

MIDDLETOWN MATERIALS: THEORY AND PRACTICE

ANTH 227 (ARCP 227 / AMST 262)

MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY, 11.00AM – 12.20PM
CROSS STREET ARCHAEOLOGY LAB

Prof Sarah Croucher

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Office: Anthropology Department (281 High St), Room 22

Office hours: Wednesday 1pm – 3pm, or email for alternative appointment times

Course Description

Buried beneath you as you walk the streets of Middletown is the residue of former residents. Mostly consisting of fragments of ceramics, glass and other objects, these hold the potential to begin to unlock the day to day history of their past owners and users. In this course, we will use collections from excavations in Middletown, with sites dating from the eighteenth through twentieth centuries, to begin to unearth these narratives.

We shall do this in two ways; a practical side will address artifact identification and classification. In half of classes, all students will participate in learning to catalogue and identify artifacts from the Middletown historical archaeological collections, building an ongoing database. Previous research notes from the original site excavators will also be consulted to help this recording process.

To help form interpretations, the theoretical side this course addresses artifact studies within archaeology, particularly historical archaeology in North America. We will address specific issues about the social role of artifacts, paying particular attention to the manner in which we can interpret their relation to ethnic, racialized, class and gendered identities. The question of increasing mass production of goods and their relation to modern consumer society will also be examined. The combination of data and theory will then form the basis of original student interpretation papers and presentations.

A website has already been set up for the class, and the main content of this website will be for the class to blog about their lab experiences and interpretive work, enabling students to share this with the Wesleyan and Middletown communities, as well as those interested in historical archaeology beyond Middletown:

<http://middletownmaterials.research.wesleyan.edu/>

Course Aims

- › To introduce the concepts of artifact classification in historical archaeology.
- › To gain a working knowledge, through practical experience, of artifacts relating to the late 18th century and early 19th century from Middletown.
- › To gain an understanding of how varying pieces of archaeological and historical evidence can come together in historical archaeology, and to utilize this knowledge in a research project.
- › To explore ways of representing archaeological findings to a wide audience, including the utilization of archaeological blogs.

Key Texts:

The majority of readings are book chapters and articles, and can all be found as PDF documents on Blackboard.

We will also be using a large number of artifact specific handbooks, articles, and websites for the purposes of artifact recognition.

Course Expectations

This is a small, partly practical based, seminar class. For lab work you will be working in pairs, assisting one another in learning about archaeological materials. I expect you to make every effort to work together as a team, particularly since this is also part of the normal archaeological research process. You will also be responsible for producing regular informal updates to the class on your findings to ensure that we work as a research community in the class. A major part of your lab assessment will be the regular completion of a journal of your research and work progress in the class, including at least one blog entry (this entry can be done as a collaborative piece with your lab partner). Since practical participation is such a vital part of your grade, if you miss more than two classes, your overall grade for the class will be lowered.

As we will always meet in the archaeology lab, it is also important that you *always* follow guidelines on proper lab etiquette and appropriate handling of archaeological materials. Further guidance will be provided in class. But there is to be **no** eating and drinking in class – partly this is for your own safety. Some of the artifacts we will be handling may be dirty. Make sure to always wash your hands thoroughly before you eat or drink after working in the lab. Care should always be taken to handle artifacts over appropriate surfaces and to ensure that artifacts are not separated from their appropriate labels.

I expect you all to complete assigned readings ahead of class, and to come to class prepared to engage with the content of these readings. All assignments should be completed by dates indicated on the syllabus. Any problems with meeting deadlines must be discussed at least 24 hours *before* deadlines, as extensions will not be granted in retrospect.

I am always happy to discuss any questions you have about the class, readings or assignments. I find that conversations are more productive in person than via email. My office hours are on Tuesday afternoons, but I am happy to arrange to meet with you at other times if you cannot meet me during this time. If you do have any questions, even if they seem trivial, please do come and see me to chat about these. When preparing your research paper, you should all meet with me at least once individually to go over your research outline.

Assessment

- › Ongoing journal of lab work and readings, including at least one blog entry. Final submission, Wednesday May 5, plus regular submission deadlines through the semester. **35% of final grade**
- › Research project prospectus. Due Friday April 2. **15% of final grade**
- › Class presentation of research project. Presentations May 3 and 5. **10% of final grade**
- › Research Project. Due Thursday May 13. **40% of final grade**

Class Schedule

Monday Jan 25

No reading

Introduction

Wednesday Jan 27

Required

Noël Hume, I. 2001. *If These Pots Could Talk: Collecting 2,000 Years of British Household Pottery*. Chapters 10, 11 and glossary.

