

ANTH 150 A02

EARLY URBAN SOCIETIES

INSTRUCTOR: Jeremy A. Beller

Course Description and Objectives:

Archaeologists have long been interested in the factors that led humans to shift from living in relatively egalitarian societies as hunter-gatherers to the more complex social patterns that eventually culminated in civilizations around the world. This course explores some of the world's earliest civilizations, including classic examples from the Near East, Asia, and the Americas. It covers major transformative events relevant to the emergence and maintenance of state societies, such as the origins of writing, religion, agriculture, craft specializations, urbanism, and stratification. Overviews of each civilization will be paired with recent case studies that highlight new archaeological approaches and technologies being used to study these societies. Traditional perspectives will be re-examined from a contemporary archaeological and anthropological perspective including the definition of a civilization and a focus on populations and practices that are often overlooked.