two-part assignment on a civilization of your choice will be due on at the start of the first class period day after we finish discussing that civilization in class. This assignment allows you to identify a civilization or region of the world of interest to you for further inquiry beyond what we can accomplish in class. The first part of the assignment is an annotated bibliography. An annotated bibliography is a list of articles or book chapters or books that pertain to a particular subject and contains a list of citation and a short summary (one paragraph) of each item. You will write an annotated bibliography containing 5 items (the two read in class and an additional three more). A literature review essay incorporates a number of items on a particular topic and discusses the key themes found within the items. You will use your annotated bibliography to write a short essay (4-5 pages) on the particular themes you discovered in your library research on your civilization. Detailed instructions, examples, and grading criteria will be provided in class. The annotated bibliography is worth 50 points and the essay is worth 80 points.

**Extra Credit:** There are 15 points of extra credit in this class. As noted above, an extra chronology chart can be turned in for an extra 7 points and an extra note card can be turned in for an extra three points. Finally, an extra item in your annotated bibliography that also turns up in your literature review essay will count as an extra 5 points.

**Challenging Assigned Grades:** All assigned grades on student work may be challenged. The challenge must be written (preferably typed) and made **within** one week of the return of the assignment or exam to the class as a whole. The challenge must include: the question or issue, the graded answer, your answer, and a persuasive argument as to why you believe your answer is correct. (Please note that stating you are “two points away” from the grade you desire is not a persuasive argument!). Please note that the reexamination of graded materials may result in either a higher or lower grade.

**Final Grades:** The following scale will be used to determine final grades:

- A = 400 – 360 points
- B = 359 – 320 points
- C = 319 – 280 points
- D = 279 – 240 points
- F = 239 points and below

Final grades are assigned by total points earned and not by percentages. This scale will not be “curved.” Final grade point totals will not be “rounded up,” (and there are opportunities to earn extra credit in this class). However, the instructor reserves the right to throw out or amend individual exam questions according to both objective knowledge expectations and overall class comprehension.

**Withdrawals:** The student, not the instructor, is solely responsible to initiate and complete a withdrawal from this course. The instructor will not provide a “W” grade for non-attendance. You will receive the grade earned, which may be a 0.0.

**Academic Integrity:** Each student is expected to submit work that is original and solely the product of the student or the group of students given the assignment. Plagiarism, cheating, forgery, falsification of data, and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Further information is available from the student handbook and being familiar with its content is a good practice. The student handbook, “The Mountie,” can be accessed online at: <http://www.arc.wvu.edu/rights.html>. Section 1.6 reads, in part:

“14. The term “cheating” includes, but is not limited to: (1) giving or receiving of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; (3) the acquisition or use, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the University faculty or staff; or (4) engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion.

15. The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.”

Additional important information for students regarding West Virginia University’s policies and procedures concerning academic discipline, academic integrity, the student code of conduct, and disciplinary measure instructors can take is located in “The Mountie.” I urge you to familiarize yourself with this information.

### **Social Justice Statement:**

“West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and nondiscrimination. Our university does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services. (293-6700)”

**General Expectations:**

- ***Instructor Responsibilities:*** Just as students have dominant learning styles, so too instructors have dominant teaching styles. My dominant style is lecturing. I recognize, however, that not all students learn best in a lecture format. Therefore, I have amended my teaching practice to incorporate other activities into this course, such as group activities, large and small group discussions, videos, games, and brief response papers. It is my intention to create a welcoming learning community within this class.
- ***Student Responsibilities:*** Good learning is not the sole responsibility of the instructor. Indeed, as the instructor, I can teach you but I cannot “learn you.” You must do your own learning. Students are therefore expected to participate in their own learning as part of their personal educational journey. The following list forms a minimum expectation for students as you actively engage this course. Undoubtedly all of you will surpass this list:
  - Consistent and regular class attendance;
  - Prompt completion of readings and other assignments;
  - Seeking to create a learning environment by respectfully asking questions of the instructor when the student is confused by or disagrees with the course material;
  - Seeking to create a mutual learning environment by knowing one’s fellow classmates and demonstrating respect to one another in and out of the classroom;
  - Setting personal educational goals for this class and adjusting personal learning style to the instructor’s teaching style.

Additional items may be added to this as need arises and as we develop our learning community within this class.

- ***Seeking Assistance with class:*** Often students find unexpected events take precedence over planned priorities, such as school. If you find yourself struggling in the class or struggling to balance your education with other activities, I might be able to help. Please feel free to contact me. This is especially true if you find yourself missing class due to extended illness or other prolonged situations.
- ***Classroom Decorum:*** An enjoyable learning experience is our collective responsibility. Some general guidelines:
  - **Absolutely NO beepers, cell phones, or other similar electronic or mechanical devices are to be heard or used during class.** They are a distraction to the instructor and to the other students in the class. Electronic devices may not be used during exams.
  - Occasionally students need or desire to use tape recorders or touch-typed notes for their own study purposes: therefore **tape recorders and computers will be allowed only on a case-by-case basis. Prior permission is required** and if their use becomes disruptive (or I find you are using your computer for purposes other than note-taking), permission will be revoked.
  - Tardiness and early departures from class are disruptive to the class as a whole and are not expected. Should an unavoidable situation arise, notify the instructor **PRIOR** to the start of class (e.g. call ahead or indicate to the instructor that an early departure is needed before class begins). Chronic tardiness and early departures can result in the loss of attendance points.
  - This class is built on lectures, large group discussion, small group discussion, and activities. For everyone to have the opportunity to learn, it is necessary for students to demonstrate appropriate respect when others are making a point by allowing them to

complete their thoughts before discussing your ideas. Interruptions and unsanctioned small group discussions (e.g. whispering) are not acceptable in a scholarly context.