Recommended

Barker, D and Majewski, T. 2006. 'Ceramic studies in historical archaeology.' In Hicks & Beaudry (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Historical Archaeology*.

Historical ceramics

Monday Feb 1

Middletown history and the Magill site

Warner, E.A. 1990. *A Pictorial History of Middletown*. Chapters 1 and 2.

Dyson, S. 1976. 'Preliminary Report of Wesleyan Historical Archaeological Excavations in Middletown, 1974-1976.'

Dyson, S. 1982. 'Material culture, social structure, and changing cultural values: The ceramics of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Middletown, Connecticut.' In Dickens (ed.), *Archaeology of Urban America: The Search for Pattern and Process*.

DeArmond, T. 2009. 'Middletown Site Summaries' (read Magill site only).

Wednesday Feb 3	Analyzing artifacts
Orser, C.E.Jr. 2004. <i>Historical Archaeology</i> (2 nd Edition). Chapter 4.	
Praetzellis, M and A. Praetzellis (eds.). 2004 <i>Putting the "There" There: Historical Archaeologies of West Oakland</i> . Chapter 1.	
Monday Feb 8	Lab
<u>Required</u>	
Miller, G.L. 2000. 'Telling Time for Archaeologists.' <i>Northeast Historical Archaeology</i> , 29: 1 – 22.	
Browse through archaeology interpretive and blog websites (see links at end of syllabus)	
<u>Recommended</u>	
Begin to look through specific identification literature. See additional bibliography for artifact identification literature and websites	
Wednesday Feb 10	Meaning and material culture
Graves-Brown, P. 2000. 'Introduction.' In Graves-Brown, P. (ed.), <i>Matter, Materiality and Modern Culture</i> .	
South, S. 1977. <i>Method and Theory in Historical Archaeology</i> . Selected sections – see Blackboard.	
Miller, G.L. 1991. 'A Revised Set of CC Index Values for Classification and Economic Scaling of English Ceramics from 1787 to 1880.' <i>Historical Archaeology</i> 25(1): 1-25.	
Monday Feb 15	Lab
SHARD (Sonoma Historic Artifact Research Database). 2008. <i>The How-To Manual</i> .	
Journal: first submission	
Wednesday Feb 17	Research themes in historical archaeology
Beaudry, M.C. 1999. 'The archaeology of domestic life in Early America.' In Egan, G. and Michael, R.L. (eds.), <i>Old and New Worlds</i> .	
Wylie, A. 1999. 'Why should historical archaeologists study capitalism?' In Leone, M.P. and P.B. Potter (eds.), <i>Historical Archaeologies of Capitalism</i> .	
Monday Feb 22	Lab
Wednesday Feb 24	18th and 19th century life through artifacts
Shackel, P.A. 1993. <i>Personal Discipline and Material Culture: An Archaeology of Annapolis, Maryland, 1695-1870</i> . Chapters 1, 2, and 4.	
Monday March 1	Lab

Wednesday March 3**Archive visit**

Leone, M.P. 2005. *The Archaeology of Liberty in an American Capital: Excavations in Annapolis*. Chapter 4.

Mrozowski, S.A. 1988. 'For gentlemen of capacity and leisure: The archaeology of colonial newspapers.' In Beaudry, M.C. (ed.), *Documentary Archaeology in the New World*.

**** Meet in Olin Library, Special Collections and Archives, 1st Floor ****

****Journal: second submission****

Monday March 8 – Sunday March 21**SPRING BREAK; no classes**

Monday March 22**Lab**

Wednesday March 24**Writing archaeology**Required

Stahl, A.B, Mann, R. and Loren, D.D. 2004. 'Writing for many: Interdisciplinary communication, constructionism, and the practices of writing.' *Historical Archaeology*, 38(2): 83-102.

Conkey, M.W. 2002. 'Expanding the archaeological imagination.' *American Antiquity*, 67(1): 166-168.

Recommended

Spector, J.D. 1993. *What this Axl Means: Feminist Archaeology at a Wahpeton Dakota Village*. Chapters 1 and 2.

Monday March 29**Lab**

****Journal: third submission****

Wednesday March 31**Consumer culture**Required

Cook, L.J., Yamin, R., and McCarthy, J.P. 1996. 'Shopping as meaningful action: Toward a redefinition of consumption in historical archaeology.' *Historical Archaeology* 30(4): 50-65

Shammas, C. 1993. 'Changes in English and Anglo-American Consumption from 1550 to 1800.' In Brewer, J. and Porter, R. *Consumption and the World of Goods*.

