

DAY Prehistoric Cultures Week 12

Modern Humans

Homo sapiens sapiens and Lithics

This week we look into the mirror and see ourselves, “Modern Humans,” aka *Homo sapiens sapiens*.

And we take a break to have some prehistoric Aztec food . . . some Ancient Mesoamerican food on Thanksgiving Day U.S.A.—featuring an American turkey, one of the very few Native American foods that the Conquistadores and their folks back in Europe took an immediate liking for (most of the rest of the foods they didn’t originally much care for). And, of course, the squash (first cultivated in prehistoric Mesoamerica 8,000 or more years ago), pumpkin (from close to the same time in Mesoamerica), tomatoes (originally a Nahuatl [Aztec] word *tomatl*), vanilla and chocolate (pre-Columbian cultivars), and maize (from west of Tehuacán, which you have seen several times in Prehistoric Cultures) are all originally prehistoric Mesoamerican foods. The cranberries came from prehistoric native North America.

This week we’ll first have a close look at **lithics**, stone tools and stone tool making. It was *Homo sapiens sapiens* who mastered the art of blade tool making, using, among other things, a technique called “pressure flaking.” **Blades** are chips, by definition at least twice as long as they are wide. These include things like arrowheads, spear points, knives, scrapers, and those types of artifacts. You’ll see two of the greatest twentieth-century lithic stone tool makers in action on Tuesday—François Bordes and Don Crabtree . . .

video:

Blades and Pressure Flaking

(21 min., 1968, VC 2841)

[course viewing guide](#)



[François Bordes](#)



[Don Crabtree](#)

Also on Tuesday you 'll see Alan Alda and friends demonstrate the *mechanics* of stone tool making. In "Hand Made Human," we'll look at the *tool maker* and the biomechanics of *toolmaking* rather than at the finished tools themselves . . .

video:

[Alan Alda, "Hand Made Human,"](#)
from [Scientific American Frontiers, "Life's Really Big Questions"](#)
(Segment 2, 15 min., 2000, VC 4261)

[film HomePage](#)
[course viewing guide](#)



Alan Alda talks with anthropologist [Mary Marzke](#)

"People have long wondered what separates humans from the rest of the animals. Is it a soul, tool use, language? Could it be baseball? Our hands are unique in their flexibility and grasping capabilities. A chimp's hands, good for swinging in trees, are virtually useless on the baseball diamond. In 'Handmade Humans' anthropologist Mary Marzke suggests that the traits that make people the world's best ball players might have spurred on the evolution of the human mind. It's the flexible joints of our index and pinky fingers that allow us to palm a ball and choke up on a bat. Those same joints allowed our ancestors to fashion stone tools and wield clubs. According to one hypothesis, tool-making offered early humans such a competitive advantage, natural selection favored the evolution of our dexterous and versatile hands. But making tools also requires a brain that can think ahead and consider cause and effect. The ability to look into the future- that's what truly separates us from the rest of the animals." -- PBS

After Thanksgiving we will literally have a look into the mirror . . .

video:

[Homo Sapiens: A Look into a Distant Mirror](#)
(53 min., 1999, UM DULUTH Library Multimedia GN286 .H666 2004 DVD)

[course viewing guide](#)



[Cave art](#) from [Grotte Chauvet](#), France
Bear (left). Aurochs and rhinoceros (right)
Understanding Humans, 10th ed.
(Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2010), p. 305

"Where did *Homo sapiens* come from?"

"How did they interpret their world?"

"And what did they think and feel?"

"Were they anything like us?"

"And just what are 'fossil words'?"

The ethnographic analogy with "The Bushmen" (the !Kung San) that you see in *A Look into a Distant Mirror* will be continued and explored further next week in the film [The Hunters](#).

As you view the videos over the remainder of the semester be sure to pay close attention to . . .

1. the *actual content* of the various finds
2. archaeological [field methods and techniques](#)
3. [laboratory methods and techniques](#)
 - including reconstruction techniques, and . . .
4. [archaeological dating techniques](#)
5. **theoretical / interpretative** approaches
 - including logic of analysis

In the  *Forum* this week we have a look at Upper Paleolithic Technology and Art . . .

- [Forum: Upper Paleolithic Technology and Art \(Due by Friday, 2 December 2011\)](#)

As usual, if you have any questions, please let me know: <mailto:troufs@d.umn.edu>. Or, better yet, post them on you  Discussion and Project forum boards.

Share your ideas. Discuss them on-line with the others in class . . .

DAY

DAY [General Student Discussion Area](#)

DAY [Live chat for Project Collaboration](#)

Your  Topics and Reading Assignments Listings for Week 12 will look something like the information below.

And as usual, best regards and wishes, and Happy Thanksgiving . . .

Tim Roufs

[Anth 1602 Prehistoric Cultures](#)

Week 12 — Modern Humans

Homo sapiens sapiens

[Lithics: Stone Tool Manufacturing](#)



