

Introduction to Archaeology
Anthropology 202.1, Fall 2009
Tues & Thurs 10:45-12:00
Stevenson 3008

<http://bruceowen.com/introarch/a202-09f.htm>

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Introduction to archaeology

Archaeology is our only access to much of the past, from the origins of humans into historical times. Archaeologists have the privilege and responsibility of figuring out what happened before now, and trying to explain why. 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. Archaeology is a wonderful field for people with wide interests, because within its humanistic approach to understanding people and societies of the past, there is room and need for a great diversity of thinking, skills, and interests. Archaeology involves historians, linguists, ethnographers, and artists; it needs chemists, botanists, statisticians, and computer experts; it needs hikers, photographers, mechanics, and diggers who can dissect the ground like a three-dimensional puzzle; and many others. A good archaeologist does all of these things, while constantly thinking like a scientist and an anthropologist. Archaeology is fun and challenging.

We will start with the history, goals, and general approaches of archaeology. Then we will look at field methods, including finding and excavating sites. We will move on to ways to squeeze conclusions from archaeological data, from ethnographic analogies and experimental archaeology, through methods for studying animal bone, plant material, and human remains. We will look at how archaeologists use these tools to approach grand questions like the origins of 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 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.

Objectives: In this course, you will

- 1) learn archaeological concepts and terms like stratigraphy, relative and absolute dating, sampling, cultural resource management, and many others.
- 2) 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.
- 3) develop your critical thinking skills by studying examples of the relationship between theoretical questions and empirical research designed to address them.
- 4) practice those skills by devising research questions and research designs to resolve them.
- 5) 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.

- 6) exercise scientific creativity by inferring possible interpretations of archaeological data.
- 7) come to appreciate why it is important to study the past, the roles of archaeological research in the modern world, the viewpoints of different stakeholders, and the ethics of preserving and studying archaeological remains.

Class web page: You are responsible for checking the class web page regularly. It will change during the semester, and it takes precedence over information in this syllabus. The assigned readings, lecture notes and slides, homework assignments, due dates, and other information will all be posted there. Note that this is *not* a WebCT page. You can click to the class web page from the SSU “Class web pages” list, or go to:

<http://bruceowen.com/introarch/a3202-09f.htm>

Class User ID and password: Due to copyright issues, you need a class user ID and password to access some material on the class web page. These are *not* the same ID and password that you use for other SSU functions. I will provide them in class. If you forget them, ask or email me.

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. 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.

Schedule of readings, assignments, etc: The schedule of readings, assignments, due dates, and tests is posted on the class web page. Please read the selections *before* the class session. Readings are from the textbook, sometimes plus online material. You will be tested on all of this material.

Daily quizzes: Most class sessions will include a brief, multiple-choice quiz on that day’s assigned readings. These quizzes will often be at the beginning of class, so please arrive on time. There are no makeups for these quizzes.

Textbook and online readings: This course has one textbook, plus online readings and other material posted on the class website. You may want to print the online items, so you can write notes in the margins, highlight, and refer to them in class. The book is

Kelly, Robert L., and David Hurst Thomas

2010 *Archaeology*. Fifth edition. Wadsworth Cengage.

ISBN 978-0-495-60291-0

New and used copies are available at North Light Books & Cafe, 550 East Cotati Ave., next to Oliver's Market in the shopping complex on East Cotati Ave. (707 792-4300). North Light is a locally-owned small business with lower prices and better service than the campus bookstore. Plus it is a good place to eat, drink, and hang out in the real (ish) world off campus.

Lecture notes and slides: My lecture notes and Powerpoint slides used in class will be posted on the web page. The notes will generally be posted before the class, while the slides will be posted after the class. The notes are useful for studying and finding information for the assignments, but they are no substitute for attending class and doing the reading.

Assignments and their weights in grading:

20% **Reading quizzes** (about 0.8% each). Three multiple-choices questions about the readings at most class sessions.

20% **Occasional in-class exercises.** 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 will 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.** Short-answer and essay questions.

20% **Final exam.** Similar to the midterm. Emphasizes material from the second part of the course, but many concepts and terms from the first part are necessarily involved, too.

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 hard 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. The due date will be on a day when the class does not meet, so that coming to class will not conflict with last-minute work on your assignment. The due date 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 the paper up to one week late with a 10% grading penalty. I will not accept it more than one week after the due date.

Drafts: I strongly encourage you to submit a draft of the paper so that I can suggest aspects to improve in the final version. Email is fastest, but I will also look at paper drafts.

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.

Invitation: If you want help, or would just like to talk about archaeology, anthropology, assignments, preparing for tests, or anything else, please drop by during my office hours, arrange to see me at some other time, or contact me by email. I am here to help you master the material.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is using someone else’s words, information, or ideas *without giving that person credit*. This includes copying from your peers, websites, or other public sources, even brief phrases, on papers, tests, or any other work. Plagiarism is immoral and dishonest. It is easy

to avoid: just use your own words and indicate the sources of all your information. Plagiarism results in penalties up to an F for the course. I have failed numerous students for plagiarism. University policy requires me to report plagiarism, and the University may impose sanctions up to expulsion. A more complete explanation, including advice on how to use material without plagiarizing, is posted on the class website. University policies about plagiarism and cheating are available through the University Policies link below. The assignment information posted on the class website will include guidelines on how to format citations.

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: There are important University policies that you should be aware of, such as the add/drop policy; cheating and plagiarism policy, grade appeal procedures, accommodations for students with disabilities and the diversity vision statement. You can see them at:

<http://www.sonoma.edu/uaffairs/policies/studentinfo.shtml>

Annoyed by lack of classes, fee increases, furloughs, etc.? 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>

Final exam: Tuesday, Dec. 15, 11:00-12:50, in our regular classroom, Stevenson 3008.