There is now no Native Past without the Stranger, no Stranger without the Native. No one can hope to be mediator or interlocutor in that opposition of Native and Stranger, because no one is gazing at it untouched by the power that is in it. Nor can anyone speak just for the one, just for the other. There is no escape from the politics of our knowledge, but the politics is not in the past. The politics is in the present -- Greg Denning, Mr. Bligh’s Bad Language, CUP 1992: 178-179.

Course Description: This course addresses some of the ways that archaeology (and thus anthropology and history) lends stability to, and reflects dominant values of, the nation state. We will want to understand how political ideologies enter and support archaeological research; we consider theoretical issues that show how archaeology is a political practice, including the relationship between scientific knowledge and power, the fierce nationalism that motivates much of the practice of archaeology in the world today, how archaeology is depicted in the media and how archaeology depicts the “primitive” past, who is an archaeologist and who isn’t, and why Native Americans often reject archaeology as a foreign logic. We will take up particular topics and case studies relative to these issues: the U.S. legislation that protects archaeological sites (what makes a site “significant”); oppositional claims over the “truth” of prehistory; the public presentation of archaeology through specific museum exhibits and films; the political ramifications of class, race, gender, and ethnicity in archaeology.

The Politics of the Past will not be conducted as a lecture course. Instead, a lively dialogue and exchange about topics that students have been reading about is expected. Be prepared for controversy and please be tolerant and respectful of views different from your own.

Course Readings: The course readings consist of various book chapters and journal articles and are available on Blackboard.

Course Grading: Course grades will be determined by five components (expanded upon in a separate handout); (1) Class participation and the preparation of questions based on the readings; (2) participation in one class panel or debate; (3) a critique of a museum exhibit or another public aspect of archaeology; (4) a web-based research project tracking the trade of antiquities; and (5) preparation of a “press release” pertaining to issues or policies about archaeological/ historical/ anthropological research.

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
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<td>Panel/Debate presentation</td>
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<td>Museum critique</td>
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1. **PRE-CLASS QUESTIONS** are due each week in class, 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 and isolate salient points that 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. **PANELS / DEBATES** are instituted in the class to encourage students to take responsibility for presenting parts of the course to the class, to encourage team learning among students, and to come up with innovative and diverse formats for presenting controversial or interesting new data in class. While the topics are pre-selected, panels and debates are encouraged to identify and locate materials relevant to each issue, deciding what to emphasize and how to present this material. Please avoid didactic formats where “panelists” simply divide up the material to be covered and each person researches and reads their separate part. Rather, work together to produce a well-informed, interactive presentation, where the class learns a lot of new material in a new way! Some possibilities: radio interviews, court hearings, lively arguments, etc.

Each member of the panel must participate, but roles do not need to be equivalent; responsibilities can be divided as each panel sees fit. Panels may want to designate one member as panel “facilitator” or “m.c.” to direct, narrate or coordinate parts of the panel. Plan carefully and practice, if possible! Panels should be timed to last approximately 20 minutes with another 15 minutes for class discussion. Panels should plan to meet with me for research resources or to consider possible formats for presentation. It is the responsibility of each panel to arrange an appointment for such discussions -- it may be sufficient for only a few members of the panel to come and then communicate with the others. A single grade will be assigned to the entire panel based on preparation, content, and format, but particular individual efforts will be recognized, taking the peer evaluation forms into account. Panel grades will be made known to the panel the week following the presentation.

Panel / debate topics will be:

I. (Week 4) What are the effects / rules / responsibilities for archaeologists of rich nations to conduct research in foreign countries or native territories? Should American and archaeologists of other wealthy “first world” nations be allowed to conduct research in underdeveloped parts of the world? Under what conditions? What rules and regulations have been applied to foreign researchers? Will / should the pattern of colonialist archaeology (IS it colonialist?) continue in the 21st century?

II. (Week 6) Practice, professionalism and the public: what role for the public? for government? in the practice of archaeology. This topic directly addresses various forms of oversight and insight that the public could insist on having, in how archaeological projects are funded, written up and disseminated. Are archaeologists sufficiently accessible? responsible? to various public constituencies? what role would you design for public constituencies, in the design and undertaking of archaeological projects?
III. (Week 9) Repatriation of National Treasures: Should England have to return the Elgin Marbles? Is the Peabody Museum in Cambridge a good place for the sacred cenote materials of the Chichen Itza, Mayan site? Are the totem poles carefully curated in the Smithsonian best returned to soggy Vancouver or Queen Charlotte islands.

IV. (Week 14) The Media and Representations of Archaeology. How is archaeology portrayed in the media? Do movies such as Indiana Jones and Lara Croft: Tomb Raider help or hinder archaeologists? Should archaeologists work to improve or change popular representations of the field, if so how?

3. Three short projects will be undertaken in this class, resulting in 4-6 page papers for each one. Each of these will be described in a separate handout!

Assigned Readings

Week 1

Introduction: Who “owns” / “controls” / “interprets” the past? The past as contested landscape; who are the stakeholders?

Week 2

Systems of science, systems of knowledge: Social studies of science. How do we know about the past?


Week 3

Nationalism and archaeology: Do nations NEED archaeology?


Week 4

The imperialism of doing archaeology in another country; World Heritage international issues and UNESCO interventions.


FIRST PANEL: Ethics/ Rules/ Responsibilities for Foreign Research

Week 5 Indigenous North America: Who tells the story?


MUSEUM EXHIBIT CRITIQUE DUE

Week 6 Archaeology & the law in North America; Historic preservation legislation


SAA Ethics Committee (1996). Principles of Archaeological Ethics. Electronic document,


**Week 7**  
**Reburial, NAGPRA, and repatriation**


**Week 8**  
**The “Kennewick Man” controversy**


Homework video: NOVA: Kennewick Man Controversy

Week 9 What's for sale? Collectors, hobbyists, museums, and flea markets.


THIRD PANEL: Repatriation of National Treasures

Week 10 North American Historical Archaeology: Great Men and Big Houses


RESEARCH PROJECT DUE
Week 11  
**Identity Politics: African American Archaeology, as a Case Study.**


Week 12  
**Archaeology and Social Justice: Community archaeology, Engaging Issues that Matter...**


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**Week 13 Cultural Heritage, Heritage Management and Cultural Tourism**


**Week 14 Indiana Jones and Lara Croft: Representations of Archaeology in the Media**


**PRESS RELEASE DUE**

**FOURTH PANEL: Media Representations of Archaeology**

**Week 14 To Dig, or Not to Dig: What happens to the collections?**


Week 15   Lost Tribes and Sunken Continents


Class recap: What have we taken away from this course?