



ANTH 60a

Fall 2008

Introduction to Archaeological Methods

Professor Javier Urcid

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- *Course description*

This course is an introduction to archaeological field methods, emphasizing procedures for designing and conducting field and laboratory research. Students participate in an excavation project at the Sibley site, a 19th and 20th century farm located in the outskirts of the Brandeis campus. Except for days with bad weather, part or all the class will be held outside at the excavation site. Discussion topics will include the methods and goals of archaeology, analytical techniques employed in material studies, problems and challenges in the interpretation of past human behavior, and ethical issues in the practice of archaeology.

- *Course Outline*

September

Date Topic

Readings

T 02 Introduction to the course

T 09 Research Design and Sampling techniques

Hester et al. 1997, chapters 1-3
Renfrew and Bahn 2000, chapters 1-2
Macaulay 1979

T 16 Survey, Mapping, Excavation

Hester et al. 1997 Chapters 4-5 and 9
Renfrew and Bahn 2000, chapter 3

T 23 Data collection

Hester et al. 1997, chapters 6-8

M 29 Stratigraphy and Chronology

Hester et al. 1997, chapters 10 and 14
Renfrew and Bahn 2000 Chapter 4

October

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|---|----|--|---|
| T | 07 | Techniques of analysis: Ceramics and other technologies
[Survey report due] | Renfrew and Bahn 2000 Chapter 8 |
| T | 14 | NO CLASS (Sukkot)
Midterm grades due Oct 17 | None |
| T | 21 | NO CLASS (Shimini Atzeret) | None |
| T | 28 | Techniques of analysis: Botanical and faunal remains | Hester et al. 1997, chapters 12-13
Renfrew and Bahn 2000, chapters 6-7 |

November

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|---|----|---|---|
| T | 04 | Techniques of analysis: Human remains | Hester et al. 1997, chapter 11
Renfrew and Bahn 2000, chapter 11 |
| T | 11 | Interpretation and explanation:
Experimental archaeology
and Ethnoarchaeology | Thomas 1999, chapter 6 |
| T | 18 | Interpretation and explanation:
Gender in archaeology | Conkey and Gero 1991, pp. 3-30 <u>or</u>
Conkey and Gero 1997, pp. 411-437 |
| T | 25 | GIS and Archaeology [lecture by Golden]
&
Review sessions for field reports | Bernhardsen 2002: 1-26 |

December

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|---|----|---|--|
| T | 02 | Cognition and Ideology | Renfrew and Bahn 2000, chapter 10 |
| T | 09 | Interpretation and explanation:
Models of interactions and social archaeology
Ethical issues in Archaeology | Renfrew and Bahn 2000, chapters 5 & 9
Renfrew and Bahn 2000, chapter 14 |

Th 11 Final Exam

- ***General policies, Assignments, and Grading***

The course includes archaeological investigations at the Sibley site and students should expect a variety of weather conditions, including possibly light rain at times in the late fall. Students should be prepared for these conditions and be willing and able to meet these requirements.

Class Participation

Students are expected to attend and participate in class on the basis of required readings. Participation will be evaluated in terms of quality and not quantity, and will be worth 15% of the final grade.

Survey report

Each student will submit by **October 7** a 3-page report based on their individual surface exploration of the area in and around the Sibley site. The guidelines for structuring the report are posted on LATTE under 'Report Guidelines'. A sketched map must accompany the report, and both text and drawing must be submitted electronically no later than 5pm. It is on the basis of this report that a midterm grade will be assessed. The report will be worth 15% of the final grade.

Excavation report

Because of the size of the class students will form groups (4-5 students per group). Each group is expected to complete a field and laboratory report. The report will account for 50% of the final individual grade. The indoor class session scheduled for Tuesday **November 18th** is for the progress review of the reports. The guidelines for structuring the report are posted on LATTE under 'Report Guidelines'. The deadline for the final reports is **December 2nd**. Five percent of the grade will be subtracted each subsequent day if the paper is turned in after the submission deadline. No reports will be accepted after Tuesday December 9.

Final Exam

The final exam (worth 20% of final grade) will include 2 or 3 essays intended to foster critical thinking by comparing and contrasting assumptions, statements, or theoretical issues from different authors. A study guideline for the final exam will be posted on LATTE, and a discussion of the exam's structure will be held during class on December 2.

Summary of Grading

Class attendance/participation	15%	} Bases for Midterm grade
Survey Report	15%	
Excavation report (by groups)	50%	
Final exam	20%	

Text books

Hester T. H., H. J. Shafer, and K.L. Feder
1997 *Field Methods in Archaeology*, 7th edition. Mountain View, Mayfield. (**Regular Library Reserve**)

Renfrew Colin, and Paul Bahn

2000 *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice*. 3rd edition. Thames and Hudson, London. (**Regular Library Reserve**)

Other Readings

Bernhardsen, Tor

2000 Geographical Information Systems and Geographical Information. In *Geographic Information Systems: An Introduction*, pp. 1-26. John Wiley and Sons Inc., New York.

Conkey, M. W., and J. M. Gero

1991 Tensions, Pluralities, and Engendering Archaeology: An Introduction to Women in Prehistory. In *Engendering Archaeology: Women in Prehistory*, J.M. Gero and M.W. Conkey, pp. 3-30. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

1997 Programme to Practice: Gender and Feminism in Archaeology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26: 411-437.

Macaulay, David

1979 *Motel of the Mysteries*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. (**Regular Library Reserve**)

Thomas, David, H.

1999 Middle-Range Research: Ethnoarchaeology and Experimental Archaeology. In *Archaeology: Down to Earth*. 2nd edition, pp. 157-183. Harcourt Brace, New York.

- ***Recommended reading***

Trigger, Bruce G.

1989 *A History of Archaeological Thought*. Cambridge University Press.

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