In this course, we consider the fascinating question of what it means to be ‘human’. We ask if there are critical characteristics of humans which mark us as different from other species, and how, when and where we might identify them in the archaeological record.

We address human societies from those of our common ancestors with chimpanzees, to early human activities 2 million years ago in East Africa, Homo ergaster and Homo heidelbergensis and lastly Neanderthals. We question the key changes taking place in each period and in each consider what defining patterns of humanity we might identify emerging within the archaeological record.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this module, you should have:

1. Developed an understanding of the key phases in the evolution of human cognitive abilities.
2. Developed an understanding of the key phases in the evolution of human social systems.
3. Developed a familiarity with some of the archaeological evidence for Lower and Middle Palaeolithic societies.

**Module Aims**

The aim of this module is to provide you with a broad understanding of the key phases in the evolution of ‘humanity’ and a critical awareness of how the evidence is interpreted.

**Assessments**

Formative essay – max 2,500 words

Summative essay – 100% - max 3,500 words

For more information about this module, please visit the Department of Archaeology website.