Anthropology 3813.10 Archaeology of North America
The George Washington University
Fall 2011

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Lecture hours & location: WF 9:35-10:50
Corcoran 106

Office hours: WF 8:45-9:30
Anthropology Basement

Course Description:
This course concerns the archaeology of prehistoric North America. We will review how researchers have reconstructed the culture histories of this continent, and how they have hypothesized different cultural evolutionary trends through time. Archaeological data are the principal means by which we reconstruct this prehistory, but the interpretation of that data is critical for the reconstruction.

My goals for this course are to present theories and debates over the arrival of humans in the Western Hemisphere and then to present the development and trends of various regional traditions up to contact. By the end of the class students should have an understanding of the different regional adaptations and cultural historical trends. We will also examine how initial archaeological interpretations can affect later analyses.

Remember:
… there is the perpetual dilemma of dealing with the minutely concrete -- with the spear points and animal bones found at the hearth side -- and moving from these in a sweeping stride to the grand abstractions” Gordon Willey (1968:3).

Learning Outcomes
• Examine and compare the varied culture histories of the North American culture areas
• Understand the epistemology of archeology (how we know what we know)
• Engage in discussions about contemporary issues in North American archaeology
• Identify different lines of evidence that inform an archeological problem
• Think through problems and create and evaluate hypotheses
• Become familiar with ongoing ethical issues

Course Structure:
The organization of presentations in the class will follow the textbook. I will expand on examples from the book, or present recent data that confirms, or changes, our perceptions of the past in particular regions. Most lectures include computer graphics of sites and artifacts, charts and maps. There will be a
Blackboard web site set up in the first week of classes that will have this syllabus, reading assignments, lecture schedule, and other information throughout the semester.

We will read the entire textbook over the semester and several extra readings that are posted on Blackboard. Your grade will be based on three non-cumulative exams, a research paper due by the last day of class, and class participation and preparation.

**Grading:**

*Tests:* There are three non-cumulative tests. The dates for Tests 1 & 2 are in the syllabus and Test 3 will be given during the scheduled final exam. These will have identifications, short answer questions, and maybe some other things. The tests will be based on the textbook, readings, class lecture and discussion. Each test is worth **22.5 points**.

*Paper:* An 9-12 page (double-spaced, 12-pt font, 1” margins, not including title page, illustrations, or references) paper will be due on the last day of class. The paper can be on a topic of your choosing, but the better papers will concern a topic that involves a controversy or interpretive issue. There must be at least four outside, professional sources, such as journals, books, book chapters, etc. The better papers will keep quotes to a minimum and use proper grammar and spelling. Papers will be graded on content, depth of analysis, presentation, clarity, and comprehension.

You can write about a particular site (ex., Casas Grandes, Moundville), group of sites (ex., Southwestern cliff dwellings), cultural historical issue (ex., what happened to the Anazasi), complex (ex., Dorset, Fort Ancient), artifact interpretation (ex., why were Clovis points fluted), etc. I am happy to help you find a topic you will be interested in. Don’t wait until late in the semester to start. I want you to decide what you are planning to do by the end of September and see your outside references and a brief outline by mid-October. The paper is worth **22.5 points**.

*Class Participation:* Several discussion topics are scheduled during the semester that requires your preparation and participation. Most, but not all, have readings related to the topics. Come to class prepared to engage in the discussion about the topic. You will be graded on your participation and preparation. That means you have to speak in class. **Class participation is worth 10 points.**

Here are the ground rules:

1. All opinions are legitimate.
2. No-one will be ridiculed or laughed at. (Violators will be marked down.)
3. Be prepared to defend your position.
4. If you are not participating, I may call on you.

*Class Attendance:* I will take roll each class. Regular attendance is required, as part of your grade will come from informed participation in class discussions, and some test questions will be based on lectures and class discussions. **Be on time, please.**
Students must notify me in advance if they will miss class the day an assignment is due. Students should notify me at the beginning of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance if this will involve a missed assignment.

