

# ANG 6930 – Proseminar in Anthropology IB: Archaeology

Section 28308  
Fall 2020

Monday 1:55 – 4:55 PM (Periods 7-9)

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## Course Description

*Proseminar in Anthropology I* is the first half of the year-long proseminar for incoming graduate students, and *IB* is the second half of the first half, dealing with one of American anthropology's four subfields, namely *archaeology*. Some of you have a solid background in archaeology and may expect this class to be a review of knowledge gained. Others perhaps have only passing exposure to the field, and even less interest. And still others may know nothing more about archaeology than what popular culture dishes up. It is not humanly possible to cover in 21 short hours over seven weeks the entirety of archaeology. What then do we cover? What gets glossed and what garners our serious attention? Should we stick with the history of the field? How about its theoretical basis? Methods? Results? What?!

In Proseminar IB we will take a look at archaeology through a wide lens: an archaeology that is relevant to other anthropologists, which is to say an archaeology structured by themes and theories of broad human relevance. The underlying premise is that archaeology is not merely the study of the past, but also the historical production of the present, and a basis for imagining alternative futures. This is a modern, even avant-garde perspective on archaeology, one that disabuses practitioners of the divisions between history and prehistory, between nature and culture, and between primitive and civilized.

Now, an emphasis on contemporary theory and practice in archaeology and its bearing on modern living runs the risk of leading us astray from the legacy of several generations of forebears. In other words, as we direct our gaze to the here and now we may lose sight of the then and there. The history of archaeological practice indeed deserves our attention, but again, we are working with only half a semester. The compromise, in this breezy overview, is to devote a portion of each lecture to the intellectual legacy of the week's topic, which will be the responsibility of your instructor. For example, when we discuss the modern approach to what are called "landscapes," we acknowledge its relationship to the genre of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century practice known as "settlement archaeology," or when we talk about archaeology as history in modern thinking, we draw connections to early 20<sup>th</sup> century "culture history" of Boasian genesis.

## Required Readings:

All required readings will be posted on the Canvas e-learning site for the seminar, and are listed below by weekly topic. Many of the readings are drawn from the Preucel and Mrozowski reader

listed below:

Preucel, Robert W., and Stephen A. Mrozowski (editors)  
2010 *Contemporary Archaeology in Theory: The New Pragmatism*. Wiley-Blackwell, Malden, Massachusetts.

The Preucel and Mrozowski reader contains 32 articles/chapters, all well worth reading, but we will discuss only about half of them. The reader also has a nice eight-part structure to it, but we will operate with a slightly different structure that requires grouping some of reader's sections and splitting others apart. Additional readings are drawn from the literature of the past few years. Weekly topics and the readings assigned for each are organized on the Canvas platform as Modules.

### **Format and Expectations**

I would prefer to treat Proseminar IB as a true seminar, but anticipate the need for some lecture to ensure that basic concepts and principles in archaeology are not overlooked. Your instructor will lead off each week with an overture to the assigned topic that identifies the major research themes, history of investigation, and broader relevance.

For each of six class meetings after our first meeting, three of you will lead class discussion on readings assigned to you by your instructor. Everyone will lead two discussions over the six-class period and each discussion will entail two articles/chapters per leader. Discussion leaders will prepare for each assigned article/chapter a ~200-word summary with full bibliographic information to submit to your instructor for posting in Canvas no later than 48 hours before we meet. Everyone is responsible for reading all assigned readings, as well as posted summaries. Without literally reading their summaries, discussion leaders will present to the class a short summary of the assigned readings, describe the theory and method employed to elucidate the topics, critically evaluate the quality and relevance of the work, and pose questions for class discussion.

#### *Class Discussion Leaders by Date and Topic*

Oct. 26	Wayfinding in Archaeology (Sassaman)
Nov. 2	Archaeology as History (xxxxxxx)
Nov. 9	Archaeology as Science (xxxxxxx)
Nov. 16	Memory, Identity, and Persons (xxxxxxx)
Nov. 23	Materiality (xxxxxxx)
Nov. 30	Landscapes and Movement (xxxxxxx)
Dec. 7	Mobilizing Pasts for Futures (xxxxxxx)

The intent of discussion is to synthesize and interpret the literature, so avoid the tendency to simply recapitulate the readings. Discussion each week is expected to last about 1.5 hours.

