

ANG 6186/ANT 4930 – Southeastern Archaeology

Section 3486 (grad); 3487 (undergrad)
Spring 2020

Monday 11:45-2:45 PM (Periods 5-7)
CBD 224

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Course Description

Southeastern Archaeology is a graduate seminar on the interpretation of 13,000 years of human history in the southeastern United States. The region boasts a rich and fascinating array of ancient cultural traditions, ranging from the thriving founding populations of the late Pleistocene, to the precocious moundbuilders of the mid-Holocene, to the experimental farmers of the late Holocene, to the chiefly societies of the late pre-Columbian and Contact eras. Although this history lends itself to a linear narrative of change—the dominant narrative in the region for over 60 years—the seminar is structured by topics of interest to a broader audience, such as the origins of agriculture, hereditary inequality, migration, monumentality, and urbanism. Recent research in the region has exposed the shortcomings of perspectives that assume, *a priori*, that change was linear and irreversible, with societies evolving over time into increasingly larger and more complex forms. A topical approach not beholden to a linear narrative encourages greater comparative study, and thus greater analytical utility outside of the region.

Required Text (a pdf of which will be provided free of charge):

Anderson, David G., and Kenneth E. Sassaman
2012 *Recent Developments in Southeastern Archaeology: From Colonization to Complexity*.
Society for American Archaeology Press, Washington, D.C.

All other required readings will be posted on the Canvas e-learning site for the seminar.

Format and Expectations

As a graduate seminar, *Southeastern Archaeology* is designed to maximize discussion on the literature of the region with limited formal lecture. The seminar is structured by the chapter titles of another Anderson and Sassaman book, under development. The first three chapters of the book summarize regional environment and the history of archaeological practice. We will review these topics the first two meetings (Jan. 13 and 27) after orientation on January 6, the first day we meet.

Thereafter the seminar is dedicated to our discussion of classic and recent literature on topics that crosscut time and space. You have the responsibility of selecting topics on which you seek

relevant literature and lead discussion. The graduate students also have a paper to write. Details on these two expectations follow.

Leading Two Discussions (All Students). By January 13 you will have selected two of the topics listed below and two more as back-ups in case your first two choices are oversubscribed. These are the 10 seminar topics we will cover from February 3 through April 13. You will be responsible for leading discussion on the two topics you choose and are assigned. Depending on enrollment (<10>), you may be joined in leading discussion by a fellow student, but not more than one.

February 3	Peopling, Other Migrations, and Social Networks of Movement
February 10	Technology, Innovation, and Communities of Practice
February 17	Subsistence Ecology and Anthropogenic Landscapes
February 24	Plant Domestication and the Domestication of Society
March 9	Promise and Risks of Coastal Living
March 16	Monumentality (includes mortuary practice)
March 23	Religion and the Cosmos
March 30	Power and Politics
April 6	Nascent Urbanism
April 13	Ethnogenesis, Coalescence, and Conflict

A few mandatory readings are assigned for each topic (listed below), but Discussion Leaders are expected to select and provide to the Instructor pdf copies of four additional readings at least one week in advance of the discussion date. In addition, Discussion Leaders are expected to provide to the Instructor ~200-word summaries of each selected reading with full bibliographic information at least 48 hours in advance of the discussion date.

Readings selected by Discussion Leaders will consist of three articles or chapters of regional interest that were published since 2014 and one of general interest (i.e., theoretical or methodological pieces or comparative material from outside the region). Discussion Leaders are expected to not only provide summaries of readings they assign, but also command the content of all the readings assigned that day. Powerpoint presentations are permissible, but certainly not required. The discussion of these readings each week is expected to last about 1.5 hours and must be structured around a set of questions that will invoke participation by fellow students who will have read all mandatory readings as well as the ~200-word summaries of the selected readings. Leaders sharing a topic and its discussion will coordinate their individual contributions.

Research paper (Graduate Students Only): You have the choice of writing a bibliographic essay on one of the two topics you choose, or a problem-oriented paper related to your own research. For the former you are expected to locate most of the relevant regional literature on the topic dating to the last 50 years, as well as a representative sample of older literature. For the latter the scope and content of the paper is determined by the problem orientation but is otherwise expected to involve a sizable body of literature. This is an opportunity to craft a literature review for your thesis or dissertation, or perhaps a publishable paper. Papers are expected to be ~20 double-spaced pages in length and conform to the style guide of *American Antiquity*

http://www.saa.org/Portals/0/SAA/Publications/StyleGuide/StyleGuide_Final_813.pdf). Papers will be due on the last meeting of the seminar, April 20.

