



Anthropology 551

Current Advances in Archaeological Theory

Instructor: Dr. Lisa Overholtzer
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Office Hours: T 12-3pm
Office: Leacock 529

Term: Fall 2015
Day: M
Time: 2:35-5:25
Room: Leacock 738

Course Description:

Archaeology is the study of the human past via analysis of the material record: the objects, architecture, and even textual remains left behind by people in historic and pre-historic times. Artifacts do not interpret themselves, however, nor do they pose research questions to be addressed. The very way in which we as archaeologists do our research—from the topics we find interesting to how we say something meaningful about hundreds of thousands of potsherds—has changed significantly over the course of the discipline’s history and varies widely among its practitioners today. Hollywood and Indiana Jones may have defined archaeology as “the search for fact, not truth,” but in reality, archaeological “facts” are rare, and our understandings of the past change as the kinds of questions we ask and the methods we use change. We should always expect a variety of explanations to any question to be popular at any given time. This multivocality notwithstanding, theoretical frameworks can be evaluated with regard to their utility or theoretical purchase, their ability to explain observable phenomena, and aspects of the past they may overlook. The discipline progresses precisely through such criticism. This course covers theoretical frameworks currently used in archaeology, focusing in particular on those that developed beginning in the 1980s.

Course goals:

This course aims to:

- 1) Introduce students to recent developments in archaeological epistemologies and the range of contemporary theoretical approaches;
- 2) Help students productively apply course material to their own research; and
- 3) Encourage the development of evaluation, communication, and grant writing skills.

Learning outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- 1) Engage in and facilitate sustained academic discussion on contemporary and historical archaeological theories
- 2) Compare, contrast, and critique theoretical approaches within archaeology
- 3) Productively employ a major archaeological theoretical orientation within their own investigations

Basis for evaluation:

- Active participation in class meetings (20 points)
- Discussion facilitation in one class meeting (10 points total)
- Weekly reading response papers, due to MyCourses at midnight on Saturday (20 points)
- Final paper
 - Final paper benchmark (10 points)
 - In-class presentation of paper (10 points)
 - Final draft of paper (30 points)

I review performance for the semester when assigning grades and reserve the right to raise a final grade when on-time completion of assignments and an upward trend through the semester make it clear that extra effort has been invested, or when poor performance on a single assignment is out of line with overall performance. Because of this, I do not entertain arguments over the grading of individual assignments aimed at moving a grade up marginally.

Active participation in class:

Attendance in class is mandatory. You should come to class prepared and ready to actively contribute to class discussions and activities. In addition, you are expected to prepare for and facilitate discussion of one week's readings in class. This is a discussion-based seminar course; the quality of the class experience depends in part on the active participation of the class learning community. You should expect to actively pose questions, make comments, and respond to other students during every single class period. I understand that life happens, people get sick, and unanticipated problems occur, so you may miss class once without a drop in your grade. Additional absences will be reflected in your participation grade.

Reading response papers:

Each class meeting has assigned readings that will be discussed in class. In order to think through the readings and prepare yourself for discussion, you must write a 2-3 page (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1" margins) response to the readings. Your response should: 1) identify the core idea or argument from each reading; 2) discuss common themes or differences between the readings; 3) identify any confusing or unclear parts of the readings, or the most surprising point of the readings; 4) end with several specific or broad discussion questions that you can pose to the rest of the class. Reading response papers should be posted to the course website by midnight on Sunday before class. Again, because I understand that life happens, you may miss one response paper without a deduction in your grade. However, I will not accept any late reading response papers.

Final paper:

Your final assignment for the course will be the development of an archaeological research proposal that will apply course material to your own regional and period interests. Using one of the major theoretical frameworks covered in class, you will focus in particular on the development of a theoretically engaged research question, appropriate hypotheses or expectations, and significance or research rationale. You should also address the kinds of data you will need to address your question, how you might be able to obtain such a dataset, and how you will interpret your findings. This proposal should be 10 double-spaced pages long, not including references and figures. It should be properly referenced and should cite class discussions; course readings, including both the textbooks and journal articles; and outside,

independent readings on your theoretical framework. If the theoretical framework of most interest to you is covered in the last few weeks of class, I highly recommend doing those readings early so that you can begin to develop your final paper early in the semester. In week 8, you will turn in a benchmark that briefly states the research (theory, research question, and dataset) you intend to do for your final paper; this benchmark will allow me to provide more specific guidance and ensure that you are on the right track. You will present your projects to the class at the end of the semester in a mock conference. Final papers will be accepted after the deadline, but 10% will be deducted for each day the assignment is late.

