

**Karime Castillo**

**OFFICE HOURS** (ADAMS 307)

Fridays 1:00-3:00 pm  
or by appointment

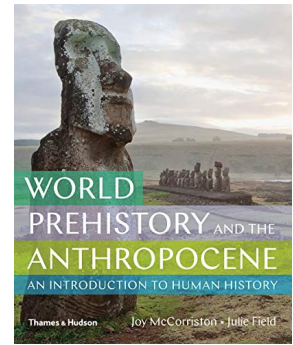
To schedule:

[calendly.com/karimecastillo/](https://calendly.com/karimecastillo/)

Or email me at

[k.castillo@bowdoin.edu](mailto:k.castillo@bowdoin.edu)

**WF 10:05-11:30 AM**  
**ADAMS 114**



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# INTRODUCTION TO PREHISTORY

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This course explores human prehistory and cultural existence around the globe, from the development of our own species and its spread across the world to the establishment of societies with diverse political systems, social structures, economic relationships, and ideologies. We consider how the fields of archaeology and physical anthropology, as part of the discipline of Anthropology, investigate the global human experience by studying objects and physical remains. At the same time, we consider how archaeological interpretation has

been shaped by historic and contemporary contexts of colonialism, racism, and other power structures.

## Course Materials

### Textbook:

- McCorriston, Joy and Julie Field. 2021. *World Prehistory and the Anthropocene: An Introduction to Human Prehistory*. Thames and Hudson: London. (on reserve in H-L)

All other readings will be provided on Blackboard. Most articles are also available through the library databases and journals. I may change some readings if I find a more appropriate piece for the class to read.

## Course Organization

This course will be a mix of lecture and discussion with in-class activities. There will be opportunities to work with physical models of human fossils and archaeological artifacts. We will visit the Bowdoin College Museum of Art and/or the Arctic Museum to examine objects relevant to the course (dates TBD).

## Course Requirements

- Attendance and participation: 15 %  
Active participation in the class involves keeping up to date on the readings, engaging in class discussions and activities, and contributing to in-class group work. May also include short assignments to be completed outside of class or to post reflections or questions to a discussion board on Blackboard.
- Midterm I (in class): 15 %  
Mix of question formats.
- Midterm II (in class): 15 %  
Non-cumulative, with a mix of question formats.
- Archaeology Practica: 30 %  
You will complete three practical exercises (each one worth 10 %) that will introduce you to the process of archaeological research and how it is communicated.
- Final exam: 25 %  
Semi-cumulative, with a mix of question formats.



## Learning Goals

- Become acquainted with key anthropological concepts and how they are studied by archaeologists.
- Understand the trajectory and pace of long-term changes in human societies across the globe.
- Understand how archaeological materials and contexts are interpreted.
- Acquire skills to critically examine ethical dilemmas.
- Discuss and critique archaeological interpretations.

All required work must be completed to pass this course. Assignments will be submitted electronically on Blackboard by 9:00 pm on the due date unless otherwise specified. Detailed instructions for each assignment will be provided.

Grading Scale 100-94% **A**; 93-90% **A-**; 89-87% **B+**; 86-84% **B**; 83-80% **B-**; 79-77% **C+**; 76-74% **C**; 73-70% **C-**; 69-66% **D**; 65% and below **F**

Absences: After two absences, your final grade will be lowered. I will make considerations for cases of serious illness, injury, and/or family emergency after notification from your dean. Please let me know in advance (whenever possible) if you will not be attending class. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate for all relevant notes and announcements.

Late Work: All late assignments will be subject to a deduction of one-third letter grade per day late (i.e. A- to B+ for 1 day late). Exceptions will be made only in case of personal crisis, family emergency, or severe illness, but please let me know ahead of time.

Flex Pass: Everybody gets **three** flex passes during the semester. A flex pass is a 24 hour extension on any written assignment, no questions asked.

Extra credit opportunities: Occasional opportunities for extra credit may be offered.

## Course Policies

The class is a safe space where opinions and ideas will be challenged and discussed but grounded on respect for yourself, the professor, and your classmates. It is important that everyone is present, engaged, and attentive in order to create a productive learning environment. To meaningfully engage with the topics covered in the course requires that we collectively approach the materials with an open mind. Thinking outside our cultural experience is central to anthropology, but can feel uncomfortable. Be open to discomfort, but also consider how your perspectives impact others. To support a sense of community, I ask that you not use laptops in the classroom and that you turn off phones, etc. and leave them in your bags. If you are a person who does not readily talk in public, I encourage you to talk with me during my office hours to find ways to support your engagement in class.

