

# **ANTH 340/689R: Method and Theory in Archaeology**

**Course Syllabus—Spring 2010**

**Mondays, 3:00-5:40 PM, 1114 Woods Hall**

**Dr. Matthew Palus, Course Instructor**

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## **Office Hours**

Mondays, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM, or by appointment  
0113 Woods Hall (basement level)

Mailbox in 1111 Woods Hall

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course addresses the methodological and theoretical basis for archaeology that has developed over the last hundred years, with emphasis on recent developments in the discipline. The course is designed to give students an overview of important issues in American archaeology, to familiarize them with how archaeologists approach their research, where research questions come from, and what methods and theoretical resources are applied to answering them. Topics to be covered include the different research paradigms that guide the work of archaeologists, specific approaches for using material culture to answer questions about societies past and present, and the historical relationship between archaeologists and descendent communities, Native Americans and other stakeholder groups. Emphasis will be placed on the archaeology of North America, however the course is designed to enable students to think about archaeology applied to many problems and contexts.

The prerequisite for the course is ANTH 240 (Introduction to Archaeology). The reading load for the course is heavy and at times the material is quite challenging. As a member of the class you are expected to complete the readings, participate in discussion, make brief presentations to the rest of the class, and complete written assignments on time. If you have any documented disabilities and require accommodations, please discuss them with me as soon as possible.

In accordance with University of Maryland policy on religious observances, students will not be penalized in any way for absences in observance of religious holidays. However, students must notify the instructor in writing of any planned absences due to religious observances, in advance. Students will be given the opportunity to make up any missed assignments, and will be responsible for completing all assigned reading and obtaining class notes, and so forth.

## ASSIGNMENTS

Please read through the criteria for your course work carefully, as it will be evaluated according to what follows. Written work should be in *American Antiquity* format, and please use author-date citations rather than footnotes (check the back pages of the journal or view the PDF at <http://www.saa.org/AbouttheSociety/Publications/StyleGuide/tabid/984/Default.aspx>). The closest equivalent style guide is *The Chicago Manual of Style*. All work should be double spaced, 11 or 12-point font, one-inch margins, pages numbered, spell-checked, grammatical, etc.

If you need an article from a journal that is not available on our campus, submit a request to Interlibrary Loans and they will have the article scanned for you within a few weeks (submit requests electronically here: <http://www.lib.umd.edu/ILL/Welcome.html>).

### 1. Discussion and Participation

Every student is expected to complete the assigned readings on the day we are scheduled to discuss them in class. Try to complete all of the reading that is assigned, so you can participate fully in discussion. If you cannot read everything, be strategic and read one or a few items carefully, so that you have something to say about them.

Because of the volume of material to cover, each reading or book chapter will also be assigned to one student, who will present that material to the rest of the group. This is a failsafe, so that if class members miss a reading, someone will be responsible to explain it to the rest of us. Preparation to discuss and especially preparation to lead the class through a reading will make a big difference in your course grade.

#### How to present a reading to the class:

*First*, if you volunteer to cover a reading in the next class meeting, you must attend that meeting. If for some reason you cannot, it is courteous to send me an email.

*Second*, you should read the selection closely, and master it. Have something to say about it. If the reading is giving you trouble, give me some notice so I can help you through it. I will still want you to present, even if you only have questions.

*Third*, you are not obliged to summarize the entire reading from start to finish. To tell the story of the reading (“The author basically said this, and then said this, and then said this, and then said...” ) is not the best way to make a presentation. Similarly, you should not be skimming the reading while you are presenting. Prepare some basic notes to talk from. Approach the readings critically and analytically, and answer these questions: what is the purpose of the reading? What are the key points that the author makes, and what is the importance to the subject under discussion? What are the problems with the reading, and what questions are you left with?

*Fourth*, force yourself to be brief. Can you cover the reading in just a few sentences, and in your own words? A concise presentation shows comprehension and confidence, and demonstrates mastery of the material.