Grading: I expect everyone to read all assigned readings before each meeting; attend every meeting and contribute to discussion; prepare and distribute on time effective summaries of papers you choose for discussion; lead two good discussions in coordination with your partner, if any; and write an excellent paper that is turned in on time and meets the stylistic specifications of *American Antiquity*. If you do all that you will have earned an A for the seminar. The value of each of these expectations, on a 100-point scale, is as follows:

- Attendance = 13 points (one point per meeting, not counting first day)
- Participation = 17 points (consistently having something meaningful to say earns full credit)
- Summaries = 10 points (well written and submitted to Instructor on time)
- Leading discussion = 25 points (leading organized, structured discussions)
- Paper = 35 points (well done, meets specs, on time)

Schedule

January 6. Introduction and orientation

January 13. Social History of Archaeology in the American Southeast, 1800-present and Environmental History of the American Southeast, 20,000 B.P. to Present

We launch the seminar by considering how broader trends in U.S. and world history influenced the practice of archaeology in the Southeast. Our starting point is the Indian Removal practices of the early nineteenth century, when the Southeast was transformed from a land of indigenous people to one of economic and political opportunism by a growing nation. We trace the influences of slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction and Carpetbaggers, the Preservation Movement, the Depression, World War II and the GI Bill, civil rights, environmental protection, feminism, and neoliberalism.

We introduce the environment of the study area starting with an overview of the landscape during the last glacial maximum, when sea levels were some 100 m lower than at present, the Gulf and Atlantic shorelines were up to hundreds of kilometers seaward of their present positions, now-extinct late Pleistocene fauna roamed the region, and temperate and subtropical biomes were north of current distributions. Ensuing changes in climate, vegetation, and fauna are outlined, with emphasis on those aspects long-considered relevant to any understanding of human settlement in the region, such as seasonal variation, primary production, availability of surface water, and the development of floodplains and estuaries. We also consider the distribution of inorganic resources of human utility, notably toolstone, potting clay, and metal ores.

Reading: Anderson and Sassaman 2012: Chapter 1; Sullivan et al. 2012

January 20. MLK Day – No Class

January 27. A Tradition of Culture History, a Culture History of Traditions

The Southeast has long been known as a bastion of culture-history in an ever-shifting landscape of alternative forms of archaeological inquiry. We use this truism to outline the basic cultural-historical taxa for the region, providing you the framework one expects in discussions of cultural form and sequence. We also introduce the suite of alternative explanations southeastern archaeologists have promoted in their study of culture variation and change, situating each in the broader trends of archaeological practice. We close this meeting by discussing how an emphasis on culture history has predisposed southeastern archaeology to modern concerns for historical contingency, proximate cause, and indigenous politics.

Reading: Anderson and Sassaman 2012: Chapters 2-5; Dunnell 1990; Loren and Wesson 2010

February 3. Peopling, Other Migrations, and Social Networks of Movement

Southeastern specialists in recent years have come to appreciate that indigenous people throughout time relocated often and over vast distances, and that migrations and other displacements were enabled by networks of affiliation and interaction spanning the entire region and beyond. Discussion of the patterns and processes of peopling in the region showcases Southeast data in the Pre-Clovis debate while providing a useful example of the interplay between movement and place in the formation of cultural identity. Migrations of later Paleoindian, Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian communities are used to highlight the synergistic roles of environment, demographics, and geopolitics in broader patterns of culture change.

Readings: Alt 2006; Jefferies 2004; Pitblado 2011; Sassaman 2011

February 10. Technology, Innovation, and Communities of Practice

The material culture of the ancient Southeast is notable for its inventory of stone tools and pottery, along with objects of organic media (e.g., bone and antler items, perishable) that tend to be preserved in only limited contexts (caves, rockshelters, submerged sites, and shell-bearing sites). The now-defunct cultural-evolutionary model of technological change posits that innovations arose through processes of selection to meet the increased demands of growing population, decreased mobility, and the diminishing returns of “traditional” practice. Modern understanding of innovations such as groundstone, pottery (the oldest in North America), and wall-trench architecture, however, suggest that technological change was never simply responsive to microeconomic demand but also to social and cultural prerogatives of identity and affiliation that were at times an inducement and at other times an impediment to innovation.

