



Anthropology 505
Current Advances in Archaeological Theory

Prof. Lisa Overholtzer
Email: lisa.overholtzer@mcgill.ca
Office Hours: T/Th, 1-2 pm and by appt
Office hours are on Zoom:
<https://mcgill.zoom.us/j/2921378674>

Term: Winter 2021, Remote delivery
Class Day: Friday
Class Time: 10 am-noon
Class will be held on Zoom through myCourses

Please note that this course will be delivered synchronously by Zoom (ie. remotely) due to covid-19. We will meet for two hours each week on Fridays, 10 am-noon, during our normally scheduled class time. The first half hour will be used to go over assignments and other housekeeping tasks, and an hour and a half will be devoted to discussions of the week's readings. I will try to keep us to two hours to avoid Zoom fatigue, but we may occasionally go until the end of the class period as scheduled, 12:25.

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; and
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 (20 points total)
- Weekly reading response papers, due at midnight on Wednesdays (20 points)
- Final paper
 - Final paper benchmark (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.

McGill grading scale:

Grade	Grade point	Percentages
A	4.0	85 -100
A-	3.7	80 - 84
B+	3.3	75 - 79
B	3.0	70 - 74
B-	2.7	65 - 69
C+	2.3	60 - 64
C	2.0	55 - 59
D (Conditional Pass)	1.0	50 - 54
F (Fail)	0	0 - 49

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 with internet connections and other things occur, especially during a pandemic, so you may miss class **two weeks** without a drop in your grade. Additional absences will be reflected in your participation grade.

Discussion leading:

Students will lead the discussion of one week's readings. To prepare to lead discussion, students should not only write the reading response paper for that week, but also prepare a thoughtful brief introduction to the week's theme (maximum 5 minutes), followed by a series of discussion prompts to which fellow students can respond, or activities students can carry out. You may also read the response papers of your fellow classmates to facilitate this preparation and get a sense of their interests and understandings of the texts. Discussion questions should be situated at various levels: theoretical, methodological, case study-specific, etc., and some of the questions should put the readings in conversation with each other, comparing and contrasting the approach of authors. Stay close to the text, including quotes when possible. You may choose to use the time creatively, for example, organizing a debate or role play, a Kahoots quiz, or other activity. My previous students have found it helpful to begin discussion with a concept mapping activity on Google Jamboards. I will model discussion facilitation in week 2 to give you an example, but feel free to think outside the box!

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 ~250-word response to the readings and post it to the discussion board. 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 a specific or broad discussion question that you can pose to the rest of the class. Reading response papers should be posted to the course website by midnight on Wednesday before class. Again, because I understand that life happens, you may miss **two response papers** without a deduction in your grade. You do not need to inform me if you will not turn in a reading response paper. 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.

Class Policies:

It is expected that students be on time, be prepared for discussion, have completed the appropriate reading, and participate actively. 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.

Diversity and Inclusion Statement:

Science—a human discipline that exists within our social world—is by definition subjective. Moreover, science has historically reproduced the voices of a privileged few. In preparing this course syllabus, I have attempted to assign papers from a diverse group of scholars, but real limits on this diversity exist in the academy that constrain my choices. Integrating a diverse set of perspectives makes for better archaeology, but both overt and covert biases likely still exist in the readings because of the lenses through which they were written. Please let me know if you have any suggestions regarding how to improve course materials.

In addition to course materials, I would like to promote a classroom learning environment that celebrates diversity in student perspectives and experiences, and that honors your identities, whether based on gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, religion, or ability. I ask that you honor and respect the diversity of your fellow classmates in discussions, and that you talk to me if something said in class (by anyone) was hurtful in this regard. I also ask that if you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those listed in your McGill records, that you please let me know.

Policy on Children in Class:

Before the pandemic, I included on every syllabus my own policy that reflected my beliefs and commitments to student parents. It acknowledged that unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of either missing class or bringing the child to the classroom. COVID-19 has made childcare disruptions more frequent and online learning more routine for elementary and secondary students, and it has erased the divide between home and school, home and work. I fully expect that children—yours or mine—may be last minute adds as participants for our Zoom sessions at some point in the semester, and I am sure we will all do our best in that situation.

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 Texts:

There is no textbook for this course. All readings are available on MyCourses. You **must** have the readings in front of you. If you read digitally, you must be able to annotate your pdfs for note taking. If this presents a serious hardship to you, please discuss this with me.