The grading system will assign letter grades as follows: A = 92-100; A- = 90-92; B+ = 88-89; B = 83-87; B- = 80-82; C+ = 78-79; C = 73-77; C- = 70-72; D+ = 68-69; D = 63-67; D- = 60-62; F = 0-59.

Deadlines and Late Work:
Part of a letter grade will be deducted for each day an assignment is late (ex., A \(\rightarrow\) A-).

Lecture and Discussion Schedule: We will try to follow this schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aug 31</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sep 2</td>
<td>Epistemology &amp; Ethics</td>
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<td>What are archaeological ethics?</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sep 7</td>
<td>Nature &amp; History of NA Archaeology</td>
<td>Chap. 1, Sec. A on CD</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sep 9</td>
<td>Environment &amp; Systematics</td>
<td>Chap. 2</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Sep 14</td>
<td>Peopling of the New World</td>
<td>Chap. 3, extra readings 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>The Solutrean Hypothesis</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Sep 16</td>
<td>Paleoindians</td>
<td>D.2. on CD</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sep 21</td>
<td>Paleoindian – Early Archaic Transition</td>
<td>Extra readings 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>Should Kennewick Man be repatriated?</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Sep 23</td>
<td>Arctic and Subarctic</td>
<td>Chap. 4, extra reading 5</td>
<td>Is subsistence digging for artifacts OK?</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Sep 28</td>
<td>Northwest Coast</td>
<td>Chap. 5</td>
<td>What is the evidence of warfare?</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Sep 31</td>
<td><strong>Test #1</strong></td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Oct 5</td>
<td>Plateau</td>
<td>Chap. 6</td>
<td>How do we infer influence &amp; connection?</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Oct 7</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>Chap. 7</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Great Basin</td>
<td>Chap. 8</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Oct 14</td>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>Chap. 9</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Oct 19</td>
<td>Southwest</td>
<td>F.4. on CD, extra reading 7</td>
<td>What is the evidence for cannibalism?</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Oct 21</td>
<td>Plains</td>
<td>Chap. 10</td>
<td>Why didn’t SW complexity spread?</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Oct 26</td>
<td><strong>Catch up &amp; Review</strong></td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Oct 28</td>
<td><strong>Test #2</strong></td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Nov 2</td>
<td>Southeast - Archaic</td>
<td>Chap. 11</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Nov 4</td>
<td>Midwest &amp; Great Lakes</td>
<td>Chap. 12</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Nov 9</td>
<td>Woodland</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Nov 11</td>
<td>Increasing Complexity</td>
<td>Extra readings 8 &amp; 9</td>
<td>What causes complexity?</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Nov 16</td>
<td>Mississippian</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Nov 18</td>
<td>Northeast &amp; Mid-Atlantic</td>
<td>Chap. 13</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Nov 30</td>
<td><strong>Catch Up</strong></td>
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Textbook:

Neusius, Sarah, and G. Timothy Gross  
2007  *Seeking Our Past: an introduction to North American Archaeology*. Oxford Univ. Press, NY. This includes the CD.

Readings on Blackboard:

1. Stanford, D, and B. Bradley  

2. Straus, Lawrence G.  

3. Meighan, Clement W.  

4. Harding, Sarah  

5. Hollowell, Julie  

6. Sapir, Edwin  

7. Anderson, David  

8. Blitz, John H.  

Academic Integrity and Ethics:

All students will work individually on all assignments. Students are expected to adhere to the GW Code of Academic Integrity. It states: “Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without
appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” For the remainder of the code, see: http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html.

**Students with extra challenges:**
Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services (DSS) office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and coordinate reasonable accommodations. If a student anticipates such accommodations, please advise me immediately. Keep in mind that reasonable accommodations are not provided retroactively. Also, the University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students’ personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Call them at 202-994-5300.

**Security:**
In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If this building is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation seek shelter at 2110 G St., where we shall reconvene.