

# AR702: CONTEMPORARY THEORY IN ARCHAEOLOGY





Class meets Mondays 9 am – 12:00 pm, STO 243

Instructor: Prof. Mary Beaudry [beaudry@bu.edu](mailto:beaudry@bu.edu) Voicemail: 8-1650 Semester II, 2009–2010  
Rm. STO 345C, 675 Comm. Ave. Office Hrs.: TR 2–3 pm, W 3–4 pm, & by appt.

## Course Objectives

In this course we explore aspects of contemporary theory in archaeology arising from post-modernist critiques of recent archaeological practice. As noted, our approach will be exploratory in nature; we will examine new material, some of it controversial because it challenges not just the status quo but recent developments as well. Our goal is to develop and to refine our own perspectives on contemporary archaeological thought and practice through engaging in constructive critique of the readings.

## Texts (available for purchase at the Boston University Bookstore):

-  Meskell, Lynn, and Robert Preucel, editors, 2006, *A Companion to Social Archaeology*. Wiley. New edition, paperback. ISBN-13: 978-1405156783
-  Holtorf, Cornelius, 2005, *From Stonehenge to Las Vegas: Archaeology as Popular Culture*. AltaMira Press, Walnut Creek, CA. ISBN: 0759102678
-  Lucas, Gavin. *The Archaeology of Time* (Themes in Archaeology Series) Routledge, New York, 2005. ISBN-13: 978-0415311984
-  Wallace, Jennifer, 2004, *Digging the Dirt: The Archaeological Imagination*. Duckworth, London. ISBN: 0715632787

Readings indicated on the syllabus by an asterisk (\*) will be available on the course web site or downloadable from the Web or through Boston University Mugar Library's electronic subscription service via the URLs provided.

## Course Format and Requirements

The class will be conducted in a seminar format; a portion of our weekly class meetings will be devoted to discussion of the week's readings. All students are expected to attend all classes and to participate in class discussion; to this end, a student will be designated as discussion leader for each session. Students must come to class having done all of the assigned reading and be prepared to discuss it.

All students enrolled in the course are expected to prepare a final paper of from 20–25 pages in length. Please note that *all paper topics must be approved by the instructor on or before February 22, 2010*. **Papers are due no later than 5 p.m. on May 3, 2010. I will not accept late papers.** There is also a final examination, cumulative in content, take-home in format. Grades for the course will be based upon the following: class attendance and participation & discussion: 30%; paper: 35%; final examination, 35%.

You should be aware of GRS policy regarding and dates for adding, dropping, and withdrawing from classes; see <http://www.bu.edu/reg/dates/ldates-spring10.html>.

## Academic Integrity:

Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the University's policy about what constitutes plagiarism (<http://www.bu.edu/grs/academics/resources/adp.html>). I will refer cases of suspected academic misconduct to the Dean's Office.

## Course Web Site

All class participants have access to the course materials through the course web site; here you will find course documents such as the syllabus, announcements about the course, copies of or access to course readings, links to WWW sites you will visit as part of your course assignments, and a communications center from which you can communicate with other members of the class. Here is where you will find copies of any reading assignments that are not in your textbooks for the course. I'll also be posting course announcements to the Web site. Please plan to visit the site regularly.

You can access the AR702 web site by clicking on the class number/name as posted in your schedule on the Student Link portion of the Boston University web pages, or you can point your browser to <http://blackboard.bu.edu>, then click on the link to the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. You will be prompted to login; to do so, enter your BU login name (the portion of your email address that comes before the @). When prompted to enter a password, type in your regular password. Once you are "in" you can change your password and other details of your account, arrange to have your course email forwarded to another address, and so on. (If you've used the system before, it will have stored any changes you made to your personal details.) Follow the on-line instructions.