Course Schedule:

Week	Date	Topic and Readings
1.	1/8	Turning the Lens Inward: Gendered Practice in the Field I will be lecturing on select findings from the following articles during the first class period, all posted on MyCourses for your reference. They are not required reading. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Bardolph, Dana. 2014. A Critical Evaluation of Recent Gendered Publishing Trends in American Archaeology. <i>American Antiquity</i> 3:522-540.▪ Clancy, Kathryn B.H., et al. 2014. Survey of Academic Field Experiences (SAFE): Trainees Report Harassment and Assault. <i>PLoS ONE</i> 9(7):e102172.▪ Goldstein, Lynne et al. 2018. Why Do Fewer Women Than Men Apply for Grants After Their PhDs? <i>American Antiquity</i> 83(3):367-386.▪ Hodgetts, Lisa, Kisha Supernant, Natasha Lyons, and John Welch. 2020. Broadening #MeToo: Tracking Dynamics in Canadian Archaeology Through a Survey on Experiences Within the Discipline. <i>Canadian Journal of Archaeology</i> 44(1):20-47.▪ Overholtzer, Lisa and Catherine L. Jalbert. In press. A Leaky Pipeline and Chilly Climate in Archaeology in Canada. <i>American Antiquity</i>.
2.	1/15	Archaeology as Interpretation: Context, Hermeneutics, and Meaning <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Hodder, Ian. 1985. Postprocessual archaeology. <i>Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory</i> 8:1-26.

- Hodder, Ian. 1991. Interpretive Archaeology and Its Role. *American Antiquity* 56(1):7-18.
- Preucel, Robert W. 1995. The Postprocessual Condition. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 3(2):147-175.
- McAnany, Patricia A. and Ian Hodder. 2009. Thinking about stratigraphic sequence in social terms. *Archaeological Dialogues* 16(1):1-22.

3. 1/22

Text, Context, and Source-Side Analysis

- Wylie, Alison. 1989. Archaeological cables and tacking: The implications of practice for Bernstein's 'Options Beyond Objectivism and Relativism. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 19:1-18.
- Stahl, Ann B. 1993. Concepts of time and approaches to analogical reasoning in historical perspective. *American Antiquity* 58:235-260.
- Morrison, Kathleen D. and Mark T. Lycett. 1997. Inscriptions as Artifacts: Precolonial South India and the Analysis of Texts. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 4(3/4):215-237.
- Brumfiel, Elizabeth M. 2011. Technologies of Time: Calendrics and Commoners in Postclassic Mexico. *Ancient Mesoamerica* 22(1): 53- 70.

4. 1/29

Gender and Sexuality

- Conkey, Margaret W. and Janet D. Spector. 1984. Archaeology and the Study of Gender. *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 7:1-38.
- 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.
- Voss, Barbara L. 2008. Domesticating Imperialism: Sexual Politics and the Archaeology of Empire. *American Anthropologist* 110(2):191- 203.
- Cook, Katherine. 2019. EmboDIYing Disruption: Queer Feminist and Inclusive Digital Archaeologies. *European Journal of Archaeology* 22(3):398-414.

5. 2/5

Social Memory

- Meskell, Lynn. 2000. Memory's Materiality: Ancestral Presence, Commemorative Practice, and Disjunctive Locales. In *Archaeologies of Memory*, edited by Ruth M. Van Dyke and Susan E. Alcock, pp. 34-55. London: Wiley.

- Mills, Barbara J. 2008. Remembering while Forgetting: Depositional Practices and Social Memory at Chaco. In *Memory work: archaeologies of material practices*, edited by Barbara J. Mills and William H. Walker, pp. 81-108. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research.
- Kuijt, Ian. 2008. The Regeneration of Life: Neolithic Structures of Symbolic Remembering and Forgetting. *Current Anthropology* 49(2):171-197. Comments optional.
- Overholtzer, Lisa and Deborah Bolnick. 2017. The archaeology of commoner social memories and legitimizing histories. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 24(1):50-89.

6. 2/12

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*, M.-A. 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.
- Overholtzer, Lisa. 2015. Agency, practice, and chronological context: A Bayesian approach to household chronologies. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 37:37-47.