### Office Hours and email

If you have any difficulties understanding course materials or assignments or simply have questions or ideas that you would like to talk about further, please see me during office hours, send me an email, or catch me after class. You can make appointments for my office hours ([calendly.com/karimecastillo/](https://calendly.com/karimecastillo/)) but you can also simply stop by. The best way to reach me is through email ([k.castillo@bowodoin.edu](mailto:k.castillo@bowodoin.edu)). I am unlikely to respond to messages over weekends

or holidays, but during the week, I will do my best to respond to you within 24 hours. If I have not responded after 24 hours please feel free to email me a reminder.

Note that I cannot disclose information about grades and class performance over email; please come to my office hours for such concerns.

### Academic Integrity

While we may do collaborative work in and outside of class, all work you submit for this class (regardless of the medium) must be your own work. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. To avoid plagiarism (using ideas and language of other people without proper attribution), be sure to carefully cite all text, ideas, and images you borrow from others. The Bowdoin Academic Honor Code is your guide for ethical academic work in this course (<https://www.bowdoin.edu/dean-of-students/ccs/community-standards/the-codes.html>). For more information on academic honesty and how to cite correctly in the discipline of anthropology, please review the College's page on plagiarism and academic honesty (<https://www.bowdoin.edu/dean-of-students/judicial-board/academic-honesty-and-plagiarism/index.html>) and the library's "Style and Citation Guide" (<https://library.bowdoin.edu/research/citation-guides.shtml>).

### Special Accommodations

I am committed to the creation of an inclusive and universal learning experience in this class. If you need accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so that we can discuss how I can best meet your needs. The Student Accessibility Office provides information on the accommodations process for students with disabilities (<https://www.bowdoin.edu/accessibility/student-accessibility-office/index.html>).

### Academic Support

As liaison to the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Beth Hoppe will be your go-to person for any questions you have about the library or citational practices. She can be reached at [ehoppe@bowdoin.edu](mailto:ehoppe@bowdoin.edu) or (207) 725-3260. For information on journals and indexes widely used in the discipline consult the Anthropology Subject Guide (<https://bowdoin.libguides.com/anthropology>).

The Writing Center offers assistance on written assignments (<https://www.bowdoin.edu/baldwin-center/for-students/writing-and-rhetoric/writing-center.html>).

### **Course Schedule**

The readings will be discussed in class on the day that they are listed on the syllabus. Please bring hardcopies with you to class. We will follow the schedule as closely as possible, but the reading schedule is subject to change. *Blackboard will have the most current schedule.*

## Week 1: Introduction

W Jan. 26: Introduction to the Course

F Jan. 28: The study of the human past

Scarre, Chris (editor)

2018 Introduction: the study of the human past. In *The Human Past: World Prehistory and the Development of Human societies*. Thames and Hudson, London. (pp. 24-30).

## Week 2: Origins

W Feb. 2: Basic concepts in archaeology

Textbook, Chapter 1

F Feb. 4: Human origins I

Toth, Nicholas and Kathy Schick

2018 African Origins. In *The Human Past: World Prehistory and the Development of Human societies*, edited by C. Scarre. Thames and Hudson, London. (pp. 46-57).

## Week 3: Origins

W Feb. 9: Human origins II

Fagan, Brian and Nadia Durrani

2019 People of the Earth: An Introduction to World Prehistory. Routledge, New York.  
Selection from Chapter 2 (pp. 32-37)

F Feb. 11: The genus *Homo*

Feder, Kenneth.

2017 "The human lineage," in *The Past in Perspective*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

## Week 4: Hominin dispersal and the human species

W Feb. 16: Hominin dispersal

Klein, Richard

2018 Hominin Dispersal in the Old World. In *The Human Past: World Prehistory and the Development of Human societies*, edited by C. Scarre. Thames and Hudson, London. (pp. 71-96)

## **ARCHAEOLOGY PRACTICUM I DUE**

F Feb. 18: Modern human origins

Textbook, Chapter 2

## Week 5: What makes us humans?

W Feb. 23: Tools and technology

Textbook, Chapter 3



F Feb. 25: **MIDTERM I****Week 6: Peopling the world**W March 2: Peopling the world

Textbook, Chapter 4

F March 4: Other perspectives to understand human origins and ancestry

Thomas, DH.

