For your midterm you will write a history of a fictional premodern civilization which displays the patterns of development and demise we’ve covered so far, i.e. up to the decline of the Classic Iron Age empires. Here’s the prompt:

You are an archaeologist who has discovered a hitherto unknown civilization which existed sometime before 500 CE. In the process of excavating this civilization, you recognize tell-tale patterns of settlement, growth, and demise common to other civilizations of its time. You present your findings to the world in an article which covers the following: 1) detailed information on the location and geography of this civilization, and the influence of environment on its development, 2) a description of the civilization which covers the eight traits of civilization as they existed in this civilization, 3) a historical overview of the civilization from the transition to agriculture and settlement, to its growth, and finally to its failure with explanations for why pivotal changes occurred. This section should detail political transitions, the economy, the rise of a social hierarchy and its consequences, one or more progress traps and their consequences, and a converging array of crises leading to dissolution. End your essay with some commentary on what this civilization tells us about the lifespan of civilizations.

Obviously, there is plenty of room for creativity with this assignment and I do hope you enjoy the writing process, but don’t forget that I’m looking for evidence that you understand historical patterns of development. That said, your fictional civilization should make sense given what we know about history.

**Sources:** I recommend reviewing the readings we’ve covered for ideas and information on historical patterns. Please stick to our course materials. This is not intended to be a research project. If you compare your civilization to a real civilization, take care to cite the source you used. Wright’s book is a good source to turn to for patterns of development and you should cite him when discussing those patterns. For instance, since Wright coined the term “progress trap”, you should review what he has to say about this phenomenon and cite his ideas when writing about progress traps in your fictional civilization.

Cite your sources in the text of your essay as instructed in the syllabus and as we’ve been doing with our discussion responses. In addition, you should list all of your sources in [Chicago Manual Style (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html) at the end of your essay in a Works Cited page. Feel free to use the ones I provide for our sources in each module.

Your skill at employing sources will help determine your grade. If you are a minimalist and only reference one or two sources haphazardly, you might get by with a passing grade. If you employ multiple sources in a nuanced fashion, you are more likely to get a high grade.

**Length**: a minimum of 4 full double-spaced pages in Times New Roman 12-point font with standard 1-inch margins (for example, this page has 1-inch margins).

Save your essay as a doc, docx, rtf, or pdf file and submit it in the Midterm Assignment page by **11:59pm Saturday, Mar. 16th.**