

**GIVE IT UP AND MAKE HUMAN REMAINS A SEPARATE CLASS (OR HAVE
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS COVER TWO CLASSES**

Introduction to Archaeology

**ANTH 1003
Spring 2014**

**Dr. Susan Johnston
1957 E, B12**

Course Description

Among the questions that all human groups ask are where we came from, what life was like in the past, and how we came by that knowledge. There are many disciplines that seek to address these questions, but one of them is archaeology. Archaeology studies life in the past through the examination of the physical remains left behind by our ancestors. Within the larger approach of anthropology, archaeology is the study of past human cultures.

This course provides a basic introduction to the way archaeology is practiced as part of anthropology, and the kinds of knowledge about the past that it can provide. It is divided into two halves. First, we consider how archaeology is actually done. How is the past thought about, how do we frame questions about it, and what techniques do we use to gather evidence with which to answer them? In this course, archaeology is considered a scientific discipline, which investigates the past through framing hypotheses and then collecting data by which to evaluate them. What evidence is available about the past, and how do we go about collecting it? How reliable is that evidence, and what are some of the uncertainties in this investigation? All of these questions are intended to get you to think critically about how knowledge about the past is gained, and which interpretations of archaeological evidence are more or less likely to be correct.

In the second half, we will then survey what archaeologists have learned about the past. Starting with the appearance of deliberately produced artifacts some two million years ago, we will explore how material culture has changed over time, and what this tells about the changes in past societies. While we will cover a lot of ground in terms of chronology, the focus is to understand the overall patterns in the past. Who were the peoples who buried their dead, made stone tools, and produced cave art? How did they become farming and herding societies? Why did some places produce cities and states? What is the evidence for these conclusions, and are there alternative interpretations? In the most general terms we are seeking to consider what happened in the past, and how we know that it happened. While we can't know the past in the same way we know the present, understanding past societies is an important step in providing the cross-cultural perspective that is central to anthropology as a discipline.

Learning Goals:

Specific By the end of this course, students should:

- ❖ have a general understanding of the ways that archaeologists collect and interpret physical evidence of past cultures;
- ❖ have a specific understanding of the evidence we have for the past;
- ❖ understand how that evidence has been interpreted to show us what the past was like and how past cultures have changed over time
- ❖ see the connection between anthropological knowledge and the interpretation of the past.

General This course will contribute to student competence in:

- ❖ critical thinking, in which the logic and evidence underlying an interpretation is evaluated in terms of the conclusions reached;
- ❖ scientific reasoning, in which interpretations that are founded on evidence are understood as distinct from speculation (legitimate or otherwise);
- ❖ cross-cultural perspectives, which are given an important time depth by including knowledge of past societies;
- ❖ written expression, in which these ideas are communicated in an effective and coherent way.

Textbooks:

Crabtree, Pam J. and Douglas V. Campana. 2006. Exploring Prehistory. McGraw-Hill: New York. ISBN 978-0072978148

Renfrew, Colin and Paul G. Bahn. 2007. Archaeology Essentials: Theories, Methods and Practice. Thames & Hudson: New York. ISBN 978-0500286371

Reading:

| | | |
|----------|----|--|
| January | 15 | Introduction |
| | 17 | What is archaeology? No reading |
| | 22 | Varieties of evidence Renfrew and Bahn Ch. 2 |
| | 24 | Looking for sites Renfrew and Bahn Ch. 3 |
| | 29 | Digging for data Renfrew and Bahn Ch.3 |
| | 31 | Archaeological dating Renfrew and Bahn Ch. 4 |
| February | 5 | Reconstructing society Renfrew and Bahn Ch. 5 Debate 1 (Blackboard) |
| | 7 | DVD: Stonehenge |
| | 12 | Archaeology of the environment Renfrew and Bahn Ch. 6, 8 Debate 2 (Blackboard) |
| | 14 | DVD: Secrets of Egypt's Lost Queen |

- 19 Symbolic analysis
Renfrew and Bahn Ch. 9
- 21 **EXAM**
- 26 Archaeology and the law
Crabtree and Campana Ch.27
- 28 Archaeological ethics
Renfrew and Bahn Ch. 11
- March 5 Earliest ancestors
Crabtree and Campana Ch. 3-5
- 7 More recent ancestors
Crabtree and Campana Ch. 6-7
- 12, 14 **SPRING BREAK!!**
- 19 The Upper Paleolithic
Crabtree and Campana Ch. 8-10
- 21 The human diaspora
Crabtree and Campana Ch. 11-12
Debate 3 (Blackboard)
- 26 After the Ice Age
Crabtree and Campana Ch. 13-14
Debate 4 (Blackboard)
- 28 **EXAM**
- April 2 First food producers
Crabtree and Campana Ch. 15-17
- PAPER DUE**
- 4 The effects of producing food
Crabtree and Campana Ch. 18
- 9 Complex society
Childe (on Blackboard)

- 11 Old World complexity I: Mesopotamia and Egypt
Crabtree and Campana Ch. 19, 21
- 16 Old World complexity II: Indus Valley and Europe
Crabtree and Campana Ch. 20, 23
- 18 New World complexity I: Mesoamerica
Crabtree and Campana Ch. 24
- 23 New World complexity II: North America
Crabtree and Campana Ch. 26
- 25 Final thoughts

Course Requirements:

This syllabus represents the basic framework of this class. However, **I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CHANGE IT IF IT BECOMES NECESSARY**. This would only happen if we get behind, or want to pursue a topic for more time than I have allowed for that topic. You will get plenty of warning if I do have to change the syllabus.