## Meeting Topics and Reading Assignments

*(Subject to changes & additions)*

### Jan 25 Introduction to the Course

**Archaeology from the outside: an art historian's view**

Wallace, *Digging the Dirt*

### Feb 1 Archaeology and popular culture

Holtorf, *From Stonehenge to Las Vegas*

### Feb 8 A big tent?

- Preucel, Robert W., and Lynn Meskell, 2004. Knowledges. In *A Companion to Social Archaeology*, ed. by Lynn Meskell and Robert W. Preucel, pp. 3–22. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Hodder, Ian, 2004. The "Social" in Archaeological Theory: An Historical and Contemporary Perspective. In *A Companion to Social Archaeology*, ed. by Lynn Meskell and Robert W. Preucel, pp. 23–42. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Trigger, Bruce G., 2004. Cross-Cultural Comparison and Archaeological Theory. In *A Companion to Social Archaeology*, ed. by Lynn Meskell and Robert W. Preucel, pp. 43–65. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Patterson, Thomas C., 2004. Social Archaeology and Marxist Social Thought. In *A Companion to Social Archaeology*, ed. by Lynn Meskell and Robert W. Preucel, pp. 66–81. Blackwell, Oxford.
- \*Yoffee, Norman and Andrew Sherratt; 1993. Introduction: the sources of archaeological theory. In *Archaeological Theory: Who Sets the Agenda?*, ed. by N. Yoffee & A. Sherratt, pp. 1–9. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

- \*Wylie, Alison, 1993. A Proliferation of New Archaeologies: 'Beyond Objectivism and Relativism.' In *Archaeological Theory: Who Sets the Agenda?*, ed. by N. Yoffee & A. Sherratt, pp. 20–26. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

## **TUESDAY Feb 16    A critical look at contemporary fieldwork**

- \*Lucas, Gavin, 2001. *Critical Approaches to Fieldwork: Contemporary and Historical Archaeological Practice*, Chapters 1, 2, 5. Routledge, London.
- \*Lucas, Gavin, 2010, Fieldwork and Collecting. In *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, ed. by Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- \*Edgeworth, Matt, The Clearing: Heidegger and Excavation. *Archaeolog*:  
<[http://traumwerk.stanford.edu/archaeolog/2006/09/the\\_clearing\\_heidegger\\_and\\_exc\\_1.html#more](http://traumwerk.stanford.edu/archaeolog/2006/09/the_clearing_heidegger_and_exc_1.html#more)>
- \*Symonds, James, 2010, Yes we can! But so what? Some thoughts on contemporary archaeology.. *Archaeolog*:  
<[http://traumwerk.stanford.edu/archaeolog/2010/01/yes\\_we\\_can\\_but\\_so\\_what\\_some\\_ob.html](http://traumwerk.stanford.edu/archaeolog/2010/01/yes_we_can_but_so_what_some_ob.html)>

## **Feb 22    Theoretical strands, part 1: Feminist theory in archaeology**

- Gilchrist, Roberta 2004, Archaeology and the Life Course: A Time and Age for Gender. In *A Companion to Social Archaeology*, ed. by Lynn Meskell and Robert W. Preucel, pp. 142–160. Blackwell, Oxford.
- \*Conkey, M. W., and J. Gero, 1997, Program to practice: Gender and feminism in archaeology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26: 411–438.
- \*Wylie, Alison, 2007, Doing Archaeology as a Feminist: Introduction. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 14: 209–216.
- \*Conkey, Margaret W., 2007, Questioning Theory: Is There a Gender of Theory in Archaeology? *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 14: 285–310.
- \*Gero, Joan M., 2007, Honoring Ambiguity / Problematizing Certitude. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 14: 311–327.
- \*Wilkie, Laurie A., and Katherine Howlett Hayes, 2006, Engendered and Feminist Archaeologies of the Recent and Documented Pasts. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 14(4): 243–264.

