

**MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology
Archaeoastronomy Module – AHAN7010
Week Description**

Week 1: Introduction to Archaeoastronomy

Purpose of the week

The topic of Archaeoastronomy is introduced this week. Like all academic disciplines, its definition is not fixed. In addition, it may be considered a practice, in that academic archaeoastronomers study the practice of archaeoastronomy. There is a blurring of boundaries between the strict notion of archaeoastronomy as concerning the relationship between astronomy and archaeology, and the wider field of 'cultural astronomy', which is introduced in the first week of the Introduction module

Tasks this week

- Familiarise yourself with the weekly structure of the module
- Print off the various technical notes
- Look at the assessment criteria for the short essay.

Class Description

Archaeoastronomy has a long history, but only recently did it acquire solid foundations in the social sciences, especially Archaeology, Anthropology and History. This week's readings explore its history and foundations. Clive Ruggles has been leading the field for the past few decades and the readings reflect that. However, each of the works you will read has a different audience: one is in an Archaeology book, another in an Astronomy book, and finally in Ruggles' own textbook on the Archaeoastronomy of the British Isles. This variety represents what Archaeoastronomy is about.

The readings are light this week as part of your time will be taken by familiarising yourself with the course material. Take some time to familiarize yourself with the website of academic organizations, such as ISAAC and SEAC. These will be especially helpful for you to learn the names of the key scholars on specific topics, as well as conference proceedings and announcements, which will help you on your research project. The recommended resources below list a couple of websites for you to start with.

Required Reading

Clive Ruggles is one of the most influential figures in the development of Archaeoastronomy over the last twenty years. It is essential to understand how he has defined, changed and presented the discipline. More than that – his works are some of the most accessible introductions to the topic.

Ruggles, Clive, *Astronomy in Prehistoric Britain and Ireland*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999, Introduction (pp. 1-11).

Ruggles, Clive, "Archaeoastronomy". In Renfrew, Colin and Paul Bahn (eds), *Archaeology: The Key Concepts*, London: Routledge, 2005, pp. 11-16. [E-BOOK ON TSD LIBRARY]

Ruggles, Clive and Michael Hoskin, "Astronomy before History". In Hoskin, Michael (ed), *The Cambridge Concise History of Astronomy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp. 1-17. Available online:
<http://assets.cambridge.org/052157/2916/sample/0521572916web.pdf>

Optional Reading

Campion, Nicholas, *A History of Western Astrology*, Vol 1. The Ancient World, London: Continuum, 2009, chap.1

Recommended resources

ISAAC – International Society for Archaeoastronomy and Astronomy in Culture
<http://www2.archaeoastronomy.org/>

SEAC – European Society for Astronomy in Culture
<http://www.archeoastronomy.org/>

Thought for the Week

What distinguishes Archaeoastronomy from 'Cultural Astronomy'? Is there a difference?