

Introduction to Archaeology: Notes 1

Introduction to the course

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- Anthropology 202: Introduction to Archaeology
 - Before I begin to explain why archaeology is so much fun and so relevant to us today
 - please do this brief exercise—I'll give you five or ten minutes for it
 - get out a piece of paper and something to write with
 - put your name on it
 - answer the following questions:
 - How do you think archaeology contributes to society, that is, what good is it?
 - If you could go back to any time and place in the past, when and where would you choose, and why?
 - pass'em in
 - Archaeology is an amazing field
 - Archaeology is our only access to much of the past,
 - from the origins of humans into historical times.
 - knowing about the past is important because
 - it helps us understand how we got to where we are now
 - if we know how and why something is
 - we can think more clearly about how to maintain it
 - or how to change it
 - or predict possible outcomes or responses to social or environmental situations
 - gives us examples of other ways that people have done things
 - options we might take or modify
 - it can build people's sense of ethnic, religious, or national identity or connection to a particular place
 - Archaeologists have the privilege and responsibility of figuring out what happened before now,
 - and trying to explain why it happened or how it worked
 - But how do archaeologists know what they claim to know?
 - This course will answer that question by introducing the goals, methods, theories, and practice of archaeology.
 - I'm Bruce Owen
 - I am an archaeologist
 - I work mostly on the far south coastal region of Peru, from the seashore up to very high elevations
 - Desert, mountains, deep valleys, of which you will see pictures at various times during the course
 - I've spent over 5 years there since 1983
 - My main interests are in complex societies, from early farmers through expansive empires
 - The Inka empire, still growing when the Spanish arrived in 1532
 - The Tiwanaku and Wari states, around AD 500 to 1000
 - Local chiefdoms that built huge irrigation systems and hilltop fortresses

- Early farmers who first cultivated the coastal desert and buried their dead under specially built mounds
- I am particularly interested in the important role of multiethnicity in and around these complex societies
 - as they were forming, as they flourished, and as they collapsed
 - relations of differential power, status, wealth, and social roles
 - population movements
- To follow my curiosity about these subjects, I have participated in and directed a variety of different kinds of projects
 - I get to find sites that no archaeologist has ever visited
 - map them, using methods from very low to fairly high tech
 - Dig up stuff that no one has seen since it was buried 500, 1000, even 3500 years ago
 - places where people lived, cooked, slept, and worked
 - cemeteries
 - places where they practiced religious rituals
 - Pore over artifacts in the lab and sift through computerized data looking for patterns
 - especially ceramics
 - and metal artifacts
 - but also human remains, stone tools, plant material, etc.
 - this involves database work, statistics, and GIS (Geographic Information Systems)
 - I have also done some technical studies to work out issues with radiocarbon dating in coastal Peru
 - even aerial photography using kites
- I have also done some historical archaeology
 - when I was an undergraduate
 - recently, doing statistical analyses of data from 19th century San Francisco and Oakland, collected by huge projects run by SSU's own Anthropological Studies Center
 - and unintentionally in my most recent field season in Peru, when some sites we excavated turned out to be more recent than I expected
- As an archaeologist, I get to write my own version of a part of the past
 - An archaeologist gets to add his or her grain of sand to the mountain of knowledge of human societies
 - It beats retail!
 - I get to propose my own stories about what people were doing, what events occurred, how society was organized, how it changed over time, and even why
 - Try to test, refine, and defend my stories using data I have personally gathered
- Archaeology is particularly fun for people with wide interests, because it involves so many different areas and skills
 - historians, linguists, ethnographers
 - chemists, physicists, geologists, DNA experts
 - botanists, zoologists, anatomists, demographers, pathologists
 - statisticians, database experts, GIS (geographic information systems) experts
 - photographers, illustrators, artists

- hikers, photographers, mechanics, skilled diggers
- usually a project has some of these specialists, but archaeologists get to do a little bit in all of those areas and more
 - while constantly thinking like a scientist and an anthropologist.
- So I have personal experience with a lot of the material of this class, and indirect experience with much of the rest through my colleagues and friends in the field
- I personally find archaeology fascinating, challenging, and fun
 - I hope to convey some of that in this course
- In this class, we will start with
 - the history, goals, and general approaches of archaeology.
 - Then we will look at field methods,
 - including finding sites (survey)
 - and digging sites (excavation).
 - We will move on to ways to squeeze conclusions from archaeological data,
 - from methods for studying animal bone, plant material, and human remains.
 - to ethnographic analogies and experimental archaeology,
 - We will look at how archaeologists use these tools to approach grand questions like
 - the origins of agriculture,
 - inequality,
 - gender roles,
 - complex societies,
 - and even human consciousness.
 - Finally (as well as all along), we will consider how archaeology fits into the real world:
 - the conservation and study of archaeological remains as a moral and legal matter,
 - the role of the observer in creating the past,
 - archaeology and the television-watching, museum-visiting public,
 - and the thorny issues of who owns archaeological remains
 - and the purposes, politics, and ethics of their use in the modern world.
 - The focus is not on the past itself, but on the thinking, methods, issues, and ethics of the field.
 - we will see a lot of examples of archaeology, but we will not cover prehistory in any systematic way
 - for that, consider World Prehistory or Emergence of Civilizations
 - by the way, archaeologists study the remains of human activities, not physical evolution per se
 - for that, consider Intro to Biological Anthro
 - nor do we study dinosaurs
 - dinosaurs were long gone by the time anything human-like appeared
 - for dinosaurs and fossil evidence of other animals, take Paleontology
 - In this class, you will
 - learn archaeological concepts and terms like
 - stratigraphy,