## **Mar 1    Theoretical strands, part 2: Structure and agency**

- \*Dobres, Marcia-Anne, and John E. Robb, 2000, Agency in archaeology: Paradigm or platitude? In *Agency in Archaeology*, ed. by Marcia-Anne Dobres and John Robb, pp. 3–17. Routledge, New York.
- \*Hodder, Ian, 2000, Agency and individuals in long-term processes. In *Agency in Archaeology*, ed. by Marcia-Anne Dobres and John Robb, pp. 21–33. Routledge, New York.
- \*Gero, Joan M., 2000, Troubled travels in agency and feminism. In *Agency in Archaeology*, ed. by Marcia-Anne Dobres and John Robb, pp. 34–39. Routledge, New York.
- \*Brumfield, Elizabeth M., 2000, On the archaeology of choice: agency studies as a research stratagem. In *Agency in Archaeology*, ed. by Marcia-Anne Dobres and John Robb, pp. 249–255. Routledge, New York.
- \*Ortner, Sherry B., 2006, Power and Projects: Reflections on Agency. In *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject*, by Sherry B. Ortner, pp. 129–. Duke University Press, Durham, NC.
- \*Bintliff, John, 2004, Time, Structure, and Agency: The *Annales*, Emergent Complexity, and Archaeology. In *A Companion to Archaeology*, ed. by J. Bintliff, pp. 174–194. Blackwell, Oxford.
- \*Joyce, Rosemary A., and Jeanne Lopiparo, 2005. PostScript: Doing Agency in Archaeology. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 12(4): 365–374.

### **Mar 15 Theoretical strands, part 3: Practice theory**

- \*Bourdieu, Pierre, 1977, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, p. 79–87, 159–197. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- \*de Certeau, Michel, 1984, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pp. 29–42, 43–60, 91–110. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- \*Barrett, John C., 1987-88, Fields of discourse: reconstituting a social archaeology. *Critique of Anthropology* 7: 5–16.
- \*Pollard, Joshua, 2001, Aesthetics of depositional practice. *World Archaeology* 33(2): 315–333.
- \*Dobres, Marcia-Anne, 2000. *Technology and Social Agency: Outlining a Practice Framework for Archaeology*. Blackwell, Oxford. Selected pages TBA.
- \*Joyce, Rosemary A., 2004. Unintended consequences? Monumentality as a novel experience in Formative Mesoamerica. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 11: 5–29.
- \*Gardner, Andrew, 2002, Social identity and the duality of structure in late Roman-period Britain. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 2: 323–351.
- \*Ortner, Sherry B., 2006, Introduction: Updating Practice Theory. In *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject*, by Sherry B. Ortner, pp. 1–18. Duke University Press, Durham, NC.

### **Mar 22 Theoretical strands, part 4: Materiality, consumption, object biographies**

- Buchi, Victor, 2004. Material Culture: Current Problems. In *A Companion to Social Archaeology*, ed. by Lynn Meskell and Robert W. Preucel, pp. 179–194. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Mullins, Paul, 2004. Ideology, Power, and Capitalism: The Historical Archaeology of Consumption. In *A Companion to Social Archaeology*, ed. by Lynn Meskell and Robert W. Preucel, pp. 195–211. Blackwell, Oxford.
- \*Miller, Daniel, 1995, Consumption and Commodities. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24: 141–161.
- \*Smith, Monica, 2007, Inconspicuous Consumption: Non-Display Goods and Identity Formation. . *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 14: 412–438.
- \*Gosden, Chris, and Yvonne Marshall, 1999, The Cultural Biography of Objects. *World Archaeology* 31(2): 169–178.
- \*Walker, William H., and Michael Brian Schiffer, 2006, The Materiality of Social Power: The Artifact-Acquisition Perspective. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 13(2): 67–88.
- \*Brown, Bill, 2001, Thing Theory. *Critical Inquiry* 28(1): 1–22.
- \*Discussion article, Materials Against Materiality, *Archaeological Dialogues* 14(1), December 2007 (Ingold, Tilley, Knappet, Miller, Nilsson).

