



ASB 361: Human Cultural Beginnings

Fall 2023 B • ASU Online (93856) • iCourse (93855)

Course and Faculty Information

Course Description: This course explores the evolution of human technology before agriculture spanning ~8 million years. Focusing on the major questions confronting researchers, students will engage with the methods of inquiry and problem-solving used to interpret material evidence. A few of the questions we will cover include: How and when did technological dependence, innovation, culture, symbolism, and religion emerge in the human lineage? What behaviors enabled human ancestors to adapt to different environments around the world while other lineages went extinct? Why does studying the deep past matter today, and how can collaborating with local and descendant communities improve research? We will begin with an introduction of methods and definitions used in deep history research, followed by a study of culture and technology in non-human primates. We will then trace the origins of the cultural behavior of ancestral hominins from eastern African roots ~ 3.3 million years ago to a worldwide expansion by ~30,000 years ago. The latter half of the course focuses on pre-agricultural technologies in our own species, *H. sapiens*, and ends with a conversation about the contemporary relevance of deep history research for the broader public.

Credits: 3

Prerequisites: None

Instructor: Dr. Kathryn L. Ranhorn (she/her)

Contact Information: kathryn.ranhorn@asu.edu

Office Hours: By appointment on Zoom (join by username: kranhorn)

Course Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe how the evidence of the distant human past is collected, analyzed, and interpreted,
- Summarize the basic chronological and geographical framework of Pleistocene human behaviors,
- Evaluate models for early human societies, based on studies of present-day primate and human societies,
- Develop a plan for establishing the age and associations of a new Pleistocene-age archaeological site,
- Explain the basis for divergent points of view on some of the major questions concerning the origins and diversification of human culture,
- Synthesize for a broad audience both scholarly and popular interpretations of current and new evidence concerning human behavioral evolution.

Assignments

Final grades for the course will be determined by the following assessments:

- Six quizzes (15 points each/90 points total),
- Contributions to four Discussion Boards (20 points each/80 points total),
- Two creative assignments (40 points each/80 points total)

Quizzes (90 points total): There are 7 graded module quizzes in this course (one due at the end of each week) of which six are required to earn full credit. These quizzes are composed of multiple-choice and matching questions based on the corresponding module's lectures, readings, and videos. You will have 30 minutes to take each quiz. Quizzes will not be available after the due date without an instructor-granted extension. Please note, while passing the Readiness Quiz with at least 80% is required to unlock subsequent course materials, your score on this quiz will not be included in calculations for your course grade. At the end of the semester, the lowest Module Quiz score will be dropped. To prepare for the Module Quizzes, complete the readings and view the lectures and videos for each module. Unlike the Readiness Quiz, Module Quizzes can only be taken once. The goal of these quizzes is to ensure that you have understood the material for that module.

Discussion Board Posts (80 points total): In Module 0 you have an opportunity to introduce yourself to the class (optional, ungraded). In modules 1, 3, 5, and 7, you will contribute to the class discussion board by making a post that addresses that module's prompt and replying to two classmates about their posts. To do this, it is important that you have (1) read through the prompt carefully, and (2) already worked through lectures, readings, and videos for the module. To give ample time for responses, *your initial post is due on Wednesday at 11:59 PM Arizona time, with replies due on Sunday at 11:59 PM Arizona time.*

Discussion Board contributions will be based on the following 3 criteria:

- The relevance of the content and appropriateness of the contribution (12 pts). Your contribution should be in the form of a comment, response, or question(s) that fully

address(es) the discussion prompt and must be original (that is, it cannot be a repeat of someone else's comment). Your post must adhere to course policies (below) regarding appropriate student conduct.

- Length, writing and grammar (2 pts). Discussion board posts should be 3 to 6 sentences in length. Content should be written in a professional manner using complete sentences.
- Two reply posts (6 pts). Required on all but the last discussion on which the initial post has an added requirement). Contribute a brief (25-75 words) but thoughtful reply/comment on 2 different posts by your classmates. Each of your 2 total reply posts is worth 3 points.

Posting after the due date will not earn any points without an extension request.

Creative Assignments (80 points total): There are three creative assignments associated with modules 2, 4, and 6, of which you are required to complete two:

1. Module 2: Cultures and learning in non-human primates
2. Module 4: A day in the life of *Homo erectus*
3. Module 6: Interpreting a Pleistocene archaeological site

Instructions are provided in links to each of these modules, but you are encouraged to review the instructions for ALL THREE assignments early so you will have ample time to choose which assignments you will complete, and carefully prepare each assignment before the associated due date.