Readings: Moore 2010; Pauketat and Alt 2005; Sassaman and Rudolphi 2001; Wallis 2008

February 17. Subsistence Ecology and Anthropogenic Landscapes

In 1958 Joseph Caldwell published a treatise on southeastern archaeology that long-resonated in explanations for subsistence change in the Southeast. For Caldwell, diversification of diet from a narrow

focus on game, to the growing reliance on smaller, less mobile resources like nuts, seeds, and shellfish, to the eventual cultivation of native and then tropical plants reflected both the response of humans to an increasingly productive and benevolent environment and the increased demands of larger, more settled populations. More nuanced, modern approaches to diet breadth and domestication emphasize the co-evolution of environment and culture, with “nondomesticated” resources such as oak and hickory trees responsive to anthropogenic activity like burning, land-clearing, and selective harvesting. Likewise, the procurement of presumed dietary resources was often affected by social or cultural demands well beyond subsistence, as in the collection of shellfish for monument construction.

Readings: Abrams and Nowacki 2008; Claassen 2010:Chaps 1-5; Lapham 2011; Smith 2011

February 24. Plant Domestication and the Domestication of Society

Separate threads in the history of domesticated plants in the Southeast intertwine in the domestication of indigenous societies. We begin with the latest research on the Eastern Agricultural Complex, a series of weedy annuals and cucurbita with a 7000-year history of manipulation and eventual cultivation. We then take a look at the introduction of tropical cultigens in the region and consider how prior experience with native cultigens shaped the direction and pace of subsistence change. The role of storage, intensification, and nutrition are likewise considered in the context of increased sedentism, household form and domestic economy, population growth, and political economy.

Readings: Cobb and Nassaney 2002; Fritz 1990; Gremillion et al. 2008; Smith and Yarnell 2009

March 2. Spring Break – No Class

March 9. The Promise and Risks of Coastal Living

Nine of the thirteen states that comprise the Southeast have coastlines, and today the coastal populations of those states comprise the vast majority of people in the region. This may have always been the case, but southeastern coastlines, particularly those before ca. 4,500 years ago, are now partially or fully submerged by the seas and thus the coastal record of ancient life is physically and chronologically truncated. We review recent efforts to locate underwater sites in the region, from near shore waters to the edge of the continental shelf, and place these results in the context of ongoing debate about the scope of coastal settlement prior to 4500 B.P., as well as how minor fluctuations since then have influenced behavior. Terrestrial coastal records offer ample evidence for more-or-less permanent settlement, even as groups had to adjust to the realities of fluctuating sea levels, storms, and occasional resource depression. As in other parts of the world where coastal biomes provided abundant and reliable subsistence resources, southeastern histories include examples of large, sedentary societies that reached levels of sociopolitical complexity rivaling those of agricultural chiefdoms.

Readings: Faught 2004; Mikell and Saunders 2007; Thompson and Worth 2011; Sassaman 2016

March 16. Monumentality

If we accept that shell mounds were monumental, the Southeast has a history of monument construction reaching back some 7000 years, and its history of earthen mounds goes back at least 5500 years. We review in this chapter the mound-building traditions of the Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian eras to consider the extent to which these varied expressions were historically related and/or functionally analogous. The role of mortuary ritual in mound construction is also examined, and we consider how persons, objects, and substances in mounds reflect the scale and organization of social integration. We reserve for March 21 discussion of the cosmological dimensions of monumentality, but consider here how monument construction was historical practice, a means by which narratives about the relationship of people to place, thing, and other persons were conveyed through metaphor.

Readings: Knight 1998, 2001; Marquardt 2010; Russo 2004; Sassaman and Randall 2012

March 23. Religion and the Cosmos

Following on the discussion of mounds as symbolic history, we expand discussion in this chapter to religion and cosmology to investigate how indigenous southeastern people thought about the world and their place in it. Starting on the firm ground provided by ethnohistoric accounts of the cosmos, we take a look at how both the built environment and “natural” features of the landscape were imbued with meaning about supernatural phenomena, and how persons were able to draw on these to assert identities and relations, and to intervene to effect or thwart change. We also take a close look at the portable paraphernalia of religion, objects of symbolic import, as well as the suite of instruments made from animal parts that suggest how animism shaped beliefs and practices.

