

Emergence of Civilizations Spring 2009
Study guide for the midterm exam

Bring one or two 8 ½ x 11 (large size) blue books. The midterm is worth 20% of the course grade, or 200 points. It covers all of the course material prior to the test. The test has three parts. In the first, you answer roughly half a dozen short questions that call for a few phrases or sentences that deal with fairly cut-and-dried topics. In the next, you write three essay answers, from a paragraph to a few pages long. You have your choice between two questions for each of these. Finally, the third section has a map of Southwest Asia like the one posted on the class website, but without the dots and labels. There is a list of geographical terms that you mark on the map. The map questions cover only places and features labeled on the map on the website. They do not include places in Egypt.

Some questions will come from this study guide. Others will not, but will be similar in style. This guide is not a list of everything you should know. You should understand the material covered in the readings and lectures. In essay questions, I look for clear, logical arguments *supported by specific examples and evidence*. Concepts should be explained, not just mentioned. When a question has several parts, address them all. You can write a good answer by treating it as an argument in which you convince me that your claims are correct, using specific evidence and clear logic. Don't assume that I know the answer; your job is to show me that *you* understand the answer, the issues, and the evidence.

Suggestions for studying: Review the readings, lecture notes, and slides. Identify the important points and arguments for each theme, time period, or place we covered. That is, be able to answer questions like "What is the big deal about agriculture?", "What was significant about the Late Uruk period?" or "What was notable about PPNA Jericho?" as specifically as possible. Even if the exam doesn't ask these questions, you will have the information for other questions. Also, try contrasting different places or periods. For example, you might think about ways in which Jericho (or Tell Hassuna, Eridu, etc.) was similar to, and different from, Çatal Hüyük (or Uruk, Tell Abu Hureyra, etc.). Comparisons help you pick out the significant features of each site or period. Finally, think about what the evidence *means*, that is, how it relates to definitions and theories of civilization.

Examples of short-answer questions:

1. What plants and animals were domesticated by early Neolithic people of the Levant?
2. Name and briefly describe four methods that archaeologists use to place things and sites in time.
3. List four significant changes or innovations of the Uruk period.
4. What are some characteristics of "temples" of the 'Ubaid and Uruk periods?
5. Mention five features that are said to characterize civilization according to any one or more definition(s) used in this class.
6. Roughly when did people a) first start practicing agriculture, b) invent writing in Mesopotamia?
7. What is a stamp seal, what is a cylinder seal, and what were they used for?

Examples of essay questions:

1. Explain why there are generally only minor differences in wealth among foragers, while there may be significant differences in wealth among farmers. Illustrate with examples from this class.
2. How is the transition from foraging to farming thought to have affected society? Consider not only how people got their food, but also their settlements, social relations, health and population trends, etc. Explain the reasoning and/or evidence for your claims.
3. “Foragers are too busy simply surviving off the land to develop civilization.” Is this statement true or false? Explain.
4. How does the anthropological concept of a city differ from that of a village?
5. Describe the unusual construction at Jericho and what it suggests about the social organization there in the PPNA period.
6. How was Asikli Höyük different from earlier agricultural villages? Consider not only the buildings, but also social, economic, religious, and other features of society.
7. How did the Hassuna, Halaf, and Samarra cultures each differ from earlier Neolithic cultures such as those of PPNA Jericho, Çatal Hüyük, and the preceding general Neolithic tradition in the Fertile Crescent? In what ways might these differences have been early expressions of trends that led to the more complex societies of southern Mesopotamia?
8. Describe the environment and resources of southern Mesopotamia. How is the environment thought to have affected the development of complex society there?
9. Explain what is meant by an economy based on redistribution. What kinds of archaeological evidence might suggest that redistribution took place? How might a redistributive economy be involved in the development of complex social organization? Illustrate your discussion with evidence from Mesopotamia.
10. What are beveled-rim bowls? What about them is interesting, what are they thought to imply, and why? Support your claims with evidence and reasoning.
11. Describe the evidence for increasing social status differentiation from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A period through the Early Dynastic period. For each type of evidence, explain what it implies about the society, and the reasoning for interpreting it that way.
12. Discuss the use of tokens, bullae, seals, and sealings in the Uruk period and the periods leading up to it. What do archaeologists infer about Uruk society from these artifacts and where they are found?