Office Hours

Students are encouraged to meet with Dr. Ranhorn as needed to review or further explore course content, discuss post-graduate plans, or consider research opportunities. Office hours can be in the form of one-on-one meetings or in groups and will be held virtually on Zoom and/or in-person in Dr. Ranhorn's office ISTB7 294A. If you would like a one-on-one or group meeting email Dr. Ranhorn.

Textbooks

All learning materials will be made available to you via Canvas.

Course Access

Your ASU courses can be accessed by both my.asu.edu and myasucourses.asu.edu; bookmark both in the event that one site is down.

Computer Requirements

This is a fully online course; therefore, it requires a computer with internet access and the following technologies:

- Web browsers ([Chrome](#), [Mozilla Firefox](#), or [Safari](#))
- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) (free)
- [Adobe Flash Player](#) (free)
- Webcam, microphone, headset/earbuds, and speaker
- Microsoft Office ([Microsoft 365 is free](#) for all currently-enrolled ASU students)
- Reliable broadband internet connection (DSL or cable) to stream videos.

Help

For technical support, use the Help icon in the black global navigation menu in your Canvas course or call the ASU Help Desk at 1+(855) 278-5080. Representatives are available to assist you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Student Success

To be successful:

- check the course daily
- read announcements
- read and respond to course email messages as needed
- complete assignments by the due dates specified
- communicate regularly with your instructor and peers
- create a study and/or assignment schedule to stay on track
- access [ASU Online Student Resources](#)

Digital Literacy

Below are some of the skills you'll need to utilize to be successful in this ASU Online course:

- Using Canvas LMS - For additional help on this, visit the [Canvas Resources for Students](#) or the [Student Canvas Guide](#). Be sure to bookmark these resources for future reference!
- Using email with attachments
- Creating and submitting word files
- Copying and pasting
- Downloading and installing software
- Using presentation and graphics programs

The ASU Library has several tutorials available to support students in expanding their digital literacy skills: [ASU Library tutorials](#)

Grading

Your grade will be determined based on the following grading schema:

Grade	%	Points
A+	97 to 100%	242.5-250
A	93 to < 97%	232.5-242.4
A-	90 to < 93%	225.0-232.4
B+	87 to < 90%	217.5-224.9
B	83 to < 87%	207.5-217.6
B-	80 to < 83%	200.0-207.4
C+	77 to < 80%	192.5-199.9
C	70 to < 77%	175.0-192.4

D	60 to < 70%	150.0-174.9
E	Below 60 %	< 150.0
EN - Failing for Not Participating	-	
EU - Failing for Incomplete Participation	-	
XE - Academic Dishonesty	-	

Submitting Assignments

All assignments, unless otherwise announced, **MUST** be submitted to the designated area of Canvas. Do not submit an assignment via email.

Assignment due dates follow Arizona Standard Time. Click the following link to access the [Time Converter](#) to ensure you account for the difference in Time Zones. Note: Arizona does not observe daylight savings time.

Grading Procedure

Grades reflect your performance on assignments and adherence to deadlines. Grades on assignments will be available within 72 hours of the due date in the Gradebook.

Late or Missed Assignments

Notify Dr. Ranhorn **BEFORE** an assignment is due if an urgent situation arises and you are unable to submit the assignment on time.

Follow the appropriate University policies to request an [accommodation for religious practices](#) or to accommodate a missed assignment [due to University-sanctioned activities](#).

Exam Proctoring

This course will not use any form of online proctoring.

Communicating With the Instructor

Community Forum

This course uses a discussion topic called "Community Forum" for general questions and comments about the course. Prior to posting a question or comment, check the syllabus, announcements, and existing posts to ensure it's not redundant. You are encouraged to respond to the questions of your classmates.

Email questions of a personal nature to your instructor. You can expect a response within 24 hours.

Canvas Message

The message tool in Canvas allows students to directly message the instructor. Use the message tool if you have a quick question for the instructor. You are encouraged to use this tool more than e-mail when possible.

Email

ASU email is an [official means of communication](#) among students, faculty, and staff. Students are expected to read and act upon email in a timely fashion. Students bear the responsibility of missed messages and should check their ASU-assigned email regularly.

