

**MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
I.R. 104, COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF CIVILIZATIONS
INSTRUCTOR: A.NURI YURDUSEV (ROOM H207)**

GENERAL INFORMATION

The basic purpose of this undergraduate course is to introduce the students to the history of civilizations through a comparative perspective. The course starts with a conceptual analysis of the term 'civilization' and deals with the basic questions in definition and civilizing process. Its departing point is that there is a common human civilizing process and also a plurality of human civilizations. Having examined how civilization came into being, it then proceeds to analyze major world civilizations from the beginning to the modern period. The course concludes by pointing out the emerging cosmopolitanism of human civilization in our present age.

The course will be conducted in the mode of lecture, though student participation is most welcomed.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will be asked to sit for one mid-term examination with 50% weight on the final grade. The final examination will count for 50% of the final grade.

TEXTBOOK

The following book will be used throughout the course.

William H. McNeill, *A World History*, 2nd edition (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1971)

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE

(Readings are given in paginated form after each entry).

I. INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

1. Etymology of the word
2. Civilization as a quality
3. Civilization as a process and state of human society
4. Civilization as a society/entity and plurality of civilizations
5. Distinction between civilization and non-civilization (primitivity)

For this part, W.H.McNeill, 'Civilisation', *The Encyclopedia Americana*, (Danbury: Grolier Incorporated, 1982), pp. 1-6; could be consulted.

II. MAJOR EURASIAN CIVILIZATIONS TO 500 B.C.

1. How civilization and major Eurasian civilizations came into being (pp. 3-13).
2. Sumerian civilization (pp. 13-21).
3. First phase of the diffusion of civilization to 1700 B.C.: Pastoralism and the invention of plow, Egyptian civilization, Indus civilization, Satellite and sea-borne civilizations and East Asia and the Americas (pp. 22-46).
4. Cosmopolitanism in the Middle East 1700-500 B.C.: Middle Eastern empires and major contributions (pp.47-74).
5. Indian civilization: Basic institutions and characteristics (pp.75-87).
6. Greek civilization: Origins and the city-state *-polis*. (pp. 88-100).
7. Chinese civilization: Dynasties, Confucianism and Taoism (pp. 101-111).

III. EQUILIBRIUM AMONG CIVILIZATIONS 500 B.C.-A.D. 1500

1. The classical age of Greek civilization 500-336 B.C. (pp. 127-146).
2. The spread of Hellenistic civilization 500 B.C. to A.D. 200: Macedonian conquest, the rise of Rome and Christianity (pp. 147-162).
3. Civilizations of Asia 500 B.C. to A.D. 200: Mauryan empire in India and Chinese unification (pp. 163-176).
4. The expansion of Indian civilization A.D. 200-600 (pp. 177-190).
5. The rise of Islam (pp.207-217).
6. China, India, and Europe A.D. 200-1000 (pp.191-206, 218-234).
7. The Impact of Turkish and Mongolian Conquests (pp.235-251).
8. Medieval Europe, Japan, Africa and the Americas A.D.1000-1500 (pp.252-278).

IV. THE DOMINANCE OF THE WESTERN CIVILIZATION

1. Discoveries and Europe's self-transformation A.D.1500-1648 (pp.289-320).
2. Russia and the Americas A.D. 1500-1648 (pp.321-330).
3. The Realm of Islam and the Far East A.D. 1500-1700 (pp. 331-352).
4. Europe, the Americas and Russia A.D. 1648-1789 (pp. 353-382).
5. Asian Reactions to Europe A.D. 1700-1850 (pp.383-398).

Skull find may lead to rewriting of history and the origins of mankind

By John Lichfield in Paris

The Independent, 01 August 2001

A large, intact primate skull, more than six million years old, has been found in Chad and may provide another piece in the rapidly expanding jigsaw puzzle of pre-human history.

Although the skull has not yet been positively identified as that of hominid, or pre-human creature, the size of the cranium suggests it is more likely to be an ancestor of humanity than an early great ape.

If this finding is confirmed, the map and the time-lines of human evolution may have to be revised. The skull, found by a Franco-Chadian team in the Djourab desert of northern Chad last month, is twice as old as "Lucy", the fossilised hominid found in Ethiopia in 1974, now thought to be a near-relation, rather than a direct ancestor, of *Homo sapiens*.

The Chadian skull is roughly the same age as the Millennium Ancestor, or *Orrorin tugenensis*, the new species of hominid more modern in its characteristics than Lucy and discovered by a Franco-British team in Kenya last year. The significance of the find is two-fold. It is unusual to discover a near-complete skull, even two or three million years old, never mind six million years old.

Most of the earliest pre-human remains have been discovered to the east of the African Rift Valley. The new skull was far to the west. The lower jaw of a hominid creature, named "Abel", thought to be 3.5 million years old, was found in Chad six years ago. The theory that the cradle of humanity lies to the east of the Rift Valley may now have to be reconsidered. The opening of the rift, eight million years ago, is thought to have changed the ecology of Africa, leaving jungle on the west, and savannah or grassland on the east.

Anthropologists believe the first pre-humans began to walk on two legs to adapt to their grassland habitat. If the Chadian skull is found to be that of a pre-human creature, this concept will have to be abandoned or comprehensively reworked. Baba Elhadj Mallah, the director of the Chadian national research centre, told the French paper *Le Figaro* that the skull was "dark, entirely fossilised. The cranium is very large and the teeth very developed."

Professor Michel Brunet, the paleontologist from the University of Poitiers in charge of the excavations in Chad (and the man who found Abel) had hoped to keep the discovery secret until he publishes his scientific findings next year. But the news was given to the media in Chad last week.

The French ambassador to Chad, Jacques Courbin, refused to give details but said the skull appeared to be an extremely important find. "It's very moving to hold such an object," he said. "For a scientist, it's like the Holy Grail."