**Also note:** You will have to do all of the assigned reading in order to complete the final examination, and you will need to show comprehension of the readings in order to do well. It is much better to keep up with the reading assignments throughout the course than to try to cram it in at the end. For best results, take notes on the readings as you go along, *with page numbers*. This will make the final exam much easier.

## 2. Mid-term Research Paper

Due Date: March 22.

Write a short research paper on one of the following topics (Options A and B, below). Midterm research papers should be at least 2000-2500 words in length (8-10 double-spaced pages) exclusive of the bibliography, and must be supported by at least ten references. Midterm papers will be collected in class on the due date.

Students will be expected to briefly present midterm research to the class, beginning on the day that the midterm is due. Presentations should be brief, around five minutes each, and can make use of hand-outs, props, or Powerpoint software. But keep it brief! We will have two class meetings in which everyone must present. Don't throw the schedule!

### Option A: Archaeological Methodology

Much of the reading and discussion in this course will cover theoretical issues. To give you a broader exposure to archaeological methodologies, **students who select this option will research one analytical method used by archaeologists**. Students will write a brief, concise research paper about the method they select, and should treat the following issues: Who pioneered the method, and when? Does the method fit particularly well within one research paradigm, and why? Is the method still in use? What is it good for, and what are its weaknesses and limitations? You should give a thorough description of the methodology in your paper, illustrated with one or more examples (i.e. case studies) of how the method has been used successfully and what kind of data it produces.

**Your topic should be fairly specific.** You cannot write a concise paper about faunal analysis in just 2500 words, however that is enough space to give thorough treatment to one technique, such as meat weight analysis or the Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI), which are both part of the tool kit for faunal analysis.

Some possible methodologies to pursue:

- Lithic artifacts: material sourcing, use-wear analysis, “refitting”, experimental tool reproduction
- Faunal analysis: Number of Identified Specimens (NISP), Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI), meat weight analysis, other statistical measures
- Ceramics: Minimum Vessel Analysis (MVA), trace element analysis and clay sourcing, stylistic analysis, etc.
- Predictive modeling and *specific* GIS applications
- Pollen analysis and paleoenvironmental reconstruction
- Geoarchaeological approaches
- Coprolite analysis and paleonutrition
- Taphonomic reconstruction
- Survey, testing, or data recovery-level sampling strategies
- Heritage management techniques, protection of archaeological resources
- Mitochondrial DNA analysis, or recovery of prehistoric human genetic material via PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) and similar approaches

The best way to start this project is to skim through peer-review journals. You will find that when archaeologists publish the results of their analysis, they must credit previous researchers who have perfected a particular method or approach. Track these citations backwards and you will easily come up with enough material to write this paper.

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### **Option B: Adopt an Archaeologist**

Write an intellectual biography of an archaeologist of your choosing. Read everything you can find authored by your archaeologist, in order to get a sense for their intellectual development as well as how the field has changed over the course of their career. You can pick this individual from the course syllabus, from the pages of *American Antiquity* or another journal. If you pick someone we are going to read anyway, you’ll save yourself a little work, but why not pick someone who is researching a site or topic that you find interesting?

Read everything you can find published in books or peer review journals authored or co-authored by the individual. Don’t read more than ten works if the author has published a lot. Books published by the individual count as one item (skim them), but you shouldn’t read volumes edited by individuals, just read the introduction and the conclusion that they authored themselves. If your archaeologist is deceased, look for an obituary in *American Antiquity* or another forum.

You should write a short paper that summarizes what you read, and addresses the following questions.

- a. What discoveries has this archaeologist made during their career? What are they trying to demonstrate to other archaeologists, or prove about the past?
- b. What sites has this archaeologist excavated, and what is their home institution? Who have they collaborated with?
- c. What positions have they taken in regards to methodology, interpretation, or the intellectual or political content of their work? Who have they criticized or disagreed with, and why?

