**AHS 1203 New World Prehistory**

**Course objectives:** The course aims at surveying the major cultural developments and adaptations from the earliest appearance of humans in America to the time of European contact.

**Course Description**

The first part of this course reviews the biological, cultural and geological/palaeoenvironmental evidence for early occupation of America. In the second part, it examines post-Pleistocene forager adaptations and the evolution of food production and village life. The last part deals with the emergence of civilizations /complex societies (i.e. development of chiefdoms and state level societies) in the New World and cultural similarities between the Old and New World.

**Course Outline**

Topic 1: On studying New World Prehistory

* 1. What is New World Prehistory
  2. Why study New World Prehistory
  3. What are the sources of world civilizations (archaeology, oral history, linguistics, written record)

Topic 2: The First Americans: the Palaeo-Indians

2.1 Biological evidence

2.2 Archaeological and geological evidences

2.3 Subsistence patterns

2.4 Social Organizations

2.5 Settlement patterns

2.6 Ideology

Topic 3: Post- Pleistocene Foragers: The Archaics-Case studies

3.1 Eastern North America

3.2 Western North America

3.3 The Great Basin

3.4 The Plains

3.5 The Arctic and Sub-arctic

3.6 Central and South America

Topic 4: Early Farming Societies in America- Case studies

4.1 Mesoamerica

4.2 The Andes

4.3 South-western North America

4.4 Eastern North America

4.5 south-western North America

Topic 5: New World Civilizations-Case studies

5.1 Evidences

5.2 Eastern North America (Adena, Hopewell, Mississippian)

5.3 Southwest North America

5.4 Mesoamerica (Olmec, Maya, Inca, Aztec)

5.5 Andean civilization

Topic 6: Old World/New World cultural similarities and differences

6.1 Identification of key cultural traits

6.2 Explanation for cultural similarities and differences

**Basic readings**

Berger, R. 1978. Thoughts on the first peopling of American and Australia. In Bryan, A. L (ed) *Early Man in America from a circum perspective.* Alberta: Archaeological Research International.

Fagan. B, (1995) People of the Earth. HarperCollinsCollege Publisher

Feder, K. L. 2000.*The past in perspective: an introduction to Human Prehistory.*California: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Fiedel, S. J. 1999. *Prehistory of the Americas*.Cambridge: CambridgeUniversity press.

Jennings, J. D. 1983. *Ancient North Americans.*New York: W. H. Freeman and Company.

MacNeish, R. S. 1983. The Origins of New World Civilizations.*In prehistoric times, ScientificAmerica*.New York: W.H Freeman and Company.

Phillips, J.L and J.A Brown 1983 *Archaic Hunters and Gatherers in American Midwest.*New Jersey: Academic Press.

Price, T.D and G.M Feinman 2001.*Images of the Past.*California: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Weaver, M.P. 1981. *The Aztecs, Maya and their Predecessors.*New York: Academic Press.

Wheat, J. b 1983.A Palaeo-Indian Bison Kill*. In Scientific American Prehistoric times.*New York: W.H Freeman and Company.