*Short paper on applied archaeology:* You are expected to locate an example of archaeological results and/or perspectives that were mobilized to solve a real-world problem. This can be something with direct, practical value (e.g., showing that pre-Columbian designs for domestic architecture are best adapted to geologically unstable locations), or more abstract utility, as in

heritage making (e.g., building sense of community through common history), or even the legalities of indigenous rights (e.g., native land claims against the state). You may find inspiration in a pair of articles assigned for the week of November 9 (Kintigh et al. 2014; Cobb 2014) on the Grand Challenges of archaeology. A title and 100-word abstract of your chosen topic is due that day. For the final paper you are expected to summarize the case material and explain its relevance to contemporary society. Papers are expected to be ~5 double-spaced pages (12-pt font, 1-inch margins throughout) in length and conform to the style guide of *American Antiquity* ([https://documents.saa.org/container/docs/default-source/doc-publications/style-guide/saa-style-guide\\_updated-july-2018c5062f7e55154959ab57564384bda7de.pdf?sfvrsn=8247640e\\_6](https://documents.saa.org/container/docs/default-source/doc-publications/style-guide/saa-style-guide_updated-july-2018c5062f7e55154959ab57564384bda7de.pdf?sfvrsn=8247640e_6)). Papers will be due on our last meeting, December 7. This is not a simple summary of a paper, but rather a thoughtful discussion about how the work actually articulated with the “real world,” which then means you will have to find complementary literature, including all manner of digital media (video, virtual, audio, website, and more), that exists outside the realm of academic publications.

## Grading

You can earn up to 100 points for Proseminar IB, broken down by responsibilities as follows:

Participation = 35 points  
 Article/Chapter summaries = 20 points  
 Discussion leadership = 20 points  
 Abstract – 5 points  
 Short paper = 20 points

Note: participation presupposes (virtual) attendance, and you will lose 5 points for an unauthorized absence, and will lose 2 points for being late to class on any given day by more than five minutes.

The usual point equivalencies for letter grades (including minus grades) apply:

93.0-100 A	90.0-92.9 A-
87.0-89.9 B+	83.0-86.9 B
80.0-82.9 B-	77.0-79.9 C+
73.0-76.9 C	70.0-72.9 C-
67.0-69.9 D+	63.0-66.9 D
60.0-62.9 D-	<60.0 E

## Schedule

October 26    Wayfinding in Archaeology

*Readings:* Preucel and Mrozowski 2010, Part I (hereafter all readings from this volume are coded as “P&M2010”); Blakey Chap. 27 (P&M2010); Cipolla et al. 2019; Rosenzweig 2020; SAA Principles of Archaeological Ethics <https://www.saa.org/career-practice/ethics-in-professional-archaeology>

*Lecture topics:* After getting oriented to first half of Proseminar I, we will review briefly the

history of a uniquely Americanist setting that enfolded archaeology into a four-field discipline. We will take an analytic view of the three major axes of archaeological observation (time, space, and form), consider the role of inference, and discuss changes in the research orientation of the profession since its inception in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We confront ethics right from the start, and make it clear what divides a profession from a hobby from a business from a crime. The historical circumstances of archaeologies worldwide are touched upon, and we conclude with a look at the topics in P&M2010 that shape the contours of modern practice.

## November 2    Archaeology as History

*Readings:* Pauketat Chap. 5 (P&M2010); Sassaman and Randall 2012; Schmidt and Walz Chap. 20 (P&M2010); Diaz-Andreu Chap. 21 (P&M2010); Cobb 2005; Lightfoot and Gonzalez 2018

*Discussion Leaders:* XXXXXXXX

*Lecture topics:* What makes Americanist archaeology different from the study of classical history? Are not the experiences of all people in all times and places historical in the sense that they entailed changes over time that were incorporated into memory as the past, as thus history? We will see how this convoluted rationale for calling all human experience historical plays in today's application of social theory that was itself derived, in many cases, from the study of modern people, not the ancients. We will consider the extent to which approaches to the past that are versed in proximate explanations for change (real-time, localized conditions) are amenable to generalization in a transhistorical sense. The relationship of an archaeology such as this to modern social theory is clear, but let us consider too its relationship to the culture-history paradigm that arguably set archaeology on its 20<sup>th</sup>-century pathway to historical science.

