

## Theory and Practice in Archaeology

ANTH 3838, 3838W  
Fall 2011

Dr. Susan Johnston  
HAH 202

Textbooks: Johnson, Matthew. 2010. Archaeological Theory: An Introduction. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Wiley-Blackwell. ISBN 978-1405100151

Praetzellis, Adrian. 2011. Death by Theory. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Altamira. ISBN 978-0759119581

Vitelli, Karen D. and Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh. 2006. Archaeological Ethics. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Altamira. ISBN 978-0759109636

### Reading:

August	31	Introduction
September	2	Why is theory necessary? Johnson Ch. 1; Praetzellis Ch. 1
	7	What came before Praetzellis Ch. 2 Trigger (2006), Childe (1957), Childe (1947), Willey
	9	The "new" archaeology and processualism Johnson Ch. 2 Binford (1962), Binford (1972), Flanney (1972a)
	14	Explanation and analogy Johnson Ch. 4 Binford (1967), Munson, Hodder (1977; skim ethnographic details)
	16	Laws and middle range theory Johnson Ch. 3 Watson et al, Reid et al, Schiffer, Rathje, Hammond & Hammond
	21	Responses to processualism Flanney (1982), Flannery (1973), Hawkes
	23	Systems theory and its offspring Johnson Ch. 5 Flannery 1972b, Peregrine, Algaze

**ESSAY #1 DUE**

	28	Structuralism Johnson Ch. 6, Praetzellis Ch. 6, 7 Conkey, Deetz
	30	Marxism Praetzellis Ch. 8 Gilman, Johnson
October	5	The postprocessual critique Johnson Ch. 7, Praetzellis Ch. 9 Hodder (1986), Hodder (1997), Hassan (1997), Hodder (1998); also take a look at Hodder's website: <a href="http://www.catalhoyuk.com/">http://www.catalhoyuk.com/</a>
	7	Agency and practice theory Johnson Ch. 12 Pauketat, Hodder (1984), Dobres & Robb, Robb
	12	Radical postprocessualism & critical archaeology Leone et al, Holtorf (2002), Holtorf (2004)
	14	Responses to postprocessualism Kohl, Renfrew, Flannery (2006)
	19	Evolutionary approaches Johnson Ch. 10 White, Dunnell, McGuire & Hildebrandt
	21	Gender and archaeology Johnson Ch. 8 Arnold (1991), Wright, McCafferty & McCafferty
		<b>MIDTERM DUE</b>
	26	Queer theory and archaeology Dowson, Reeder, Geller
	28	Postcolonial archaeology Gosden, Wells, Horning
November	2	The ethnography of archaeology Carman, Holtorf (2006), Holtorf (2007)
	4	Gender and the practice of archaeology Gero, Politis (look at response to Gero), Hutson, Claasen
	9	Archaeology and politics Emberling, Arnold (1990), Romey (AE 11), Garen (AE 9), Price (AE 12)

- 11 Native Americans and archaeology  
Trigger (1980), Meighan, Watkins, Watkins (AE 26), Michel (AE 18)
- 16 NAGPRA and Kennewick  
Chatters, Kelly, Preucel (AE 19)
- 18 The Elgin Marbles  
Stewart, Merryman, Hallote, Lobell (AE 21)

**ESSAY #2 DUE**

23-25 **THANKSGIVING**

- 30 Archaeological ethics I  
Vitelli & Colwell-Chanthaphonh Ch. 1-4, 7, 14, 15
- December 2 Archaeological ethics II  
Vitelli & Colwell-Chanthaphonh Ch. 6, 16, 20, 23, 25
- 7 Where are we now?  
Johnson Ch. 13  
Rodning, Hegmon
- 9 Final thoughts

**Learning Objectives**

- \* to get some idea of why theory is important in archaeology
- \* to see the way theory has evolved in archaeology
- \* to think about ethical issues in archaeology

**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. Discussion in the class is mandatory, and it will make this class both more interesting and more useful for you if you will **PLEASE DO THE READING**.

You must take the exam and turn in all papers (with revisions) in order to pass the course. The breakdown of the various course components is:

Tsar essay and presentation	10%
Essay 1	15%
Essay 2	15%
Mid-term	25%
Final	25%
Class participation	10%

My office is Rm. 101 in 2112 G St. (Building X), and my extension is 4-6075. You can also reach me by e-mail at [sjohnsto@gwu.edu](mailto:sjohnsto@gwu.edu). Email is the quickest way to reach me, but I will be available in my office on Wednesday 11-12:30 and Friday 2-3:30 if you need to see me in person.

#### General essay guidelines

You will be required to write a total of 5 essays for this class. They should be typed, double-spaced, and have margins of about an inch. Even though you will mostly be discussing material read in class, you should still use proper citation for sources. I don't care what form you use, but 1) it should be consistent and 2) you should have a list of sources at the end. **Anything which is not common knowledge or your own idea should be cited.** Otherwise, it's plagiarism.