2000. *Skull Wars*. Basic Books: NY. (selection)

Sterling, Kathleen

2015. Black Feminist Theory in Prehistory. *Archaeologies* 11: 93-120.**Week 7: Responding to a changing environment**W March 9: Responding to climate change

Textbook, Chapter 5

F March 11: Responding to changing resources

Textbook, Chapter 6

**Week 8**

Happy spring break!

**Week 9**

Happy spring break!

**Week 10: Food procurement and production**W March 30: Hunting and decision-making

Textbook, Chapter 7

F April 1: Early domestication

Textbook Chapter 8

**ARCHAEOLOGY PRACTICUM II DUE****Week 11: Identity and Agency**W April 6: Identity and agency

Textbook, Chapter 9

F April 8: Archaeological approaches to the study of identity

Meskel, Lynn

2002. The intersections of identity and politics in archaeology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31: 279-301.

### Week 12: The built environment

W April 13: Early urbanism

Textbook, Chapter 10

F April 15: Building monuments

Textbook, Chapter 11

### Week 13: Conspicuous consumption

W April 20: **MIDTERM II**

F April 22: Feasts, burials, and sacrifices

Textbook, Chapter 12

### Week 14: Early Writing

W April 27: Ancient writing systems I

Textbook, Chapter 13

F April 29: Ancient writing systems II

Coe, Michael D.

2012 *Breaking the Maya Code*. Thames and Hudson, New York. (selection)

### Week 15: Extracting

W May 4: Extracting and exploitation practices I

Textbook, Chapter 14

F May 6: Extracting and exploitation practices I

Hu, Di and Kylie Quave

2020 Prosperity and Prestige: Archaeological Realities of Unfree Laborers Under Inka Imperialism. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 59: 101201

### Week 16: The challenges ahead: what can we learn from the past?

W May 11: Lessons from the past

Textbook, Chapter 15

**ARCHAEOLOGY PRACTICUM III DUE**

Week 17 (Finals)

F May 20: **FINAL EXAM 8:30-11:30 AM** as per the College schedule.



INTRODUCTION TO WORLD PREHISTORY AT A GLANCE				
Wk	Date	Topic	Readings	Due
1	1/26	Introduction to the course		
	1/28	The study of the human past	Scarre 2018	
2	2/2	Basic concepts in archaeology	Textbook Ch. 1	
	2/4	Human origins I	Toth and Schick 2018	
3	2/9	Human origins II	Fagan and Durrani 2019	
	2/11	The genus <i>Homo</i>	Feder 2017	<b>Practicum I</b>
4	2/16	Hominin dispersal	Klein 2018	
	2/18	Modern human origins	Textbook Ch. 2	
5	2/23	<b>MIDTERM I</b>		
	2/25	Tools and technology	Textbook Ch. 3	
6	3/2	Peopling the world	Textbook Ch. 4	
	3/4	Other perspectives to understand human origins and ancestry	Thomas 2000; Sterling 2015	
7	3/9	Responding to climate change	Textbook Ch. 5	
	3/11	Responding to changing resources	Textbook Ch. 6	
8		Spring Break!		
9		Spring Break!		
10	3/30	Hunting and decision-making	Textbook Ch. 7	
	4/1	Early domestication	Textbook Ch. 8	<b>Practicum II</b>
11	4/6	Identity and agency	Textbook Ch. 9	
	4/8	Archaeological approaches to the study of identity	Meskill 2002	
12	4/13	Early urbanism	Textbook Ch. 10	
	4/15	Building monuments	Textbook Ch. 11	
13	4/20	<b>MIDTERM II</b>		
	4/22	Feasts, burials, and sacrifices	Textbook Ch. 12	
14	4/27	Ancient writing systems I	Textbook. Ch. 13	
	4/29	Ancient writing systems II	Coe 2012	
15	5/4	Extracting and exploitation practices I	Textbook Ch. 14	
	5/6	Extracting and exploitation practices II	Hu and Quaye 2020	
16	5/11	Lessons from the past	Textbook Ch. 15	<b>Practicum III</b>
17	5/20	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>		