Your paper should present a summary of their work, but you should also read their work critically and show that you understand its worth as well as its failings. If your archaeologist is still alive, consider contacting them. Students in the past have had very productive telephone interviews with local and non-local archaeologists, and this can make a huge difference in your understanding of their published positions. Start with an email to introduce yourself, and read their works before you try to talk to them!

### **3. Term Research Paper**

Due Dates: Précis and reading list due on Monday, April 5, in class; Term papers due Monday, May 10, in class.

Students will complete a research paper on any topic of their choosing that is relevant to archaeology. Term papers should be around 12-15 pages (3000-3750 words) in length, and should be well referenced.

The purpose of this assignment is to allow students to pursue their own interests through substantive research. Topics should be narrow enough so you can address them thoroughly in a paper of this length. Term papers can address a component of the archaeological record, such as an archaeological site or culture, an emerging analytical technique, a class of material culture, an important moment in the history of the discipline, or a theoretical development from archaeology's past or present. The term research paper is especially well suited to exploring the most current trends in theory that have not been included in the assigned reading.

A brief (1-2 page) précis and reading list will be collected in class a month in advance of the due date for the term paper, on April 5. The précis should describe the topic that you will research, and must be accompanied by a list of 8-10 sources that will inform the research paper; students need not have read all of these sources at the time that the précis is due.

You should select a topic as soon as possible so there is time to gather the necessary references, or change topics if for some reason you are forced to. Ask me questions at any time if you get hung up, or if you want feedback on a topic that you are thinking of. I

will review a draft version of your term paper if you get it to me at least a week before the due-date (COB on May 3). I will review draft papers in the order they are received, either on paper or via email. I can only read electronic documents in .pdf, .txt, .rtf, .doc or .docx formats.

#### 4. Final Examination

Due Date: Monday, May 17, in my mailbox on campus by 4:30 PM.

There will be a final, cumulative examination administered at the end of the course. The final exam will consist of several short answer and essay questions representing the breadth of theoretical material covered in the course.

The final exam will be take-home, and open-book. Students will have seven days to complete the exam using all of the course materials. Short answers and essays must be referenced with in-text citations, and submitted exams must include a list of works cited.

• **On academic honesty:** Please review the University's policy on academic integrity, found in the student handbook. I am especially concerned with plagiarism. Sometimes students unintentionally plagiarize because they do not know what actually constitutes plagiarism. It is worthwhile to educate yourself. To avoid the appearance of plagiarism in written work, it is important to reference the sources of your information in order to clearly differentiate others' ideas or arguments and the ideas or arguments that are uniquely yours. **One reference per paragraph is suggested as a minimum for all written work.** You cannot reference too many sources. It is best to give a page number with each reference, unless you are referencing the overall idea presented in a publication.

• **On internet resources:** You can cite material from the internet in your research, but web sources are always inferior to peer-reviewed sources (i.e. books and journal articles) for the purposes of scholarly research. Internet sites should not be your primary sources, and they are not exempt from the rules of plagiarism. Use internet sources only if they contain information that you cannot find anywhere else. Overuse of internet sources will be penalized.

Cite web pages by giving the title of the page, the address, and the date you visited the site. Use the "last updated" date for the date of publication, or say n.d. (no date). Cutting and pasting text from a web site and changing some of the words around is *absolutely* plagiarism, even if you include a citation for the web site. This and other forms of internet plagiarism will not be tolerated.

## GRADING CRITERIA

The syllabus includes deadlines for all assignments and other due dates. It is your responsibility to know when assignments are due and when to prepare for presentations. There will be no extra-credit assignments. During this course you will be evaluated according to the following schedule:

Assignment	Due Date	Credit
Discussion and Participation	Weekly	20%
Mid-Term Research Paper	March 22	20%
Mid-Term Presentation	March 22-29	5%
Term Paper Précis and Bibliography	April 5	5%
Term Paper	May 10	25%
Final Examination	May 17	25%

Your participation score will be affected by your preparation to discuss the readings and other people's projects. You are not guaranteed *any* credit for participation, unless you both attend class regularly and join in discussion. Speaking up in class and joining in discussion can make the difference of one or two whole letter grades; you cannot earn an "A" without a solid record of lively participation. *Unexcused* absences will also impact this portion of your grade. Tardiness or leaving class early will also be noted.