You are expected to work independently, and while I don't necessarily mind if you discuss various topics among yourselves, I will be alert for essays that sound too similar to each other. I expect you to turn in materials on time. One grade level (e.g. A- to B+) will be deducted for each day a paper is late.

**IF AN ASSIGNED ESSAY IS DUE ON THE DAY YOU ARE TO BE THE ARTICLE TSAR, YOU MAY HAVE AN ADDITIONAL 4 DAYS TO TURN IN THE ESSAY (N.B. THE ASSIGNED ESSAY, NOT YOUR ARTICLE TSAR ESSAY).**

Papers are due **IN CLASS** on the assigned dates. **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.

#### Article tsar presentation and essay

For each class, a student will serve as the "article tsar" (please note this is different from Prof. Blomster's "article czar", which is spelled differently...) for that week's articles. Note that this refers to the articles and not the book chapters from Johnson or Praetzellis, though examples and ideas from these books may be used for illustration. The tsar's job is to provide a brief overview of each of the articles for that class and to pose questions that will stimulate class discussion. You are expected to be able to speak for 10-15 minutes on the articles, and then take the lead for subsequent class discussion (I'll be there too, don't

panic). On the day of the presentation, you will turn in a 4-5 page essay that provides a brief synopsis for each article and a critique which assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the article. In general, what do you think about the article? Is it worth reading, does it make a contribution, and if so, what is it?

### Essay 1

Choose one of the chapters in the book Archaeological Ethics **THAT WE WILL NOT COVER IN CLASS**. These are Ch. 5, 8, 10, 13, 16, 17, 22, 24, and 25. At the end of the chapter, there is a series of discussion questions. Answer the questions that seem most interesting to you. The number of questions varies in each chapter, and you don't have to answer all of them. But you should have enough material to produce a 4-5 page essay. Please be sure to use specific information, and don't just ramble on in generalities (e.g. avoid things like "I just think it's wrong to loot sites"—specifically, why is it wrong? who does it hurt? why is this bad?). You may have to do some small amount of research on this; if you do, be sure to cite sources appropriately. **DUE SEPTEMBER 23.**

### Midterm

Having read what was sometimes a very polarizing debate on processualism versus postprocessualism, it is obvious that there is not only a significant difference between the two, but also that the latter was specifically formed in reaction to the former. Despite this, several authors have suggested that they are not really so different, and that they can be fruitfully combined into a more moderate approach. One of the more interesting attempts to do this was provided by Van Pool and Van Pool (1999) in *American Antiquity*. Read this article and compare their presentation with what you have read in previous articles in a 5-6 page essay. You should also refer to the critiques on this article (Hutson 2001 and Arnold and Wilkens 2001) and the response by the Van Pools (2001). Take a position on this discussion—is their attempt successful or does it somehow shortchange both positions? Do the Van Pools sound like they are more in one camp than the other? The intent here is to show that you understand these two positions, and to use this understanding to determine if they in fact overlap or if the attempt to reconcile them is futile. **DUE IN CLASS OCTOBER 21.**

### Essay 2

Choose one of the following two topics on which to write a 4-5 page essay. **DUE NOVEMBER 18.**

a. Choose any research article (i.e. something that is doing some kind of archaeological research, rather than reporting on others' research) from a peer-reviewed archaeological journal (if you don't know what this means, come and see me; in general, it means something like *American Antiquity* or *Antiquity* and not a magazine like *Archaeology* or *National Geographic*) and analyze it in terms of its theoretical stance. Based on the article content, what theoretical position(s) does it take and what specific evidence is there in the article to support it? You are allowed to use the fact that the author says "I am taking a Marxist position" if that is available, but you should still derive specific information from the article to support your analysis. **YOU MAY NOT USE AN ARTICLE ON THE SYLLABUS FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT.** Duh...

or...

b. In the book, Death by Theory, there are a number of theoretical positions presented. However, not every possible stance is covered. Create a character for the book that has a **DIFFERENT** theoretical position than those already there. What is this person's approach? How would this person respond to the events in the book? Where would they fit in terms of the plot? While you may choose any theoretical position you like for this, be sure that you make it clear how this character is different from those already in the book.

### Final take-home exam

There will be a take-home exam for this course. The first part of this exam will be to revise either your mid-term or your second essay. Based on my comments and what you have learned since writing it, revise your paper accordingly. The remainder of the take-home will consist of two questions you will have to answer. Each answer will be 3-4 pages long. The final will be due **NO LATER THAN NOON (12:00 PM) ON THE DAY ON WHICH THE FINAL EXAM IS SCHEDULED**. I will give you the date as soon as it's posted.

### **References for Blackboard readings**

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