

Archaeology of the African Diaspora

ANTH 576 / AFRO 398

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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:

Singleton, T. A. (1999). "I, Too, Am America" Archaeological Studies of African-American Life. Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press.

Thornton, J. (1998). Africa and Africans in the making of the Atlantic world, 1400-1800. New York, Cambridge University Press.

Barber, Russell J. (1994). Doing Historical Archaeology: Exercises Using Documentary, Oral, and Material Evidence. Prentice Hall.

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:

Class Participation	(15%)
Site Summaries	(15%)
Mid-term Exam	(20%)
Museum Exhibit Critique	(15%)
Cemetery Project	(20%)
Final Exam	(15%)

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.*

Deetz, J. (1996) Recalling Things Forgotten: Archaeology and the American Artifact. In small things forgotten: An archaeology of early American life, pp. 1-36. New York, Anchor Books/Doubleday. (BB)

Orser Jr., C. E. (2004). What is Historical Archaeology? In Historical Archaeology, pp. 1-25. 2nd Edition. Upper Saddle River, Pearson Prentice Hall. (BB)

M Jan 19 No Class, Martin Luther King Holiday

W Jan 21 *Archaeological perspectives on Africa*

Mitchell, P. (2005). Introducing Africa: Definitions, Routes, Resources, and Interactions. In African Connections: Archaeological Perspectives on Africa and the Wider World, pp. 1-32. Walnut Creek, CA, AltaMira Press. (BB)

Mitchell, P. (2005). The Development and Spread of African Farming Systems. In African Connections: Archaeological Perspectives on Africa and the Wider World, pp. 33-64. Walnut Creek, CA, AltaMira Press. (BB)

F Jan 23 Guest lecture, Dr. Joanna Casey

M Jan 27 *Colonialism and The Slave Trade*

Thornton, J. (1998). Africans in Africa. In Africa and Africans in the making of the Atlantic world, 1400-1800, pp. 13-125. New York, Cambridge University Press.

Webster, Jane (2008). Historical Archaeology and the Slave Ship. International Journal of Historical Archaeology 12: 1-5. (BB)

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?*

Thornton, J. (1998). African Cultural Groups in the Atlantic World. In Africa and Africans in the making of the Atlantic world, 1400-1800, pp. 183-205. New York, Cambridge University Press.

Singleton, Theresa and Mark D. Bograd (1995). The African Experience in America: A Brief Overview. In The Archaeology of the African Diaspora in the Americas. Guides to the Archaeological Literature of the Immigrant Experience in America, Number 2, pp. 5-12. The Society for Historical Archaeology. (BB)

Orser Jr., C. E. (1998). The Archaeology of the African Diaspora. Annual Review of Anthropology 27: 63-82. (BB)

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

M Feb 9 *Pioneering works on Plantation studies*

Thornton, J. (1998). Africans in colonial Atlantic societies. In Africa and Africans in the making of the Atlantic world, 1400-1800, pp. 129-151. New York, Cambridge University Press.

Bullen, A. K. and R. P. Bullen (1945). Black Lucy's Garden. Bulletin of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society 6(2): 17-28. (BB)

Ascher, R. and C. H. Fairbanks (1971). Excavation of a Slave Cabin: Georgia, U.S.A. Historical Archaeology 5: 3-17. (BB)

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*

Thornton, J. (1998). Africans and Afro-Americans in the in Atlantic world: Life and labor. In Africa and Africans in the making of the Atlantic world, 1400-1800, pp. 152-182. New York, Cambridge University Press.

Potter Jr., P. B. (1991). What is the Use of Plantation Archaeology? Historical Archaeology 25(3): 94-107. (BB)

Thomas, B. W. (1995). Source Criticism and the Interpretation of African-American Sites. Southeastern Archaeology 14(2): 149-157. (BB)

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*

Thornton, J. (1998). Transformations of African culture in the Atlantic world. In Africa and Africans in the making of the Atlantic world, 1400-1800, pp. 206-234. New York, Cambridge University Press.

Perry, Warren and Robert Paynter (1999). Artifacts, Ethnicity, and the Archaeology of African Americans. In "I, Too, Am America": Archaeological Studies of African-American Life, edited by T. A. Singleton, pp. 299-310. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

Ferguson, L. (1980). Looking for the "Afro" in Colono-Indian Pottery. Archaeological Perspectives on Ethnicity in America: Afro-American and Asian American Culture History. R. L. Schuyler, pp. 14-28. Farmingdale, NY, Baywood Publishing Co. (BB)

Doing Historical Archaeology, pp. 127-129, 133-138, 166-169, 174-175, and 181-183.