Graduate students enrolled in ANTH 689R will be expected to come to class especially well prepared to maintain lively discussion, though they are discouraged from dominating discussion.

If you are running late with any assignments, you are responsible to contact me as soon as possible in class, during office hours, or via email. If you cannot complete an assignment on time, please contact me. You cannot completely miss any assignment and expect to do well. Work turned in late will be penalized significantly unless you talk to me beforehand (catching me on my way into class does not constitute talking to me beforehand). **All work must be completed by 4:30 PM on Monday, May 17.**

## SCHEDULE FOR THE COURSE

Date	Topic
January 25	Introduction and overview of the course; review syllabus and assignments.
February 1	The Culture-Historical Method Readings: <b>(1)</b> Trigger, "Culture-Historical Archaeology" <b>(2)</b> Cole, "The American Museum and Dr. Boas" <b>(3)</b> Jacknis, "Franz Boas and Exhibits: On the Limitations of the Museum Method in Anthropology"
February 8	The Legacy of Culture History in the United States Readings: <b>(1)</b> Thomas, <i>Skull Wars</i> , Chapters 1-15 (pages 1-156) <b>(2)</b> Hasinoff, "Faith in Objects: American Indian Object Lessons at the World in Boston"
February 15	The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Readings: <b>(1)</b> Thomas, <i>Skull Wars</i> , Chapters 16-24 (pages 157-276) <b>(2)</b> Zimmerman, "Multivocality, Descendent Communities, and some Epistemological Shifts Forced by Repatriation" <b>(3)</b> Welch and Ferguson, "Putting <i>Patria</i> Back into Repatriation: Cultural Affiliation Assessment of White Mountain Apache Tribal Lands" <b>(4)</b> The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (25 U.S.C. 3001 <i>et seq.</i> )
February 22	New Archaeology and Ethnoarchaeology Readings: <b>(1)</b> Binford, "Archaeology as Anthropology" <b>(2)</b> Binford, "Willow Smoke and Dogs' Tails" <b>(3)</b> Binford, "Butchering, Sharing and the Archaeological Record" <b>(4)</b> Redman, "In Defense of the Seventies"

Date		Topic
March 1		<p>The Use of Analogy</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>(1) Ascher, "Analogy in Archaeological Interpretation"</p> <p>(2) Binford, "Smudge Pits and Hide Smoking"</p> <p>(3) Gould and Watson, "A Dialog on the Meaning and Use of Analogy"</p> <p>(4) Wylie, "The Reaction Against Analogy"</p> <p>(5) Stahl, "Concepts of Time and Approaches to Analogical Reasoning"</p>
March 8		<p>Structuralism and Symbolic Archaeology</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>(1) Hodder, <i>Reading the Past</i>, pages 1-89</p> <p>(2) Watson and Fotiadis, "The Razor's Edge: Symbolic-Structuralist Archaeology and the Expansion of Archaeological Inference".</p>
March 15		Spring Break – No Class.
March 22		<p>Mid-term Paper due. Student presentations of mid-term research.</p> <p>Readings: None.</p>
March 29		<p>Student presentations of mid-term research.</p> <p>Readings: None.</p>
April 5		<p>Archaeological Approaches to Practice and Individuals</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>(1) Hodder, <i>Reading the Past</i>, pages 90-155</p> <p>(2) de Certeau, "General Introduction"</p> <p>Précis and reading list for term papers due in class; Students observing Passover may submit before or after the holiday, but no later than April 12.</p>
April 12		<p>Postprocessualism and Interpretive Archaeology</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>(1) Hodder, <i>Reading the Past</i>, pages 156-247</p>