DAY Week 12 Memo

Dates and Times to Remember

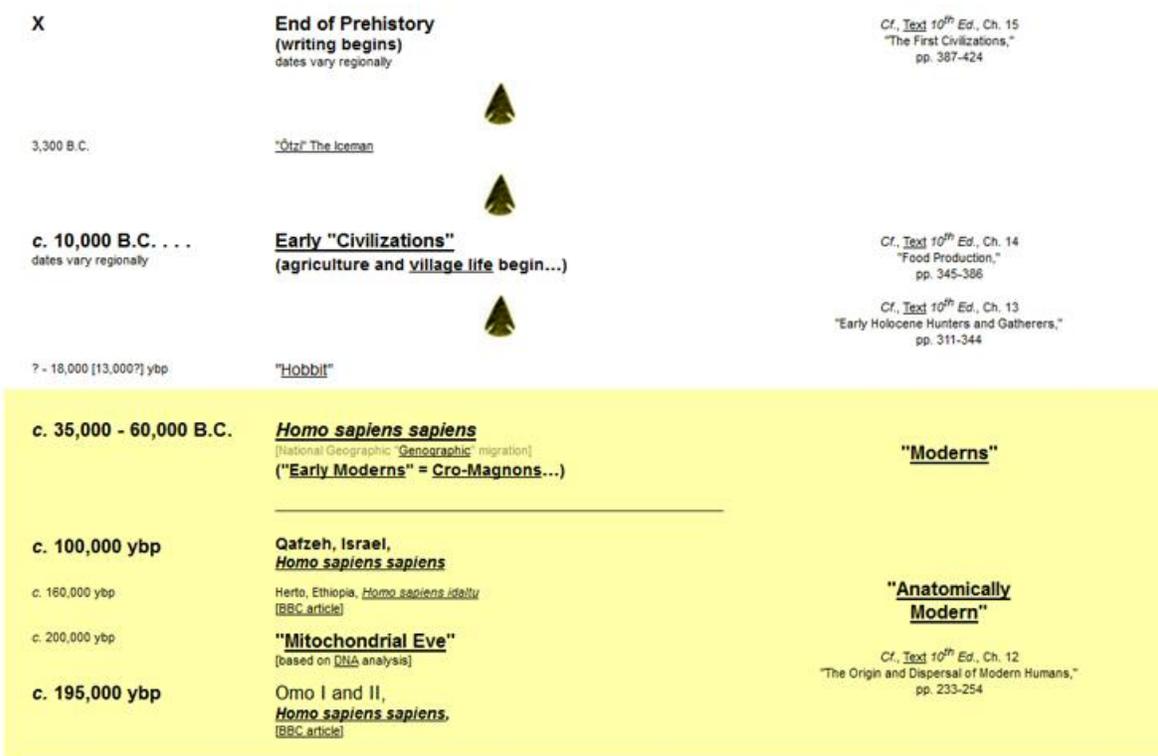
<http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anth1602/pctimes.html#homoerectus>

cf., handout: ["Outline Chart of the Principal Paleolithic Industries"](#)

cf., handout: ["Fossil Man \[sic.\] in the Pleistocene"](#)

[Lithics: Stone Tool Manufacturing class WebPage](#)

slides: moderns .pptx



DAY 23 Tuesday, 22 November 2011 nlt 12:55
CE Week 12 Monday, 28 November 2011 nlt 6:34

video:

Blades and Pressure Flaking

(21 min., 1968, VC 2841)

[course viewing guide](#)



[Francois Bordes](#)



[Don Crabtree](#)

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looking at the *tool maker* and the biomechanics of toolmaking rather than at the finished tools themselves . . .

DAY 23 Tuesday, 22 November 2011 nlt 1:20
CE Week 12 Monday, 28 November 2011 nlt 7:00

video:

Alan Alda, "Hand Made Human,"

from *Scientific American Frontiers, "Life's Really Big Questions"*
(Segment 2, 15 min., 2000, VC 4261)

[film HomePage](#)

[course viewing guide](#)



Alan Alda
talks with anthropologist
[Mary Marzke](#)

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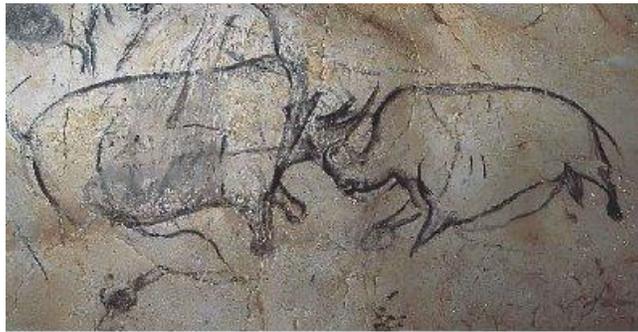
DAY 24 Tuesday, 29 November 2011 nlt 12:42
CE Week 12 Monday, 28 November 2011 nlt 7:28

(After Thanksgiving)

video:
Homo Sapiens: A Look into a Distant Mirror
(53 min., 1999, UM DULUTH Library Multimedia GN286 .H666 2004 DVD)

[course viewing guide](#)

... the ethnographic analogy with "The Bushmen" (!Kung San) film HomePage
to be continued in [The Hunters](#)



[Cave art](#) from [Grotte Chauvet](#), France
Bear (left), Aurochs and rhinoceros (right)
Understanding Humans, 10th ed.
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REM:

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 - including reconstruction techniques, and . . .
4. [archaeological dating techniques](#)
5. **theoretical / interpretative** approaches
 - including logic of analysis

REM:

Archaeological Methods and Dating Techniques

[WebPage](#)

Some Important Concepts ([slides 11B](#))

Special Skills:

In the Field ([slides 10A](#))

In the Lab ([slides 10B](#))

In the Field and Lab ([slides 10C](#))

Archaeological Dating Methods ([slides 10D](#))

Other Methods of Analysis ([slides 10E](#))

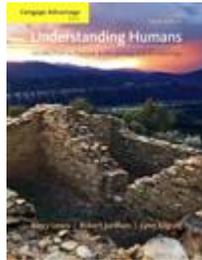
For Week 12 Activities see [moodle](#)

assignment:

readings from [Understanding Humans, 10th Edition](#)

Ch. 13, "Early Holocene Hunters and Gatherers," pp. 311-344

The materials from Ch. 13 will be reviewed in the Week 13 presentations



For Week 12 Activities see [moodle](#)
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