All instructor correspondence will be sent to your ASU email account.

Communication Expectations (Netiquette)

Learning takes place best when a safe environment is established. Students enrolled in this course have a responsibility to support an environment that nurtures individual and group differences and encourages engaged honest discussions. Doing so will effectively contribute to our own and others' intellectual and personal growth and development. We welcome disagreements in the tolerant spirit of academic discourse, but please remember to be respectful of others' viewpoints, whether you agree with them or not. The following are some guidelines to consider when engaging in online discussion and discourse:

- **Be kind and polite.** Be mindful of your tone and do not make fun of another person for any reason.

- **Be respectful.** Being part of an academic community means being exposed to diverse perspectives and viewpoints. Be respectful in all situations and in your critiques. If you wouldn't say it face to face, don't say it online
- **Be wary of sarcasm.** In-person, sarcastic comments can be funny and break up a tense situation. Online, it's hard to tell the difference between when someone is being sarcastic and when someone is genuinely being rude.
- **Avoid stereotyping.** Just because someone holds view X, and some people you know of who hold view X also hold view Y, doesn't mean that holding view X means holding view Y.
- **Use proper grammar and spelling.** Typos and basic spelling mistakes will happen, but if it's distracting from your message, it can be difficult to figure out what you mean. Also, you should avoid using all caps as this can imply shouting in the online environment.

ASU Online Course Policies

View the [ASU Online Course Policies](#)

Inclusive Environment

Throughout this course, you may be presented with ideas or perspectives that you are unfamiliar or uncomfortable with. We encourage you to critically examine these ideas and take risks by offering your own experiences and perspectives through civil discourse. In return, I will work to foster and create an environment where you feel supported in taking these risks.

When possible, human biases were addressed in the design of this course. If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion, please reach out to me with suggestions on how I can further improve this course for you or for others.

Inclusion and Accessibility Statements

View the [Accessibility section](#) to review accessibility statements for common tools and resources used in ASU Online courses.

If any other tools are used in this course, links to the accessibility statements will be listed below this sentence.

View the Statement of Inclusion policy listed in the [ASU Course Policies](#) page.

Syllabus Disclaimer

The syllabus is a statement of intent and serves as an implicit agreement between the instructor and the student. Every effort will be made to avoid changing the course schedule but the

possibility exists that unforeseen events will make syllabus changes necessary. Remember to check your ASU email and the course site often.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is expected of all students in all examinations, papers, and laboratory work, academic transactions, and records. The possible sanctions include but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification, and dismissal. For more information, see <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>

Accessibility Resources

Students who feel they will need accessibility accommodations in this class but have not registered with the Student Accessibility and Inclusive Learning Services (SAILS) should contact SAILS immediately. The SAILS Tempe office is located on the first floor of the Matthews Center Building. SAILS staff can also be reached at: (480) 965-1234 (V) or (480) 965-9000 (TTY). For additional information, visit: www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc.

Policy Against Threatening Behavior

All incidents and allegations of violent or threatening conduct by an ASU student (whether on-or off campus) must be reported to the ASU Police Department (ASU PD) and the Office of the Dean of Students. If either office determines that the behavior poses or has posed a serious threat to personal safety or to the welfare of the campus, the student will not be permitted to return to campus or reside in any ASU residence hall until an appropriate threat assessment has been completed and, if necessary, conditions for return are imposed. ASU PD, the Office of the Dean of Students, and other appropriate offices will coordinate the assessment in light of the relevant circumstances. For more information please visit <https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/srr/PoliciesAndProcedures> and <https://eoss.asu.edu/dos/safety/ThreateningBehavior>.

Reporting Title IX Violations

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>.

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling> is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately. ASU online students may access 360 Life Services, <https://goto.asuonline.asu.edu/success/online-resources.html>.

Policy on Sexual Discrimination

Arizona State University is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation for the entire university community, including all students, faculty members, staff employees, and guests. ASU expressly prohibits [discrimination](#), [harassment](#), and [retaliation](#) by employees, students, contractors, or agents of the university based on any protected status: race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and genetic information.

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>, is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

Copyrighted Materials

Students must refrain from uploading to any course shell, discussion board, or website used by the course instructor or other course forum, material that is not the student's original work unless the students first comply with all applicable copyright laws; faculty members reserve the right to delete materials on the grounds of suspected copyright infringement.