Date	Topic
April 19	Places and Landscapes Readings: (1) Basso, <i>Wisdom Sits in Places</i> (whole book) (2) Leone, "Landscapes of Power"
April 26	Materiality and Technology Readings: (1) Meskell, "Objects in the Mirror May Appear Closer Than They Are" (2) Tilley, "The Metaphorical Transformation of Wala Canoes" (3) Bennett, "The Agency of Assemblages and the North American Blackout" (4) Marcuse, "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology" (5) Bille and Sørensen, "An Anthropology of Luminosity: The Agency of Light"
May 3	Critical Theory and Sites of Struggle Readings: (1) Leone, "Some Opinions About Recovering Mind" (2) Palus, Leone and Cochran, "Critical Theory: Politics Past and Present" (3) Mullins, "Excavating America's Metaphor: Race, Diaspora, and Vindicationist Archaeologies"
May 10	Civic Engagement and Applied Archaeology Readings: (1) Little, "Archaeology and Civic Engagement" (2) Castañeda and Matthews, "Ethnography and the Social Construction of Archaeology" (3) Hantman, "Monocan Mediation" (4) McDavid, "Descendants, Decisions, and Power" Term Research Paper due. Take-Home Final Examination distributed.
<p>Monday, May 17 – Take-Home Final Examination due in my mailbox in 1111 Woods Hall by 4:30 PM.</p> <p><b>No assignments will be accepted after this date.</b></p>	

## REQUIRED TEXTS

The following three texts can be purchased at the book store in Stamp Student Union, and are also available from McKeldin Reserves:

Basso, Keith H.

1996 *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache*. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque. ISBN 9780826317243 (paper).

Hodder, Ian, and Scott Hutson

2003 *Reading the Past: Current Approaches to Interpretation in Archaeology*. 3rd Edition. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. ISBN 9780521528844 (paper).

Thomas, David Hurst

2001 *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for Native American Identity*. Perseus Publishing, New York. ISBN 9780465092253 (paper).

## RECOMMENDED TEXT

The following text is an introduction to theory in archaeology that many students have found helpful and enjoyable. It is optional reading. Despite the title of this text, be assured that the theories we will discuss will not kill you.

Praetzelis, Adrian

2000 *Death by Theory: A Tale of Mystery and Archaeological Theory*. AltaMira Press, Walnut Creek. ISBN 9780742503593 (paper).

## ADDITIONAL READINGS ON RESERVE

The readings listed here are available on ELMS. They can be downloaded in PDF format from the "Course Reserves" section of the ELMS site for our course, accessed through the "Course Tools" menu. See me if you have any difficulty accessing these readings.

Ascher, Robert

1961 Analogy in Archaeological Interpretation. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 17:317-325.

Bennett, Jane

2005 The Agency of Assemblages and the North American Blackout. *Public Culture* 17(3):445-65.

- Bille, Mikkel, and Tim Flohr Sørensen  
2007 An Anthropology of Luminosity: The Agency of Light. *Journal of Material Culture* 12(3):263-284.
- Binford, Lewis R.  
1962 Archaeology as Anthropology. *American Antiquity*. 28:217-225.  
  
1967 Smudge Pits and Hide Smoking: The Use of Analogy in Archaeological Reasoning. *American Antiquity* 32(1):1-12.  
  
1980 Willow Smoke and Dogs' Tails: Hunter-Gatherer Settlement Systems and Archaeological Site Formation. *American Antiquity* 45(1):4-20.  
  
1984 Butchering, Sharing, and the Archaeological Record. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 3:235-257.
- Castañeda, Quetzil E., and Christopher N. Matthews  
2008 Ethnography and the Social Construction of Archaeology. In *Ethnographic Archaeologies: Reflections on Stakeholders and Archaeological Practice*, pp. 1-23. Quetzil E. Castañeda and Christopher N. Matthews, eds. AltaMira Press, Lanham.
- Cole, Douglas  
1985 The American Museum and Dr. Boas. In *Captured Heritage: The Scramble for Northwest Coast Artifacts*, pp. 141-164. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- de Certeau, Michel  
1984 "General Introduction", in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pages xi-xxiv. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Gould, Richard A., and Patty Jo Watson  
1982 A Dialogue on the Meaning and Use of Analogy in Ethnoarchaeological Reasoning. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 1:355-381.
- Hantman, Jeffrey L.  
2004 Monacan Mediation: Regional and Individual Archaeologies in the Contemporary Politics of Indian Heritage. In *Places in Mind: Public Archaeology as Applied Anthropology*, pp. 19-33. Paul A. Shackel and Erve J. Chambers, eds. Routledge, London.
- Hasinoff, Erin  
2005 Faith in Objects: American Indian Object Lessons at the World in Boston. In *Archaeologies of Materiality*, pp. 96-125. Lynn M. Meskell, ed. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.

- Jacknis, Ira  
1985 Franz Boas and Exhibits: On the Limitations of the Museum Method in Anthropology. In *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, pp. 75-111. George W. Stocking, Jr., ed. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison.
- Leone, Mark P.  
1982 Some Opinions on Recovering Mind. *American Antiquity* 47(4):742-760.  
  
2005 "Landscapes of Power", in *The Archaeology of Liberty in an American Capital*, pages 63-110. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Little, Barbara J.  
2007 Archaeology and Civic Engagement. In *Archaeology as a Tool of Civic Engagement*, pp. 1-22. Barbara J. Little and Paul A. Shackel, eds. AltaMira Press, Lanham.
- Marcuse, Herbert  
1982 Some Social Implications of Modern Technology. In *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, pp. 138-182. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt, eds. Continuum Publishing, New York.
- McDavid, Carol  
1997 Descendants, Decisions, and Power: The Public Interpretation of the Archaeology at Levi Jordan Plantation. *Historical Archaeology* 31(3):114-131.
- Meskeel, Lynn M.  
2004 Objects in the Mirror May Appear Closer Than They Are. In *Object Worlds in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 13-38. Berg Publishers, Oxford.
- Mullins, Paul R.  
2008 Excavating America's Metaphor: Race, Diaspora, and Vindicationist Archaeologies. *Historical Archaeology* 42(2):104-122.
- Palus, Matthew M., Mark P. Leone, and Matthew D. Cochran  
2006 Critical Archaeology: Politics Past and Present. In *Historical Archaeology*, pp. 84-104. Martin Hall and Stephen W. Silliman, eds. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.
- Redman, Charles L.  
1991 In Defense of the Seventies—The Adolescence of New Archaeology. *American Anthropologist* 93:295-307.

- Stahl, Anna B.  
1993 Concepts of Time and Approaches to Analogical Reasoning in Historical Perspective. *American Antiquity* 58(2):235-260.
- Tilley, Christopher  
2002 The Metaphorical Transformation of Wala Canoes. In *The Material Culture Reader*, pp. 27-55. Victor Buchli, ed. Berg Publishers, Oxford.
- Trigger, Bruce G.  
1989 Culture-Historical Archaeology. In *A History of Archaeological Thought*, pp. 148-206. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- United States Code  
1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, as amended (25 U.S.C. 3001 *et seq.*).
- Watson, Patty Jo, and Michael Fotiadis  
1990 The Razor's Edge: Symbolic-Structuralist Archaeology and the Expansion of Archaeological Inference. *American Anthropologist* 92:613-629.
- Welch, John R., and T. J. Ferguson  
2007 Putting *Patria* Back into Repatriation: Cultural Affiliation Assessment of White Mountain Apache Tribal Lands. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 7(2):171-198.
- Wylie, Alison  
1985 The Reaction Against Analogy. *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory*. 8:63-111. Michael B. Schiffer, Ed. Academic Press. New York.
- Zimmerman, Larry J.  
2007 Multivocality, Descendent Communities, and Some Epistemological Shifts Forced by Repatriation. In *Opening Archaeology: Repatriation's Impact on Contemporary Research and Practice*, pp. 91-107. School for Advanced Research Press, Santa Fe.

**Other readings to be announced; will be posted to ELMS or distributed in class.**