Recommended

McCracken, G. 1990. *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Chapter 1, 'The Making of Modern Consumption.'

Monday April 5**Lab**

Wednesday April 7

Bric a Brac and biography

Required

Mullins, P.R. 'Consuming aspirations: Bric-a-brac and the politics of Victorian materialism in West Oakland. In Praetzellis, M and A. Praetzellis (eds.). 2004 *Putting the "There" There: Historical Archaeologies of West Oakland*.

Spooner, B. 1986. 'Weavers and dealers: The authenticity of an oriental carpet.' In Appadurai, A. (ed.). *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*.

Recommended

Appadurai, A. 1986. 'Introduction: Commodities and the politics of value.' In Appadurai, A. (ed.). *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*.

****Project prospectus submission deadline, Fri April 2 (12pm) ****

Monday April 12

Lab

Wednesday April 14

Ethnicity and group identity

Jones, S. 1999. 'Historical categories and the praxis of identity: the interpretation of ethnicity in historical archaeology.' In Funari, P.P., Hall, M. and Jones, S. (eds.), *Historical Archaeology: Back from the Edge*.

Brooks, A.M. 1997. 'Beyond the fringe: Transfer-printed ceramics and the internationalization of Celtic Myth.' *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 1(1): 39-55.

****Journal: fourth submission****

Monday April 19

Lab

Wednesday April 21

Gender and class

Required

Wurst, L. 1999. 'Internalizing class in historical archaeology.' *Historical Archaeology*, 33(1): 7-21.

Wall, D.D. 1999. Examining gender, class, and ethnicity in nineteenth-century New York City.' *Historical Archaeology*, 33(1): 102-117.

Recommended

Wurst, L. and R.K. Fitts 1999. 'Introduction: Why confront class?' *Historical Archaeology* 33(1): 1-6.

Monday April 26

Lab

Wednesday April 28

Lab

Monday May 3

Final Presentations

Wednesday May 5 (end classes)

Final Presentations

****Journal: final submission deadline (entire journal to be submitted) ****

Thursday May 13, 12pm

****Final project submission deadline****

Web Resources

The following are websites where you can find information on ceramic types, maker's marks, and glassware:

Florida Museum of Natural History, historical ceramic type collection:

http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/histarch/gallery_types/ceramics_intro.asp

Historic Glass Bottle Identification and Information Website:

<http://www.sha.org/bottle/>

Historical Archaeology online explorer (Journal of the *Society for Historical Archaeology*):

http://www.sha.org/publications/onlinepubs_html/default.cfm

Hunt, William J. Jr. (compiler), 1995, *Embossed Medicine Bottle Labels: An Electronic Finding Aid for the Identification of Archeological Specimens*. National Park Service, Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln, Nebraska. Revised August, 1997:

http://www.nps.gov/history/mwac/bottle_glass/index.html

Maryland Archaeological Conservation Lab, *Diagnostic Artifacts in Maryland*:

<http://www.jefpat.org/diagnostic/Index.htm>

North Staffordshire Pottery Companies and Trade Marks:

<http://www.thepotteries.org/pottery.htm>

Parks Canada Archaeology Research Publications:

http://www.sha.org/research_resources/parks_canada.cfm

The following sites may provide useful local resources:

Middlesex County Historical Society:

<http://www.middlesexhistory.org/>

University of Connecticut Map and Geographic Information Center:

<http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/>

The following sites are about the techniques we may use in the class:

British Archaeological Jobs Resource, *Short Guide to Digital Photography*:

<http://www.bajr.org/documents/digitalphotography.pdf>

Michael Shanks, Archaeology and Photography:

<http://metamedia.stanford.edu/projects/MichaelShanks/943>

These websites are other archaeological blogs or sites about archaeological research. They may provide inspiration or critical starting points for your blog entries and research projects:

Archaeological Data Service (UK based, but interesting for issues of digital archiving and archaeology):

<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/>

Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery:

<http://www.daacs.org/>

Levi Jordan Plantation:

<http://www.webarchaeology.com/html/Default.htm>

Market Street Chinatown Archaeological Project (Stanford University):

<http://marketstreet.stanford.edu/>

Mount Vernon Estate, archaeological collections:

http://www.mountvernon.org/learn/pres_arch/index.cfm/ss/47/

New Philadelphia archaeological project, Illinois:

<http://www.heritage.umd.edu/chrsweb/New%20Philadelphia/NewPhiladelphia.htm>

Society for Historical Archaeology (links to wider research, information about historical archaeology, ethics and more):

<http://www.sha.org/>