- You may not sell your notes.

Obviously, this is not an exhaustive list. We may decide on additional items as our semester progresses.

### **Instructor's absence or college closure:**

In the unforeseen event of the instructor's absence or the cancellation of classes by West Virginia University, the class schedule may be amended to accommodate all necessary course material. This may include the pushing back of assignments to the next class period, such as reading assignments and papers. However, exams and quizzes may still be held in the case of instructor absence. All changes will be announced in class and via email. Do not assume that an assignment has been cancelled or pushed back until a change has actually been announced.

### **Additional Required Readings:**

The following readings are referred to by the first author's last name in the schedule. Whether they can be found on the web or on e-Reserves (indicated at the end of each citation). **For the four eReserves articles (indicated in parentheses), you need my name (hirshman –use all lower case) and password (674) to sign on.**

Feder, K. (2002). *Frauds, Myths, and Mysteries: Science and Pseudoscience in Archaeology*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. (pp. 204-240). Boston: McGraw-Hill. (WVU eReserves)

Wright, H. T. (1986). The Evolution of Civilizations. In D. H. Meltzer, D. D. Fowler, and J. A. Sabloff (Eds.), *American Archaeology, Past and Future* (pp. 323-265). Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press. (WVU eReserves)

Yoffee, N. (1993). Too many chiefs? (or, Safe texts for the '90s). In N. Yoffee and A. Sherratt (Eds.), *Archaeological theory: Who Set the Agenda?* (pp. 60-78. (WVU eReserves)

Byrd, B. E. (2005). Reassessing the emergence of village life in the Near East. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 13(3), 231-290.

Algaze, G. (2001). Initial social complexity in Southwestern Asia. *Current Anthropology* 42, 199-233.

Bard, K. A. (1994). The Egyptian predynastic: a review of the evidence. *Journal of Field Archaeology*, 21, 265-288.

Possehl, G. L. (1990). Revolution in the urban revolution: the emergence of Indus urbanization. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 19, 261-282.

Liu, L. (2003). "The products of minds as well as of hands": production of prestige goods in the Neolithic and early state periods of China. *Asian Perspectives*, 42(1), 1-40.

Clark, J. E. (1997). The arts of government in early Mesoamerica. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 26, 211-234.

Vaughn, K. J. (2006). Craft production, exchange, and political power in the pre-Incaic Andes. *Journal of Archaeological Research*, 14, 313-344.

Cowgill, G. L. (1988). Onward and upward with collapse. In N. Yoffee, and G. L. Cowgill (Eds.), *The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations* (pp. 244-276). Tucson: The University of Arizona Press. (WVU eReserves)

### Lecture and Reading Schedule:

This schedule is tentative and may be amended according to our needs in keeping with the goals of this course. Bringing the syllabus to class is a good habit to cultivate. You should come to class prepared, having already read the assignment for that day. For each article or chapter, you should minimally be able to summarize the main point and key data. *Please note: Wenke chapter 2 has excellent background information on the practice of archaeology. While the chapter is not formally assigned, the information is strongly recommended for study for those without an archaeology background and recommended for review for those who do have a background.*

Date	Day	Topic	Reading and Writing Assignments
01/15/08	T	Introduction	
01/17/08	TH	No, Really,...Aliens?	Feder (note card)
01/22/08	T	Concepts, Theories and Data	Wenke 1 & 7
01/24/08	TH	Concepts, Theories and Data	Wright (note card)
01/28/08	T	Concepts, Theories and Data	Yoffee (note card)
01/31/08	TH	Concepts, Theories and Data	
02/05/08	T	Early complexity: Domestication	Wenke 6 (chronology chart)
02/07/08	TH	Early complexity: Domestication	Byrd (note card)
02/12/08	T	Case Study: Sumer	Wenke 8 (chronology chart)
02/14/08	TH	Case Study: Sumer	Algaze (note card)
02/19/08	T	Case Study: Sumer	
02/21/08	TH	Case Study: Egypt	Wenke 9 (chronology chart) & Sumer assign. due
02/26/08	T	Case Study: Egypt	Bard (note card)
02/28/08	TH	Case Study: Indus Valley	Wenke 10(chronology chart) & Egypt assign. due
03/04/08	T	Case Study: Indus Valley	Possehl (note card)
03/06/08	TH	Review	Indus assign. due
03/11/08	T	Exam #1	
03/13/08	TH	Case Study: China	Wenke 11 (chronology chart)
03/18/08	T	Case Study: China	Liu (note card)
03/20/08	TH	Case Study: Mesoamerica	Wenke 13 (chronology chart) & China assign. due
03/25/08	Break		
03/27/08	Break		
04/01/08	T	Case Study: Mesoamerica	Clark (note card)
04/03/08	TH	Case Study: Mesoamerica	
04/08/08	T	Case Study: Mesoamerica	
04/10/08	TH	Case Study: The Andes	Wenke 14 (chron. chart) & Mesoam. Assign. due
04/15/08	T	Case Study: The Andes	Vaughn (note card)
04/17/08	TH	Why not everywhere?	Wenke 15 (chronology chart) & Andes assign. due
04/22/08	T	Why not everywhere?	
04/24/08	TH	Collapse	Cowgill (note card)
04/29/08	T	Collapse	
05/01/08	TH	Review	
05/09/08	FRI	Exam #2	