Readings: Emerson 2003; Knight 2006; Knight et al. 2001; Pauketat 2013:Chapter 6

March 30. Power and Politics

In the objects and practices archaeologist generally refer to as “ceremonial,” we find in the Southeast evidence for the manipulation of social and symbolic power since at least the time of Dalton settlement, some 11,000 years ago. In this chapter, however, we are interested in the relationship between personal and moral authority and the body politic. Under what circumstances did communities gather and persist under common belief and the authority to embody it? We focus primarily on archaeological evidence for chiefs, priests, prophets and other sorts of “leaders,” individuals who may or may not have been embedded in lineages of authority. The role of warfare, terror, and coercion is considered alongside flamboyant ritual that reinforced core beliefs about power relations.

Readings: Cobb and King 2005; Marcoux 2007; Pauketat and Emerson 1991

April 6. Nascent Urbanism

The Southeast is not known for pre-Columbian urbanism and regional specialists debate whether any of its late-prehistoric societies approached a level of statehood, however that is defined. Rather than engage in typological jousting, we reframe the issue of urbanism by simply asking how certain southeastern societies constructed places to achieve desired social outcomes. Under this broad framework, we review

evidence for architecture, site layouts, and arteries that connected places to suggest that dichotomous relationships between “center” places and outlying spaces have existed since at least the mid-Holocene, when some mound complexes enclosed “plazas.” The transformation of Mississippian town plans in the Contact era provides an opportunity to consider how structured space is situated in larger spheres of social and cultural interaction.

Readings: Kehoe 1998:Chapter 9; Pauketat 2007:Chapter 6

April 13. Ethnogenesis, Coalescence, and Conflict

After incursions from Europe disrupted the course of history in the Southeast, decimated and displaced indigenous communities often coalesced to form new identities among hitherto distinct groups in a maelstrom of disease, conflict, and shifting alliances. We review in this chapter the details of these historical turns, but also consider the extent to which pre-Columbian histories likewise involved episodes of ethnogenesis and coalescence.

Readings: Beck 2013; Ethridge 2006; Kowalewski 2006

April 20. Archaeologies of the Future

Climate change, neoliberalism, and the growing wealth of Indian tribes assure that the next century of archaeology in the Southeast will bear little resemblance to the last. Whereas technologies of remote sensing, artifact sourcing, biological assays, and data management promise to enhance the information potential of archaeological inquiry, site destruction, the curation crisis, and economic challenges undermine optimism that archaeology will necessarily remain a public good over the long term. An archaeology oriented toward future challenges may enhance its societal worth, but it will take more collaboration with government, industry, and native people to realize this potential.

Readings: Dawdy 2010; Sassaman 2012

Readings

Abrams, Marc D., and Gregory J. Nowacki

2008 Native Americans as Active and Passive Promoters of Mast and Fruit Trees in the Eastern USA. *The Holocene* 18:1123-1137.

Alt, Susan M.

2006 The Power of Diversity: The Roles of Migration and Hybridity in Culture Change. In *Leadership and Polity in Mississippian Society*, edited by Brian M. Butler and Paul D. Welch, pp. 289–308. Occasional Paper No. 33. Center for Archaeological Investigations, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

- Beck, Robin
2013 *Chiefdoms, Collapse, and Coalescence in the Early American South*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Claassen, Cheryl
2010 *Feasting with Shellfish in the Southern Ohio Valley: Archaic Sacred Sites and Rituals*. University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville.
- Cobb, Charles R., and Adam King
2005 Re-Inventing Mississippian Tradition at Etowah, Georgia. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 12:167–192.
- Cobb, Charles R., and Michael S. Nassaney
2002 Domesticating Self and Society in the Woodland Southeast. In *The Woodland Southeast*, edited by David G. Anderson and Robert C. Mainfort, Jr., pp. 525–539. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.
- Dawdy, Shannon Lee
2010 Clockpunk Anthropology and the Ruins of Modernity. *Current Anthropology* 51:761–793.
- Dunnell, Robert C.
1990 The Role of the Southeast in American Archaeology. *Southeastern Archaeology* 9:11–22.
- Emerson, Thomas E.
2003 Materializing Cahokian Shamans. *Southeastern Archaeology* 22:135–154.
- Ethridge, Robbie
2006 Creating the Shatter Zone: Indian Slave Traders and the Collapse of the Southeastern Chiefdoms. In *Light on the Path: The Anthropology and History of the Southeastern Indians*, edited by Thomas J. Pluckhahn and Robbie Ethridge, pp. 207–218. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.
- Faught, Michael K.
2004 Submerged Paleoindian and Archaic Sites of the Big Bend, Florida. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 29:273–289.
- Fritz, Gayle J.
1990 Multiple Pathways to Farming in Precontact Eastern North America. *Journal of World Prehistory* 4:387–435.
- Gremillion, Kristen J., Jason Windingstad, and Sarah C. Sherwood
2008 Forest Opening, Habitat Use, and Food Production on the Cumberland Plateau, Kentucky: Adaptive Flexibility in Marginal Settings. *American Antiquity* 73:387–411.
- Jefferies, Richard W.
2004 Regional Scale Interaction Networks and the Emergence of Cultural Complexity along the Northern Margins of the Southeast. In *Signs of Power: The Rise of Cultural Complexity in the Southeast*, edited by Jon L. Gibson and Philip J. Carr, pp. 71–85. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.

