

PROBLEMS IN CARIBBEAN PREHISTORY

SPRING 2017

Professor: Bill Keegan

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Course description: This is a class in applied theory that draws case studies from the prehistory of the Caribbean. Every week we will discuss a major archaeological theme and explore the different theoretical perspectives that have been applied to this theme. The class meets on Wednesday (periods 6-8). Students will be responsible for one reading per week, they are asked to prepare a one-page written outline for distribution to the rest of the class. They are expected to be prepared to discuss this reading along with other relevant knowledge that they bring from their own areas of expertise.

Grading: 50% of the final grade will be based on class participation. The other 50% will be based on individual projects. I do not believe in grades. Anyone who does the assigned work will receive an A. Anyone falling below this threshold will be informed during the semester.

Project: At the end of the semester, students will make a presentation to the class based on their field of research. Each presentation should last no more than 30 minutes, including time for questions. Students can choose between a written paper of no longer than 10 pages, or an oral presentation, whichever they prefer.

Textbooks:

1. Samuel Wilson (2007). *The Archaeology of the Caribbean*. Cambridge University Press, New York.
2. William Keegan and Corinne Hofman (2017). *The Caribbean Before Columbus*. Oxford University Press, New York.

PRELIMINARY COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 (1/4): Introduction

Week 2 (1/11): History of Caribbean Archaeology

Week 3 (1/18): Problems in Caribbean Prehistory -- Classification

Week 4 (1/25): Epistemology -- How do you know anything?

Week 5 (2/1): Kinship and Social Organization

Week 6 (2/8): Island Colonization

Week 7 (2/15): Human-Environmental Interactions

Week 6 (2/22): Economy

Week 7 (3/1): Demography

Week 8 (3/8): Spring Break

Week 9 (3/15): Political Organization

Week 10 (3/22): Myth and Ritual

Week 11 (3/29): SAA meeting – no class

Weeks 12-15: Student Presentations