

Assignment instructions:
Review and evaluation of an archaeological journal article

Purpose: To apply concepts from this class to a real archaeological project, as described in a journal article.

What you do:

- Select an archaeological research article in one of the specified journals in JSTOR, available online through the SSU library (details below). Pick one with a clear research question, hypothesis, methods, data, and conclusions to discuss. Some hints about finding an article are given below. Pick an article that is not being used by another student, to the best of your knowledge.
- Read and understand the article.
- Do any additional research needed to master the background, methods, and implications of the research. This may be little or none, or it may involve finding and reading one or more additional sources to help you understand terms, methods, references to places or periods, and so on. Often, you can find the relevant sources right in the references and bibliography of the article itself. You might also use the Social Sciences Citation Index (see below) to find articles published since your article came out that have commented on it.
- Write a 4 to 5 page (double-spaced) review and evaluation of the article, explaining
 - the background and reasons for the research
 - the research question
 - the hypothesis (or hypotheses) that the author(s) propose. This might not be identified explicitly as a hypothesis, but it should be clear what it is
 - the test implications proposed and the reasoning (bridging arguments) for them. Again, these might not be explicitly labeled as test implications, but they should be clear enough. If you can't identify hypotheses and test implications, look for another article!
 - your evaluation of the hypothesis (does it seem reasonable? would it resolve the question?) and, even more importantly, the test implications (do they involve any debatable assumptions, or overlook any alternative interpretations? if they are found to be true, will they really show that the hypothesis is correct?)
 - the methods that the authors use to check the test implications
 - your evaluation of these methods (again, do they involve any debatable assumptions? do they really test the test implications?)
 - the conclusion of the article, explaining the data and reasoning that supports it
 - your evaluation of the conclusion (has it really been demonstrated? are there other alternatives? was there a logical, methodological, statistical, or other flaw in the argument somewhere? do the data really support the conclusion?)
 - additional observations, suggestions for further research, other methods that might be used to further test the results, possible implications, and so on.
- The paper must properly cite the article and any others you used for background, for information on the methods, and so on.
- The paper must have a bibliography that lists the main article and any others cited in your review

- The bibliography entry for the article must include the article's "Stable URL", so that I can easily access the article while reading your paper. To get this in JSTOR, go to your article, click "Item Information", then copy and paste the stable URL into the bibliography entry for the article.

Finding an article by browsing:

- Connect to JSTOR through the SSU library website. To do this, go to <http://library.sonoma.edu/>, click on "Databases", then "Databases by title (A-Z)", then "J", then "JSTOR". You will have to provide your library barcode and Library PIN.
- In the menu bar at the top, click on "Browse", then "By discipline" in the menu.
- Select "Archaeology" and press the red box to the right of the discipline menu.
- Click on one of the following journals in the list:
 - *American Antiquity* (mostly North America, some Central and South America)
 - *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* (worldwide)
 - *Journal of Field Archaeology* (worldwide)
 - *Latin American Antiquity* (Central and South America)
 - *World Archaeology* (worldwide)
- Click on one of the sets of issues, then on a specific issue, and then scan the article titles for anything that might seem interesting. You can check other issues easily by clicking "Previous issue" at the top of the table of contents, or "Next issue" at the bottom (scroll down to see it).
- When you find an interesting title, check to see that it will work for this assignment, according to the section "the kind of article to review" below.

Finding an article by searching for a topic:

- Connect to JSTOR in the same way as above.
- On the "Advanced Search" tab, scroll down to the "Discipline(s) and/or Title(s)" section.
- Click on the triangle next to "Archaeology"
- Click on the checkboxes next to some or all of the journal titles listed above.
- Type a word that interests you ("pyramid", "plague", "potato", etc.) in the search box, and click "Search"
- Scroll through the results for something interesting, or try another word.
- When you find an interesting title, check to see that it will work for this assignment, according to the section "the kind of article to review" below.

The kind of article to review: You should review a research article, as opposed to a purely descriptive report, a review, a comment, etc. That is, your article must describe a research question, propose how to solve it, collect the relevant data (either through new fieldwork or analysis, or from published reports), and come to a conclusion. Not all academic articles do this.

The date of the article: Please use an article published in 1960 or later.

Hints for finding additional sources, if needed: The article itself will indicate sources that might help you learn about methods, background, or other information. With the full details from the bibliography, you should be able to find most articles and many books in SSU's online article databases.

You can also find other articles that came out after the one you are reviewing, and that cited it. To find these sources, go to the SSU library home page, click on “databases”, “databases by title (A-Z)”, “S”, and scroll down to “Social Sciences Citation Index”.

Or ask a librarian for help, through online chat 24/7 from the library’s home page, or in person in the library. They are there to help you.

Wikipedia and other online sources: Wikipedia is useful for background information and orienting yourself, getting ideas, and finding other sources, but it and similar sites are not acceptable sources themselves, because you cannot be confident that the information in them is correct. If you find a useful fact on Wikipedia, track down a reliable source that confirms it, and cite that source. Never cite Wikipedia or similar websites.

Format or style: The paper may be in any standard research paper style. The article must be correctly cited at least once in your paper, as must any additional sources of information that you use. Citations may be footnotes, endnotes, or in the text, like (Smith 2005:12). If you would like specific guidelines, a style guide for the most common style for archaeological writing in the US, the Society for American Archaeology style, is available through a link on the class web page.

Grading: The paper is worth up to 250 points, of the 1000 possible in the course. The syllabus originally gave this assignment only 200 points, but it was adjusted upwards when we eliminated the in-class exercises. The grading rubric is attached, to give you an idea of what I will be looking for.

Submitting the paper: Submit the paper by email to bruce.owen@sonoma.edu, as an attachment. No paper copy is involved. A good way to send it is to click “Email me!” on the class website. Being able to email files as attachments is a useful skill.

File format: Save the paper in Word 95 (.doc), Word 2000 (.doc), or Rich Text (.rtf) format. These are nearly universal formats that any word processor should be able to make and open. The command to save in these formats is often under a “Save As” menu item. Being able to share files in these formats is another useful skill.

File name: Name the file in this format:

a202-09f-Article-LastnameFirstname

Replace “LastnameFirstname” with your name, last name first, capitalizing the first letter of each name. Do not use a comma in the filename, because email programs will often cut off the filename at the comma. The first part identifies the class, semester, and section. Most word processors will add a 3-letter file extension like “.doc” or “.rtf”.

Drafts: You are welcome to discuss your assignment with me or give me a draft to review before the assignment is due. My comments and suggestions may help you write a better essay and get a better grade. Please send your draft at least a few days before the deadline, so I will have time to respond and you will have time to revise. If you email a draft, please name the file as above, but add “-draft”, like

a202-09f-Article-SmithJohn-draft.doc

Review and evaluation of an archaeological journal article

Points	Possible	Item
	20	Article is meets the assignment criteria
	20	Explanation of the background and reasons for the research
	30	Explanation of the research question
	20	Explanation of the hypotheses proposed
	40	Explanation of the test implications and the reasoning for them
	10	Evaluation of the hypotheses and test implications
	30	Explanation of the methods used to evaluate the test implications
	10	Evaluation of the methods
	20	Explanation of the conclusions of the article
	10	Evaluation of how well the conclusions are supported
	10	Additional comments, insights, further questions for study, etc.
	10	Article(s) properly cited in the text
	10	Bibliography with full reference information for the article(s)
	10	Stable URL of the article
		Late (-10%) or Rewrite (-20%)
	250	Total