## November 9    Archaeology as Science

*Readings:* Smith et al. 2012; Kintigh et al. 2014; McGhee 2008; Wylie Chap. 9 (P&M2010); Nicholas and Bannister Chap 32 (P&M2010); Cobb 2014

*Discussion Leaders:* XXXXXXXXXXXX

*Due:* Title and 100-word abstract on proposed paper

*Lecture topics:* If you know the French film *King of Hearts*, you know it is about a group of lunatics who escaped from an asylum during a WWI bombing and basically took over the nearby, abandoned village. To see how science has at times been used in archaeology is to imagine how objectification and measurement have been used to round up the lunatics and lock them back in their cage. As a philosophy and as method, science serves well the need for archaeology to set itself apart from its antiquarian roots. But that does not mean that the ways of western science reign supreme, or that they are somehow immune to the subjectivities it strives to control. In this context, it would seem the important question to ask is: To what end will archaeological knowledge be put? What purpose will it serve? Can there

be truth without justice? As we will see, science today in archaeology operates at both ends of the spectrum: promising to answer the big questions of our times for human good, while guarding against subaltern perspectives that muddle the clarity of “truth.” Who let the lunatics out?

#### November 16 Memory, Identity, and Persons

*Readings:* Lightfoot et al. Chap. 8 (P&M2010); Joyce Chap. 11 (P&M2010); Sinopoli Chap. 22 (P&M2010); Hubert 2016; Henry 2017; Baires and Baltus 2017

*Discussion Leaders:* XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

*Lecture topics:* Many of the nuances of modern theory about social or cultural identity, the body, personhood, and senses of history, or memory reveal the taken-for-granted of archaeology, notably its tendency to reduce cultural variation to a list of definitive material traits. We will take a look at a number of examples to show how our archaeological understanding of identity and history is not served well by reductionist and totalizing logic but instead must confront the contingent, counter-intuitive, and relational qualities of being human.

#### November 23 Artifacts and Materiality

*Readings:* Mills Chap. 18 (P&M2010); Hodder 2011; Talady Chap. 30 (P&M2010); Joyce 2012; Gillespie 2012; Wittmore 2014; Voss et al. 2018

*Discussion Leaders:* XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

*Lecture topics:* Archaeology would not have a purpose with objects, and objects would not exist without humans. Or would they...? Humans need things and things need humans, so the material and mental are one, or at least can be construed as one. We will look at changes in the way archaeologists look at objects and the object world with emphasis first on typology and ending up with contemporary theory on object agency and other posthumanistic perspectives on materiality. It goes without saying that archaeologists know a thing or two about material culture, but recent perspectives on *things* broadens the scope of archaeology, including penetrations of the modern world far outside the profession.

#### November 30 Landscapes and Movement

*Readings:* Ingold, Chap 1 (P&M2010); Tacon Chap. 2 (P&M2010); Erickson Chap. 4 (P&M2010); Dawdy 2006; Liebmann 2017; Seidemann and Halling 2019; Howey 2020

*Discussion Leaders:* XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

*Lecture topics:* Archaeology has always dealt with *space*, but has only recently began to understand *place*. Likewise, archaeology has long focused on *mobility* as a proxy for cultural complexity, but has only recently looked at *movement* of objects, as well as bodies,

as historical practice. Breaking down this fascinating array of issues involving natural and built environments, pathways, migrations, terraforming, exchange networks, pilgrimage, wayfinding, and more is the goal of this far-too-brief lecture on landscape, from historical and modern perspectives.

December 7    Mobilizing Pasts for Futures

*Readings:* Dawdy 2010; Echo-Hawk and Zimmerman Chap. 15 (P&M2010); Atalay Chap. 29 (P&M2010); Haskell and Stawski 2017; Hauser et al. 2018; Stahl 2020

*Discussion Leaders:* XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

*Lecture topics:* Rather than listening to another lecture, we will devote an hour or more to reviewing the case studies you have researched for your 5-page papers, due on this day. Be prepared to hold forth on your case study for a couple of minutes, and to field any questions your colleagues may have. Group discussion on the weekly topic will follow.

*Due:* Short paper on applied archaeology

**Readings beyond those taken from Preucel and Mrozowski 2010:**

Baires, Sarah E., and Melissa R. Baltus

2017    Matter, Places, and Persons in Cahokian Depositional Acts. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 24:974-997.

Cipolla, Craig N., James Quinn, and Jay Levy

2018    Theory in Collaborative Indigenous Archaeology: Insights from Mohegan. *American Antiquity* 84:127-142.

Cobb, Charles R.

2005    Archaeology and the “Savage Slot”: Displacement and Emplacement in the Premodern World. *American Anthropologist* 107:563–574.