All of the reading listed in this syllabus is required. You are also responsible for anything which happens in class. It will make this class both more interesting and more useful for you if you will **PLEASE DO THE READING**. That will make it easier for you to enter discussions, which will be numerous in this class.

You must do the paper and take all three exams in order to pass the course. There are three exams, two during the semester and the third during the final exam period. Each will cover the section of the course that preceded it. This includes the third exam which, although held during the final exam period, is not cumulative. Each exam is worth 25% of your grade.

FAILURE TO APPEAR AT AN EXAM WITHOUT LETTING ME KNOW IN ADVANCE WILL GET YOU AN F ON THAT EXAM. If you must miss an exam, you will have until I hand back the graded exams to make it up. This is usually about a week. If this becomes necessary, please see me as soon as possible to arrange a time.

There are also discussion sections for this course. **YOU MUST ATTEND AT LEAST 10 OF THE 11 SECTIONS TO PASS THE COURSE.** Review sessions in connection with the exams do not count as one of the ten discussion sections you must attend. Attendance will be taken to verify that you are there. Each discussion section is worth 2 points, for a total of 20 points (10% of your grade). To get the points, you must also turn in any assignments required by that discussion section.

Finally, there is a short paper for this course. The paper topic is described on the following pages; it asks you to think about archaeology in its social context. **THE PAPER IS DUE APRIL 2 IN CLASS.** The paper is worth 15% of your grade. **YOU MAY ONLY SUBMIT FINAL PAPERS BY E-MAIL IF YOU HAVE MADE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS WITH ME TO DO SO.** I am not a printing service. Last minute submissions by e-mail without such arrangements will not be accepted. If you want to discuss any

details about this paper with me, please come to my office hours or email me. Also, I would be happy to read a draft version of your paper, and make comments on it before you turn the final version in. Draft papers may be emailed to me. **If you want me to read a draft, please give it to me no later than ten days before the paper is due.**

Academic Integrity

All students must practice academic integrity. This means doing your own work, and when you use **the words or ideas of others in any written work, you must:** 1) identify quotations with quotations marks; and 2) indicate the source of ideas that are not your own using social sciences notation form. **THE RULE IS THAT, IF IT IS NOT YOUR OWN IDEA OR COMMON KNOWLEDGE, YOU MUST PROVIDE A CITATION.** That includes both quoted material and general summaries or other references to the ideas of others. If you have any questions at all about what this means, you should speak to the instructor. Plagiarism, and all breaches of academic integrity (for example, the sale of lecture-notes from this class, or use of content from the internet as though it was your own), will be severely dealt with in accordance with the University's policies and procedures. For more information on The George Washington University's policies on academic integrity, consult: <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>

*The policy on academic integrity in this course is that if you commit a breach of academic integrity in any assignment or exam, you will receive a zero for that assignment or exam. This infraction will be reported to the University's Academic Integrity Council. You will be **clearly** notified by the instructor in person OR by email before the Council is informed.*

Testing Goals:

The exam questions will consist of multiple choice, the identification of terms, and a longer essay question. For identifications, you should note 1) what it is and 2) why it is important for this course; for sites, you should also give an indication of its chronological position (specific date or period) and where it is located. For the essay questions, you should be sure to 1) address all required parts of the question; 2) provide specific information (and avoid generalities); and 3) demonstrate knowledge of material in the reading and presented and discussed in class.

Housekeeping:

My office this semester is Rm. 202 in 2112 G St. (Building X), and you can reach me by phone at 4-6075, which is the anthropology department. You can also reach me by e-mail at sjohnsto@gwu.edu. I will be available in my office on Wednesday 2-3:30 and Friday 11-12:30, if you need to see me. I am only on campus those two days, but I check my email frequently. If you are having trouble with the course material or did not do well on the first exam, **I urge you to come and talk to me.** After a certain point in the semester, it will be too late to correct any errors in approach or help you understand the reading or the discussions.

Paper Assignment

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The paper for this course is supposed to be more of a “thought” piece than a research paper. The idea is to get you to think critically about archaeology and archaeological knowledge in today’s world, and how our particular cultural perspectives are included in archaeological analysis and its presentation. You can approach the topic any way you like. However, I want you to do this by analyzing something specific, such as a TV show, a museum exhibit, a book, a survey, a site, etc., and use that analysis as the center of the paper. The basic questions you are attempting to answer are how does archaeology work, how is archaeological knowledge acquired and conveyed, and what is its impact? Papers that receive As are ones that do an analysis of something specific that stems from an understanding of archaeological issues and avoid superficial discussions of how great archaeology can be or simply summarize movie plots or exhibits.