### **Mar 29 Themes in contemporary archaeology: Archaeology and politics**

- Meskell, Lynn, and Robert W. Preucel, 2004. Politics. In *A Companion to Social Archaeology*, ed. by Lynn Meskell and Robert W. Preucel, pp. 215–229. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Gosden, Chris, 2004. The Past and Foreign Countries: Colonial and Post-Colonial Archaeology and Anthropology. In *A Companion to Social Archaeology*, ed. by Lynn Meskell and Robert W. Preucel, pp. 161–178. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Bernbeck, Reinhard, and Susan Pollock, 2004. The Political Economy of Archaeological Practice and the Production of Heritage in the Middle East. In *A Companion to Social Archaeology*, ed. by Lynn Meskell and Robert W. Preucel, pp. 335–352. Blackwell, Oxford.

McGuire, Randall H., 2004. Contested Pasts: Archaeology and Native Americans. In *A Companion to Social Archaeology*, ed. by Lynn Meskell and Robert W. Preucel, pp. 374–395. Blackwell, Oxford.

Optional: remaining essays in Part IV of *A Companion to Social Archaeology*

\*Shanks, Michael, 2006, Archaeology and Politics. In *A Companion to Archaeology*, ed. by John Bintliff, pp. 490–508. Blackwell, Oxford.

#### **Apr 5 Themes in contemporary archaeology: Time/Place**

Lucas, *The Archaeology of Time*

\*Fletcher, Roland, 2004, Materiality, Space, Time, and Outcome. In *A Companion to Archaeology*, ed. by J. Bintliff, pp. 110–140. Blackwell, Oxford.

**Place:** Essays in Part III of *A Companion to Social Archaeology*

#### **Apr 12 Themes in contemporary archaeology: Embodiment & sexuality**

Joyce, Rosemary A., 2004. Embodied Subjectivity: Gender, Femininity, Masculinity, Sexuality. In *A Companion to Social Archaeology*, ed. by Lynn Meskell and Robert W. Preucel, pp. 82–95. Blackwell, Oxford.

\*Joyce, Rosemary, 2005. Archaeology of the Body. *Annual Reviews in Anthropology* 34:139–158.

\*Meskell, Lynn, 2000. Writing the body in archaeology. In *Reading the Body: Representations and Remains in the Archaeological Record*, ed. by Rautman A.E., pp. 13–21. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.

\*Fisher G., and Loren D.D. 2003. Introduction: embodying identity in archaeology. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 13:225–230.

Crossland, Zoë, 2010, Materiality and Embodiment. In *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, ed. by Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry. Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

#### **THURSDAY Apr 22 Archaeology of experience/experience of archaeology**

\*Thomas, Julian, 2004, The Great Dark Book: Archaeology, Experience, and Interpretation. In *A Companion to Archaeology*, ed. by J. Bintliff, pp. 21–36. Blackwell, Oxford.

\*Latour, Bruno, 1999, Circulating reference. In *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the of Reality Science Studies*, by B. Latour, pp 24–79. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

\*Shanks, Michael, 2000, The Three Landscapes Project.  
<http://documents.stanford.edu/michaelshanks/62>

\*Holtorf, Cornelius, 2001, Fieldtrip Theory: Towards Archaeological Ways of Seeing. Electronic version of a paper published in *Interrogating Pedagogies: Archaeology in Higher Education*, ed. by P. Rainbird and Y. Hamilakis, pp. 81-87. British Archaeological Reports, *International Series* 948. Archaeopress, Oxford.  
<http://web.comhem.se/cornelius/Fieldtrips.html>

\*Van Dyke, Ruth M. and Susan E. Alcock, 2003, Introduction. In *Archaeologies of Memory*, ed. by Ruth M. Van Dyke and Susan E. Alcock, pp. 1-30. Blackwell, Oxford.

\*Blake, Emma (1998) Sardinia's Nuraghi: Four Millennia of Becoming. *World Archaeology* 30(1):59–71.

#### **Apr 26 Theory and Practice: a review**

\*Jones, Andrew, *Archaeological Theory and Scientific Practice* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), Chapters 1–3

\*Discussion article on theory & practice from *Archaeological Dialogues* 13(2), December 2006 (<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayIssue?jid=ARD&volumeId=13&issueId=02>)