

**Archaeology of the American South
Anthropology 550
Spring 2024**

Final Exam Study Questions

Paleoindian Arrival.

The question of whether pre-Clovis occupations exist in North America has long been a topic of debate. In your opinion, what are the three sites that currently provide the strongest evidence for pre-Clovis occupation? Briefly review and evaluate the evidence from each. In light of all the evidence, when do you believe people first arrived in North America?

Paleoindian Chronology and Settlement.

Discuss current models for the Paleoindian settlement of the South, taking into account both chronology and landscape use. What are the principal lines of evidence available, and what are some of the problems with assigning archaeological meaning to such data?

Early Archaic.

Briefly review the major models that have proposed for Early Archaic settlement systems in the South (i.e., Anderson and Hanson 1988, Daniel 2001, and Hollenbach 2010). What are the strengths and weaknesses of each? Which do you find most convincing and why?

Middle Archaic.

The Middle Archaic period was a time of major cultural transformation in the South. Briefly outline the changes that took place in technology, settlement, and social arrangements at this time, as well as the evidence we see for these changes. What may have caused these changes?

Poverty Point.

The Poverty Point site in Louisiana has long generated debate on several interesting questions: (1) Was it the capital of a centralized chiefdom or an example of monumental construction in an egalitarian society? (2) Was it a permanently occupied town or a place of seasonal aggregation? And (3) was it built by relatively few people over a long period of time, or by many people in a short period? Briefly summarize the current evidence and state your position on each of these questions.

Eastern Agricultural Complex.

In some parts of the South, the Late Archaic period saw the appearance of the Eastern Agricultural Complex, one of the few cases in world history of farming being independently invented. Describe this process of plant domestication as it is currently understood in this case. Which crops were planted, what were the signs of domestication, and what were the causal processes involved?

Middle Woodland.

The Middle Woodland period was a time of elaboration in both mortuary ceremonialism and the long-distance movement of raw materials and craft items. Briefly discuss both of these issues, touching on the models that have been proposed to explain each. How might mortuary ceremonialism and the long-distance movement of objects been functionally linked? (Don't be afraid to speculate.)

Late Woodland.

(a) Discuss the changes in community patterns and ceremonialism that happen in the Late Woodland. In what ways are they similar to Middle Woodland patterns? In what ways are they different?

(b) The Late Woodland period saw a second major transformation of farming practices in the South: the adoption of intensive maize agriculture. Briefly discuss this transition as it is currently understood, taking into account the timing and regional variation in how this process took place. What may have caused this transformation?

Mississippian Origins and Cahokia.

From a historical perspective, discuss the role that migrations and cultural diffusion have played in models of Mississippian development. What role(s) do migration, diffusion, and climate play in current models of Cahokia?

Moundville.

Moundville has served as the "textbook" example of an archaeological chiefdom, and also as a case study of how social relationships were deliberately inscribed in cultural landscapes. Using Moundville as an example, discuss how aspects of social organization and political economy can be reconstructed archaeologically, and how these articulated with architecture and the layout and use of space.

Mississippian Iconography.

How have archaeologists' conceptions of the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex (SECC) changed over the past 70 years? Discuss the various approaches that have been taken, and comment on their strengths and weaknesses.