Class Policies:

It is expected that students be on time, be prepared for discussion, have completed the appropriate reading, and participate actively. Cell phones should be turned to silent or turned off (not turned to vibrate) before class. Failure to meet any of these expectations will result in the lowering of the student's participation grade.

As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009, <http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/>.

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

University Policy Statements:

- 1. McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).***

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).
- 2. In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).***

Required Text:

Hodder, Ian (editor). 2012. *Archaeological Theory Today*. 2nd Ed. Malden, MA: Polity Press.

Additional readings on MyCourses. Please note that you **must** also bring these additional readings to class, either in printed or digital form (only if your digital medium allows you to annotate your copy). If this presents a serious hardship to you, please discuss this with me.

Course Schedule:

Please complete all readings before the dates listed.

Week	Date	Topic and Readings
1	9/4	Syllabus and Introductions, Theoretical Overview Lecture
	9/7	NO CLASS: LABOR DAY
2	9/14	Archaeology as Interpretation: Context, Hermeneutics, Meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Hodder, Ch. 1▪ Hodder, Ian. 1985. Postprocessual archaeology. <i>Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory</i> 8:1-26.▪ Hodder, Ian. 1991. Interpretive Archaeology and Its Role. <i>American Antiquity</i> 56(1):7-18.▪ McAnany, Patricia A. and Ian Hodder. 2009. Thinking about stratigraphic sequence in social terms. <i>Archaeological Dialogues</i> 16(1):1-22.
3	9/21	Text, Context, and Source-Side Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Wylie, Alison. 1989. Archaeological cables and tacking: The implications of practice for Bernstein's 'Options Beyond Objectivism and Relativism. <i>Philosophy of the Social Sciences</i> 19:1-18.▪ Stahl, Ann B. 1993. Concepts of time and approaches to analogical reasoning in historical perspective. <i>American Antiquity</i> 58:235-260.▪ Morrison, Kathleen D. and Mark T. Lycett. 1997. Inscriptions as Artifacts: Precolonial South India and the Analysis of Texts. <i>Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory</i> 4(3/4):215-237.▪ Brumfiel, Elizabeth M. 2011. Technologies of Time: Calendrics and Commoners in Postclassic Mexico. <i>Ancient Mesoamerica</i> 22(1): 53-70.

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Identity: Gender and Sexuality

- Brumfiel, Elizabeth M. 1992. Distinguished Lecture in Archaeology— Breaking and Entering the Ecosystem: Class and Faction Steal the Show. *American Anthropologist* 94(3):551-567.
- Brumfiel, Elizabeth M. 1991. Weaving and cooking: Women's production in Aztec Mexico. In *Engendering archaeology: women and prehistory*, edited by Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey, pp. 224-251. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Voss, Barbara L. 2008. Domesticating Imperialism: Sexual Politics and the Archaeology of Empire. *American Anthropologist* 110(2):191-203.
- Joyce, Rosemary A. 2000. A Precolumbian gaze: male sexuality among the ancient Maya. In *Archaeologies of sexuality*, edited by Robert A. Schmidt and Barbara L. Voss, pp. 263-283. London: Routledge.

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Identity: Class and ethnicity

- Upton, Dell. 1996. Ethnicity, Authenticity, and Invented Traditions. *Historical Archaeology* 30(2):1-7.
- Mullins, Paul R. 1999. Race and the Genteel Consumer: Class and African-American Consumption, 1850-1930. *Historical Archaeology* 33(1):22-38.
- Saitta, Dean J. 1994. Agency, Class, and Archaeological Interpretation. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 13(3):201-227.
- Joyce, Arthur A. et al. 2001. Commoner Power: A Case Study from the Classic Period Collapse on the Oaxaca Coast. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 8(4):343-385.

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NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING

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Phenomenology

- Hodder, Chapter 8
- Introduction to: Tilley, Christopher. 1994. *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths, and Monuments*. Bloomsbury.
- Brück, Joanna. 2005. Experiencing the past? The development of a phenomenological archaeology in British prehistory. *Archaeological Dialogues* 12:45-72.
- Barrett, John C. and Ilhong Ko. 2009. A phenomenology of landscape: A crisis in British landscape archaeology? *Journal of Social Archaeology* 9(3):275-294.

- 7 10/26 **Archaeological Time**
- Ingold, Tim. 1993. The temporality of the landscape. *World Archaeology* 25(2):152-174.
 - Bailey, Geoff. 2007. Time perspectives, palimpsests and the archaeology of time. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 26(2):198-223.
 - Foxhall, Lin. 2000. The running sands of time: archaeology and the short-term. *World Archaeology* 31(3): 484-498.
 - Whittle, Alasdair, et al. 2007. Building for the dead: events, processes and changing worldviews from the thirty-eighth to the thirty-fourth centuries cal. BC in Southern Britain. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 17:123-147.
- 8 11/2 **Theories of Agency and Practice**
- Dobres, Marcia-Anne and John Robb. 2000. Agency in archaeology: Paradigm or platitude? In: *Agency in archaeology*, M.-A. Dobres and J. Robb, eds., pp. 3–17. London: Routledge.
 - Pauketat, Timothy R. 2000. The Tragedy of the Commoners. In *Agency in Archaeology*, Marcia-Anne Dobres and John Robb, eds., pp. 113–129. London: Routledge.
 - Silliman, Stephen W. 2001. Agency, Practical Politics, and the Archaeology of Culture Contact. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 1(2):184-204.
 - Joyce, Rosemary and Jeanne Lopiparo. 2005. Postscript: Doing Agency in Archaeology. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 12(4):365-374.
 - Recommended: Hodder, Ch. 7
- Final paper benchmarks due**
- 9 11/9 **Materiality**
- Hodder, Ch. 9
 - Pauketat, Timothy R. and Susan M. Alt. 2005. Agency in a Postmold? Physicality and the Archaeology of Culture-Making. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 12(3):213-237.
 - Ingold, Timothy. 2007. Materials Against Materiality. *Archaeological Dialogues* 14(1):1-16.
 - Jones, Andrew. 2004. Archaeometry and materiality: materials-based analysis in theory and practice. *Archaeometry* 46(3): 327-338.

- 10 11/16 **New Materialisms**
- Hodder, Ch. 10
 - Webmoor, Timothy. 2007. What about 'one more turn after the social' in archaeological reasoning? Taking things seriously. *World Archaeology* 39(4):563-578.
 - Witmore, Christopher. 2014. Archaeology and the New Materialisms. *Journal of Contemporary Archaeology* 1(2): 203–246.
 - Knappett, Carl. 2011. Networks of objects. Meshworks of things. In *Redrawing Anthropology. Materials, Movements, Lines*, edited by Tim Ingold, pp. 45-63. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate.
- 11 11/23 **Postcolonial Theory and Colonial Representation**
- Hodder, Ch. 12
 - Introduction to: Liebmann, Matthew and Uzma Z. Rizvi. 2008. A Brief History of Postcolonial Theory and Implications for Archaeology. In *Archaeology and the Postcolonial Critique*, pp. 1-20. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
 - Overholtzer, Lisa. 2013. Archaeological Interpretation and the Rewriting of History: Deimperializing and Decolonizing the Past at Xaltocan, Mexico. *American Anthropologist* 115(3): 481-495.
 - Silliman, Stephen W. 2005. Culture contact or colonialism? Challenges in the archaeology of native North America. *American Antiquity* 70(1): 55-74.
- 12 11/30 **Indigenous Archaeology**
- Hodder, Ch. 13
 - McGuire, Randall H. 1992. Archaeology and the first Americans. *American Anthropologist* 94:816-36.
 - Atalay, Sonya. 2006. Indigenous archaeology as decolonizing practice. *American Indian Quarterly* 30:280-310.
 - Dawdy, Shannon L. 2009. Millennial archaeology. Locating the discipline in the age of insecurity. *Archaeological Dialogues* 16(2):131-142.

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Archaeological Publishing: Gender, Class, Citation, Self-Citation

- Hutson, Scott R. 2006. Self-Citation in Archaeology: Age, Gender, Prestige, and the Self. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 13(1):1-18.
- Bardolph, Dana. 2014. A Critical Evaluation of Recent Gendered Publishing Trends in American Archaeology. *American Antiquity* 3:522-540.
- Chibnik, Michael. 2014. Gender and Citations in *American Anthropologist*. *American Anthropologist* 116:493-496.
- Shott, Michael J. 2005. An Unwashed's Knowledge of Archaeology: Class and Merit in Academic Placement. In *Reflections From the Wrong Side of the Tracks: Class, Identity, and the Working Class Experience in Academe*, edited by Stephen L. Muzzatti and C. Vincent Samarco, pp. 221-240. Rowman and Littlefield: Lanham, MD.

Final papers are due and final presentations will be given during the normally scheduled final exam time.