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1998 *The Land of Prehistory: A Critical History of American Archaeology*. Routledge, New York.
- Knight, Vernon J., Jr.
1998 Moundville as a Diagrammatic Ceremonial Center. In *Archaeology of the Moundville Chiefdom*, edited by Vernon J. Knight and Vincas P. Steponaitis, pp. 44–62. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C.

2001 Feasting and the Emergence of Platform Mound Ceremonialism in Eastern North America. In *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power*, edited by Michael Dietler and Brian Hayden, pp. 311–333. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C.

2006 Farewell to the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex. *Southeastern Archaeology* 25:1–5.
- Knight, Vernon James, Jr., James A. Brown, and George E. Langford
2001 On the Subject Matter of Southeastern Ceremonial Complex Art. *Southeastern Archaeology* 20:129–142.
- Kowalewski, Stephen A.
2006 Coalescent Societies. In *Light on the Path: Essays in the Anthropology and History of the Southeastern Indians*, edited by Thomas J. Pluckhahn and Robbie Ethridge, 94–122. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.
- Lapham, Heather A.
2011 Animals in Southeastern Native American Subsistence Economies. In *Subsistence Economies of Indigenous North American Societies*, edited by Bruce D. Smith, pp. 401–429. Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, Washington, D.C.
- Loren, Diana Dipaolo, and Cameron B. Wesson
2010 Current Archaeologies in the American Southeast. *Native South* 3:39–64.
- Marcoux, Jon Bernard
2007 On Reconsidering Display Goods Production and Circulation in The Moundville Chiefdom. *Southeastern Archaeology* 26:232–245.
- Marquardt, William H.
2010 Mounds, Middens, and Rapid Climate Change during the Archaic–Woodland Transition in the Southeastern United States. In *Trend, Tradition, and Turmoil: What Happened to the Southeastern Archaic?*, edited by David Hurst Thomas and Matthew C. Sanger, pp. 253–271. Anthropological Papers 93. American Museum of Natural History, New York.
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2007 Terminal Middle to Late Archaic Settlement in Coastal Northwest Florida: Early Estuarine Exploitation on the Northern Gulf Coast. *Southeastern Archaeology* 26:169–195.
- Moore, Christopher R.
2010 A Macroscopic Investigation of Technological Style and the Production of Middle to Late Archaic Fishhooks at the Chiggerville, Read, and Baker Sites, Western Kentucky. *Southeastern Archaeology* 29:197–221

- Pauketat, Timothy R.
 2007 *Chiefdoms and Other Archaeological Delusions*. AltaMira, Lanham, Maryland.
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 2009 Initial Formation of an Indigenous Crop Complex in Eastern North America at 3800 B.P. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA* 106:6561–6566.

Sullivan, Lynne P., Bobby R. Braly, Michaelyn S. Harle, and Shannon D. Koerner

2011 Remembering New Deal Archaeology in the Southeast: A Legacy in Museum Collections. In *Museums and Memory*, edited by Margaret Williamson Huber, pp. 64–107. Newfound Press, University of Tennessee Libraries, Knoxville.

Thompson, Victor D., and John E. Worth

2011 Dwellers by the Sea: Native American Adaptations along the Southern Coasts of Eastern North America. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 19:51–101.

Wallis, Neill J.

2008 Networks of History and Memory: Creating a Nexus of Social Identity in Woodland Period Mounds on the Lower St. Johns River, Florida. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 8:236–271.