Course Description: This course examines the major themes, ideas, and research entailed in the historical archaeology of the African Diaspora. With an archaeological lens, this class focuses on themes of cultural reformulation, socio-historical experiences, and the means used by people of African descent to adapt to changing environments in the Atlantic world. By looking at the archaeology of Africans and African descendants, we will discuss the similarities and differences between populations and how research at differing archaeological sites contribute to our understanding of broader cultural processes. A critical component of this class looks to the historical, ethnographic, and archaeological research done in Africa and the Americas to inform us about assumptions and interpretations concerning the African Diaspora. We will critically review the methodological and theoretical issues regarding “Africanisms”, religious beliefs and practices, foodways, gender, the impact of race, racism, and ethnicity on archaeological research designs, and the development of analyses and interpretations specific to an archaeology of the African Diaspora. We will examine current archaeological case studies from different regions in the Americas, Europe, and significant and appropriate research directions for future and ongoing projects.

Course Objectives: By the end of the semester, students will:

- Develop knowledge on the key concepts and terms associated with archaeologies of the African diaspora;
- Develop an understanding of major archaeological case studies that investigate traditional and contemporary trends concerning the African diaspora;
- Learn archaeological methodologies and theories through hands-on research experience;
- Develop skills in written and verbal communication.

Texts:


In addition, various readings will be available on Blackboard (BB).

Course Format: Students from various majors and class-levels are welcome. Lectures highlight the major issues brought forth in the readings, but will not cover the readings in detail. Readings will be examined more fully during discussion. Come to class prepared to discuss readings thoughtfully and critically.

Class participation is 15% of your grade. Class participation grades are based upon attendance, the
quality of your pre-class questions and class presentation(s), as well as your regular participation in class. **Attendance is expected and essential.** Attendance is considered part of class participation and will be monitored with a sign-in system. An absence motivated by severe illness or extreme emergency will be counted as an excused absence. Students will be asked to provide documentation. Students missing class should notify the instructor via e-mail or by paper notice to the Instructor’s mailbox.

**Class discussion is vital.** The “R.O.P.E.S.” (Respect, Openness, Participation, Enthusiasm, Sensitivity) will serve as a guideline for all class discussion. The "R" for RESPECT includes TURNING OFF CELL PHONE RINGERS while class is in session and refraining from leaving class to answer phone cell phone calls. The “S” for SENSITIVITY includes being able to work cooperatively in groups as well as being sensitive to the diverse life experiences represented by fellow students.

**Assignments:**

1. **Pre-class questions.** Three questions are due each week in class (on Mondays), covering the readings assigned for that week. You should prepare three thoughtful questions that both reflect your comprehension of the readings and isolate salient points that you think will contribute to the discussion of the readings in class. Everyone is expected to turn in ten sets of questions over the course of the semester (so you have a couple of down-weeks if/when the semester gets a little hectic). Remember that active participation in class discussion is an integral part of the course and one way participation is graded is with the submission of your weekly questions about the readings.

2. **Site Summaries.** Summarize an African diaspora archaeological site, placing it in geographic, environmental, and cultural-historic context. The site summary should be descriptive, include illustrations and references, and written as if it was for an encyclopedia article. Summaries are due in class on January 29. Students will present information on their site on the date noted on the syllabus. A revised copy of the summary is also due on that date. Additional information will be handed out in class.

3. **Cemetery Project.** We will conduct research at the Douglas Cemetery (38RD1194), an African American Cemetery, in Columbia. Additional information will be handed out in class.

4. **Museum Exhibit Critique.** 5 page paper on a local museum exhibit that connects to the African diaspora. Additional information will be handed out in class.

5. **Mid-term Exam.**

6. **Final Exam.**

7. **Extra Credit** (Up to 15 points). There are 2 possible ways to earn extra credit. (1) Visit the Writing Center with writing assignments (3 points). (2) Write commentaries on grad student readings or indicated talks and films (up to 3 points each). The commentary is due the Monday after the event or unit. The commentaries should be 2-3 pages in length and should include the Author/Speaker/ Director, Title, Source, Date of publication/event, Publisher and City of the readings you are discussing. It should also include the following: (a.) What is the argument and evidence/sources? Not only what it’s about or the info-bits contained, but what’s it driving at, who’s the audience, and what’s at stake? (b.) Specify a passage/part that you find interesting or problematic and discuss it; (c.) Connect to at least 1 specific other piece from our course materials and link them
in a brief discussion; (d.) Reflect on HOW this aids or confuses your understanding of the issues we have been working on in this course.

**Grade distribution:**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>(15%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site Summaries</td>
<td>(15%)</td>
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<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
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<td>Museum Exhibit Critique</td>
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<td>Cemetery Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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NOTE: If you miss an exam or project deadline, it is your responsibility to contact me as soon as possible. If you do not contact me, you will receive a “0” for that exam or project. If you miss an exam or fail to turn in your project, you must have a written excuse. Proper documentation includes a signed medical excuse, letter from a supervisor, or letter from an appropriate official. If you need to make up an exam and have a documented excuse, you must schedule a make-up within a week from the date of the original exam.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Therefore, all submitted work during the course shall be the student's original work, with credit being given to any sources used. Violating this premise will affect evaluations of work submitted, and if necessary, adjudication will be processed by procedures according to University of South Carolina guidelines.

