"Ancient Civilizations": Anthropology 150 (GenEd HSDG) Fall 2018

Read what instructor Virginia McLaurin has to say about the course:

In this course, we will use archeological data to explore a range of civilizations in the Near East and the Americas. We will study small-scale foraging societies, the emergence of the very first cities and states, and even a few civilizations that seem to fit somewhere "in between." By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- see cultures around the world with an appreciation for their internal structures and values
- understand how people gain power and maintain it
- comprehend various levels of social structure and how they might impact each other
- recognize hierarchical social relations taking place around you, and the social contracts that maintain them
- both appreciate and critique how archeology interprets the past through a limited set of physical remains

While we will be focusing on the past through the physical records people left behind, we will always attempt to take the practices we see and relate them to our own human experience. Can we learn something from the first societies who domesticated crops, built religious temples, or began creating different social classes? In this course, we can - and we will! We will do this through interactive, engaged discussions. One week you may have to debate the merits of farming with a group of foragers - it's harder than you think - and another week you may be engaged in a trade war with a neighboring Ancient Maya chiefdom.

With these activities, you'll think through the options available to people in the past and begin to understand the world as they saw it.

As a RAP course, you will also gain insight into how a course is structured, how assignments are constructed, and what skills professors in similar courses are helping you build. As an introduction to similar college courses, you will leave the class with a clear vision of why it was designed, what you learned from it, and what you can do with that knowledge in your own life.

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