- relative and absolute dating, sampling,
- cultural resource management,
- and many others.
- interconnect and apply a wide range of anthropological, scientific, and practical spheres of knowledge as you learn about
 - lab techniques for dating,
 - computer methods,
 - ethnographic analogy,
 - and the many other areas that contribute to answering archaeological questions.
- develop your critical thinking skills
 - by studying examples of the relationship between theoretical questions and empirical research designed to address them.
- practice those skills
 - by devising research questions and research designs to resolve them.
- build your critical thinking abilities further
 - by learning to evaluate the significance and reasonableness of archaeological arguments and claims in the professional and popular media.
- exercise scientific creativity
 - by inferring possible interpretations of archaeological data.
- gain a clearer idea of
 - why it is important to study the past,
 - what kinds of things we do and do not know about the past
 - the issues surrounding divergent views of the “truth” about the past (who writes the past, and why?)
 - the roles of archaeological research in the modern world,
 - the importance and uses of the past in the present
 - and the ethics of preserving and studying archaeological remains.
- The not-very-hidden agenda:
 - This should be a good exercise in logical, critical thinking,
 - using complex and incomplete evidence,
 - and explaining yourself in writing,
 - that should sharpen skills that you will use not only in other social sciences, but also in the rest of life
- Format of the course
 - Mostly lectures with a fair amount of class discussion, usually with Powerpoint slides
 - I hope you will ask questions and make comments
- Course mechanics, from the syllabus
 - Key to the course: the class web page
 - note that this is NOT a WebCT (Blackboard) page
 - You can get to it from the SSU “Class web pages” list
 - From the SSU web page (sonoma.edu)
 - click on "Information for...students",

- then "Class web pages",
- then "Anthropology 202: Introduction to Archaeology (Owen)"
- You are responsible for checking it regularly
- The web page takes precedence over the paper syllabus
- It *will* change over the semester, so check it!
 - I will post new announcements, assignment information, deadlines, study guides, etc.
 - I may adjust the reading schedule if we fall behind or get ahead
 - I will add some online readings that are not listed yet
 - but don't worry, it won't be too much
 - I may change deadlines, exam dates, etc.
- The web page features:
 - Class news, reminders, changes to assignments deadlines, readings, test dates, etc.
 - These can be important!
 - The schedule of readings
 - Each day shows what you should read from the textbook,
 - and has links to online assigned readings
 - Please do the readings *before* the class session
 - The readings are fairly light, about 19 pages per class from the textbook, or about 38 pages per week
 - plus occasional online readings, but not too much
 - the textbook is well-written and fairly easy to read
 - I will not cover everything in the reading, but you are responsible for it on the tests
 - if you don't understand something, ask!
 - The schedule also has links to
 - lecture notes
 - Usually will be posted before the class session
 - These notes can be useful for studying
 - PowerPoint slides used in class
 - usually posted after the class session
 - also good for assignments and preparing for tests
 - Optional online sources of additional information and images related to some class sessions
 - The schedule also shows
 - dates when each assignment is due
 - dates of the tests
 - Virtual handouts
 - the syllabus
 - detailed information about each assignment
 - charts, maps, and other items
 - study guides, etc.
 - Links to other websites with useful and interesting information and images
- The class web page URL is in the syllabus (which is on the website... what use is that?)
- To access some items, you will need a class user ID and password

