

# ANG 6930 – Proseminar in Anthropology IIB: Archaeology

Section 8486  
Spring 2014

Friday 1:55-4:55 PM (Period 7-9)  
Turlington 2318

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## Course Description

*Proseminar in Anthropology II* is the second half of the year-long proseminar for incoming graduate students, and *IIB* is the second half of the second half, dealing with the fourth 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 intermittent 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 do? 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 IIB 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. We will use a reader in archaeological theory that emphasizes the connection between archaeological practice and pragmatic contemporary concerns. 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 dispatch each of you to find ancestral works that enchain past archaeological thinking with the present. 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. Your instructor will

assemble the modern literature via the reader and more, and you will help find readings that lay the basis for getting us to this point.

### **Required Text:**

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

All other required readings will be posted on an e-learning site for the seminar, and are listed below by weekly topic. The Preucel and Mrozowski reader contains 32 articles/chapters, all well worth reading, but we will discuss under 2/3rds 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.

### **Format and Expectations**

I would prefer to treat Proseminar IIB 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 Spring Break, three of you (four of you on April 18) will lead class discussion through a coordinated effort involving several additional readings, which you will select. Mandatory readings are assigned for each topic from the Preucel and Mrzowski reader, along with a few additional papers as specified below. Here is where we tie the contemporary literature to classic literature in the field. For the topic to which you were assigned, you are expected to find three articles from the classic literature on the subject (for all intents and purposes, this means literature predating the 1990s, and going as far back as the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, if you wish). You will summarize each of these three readings in ~200 words and post the full bibliographic citations and your summaries in the respective weekly resources folder of the e-Learning site no later than 48 hours before we meet. Assignments by date and topic are listed below.

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

February 28	Wayfinding in Archaeology (Sassaman)
March 7	Spring Break (No Class)
March 14	Archaeology as History (Kennelly, Lawres, Soler; Sassaman absent)
March 21	Archaeology as Science (Boileau, Jenkins, Rej)
March 28	Memory, Identity, and Persons (Crosby, Friend, Garcia)
April 4	Materiality (Balch, Gu, Messersmith)
April 11	Landscapes and Movement (Roberson, Schaye, Sutton)
April 18	Mobilizing Pasts for Futures (Dillion, Grafft-Weiss, Thwing, Turientine)

You are expected to coordinate your selections with your two other discussion leaders, and all three of you are expected to command the content of the mandatory readings for the week, plus your selections. The intent of discussion is to synthesize the literature, so avoid the tendency to discuss the weekly papers individually. Because we have 19 graded participants in Proseminar II and six weeks of discussions, one meeting, the last (April 18) involves four students, hence 12 total papers. You are not expected to read papers you do not assign, but everyone is expected to read the 200-word summaries posted each week and engage in the discussion led by you and your colleagues. The 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 are expected to summarize the case material in a short paper that showcases the value of archaeology 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* ([http://www.saa.org/Portals/0/SAA/Publications/StyleGuide/StyleGuide\\_Final\\_813.pdf](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 18. Title and 100-word abstract for paper proposals are due in class on March 21. This is not a simple summary of a paper, but rather a thoughtful discussion about how this 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 IIB, 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 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 a 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

As far as the reality of actually doing well in the eyes of your Instructor, you will have failed this course if you can't earn at least 87 points. Get your head and heart into this and you will do well.

## Schedule

February 28    Wayfinding in Archaeology

*Readings:* Preucel and Mrozowski 2010, Part I (hereafter all readings from this volume will be coded as "P&M2010"); Blakey Chap. 27 (P&M2010); SAA Principles of Archaeological Ethics <http://www.saa.org/AbouttheSociety/PrinciplesofArchaeologicalEthics/tabid/203/Default.aspx>

*Lecture topics:* After getting oriented to second half of Proseminar II, 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.

March 7            Spring Break (No Class)

March 14        Archaeology as History (Sassaman absent)

*Readings:* Pauketat Chap. 5 (P&M2010); Sassaman Chap. 7 (P&M2010); Schmidt and Walz Chap. 20 (P&M2010); Diaz-Andreu Chap. 21 (P&M2010)

*Discussion Leaders:* Kennelly, Lawres, Soler

*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.

March 21      Archaeology as Science

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

*Discussion Leaders:* Boileau, Jenkins, Rej

*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?

March 28      Memory, Identity, and Persons

*Readings:* Lightfoot et al. Chap. 8 (P&M2010); Joyce Chap. 11 (P&M2010); Nelson Chap. 13 (P&M2010); Sinopoli Chap. 22 (P&M2010)

*Discussion Leaders:* Crosby, Friend, Garcia

*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.

April 4      Artifacts and Materiality

*Readings:* Mills Chap. 18 (P&M2010); Talady Chap. 30 (P&M2010); Joyce 2012; Gillespie 2012

*Discussion Leaders:* Balch, Gu, Messersmith

*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.

April 11      Landscapes and Movement

*Readings:* Ingold, Chap 1 (P&M2010); Tacon Chap. 2 (P&M2010); Erickson Chap. 3 (P&M2010); Dawdy 2006; Cobb 2005

*Discussion Leaders:* Roberson, Schaye, Sutton

*Lecture topics:* Archaeology has always dealt with *space*, but has only recently began to understand *place*. And 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.

April 18      Mobilizing Pasts for Futures

*Readings:* Dawdy 2010; Echo-Hawk and Zimmerman Chap, 17 (P&M2010); Atalay Chap. 29 (P&M2010)

*Discussion Leaders:* Dillion, Grafft-Weiss, Thwing, Turentine

*Lecture topics:* Rather than 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.

*Due:* Short paper on applied archaeology.

## Additional Readings

Cobb, Charles R.

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

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.

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.

McGhee, Robert

2008 Aboriginalism and the Problems of Indigenous Archaeology. *American Antiquity* 73:579–597.