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

Franklin, M. (2001). The Archaeological Dimensions of Soul Food: Interpreting Race, Culture, and Afro-Virginian Identity. Race and the Archaeology of Identity, edited by C. E. Orser, pp. 88-107. Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press. (A0)

Farnsworth, P. (2001). Beer Brewing and Consumption in the Maintenance of African Identity by the Enslaved People of the Bahamas, 1783-1834. Culture & Agriculture 23(2): 19-30. (BB)

McKee, Larry (1999). Food Supply and Plantation Social Order: An Archaeological Perspective. In "I, Too, Am America": Archaeological Studies of African-American Life, edited by T. A. Singleton, pp. 218-239. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

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

Edwards-Ingram, Ywone (1998). "Trash" Revisited: A Comparative Approach to Historical Descriptions and Archaeological Analyses of Slave Houses and Yards. In Keep your head to the sky: Interpreting African American home ground, edited by G. Gundaker, pp. 245-271. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia. (BB)

Cowan, Tynes (1998). The Slave in the Swamp: Affects of Uncultivated Regions on Plantation Life. In Keep your head to the sky: Interpreting African American home ground, edited by G. Gundaker, pp. 193-207. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia. (BB)

Vlach, J. M. (1993). The Plantation Landscape. In Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery, pp. 1-17. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press. (BB)

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*

Thornton, J. (1998). African religions and Christianity in the Atlantic world. In *Africa and Africans in the making of the Atlantic world, 1400-1800*, pp. 235-271. New York, Cambridge University Press.

Wilkie, L. A. (1995). Magic and Empowerment on the Plantation: An Archaeological Consideration of African-American World View. *Southeastern Archaeology* 14(2): 136-148. (BB)

Davidson, J. M. (2004). Rituals Captured in Context and Time: Charm Use in North Dallas Freedman's Town (1869-1907), Dallas, Texas. *Historical Archaeology* 38(2): 22-54. (BB)

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*

Bolton, H. C. (1891). Decoration of Graves of Negroes in South Carolina. *Journal of American Folk-Lore* 4(12): 214. (BB)

Ingersoll, E. (1892). Decoration of Negro Graves. *Journal of American Folk-Lore* 5(16): 68-69. (BB)

Armstrong, D. V. and M. L. Fleishman (2003). House-Yard Burials of Enslaved Laborers in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 7(1): 33-65. (BB)

McCarthy, J. P. (1997). Material Culture and the Performance of Sociocultural Identity: Community, Ethnicity, and Agency in the Burial Practices at the First African Baptist Church Cemeteries, Philadelphia, 1810-1841. *American Material Culture: The Shape of the Field*. A. S. Martin and J. R. Garrison, pp. 359-379. Winterthur, DE, Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum. (BB)

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*

Scott, E. M. (2004). Introduction: Gender Research in African American Archaeology. Engendering African American Archaeology: A Southern Perspective, edited by J. E. Galle and A. L. Young, pp. 1-18. Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press. (BB)

Wilkie, L. A. (2004). Granny Midwives: Gender and Generational Mediators of the African American Community. Engendering African American Archaeology: A Southern Perspective, edited by J. E. Galle and A. L. Young, pp. 73-100. Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press. (BB)

Franklin, M. (2001). A Black Feminist-Inspired Archaeology? Journal of Social Archaeology 1(1): 108-125. (BB)

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*

Thornton, J. (1998). Resistance, runaways, and rebels. In Africa and Africans in the making of the Atlantic world, 1400-1800, pp. 272-302. New York, Cambridge University Press.

Deagan, K. (1999). Fort Mosé: Earliest free African-American town in the United States. In "I, Too, Am America": Archaeological Studies of African-American Life, edited by T. Singleton, pp. 261-282. Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press.

Weik, T. (1997). The Archaeology of Maroon Societies in the Americas: Resistance, Cultural Continuity, and Transformation in the African Diaspora. Historical Archaeology 31(2): 81-92. (BB)

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*

LaRoche, C. and M. Blakey (1997). Seizing Intellectual Power: The Dialogue at the New York African Burial Ground." Historical Archaeology 31(3): 84-106. (BB)

Bruner, E. M. (1996). Tourism in Ghana: The Representation of Slavery and the Return of the Black Diaspora. American Anthropologist 98(2): 290-304. (BB)

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 Lastday of class, Final review.

Museum Exhibit Critique Due in Class

Thursday Apr 30 Final Exam 9:00 am