7. 2/19

Time

- Ingold, Tim. 1993. The temporality of the landscape. *World Archaeology* 25(2):152-174.
- Boivin, Nicole. 2000. Life rhythms and floor sequences: excavating time in rural Rajasthan and Neolithic Catalhoyuk. *World Archaeology* 31(3):367-388.
- Foxhall, Lin. 2000. The running sands of time: archaeology and the short-term. *World Archaeology* 31(3): 484-498.
- Roddick, Andrew P. 2018. Disordering the Chronotope and Visualizing Inhabitation in the Lake Titicaca Basin. In *Constructions of Time and History in the Pre-Columbian Andes*, edited by Edward Swenson and Andrew P. Roddick, pp. 65-106. Boulder: University of Colorado.

Final paper benchmarks due

8. 2/26 **Materiality**
- Jones, Andrew. 2004. Archaeometry and materiality: materials-based analysis in theory and practice. *Archaeometry* 46(3): 327-338.
 - Robb, John. 2015. What Do Things Want? Object Design as a Middle Range Theory of Material Culture. In *The Materiality of Everyday Life*, edited by Lisa Overholtzer and Cynthia Robin, pp. 166-180. *Archeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 26(1).
 - Overholtzer, Lisa and Wesley D. Stoner. 2011. Merging the social and the material: Life histories of ancient mementos from Central Mexico. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 11(2):171-193.
 - Joyce, Rosemary A. 2015. History and Materiality. *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences: An Interdisciplinary, Searchable, and Linkable Resource*.

Study Break—no class on 3/5

9. 3/12 **New Materialisms**
- Webmoor, Timothy. 2007. What about 'one more turn after the social' in archaeological reasoning? Taking things seriously. *World Archaeology* 39(4):563-578.
 - Weismantel, Mary J. 2013. Inhuman Eyes: Looking at Chavín de Huantar. In *Relational Archaeologies: Humans, Animals, Things*, edited by Christopher Watts, pp. 21-41. Routledge, New York.
 - Alberti, Benjamin. 2016. Archaeologies of Ontology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 45:163-179.
 - Johansen, Peter G. and Andrew M. Bauer. 2018. On the Matter of Resources and Techno-Politics: The Case of Water and Iron in the South Indian Iron Age. *American Anthropologist* 20(3):412-428.
10. 3/19 **Colonial Representations and Forms**
- 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.
 - Loren, Diana D. 2013. Considering Mimicry and Hybridity in Early Colonial New England: Health, Sin and the Body “Behung with Beades.” *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 28(1):151-168.
 - Pezzarossi Law, Heather. 2014. Assembling indigeneity: Rethinking innovation, tradition and indigenous materiality in a 19th century native toolkit. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 14(3):340-360.

- Silliman, Stephen W. 2014. Archaeologies of Indigenous Survivance and Residence: Navigating Colonial and Scholarly Dualities. In *Rethinking Colonial Pasts Through Archaeology*, edited Neal Ferris et al. Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 57-75.

11. 3/26

Indigenous Archaeology

- Atalay, Sonya. 2006. Indigenous archaeology as decolonizing practice. *American Indian Quarterly* 30:280-310.
- Nicholas, George and Nola Markey. 2015. Traditional Knowledge, Archaeological Evidence, and Other Ways of Knowing. In *Material Evidence: Learning from archaeological practice*, edited by Robert Chapman and Alison Wylie, pp. 287-308. London: Routledge.
- Wylie, Alison. 2015. A Plurality of Pluralisms: Collaborative Practice in Archaeology. *Objectivity in Science*, edited by Padovani, Flavia, Alan Richardson, and Jonathan Y. Tsou, pp. 189-210. New York: Springer.
- Gonzalez, Sara L. and Briece Edwards. 2020. The Intersection of Indigenous thought and archaeological practice: The field methods in Indigenous archaeology field school. *Journal of Community Archaeology and Heritage* 7(4):239-254.

April 2 is a legal holiday—no class.

12. 4/9

Archaeology and Black Lives Matter

- Dunnivant, Justin P., Ayana Omilade Flewellen, Alexandra Jones, Alicia Odewale, and William White. 2018. Assessing Heritage Resources in St. Croix Post-Hurricanes Irma and Maria. *Transforming Anthropology* 26(2):157-172.
- Odewale, Alicia. 2019. An Archaeology of Struggle: Material Remnants of a Double Consciousness in the American South and Danish Caribbean Communities. *Transforming Anthropology* 27(2):114-132.
- Franklin, