**The Archaeology of Minoan Crete**

**Instructor: Merkourios Georgiadis**

**Course description:**

The aims of this course is to offer an introduction to the archaeology of the Minoan civilization that developed on the island of Crete during the prehistoric period (7000 BCE to 1100 BCE). This will include the early occupation of the island, since the beginning of farming (7000-6500 BCE) until the creation of the earliest palatial culture in Europe (2000 BCE-1200 BCE), and its downfall (12th century BCE). This unique and famous culture will be presented through its fascinating and engaging archaeological finds.

The course will offer an overview of the Minoan culture and will analyze several themes that explain how it was formed through time. The idiosyncrasies of Crete will be explained and comparisons will be made with contemporary mainland Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean. The ways settlements and the first palatial states in Europe were developed will be important subjects to discuss. It is also very significant to consider the character and form of the earliest organized religion that appeared in Europe. The Minoan material culture also reflected the multiplicity of arts and crafts that that were locally produced, which employed Cretan and exotic materials alike. In this course students will be able to explore several aspects of the everyday life, culture, society, economy, religion and politics of Minoan Crete and the effect of this island in the broader Aegean and Mediterranean.

Apart from classes, the course will also include visits to important archaeological sites and museums (Knossos, Phaistos, Herakleion Museum).

**Weekly schedule:**

Week 1 **Introduction: geography and early occupation of Crete**

Week 2  **The Early Minoan Period** **(3100-2000 BCE)**

Week 3 **The Minoan Palaces (2000-1200 BCE)**

Week 4 **Architecture and Settlements patterns**

Week 5 **The Minoan Religion in the Countryside**

Week 6 **The Minoan Religion in Settlements and Burial Practices**

Week 7 **Arts, Crafts and Iconography**

Week 8 **The Pottery Production**

Week 9 **The Minoan Economy**

Week 10 **The Minoan Thalassocracy**

Week 11 **Mycenaean Crete and the fall of the Palaces (1500-1100 BC)**

Week 12 **Student presentations**

Week 13 **Student presentations**

**Evaluation:** Student evaluation will be based on the following three criteria:

* 20% of the final mark will depend on middle-term quizzes, to assess student progress and understanding of the course content. Quizzes will take place in weeks 4 and 8.
* 30% of the final mark will be based on a 15-min oral presentation of topics related to the course. Essay topics will be chosen by week 3 in consultation with the course convener, while presentations will take place in weeks 12 and 13.
* 50% of the final mark will be based on an end-of-term written exam

**Selected bibliography**

Betancourt, P.P. 1985. *The History of Minoan Pottery.*Princeton

Castleden, R. 1990. *Minoans: Life in the Bronze Age*, New York.

Cline, E.H. (ed.) 2012. *The Bronze Age Aegean (ca 3000-1000 BC)*, Oxford.

Cullen, T. (ed.) 2001. *Aegean Prehistory: A Review*. American Journal of Archaeology Supplement I, Boston.

Dickinson, O.T.P.K. 1994. *The Aegean Bronze Age*. Cambridge

Fitton, J.L. 2002. *Minoans*, London.

Jones, D.W. 1999. *Peak Sanctuaries and Sacred Caves in Minoan Crete: A Comparison of Artefacts*, Jonsered.

Kyriakidis, E. 2005. *Ritual in the Bronze Age Aegean- The Minoan Peak Sanctuaries*, London.

Shelmerdine, C.W. (ed.) 2008. *The Cambridge Companion to the Aegean Bronze Age*, Cambridge.

Watrous, L.V. 2021. *Minoan Crete: an Introduction*, Cambridge.