2014    The Once and Future Archaeology. *American Antiquity* 79:589-595.

Dawdy, Shannon Lee

2006    The Taphonomy of Disaster and the (Re)Formation of New Orleans. *American Anthropologist* 108:719-730.

2010    Clockpunk Anthropology and the Ruins of Modernity. *Current Anthropology* 51:761– 793.

Gillespie, Susan D.

2012    The Entanglement of Jade and the Rise of Mesoamerica. Patty Jo Watson Distinguished Lecture, Archaeology Division, American Anthropological Association. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, San Francisco.

- Haskell, David L., and Christopher J. Stawski  
 2017 Re-Envisioning Tarascan Temporalities and Landscapes: Historical Being, Archaeological Representation, and Futurity in Past Social Processes. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 24:611-639.
- Hauser, Mark W., Whitney Battle-Baptiste, Koji Lau-Ozawa, Barbara L. Voss, Reinhard Bernbeck, Susan Pollock, Randall H. McGuire, Uzma Z. Rizvi, Christopher Hernandez, and Sonya Atalay  
 2018 Archaeology as Bearing Witness. *American Anthropologist* 120:535-548.
- Henry, Edward R.  
 2017 Building Bundles, Building Memories: Processes of Remembering in Adena-Hopewell Societies of Eastern North America. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 24:188-228.
- Hodder, Ian  
 2011 Human-thing Entanglement: Towards an Integrated Archaeological Perspective. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 17:154-177.
- Howie, Meghan C. L.  
 2020 Other-Than-Human Persons, Mishipishu, and Danger in the Late Woodland Inland Waterway Landscape of Northern Michigan. *American Antiquity* 85:347-366.
- Hubert, Erell  
 2016 Figuring Identity in Everyday Life. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 44:1-13.
- Joyce, Rosemary  
 2012 Life with Things: Archaeology and Materiality. In *Archaeology and Anthropology: Past, Present, and Future*, edited by David Shankland, pp. 119-132. Bloomsbury, London.
- Kintigh, Keith W., Jeffrey H. Altschul, Mary C. Beaudry, Robert D. Drennan, Ann P. Kinzig, Timothy A. Kohler, W. Fredrick Limp, Herbert D. G. Maschner, William K. Michener, Timothy R. Pauketat, Peter Peregrine, Jeremy A. Sabloff, Tony J. Wilkinson, Henry T. Wright, and Melinda A. Zeder  
 2014 Grand Challenges for Archaeology. *American Antiquity* 79:5-24.
- Liebmann, Matthew J.  
 2017 From Landscapes of Meaning to Landscapes of Signification in the American Southwest. *American Antiquity* 82:642-661.
- Lightfoot, Kent G., and Sarah L. Gonzalez  
 2018 The Study of Sustained Colonialism: An Example from the Kashaya Pomo Homeland in Northern California. *American Antiquity* 83:427-443.
- McGhee, Robert  
 2008 Aboriginalism and the Problems of Indigenous Archaeology. *American Antiquity* 73:579-597.

- Rosenzweig, Melissa S.  
2020 Confronting the Present: Archaeology in 2019. *American Anthropologist* 122:284-305.
- Sassaman, Kenneth E., and Asa R. Randall  
2012 Shell Mounds of the Middle St. Johns Basin, Northeast Florida. In *Early New World Monumentality*, edited by Richard L. Burger and Robert M. Rosenswig, pp. 53-77. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.
- Seidemann, Ryan M., and Christine L. Halling  
2019 Landscape Structural Violence: A View from New Orleans's Cemeteries. *American Antiquity* 84:669-683.
- Smith, Michael E., Gary M. Feinman, Robert D. Drennan, Timothy Earle, and Ian Morris  
2012 Archaeology as a Social Science. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* 109:7617-7621.
- Stahl, Ann Brower  
2020 Assembling "Effective Archaeologies" towards Equitable Futures. *American Anthropologist* 122:37-50.
- Voss, Barbara L., J. Ryan Kennedy, Jinhua (Selia) Tan, and Laura W. Ng  
2018 The Archaeology of Home: *Qiaoxiang* and Nonstate Actors in the Archaeology of the Chinese Diaspora. *American Antiquity* 83:407-426.
- Witmore, Christopher  
2014 Archaeology and the New Materialisms. *Journal of Contemporary Archaeology* 1(2):203-246.