There may be periodic “pop” quizzes concerning assigned readings and films. Students are encouraged to complete readings prior to class meeting times. The evaluation of these “pop” quizzes will be computed into students' final class participation grades.

Students requesting classroom accommodations or disability resources are encouraged to contact the instructor about appropriate accommodations. *Please do not hesitate to approach your Instructor concerning these matters.*

**Course schedule:**

**M Jan 12**  
*Introductions, course overview*

**W Jan 14**  
*What is historical archaeology?*

Film: [*Other People's Garbage*](#)

**F Jan 16**  
*Historical archaeology, cont.*


**M Jan 19**  
No Class, Martin Luther King Holiday

**W Jan 21**  
*Archaeological perspectives on Africa*


F Jan 23 Guest lecture, Dr. Joanna Casey

M Jan 27 *Colonialism and The Slave Trade*


W Jan 29 Film: *Unearthing the slave trade*

*Site summaries due in class*

F Jan 31 Discussion/In class activity

M Feb 2 *What is the Archaeology of the African Diaspora?*


W Feb 4 Film: *Scattered Africa: Faces and Voices of the African Diaspora*

M Feb 9 *Pioneering works on Plantation studies*


W Feb 11

Site summary: Kingsley Plantation (FL) by __________________________

Site summary: Newton Plantation (Barbados) by __________________________
F Feb 13

Discussion/In class activity

M Feb 16  *Critiques of plantation studies*


*Doing Historical Archaeology*, pp. 5-10, 27-28, and 42-43.

W Feb 18

Site summary: Seville Plantation (Jamaica) by ____________________________

Site Summary: Flowerdew Hundred (Virginia) by ____________________________

F Feb 20

Discussion/In class activity

M Feb 23  *Material Culture: Race and Ethnicity*


W Feb 25

Site summary: Monticello (VA) by ____________________________

Site summary: Moravian town, Salem (NC) by ____________________________

Site summary: Maynard-Burgess House (MD) by ____________________________
F Feb 27  The Archaeology of the Recent African American Past Conference, South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology.

No Class – Attendance of conference events, mandatory, Extra credit opportunity.

M Mar 2  Foodways


Doing Historical Archaeology, pp. 93-95.

W Mar 4

Site summary: Drax Hall Plantation (Jamaica) by ________________________________

Site summary: Montpelier (VA) by ________________________________

Site Summary: Boston Saloon (NV) by ________________________________

F Mar 6  ****Mid-term Exam****

M Mar 9 – F Mar 13  Spring Break! No classes

M Mar 16  Space and Place: Looking at Landscapes and Yards


Doing Historical Archaeology, pp. 53-58, 64-66, 75-77, 81-86.

W Mar 18

Site summary: Pine Springs Camp (TX) by ________________________________

Site summary: Millwood Plantation (SC) by ________________________________
Site summary: Waverly Plantation (MS) by ________________________________

F Mar 20

Discussion/In class activity

M Mar 23  Religious Beliefs and Practices of Diaspora Communities


W Mar 25

Site summary: Poplar Forest (VA) by ________________________________

Site summary: Clifton Plantation (Bahamas) by ________________________________

Site summary: Freedmen's Town (TX) by ________________________________

F Mar 27

Discussion/In class activity

M Mar 30  Cemeteries and Burial Places


Doing Historical Archaeology, pp. 191-195, 196.

W Apr 1

Site summary: African American Burial Ground (NY) by ________________________________

Site Summary: First African Baptist Church (PA) by ________________________________

Site Summary: Campeche churchyard (Mexico) by ________________________________
**F Apr 3**

Discussion/In class activity

**M Apr 6**  
*Engendering the African Diaspora*


**W Apr 8**

Site summary: Birchtown (Canada) by ________________________________

Site summary: Lucinda Tilghman’s House, Oakland (CA) by ________________

Site summary: Oakley Plantation (LA) by ________________________________

**F Apr 10**

Discussion/In class activity

*Cemetery Project Due in Class*

**M Apr 13**  
*Resistance: Maroon settlements in the Americas*


**W Apr 15**

Site summary: Dismal Swamp by ________________________________

Site summary: Palmares Quilombo (Brazil) by ________________________________

**F Apr 17**

Film: *Quilombo Country*
M Apr 20  The Politics of Representation: Considering Heritage and Tourism


W Apr 22

Site Summary: New Philadelphia (IL) by ________________________________

Site Summary: Levi-Jordan Plantation (TX) by ________________________________

Site Summary: Seneca Village (NY) by ________________________________

F Apr 24  Society for American Anthropology Meetings, Atlanta, GA.

Discussion/In class activity

M Apr 27  Last day of class, Final review.

Museum Exhibit Critique Due in Class

Thursday Apr 30  Final Exam 9:00 am