Some possible ways to approach the topic:



Visit a museum or historical site and look at a specific exhibit (NB: this should be a museum with archaeological things in it, not an art museum; archaeological things have been excavated). What are they telling you about the past? Is the exhibit slanted in a particular way? What is the specific content of the exhibit and does this have an impact on the general ideas being represented? Why is this information useful/interesting/educational etc.? Is it important or valuable? Is it worth using the taxpayers’ money to support it? Be sure that you analyze the exhibit, not just summarize what is in it.



Watch a TV show or read a novel or nonfiction book about archaeology (NB: the textbooks for this course don’t count!!) and analyze how archaeology is presented. How is the past being presented? What sorts of interpretations are being offered? What evidence is presented to support them? Do they make sense? Are they slanted in any particular way? Is there anything obvious left out? Why is this information useful/interesting/educational etc.? Is it important or valuable? Be sure that you analyze the show/book/movie, not just summarize what is in it. **PLEASE NOTE: YOU MAY NOT DO INDIANA JONES FOR THIS CHOICE.** We will be talking a little about this film in class so I want you to do something different. Again, this should be about archaeology, not physical anthropology (unless there is a significant component about material culture).



Survey your friends and family, or what the heck, a bunch of strangers (if you do something like this, you need to ask maybe 15-20 people the same set of questions to make it worthwhile). Suggested questions: do those you asked value archaeology? do they participate in it, go to museums, historic sites, watch TV shows and read books? why? why do they think it’s valuable? Tabulate your results (i.e. present them in some formal way as totals, percentages, etc.) and discuss them. Who did you ask (e.g. age, gender, educational background) and how might this affect the answers you received? Is their opinion representative of the general population? What does this imply for the way we should approach archaeological knowledge and its presentation?



Pick a place on campus, or your house, or somewhere else that's interesting, and think about it archaeologically about a 1000 years from now (NB: to do this, you need to describe it pretty thoroughly). What specific evidence would survive and under what circumstances? How would archaeologists interpret the meaning and/or use of these objects and features? Would they know what they were? How? What would it tell you about society and how would we know? What wouldn't survive, and what would be lost about that society that was of value? You can do this as a semi-fictional piece if you want, e.g. as someone excavating it 1000 years in the future. Just be sure that you describe specific evidence in your analysis, and make sure you explain why someone would interpret the remains this way-- don't just guess, use archaeological thinking! Keep in mind what it is that archaeologists might or might not know from the material remains that you are describing (hint: it's somewhere between "nothing" and "every little nuance of thought and meaning"). Note: you can't use the classroom for this since we will have already discussed it in class!!

These are just suggestions. I am open to other possibilities, but if you want to explore other options **you must let me know what you want to do to make sure you don't get too far away from what I'm intending you to get out of this paper.** However, the idea is to do a specific analysis of something (rather than a more general discussion), and there are certainly other ways it can be approached.

Please note that this is supposed to be a paper about archaeology. By the time the paper is due, you should know what this means—however, to be clear, it doesn't mean living people, dinosaurs, physical anthropology (unless the focus is on the material culture of our ancestors, rather than their physical attributes), or history (unless the focus is on the material culture rather than documents per se). If you are uncertain whether or not the topic you wish to do fits this criterion, run it by me in advance.

While this is a short paper, I do expect you to take it seriously. I will be paying attention to things like typos, grammar, and suchlike, so read it over before you turn it in! An A paper will not look like something you spit out last night after midnight and clearly haven't read over since.

While this is not a research paper, you should provide references if you use a book or other media presentation so that I can look it up if necessary. If you do a survey, please provide me with the "raw data" (i.e. the questionnaires that you used etc.). With other options, just make sure you give me whatever I need to properly evaluate what you have done. If you cite references, make sure that you use some consistent format. I don't care if you use footnotes or references in the text, but whatever you choose, stick to it.

A word about **Internet resources**. There are lots of sources of information on the Internet about lots of subjects, and it is certainly possible to use them for this paper. While I would encourage you to use this resource as a way to get initial information or to represent general opinions, **PLEASE DO NOT USE A WEB SITE AS PRIMARY REFERENCE MATERIAL UNLESS YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY SURE IT IS A LEGITIMATE WEBSITE.** There is a lot of, well, crap about archaeology on the web, and it's important that you not use such, well, crap, as sources of basic information. So be aware of what you are using, and if you are unsure, send me the URL and I'll let you know.

If you want to discuss any details about this paper with me, please come to my office hours. Also, I would be happy to read a draft version of your paper, and make comments on it before you turn the final version in. Draft papers may be emailed to me. **If you want me to read a draft, please give it to me no later than ten days before the paper is due.**

The paper will be 5-7 pages long, double-spaced, and will be worth 30 points (15% of your grade). And please remember-- I was as student too! I know all about large type faces and large margins. Please give me some credit for intelligence. It is due **IN CLASS** on **APRIL 2**. And in case you missed it the first time, **YOU MAY ONLY SUBMIT PAPERS BY E-MAIL IF YOU HAVE MADE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS WITH ME TO DO SO**. I am not a printing service. Last minute submissions by e-mail without such arrangements will not be accepted.