- because some of the reading is copyrighted
- restricting access meets the requirements of use for "educational purposes"
- Class user ID:
- Class password:
- Enrollment
 - No waiting list, special permissions, etc.
 - If you want to get in, just keep checking PeopleSoft and grab a seat if someone drops
- Furloughs
 - Because of the severe state budget cuts to the California State University system, most staff other than Police Services must take 2 unpaid furlough days a month, and faculty must take 9 unpaid furlough days each semester.
 - We have to sign a statement that we will not work on furlough days.
 - We have been urged to divide the days proportionally among class days and days for preparation and grading (which extends both before the first class and after the last one.).
 - This works out to three class sessions cancelled per semester for courses that meet twice a week,
 - or over nine percent less school for your (increased) fees overall.
 - 3 furlough days for this class, this semester:
 - Tuesday Sept. 8, the day after Labor Day holiday (Monday Sept 7)
 - Tuesday Nov. 10, the day before Veteran's day holiday (Wednesday Nov 11)
 - Tuesday Nov. 24, the day before Thanksgiving holiday
 - Furlough days are not holidays, although I have scheduled them adjacent to holidays to give you more flexibility.
 - The furlough days are indicated in the class schedule, along with required activities comparable to a class period.
 - You may schedule those activities whenever you want, before the next class meeting.
 - Other furlough days will delay my returning some assignments or tests.
 - Should you wish to contact your Governor or legislators about funding for the CSU, contact information is posted at
 - <http://www.sonoma.edu/uaffairs/legislators.shtml>
- We use one book:
 - Kelly, Robert L., and David Hurst Thomas, 2010 (!)
 - *Archaeology*. Fifth edition. Wadsworth Cengage.
 - ISBN 978-0-495-60291-0
 - Available from the Northlight Books, Amazon.com, and elsewhere
- Grading
 - 20%: Short reading quiz at most class sessions (about 0.8% each)
 - 20%: Occasional in-class exercises
 - these are brief problems that you will solve or data that you will interpret in writing in class.
 - We will discuss the exercises immediately.
 - These will not be announced in advance, and there will be no makeups.
 - 20%: Evaluation of a journal article.

- You summarize and evaluate an archaeological article in an academic journal,
 - explaining the research question(s) and its significance,
 - the arguments and methods,
 - and the results and interpretations. Details will be posted on the class website.
- 20%: In-class midterm
- 20%: Final exam during exam week
 - essays, short answers, and map questions
 - study guides will be posted on the web page
- Grading scheme: This course is graded on a curve, with the minimum score for a B- initially set near the median (that is, about half the class gets a B- or better).
 - I may then shift the grade ranges up or down somewhat to better reflect the performance of the class.
- Submitting assignments: The evaluation of an article paper must be submitted as a file attached to an email message to me.
 - No paper copy is needed.
 - I will comment and grade the paper on an evaluation form tailored to each assignment.
 - This form will be included in the assignment information, to help you understand what I am looking for.
 - I will email the completed form back to you.
 - The computer file is due by midnight of the due date.
 - Due dates will be on days when the class does not meet, so that coming to class will not conflict with last-minute work on your assignment. Due dates will be indicated on the class web page.
 - Details on submitting assignments will be included in the assignment information.
- Late assignment policy:
 - I will accept assignments up to one week late with a 10% grading penalty. I will not accept any assignment more than one week after the due date.
- Drafts: I encourage you to submit drafts of the assignments so that I can comment on them and suggest directions for the final version.
 - Email is fastest, but I will also look at paper drafts.
 - please indicate that you are sending a draft, and not submitting a final version
- Email: I usually reply to emails within 24 hours. If you do not hear from me within 48 hours, assume that I did not get your message and try again.
- Plagiarism
 - Don't do it!
 - I have failed students for plagiarism
 - I have posted an explanation of plagiarism on the course web page that you may want to look at. It explains how to easily avoid plagiarizing
 - Please see me if you have any doubts or questions about this
- I do not take attendance, but
 - I cover things in class that are not in the readings
 - I show lots of pictures that make things easier to visualize and remember
 - I explain overall patterns, important points, and errors in the readings
 - You and your colleagues can ask questions

- Sometimes I announce changes to assignments, deadlines, readings, etc. in class
- Students who come to class tend to do better on the assignments and tests.
- But I won't patronize you or waste time by taking roll, so I'll leave attendance up to you.
- Students with Special Needs:
 - If you are a student with special learning needs and you think you may require accommodations, your first step is to register with the campus office of Disabled Student Services, Salazar 1049, phone 664-2677.
 - DSS will provide you with written confirmation of your verified disability and authorize recommended accommodations.
 - You then bring this recommendation to me, and we work out how to handle the accommodations.
 - If you think you may require assistance evacuating a building in the event of a disaster, please let me know what type of assistance you think you may need.
- University policies
 - the syllabus includes a link to University policies on adding and dropping, appealing grades, cheating, and other things you might want to know about
- Contacting me:
 - My office hours:
 - Tu-Th 2:30-3:30; Tu 5:30-6:30
 - in Stevenson 3007
 - or see me after class
 - or arrange to see me at some other time, if none of these are convenient
 - email me at: bruce.owen@sonoma.edu , which I usually check at least once every day
 - or click on the email link near the top of the course web page
 - Don't bother with my office phone, since I am rarely there except during office hours, and I rarely check the voice mail.
 - I have a box in the Anthro department office, Stevenson 2054, where you can leave messages or papers for me
 - If the door to Stevenson 2054 is locked, go in through Stevenson 2070
 - please don't slide things under my office door, stick them to a nearby bulletin board, etc., because I share that office with several other people who may not correctly figure out what to do with your paper.
- Photos