Beyond Apogee and Collapse: Empires and other Polities in the Ancient World (BCE)

Instructors: Rod Campbell/Lorenzo d’Alfonso

Week 1) Presentation of the course

Week 2) Ancient Empires and other polities: Foundations of Government
  o *Polities: Authority, Identities, and Change* – Ferguson and Mansbach, introduction;
  o *The Sources of Social Power* – Michael Mann, introduction, pp. 1-33;
  o *A History of Government* – Samuel Finer, pp. 1-96, (or:)
  o *The Political Systems of Empires* – Eisenstadt, 1-112.

Week 3) History and Process
  o Selections from *The Logics of History* – Sewell
  o Selections from *After Collapse: The Regeneration of Complex Societies* – Glen Schwartz and John Nichols
  o Selections from *Questioning Collapse* – McAnany and Yoffee eds.
  o Selections from *The Collapse of Ancient States and Civilizations* – Yoffee and Cowgill (I would prefer the myth of the archaic State)

Week 4) Discourses of Empire – Ancient Near East

Week 5) Discourses of Empire – Ancient China
  o Excerpts from *The Politics of the Past in Early China* - Vincent Leung
  o Selections from primary texts in translation
  o Selections from *Cambridge History of Ancient China*

Week 6) Authority and Opposition – ANE

Rebellions and peripheries in the Cuneiform World – S. Richardson (ed.): New Haven 2010: S. Richardson, Writing rebellion back into the record: a methodologies toolkit; R. Westbrook, The law and politics of rebellion in the late Bronze Age.


Week 7) Authority and Opposition – AC

Selections from Cambridge History
Selections from primary sources (oracle-bones, bronze inscriptions, Zuo Zhuan, Zhan Guo Ci)

Week 8) Empires and Violence – ANE


Week 9) Empires and Violence – AC
Sanctioned Violence in Early China – Lewis
“Violence and Order” – Campbell
“On Humanity and Inhumanity in Ancient China” - Campbell

Week 10) Law, Order and Governance – ANE

Norman Yoffee lecture on governance and society in Mesopotamia: gen. and late 3rd and 2nd Millennia BCE

Civilizations of the Ancient Near East – Volume I, 529-569.

Week 11) Law, Order and Governance – AC

Li Feng – Western Zhou Bureaucracy
Selections from Cambridge history
Selections from primary sources in translation
Norman Yoffee’s lecture on collapse of governance and society in the Ancient World

Week 12) Feasting, Festivals and Society – ANE
  o Syro-Hittite Monumental Art and the Archaeology of Performance – A. Gilibert, Berlin 2011, chapters 1,2,5,6,7.

Week 13) Feasting, Festivals and Society – AC
  o Selections from primary sources
  o Intro from Feasts Deitler and Hayden

Week 14) Conclusions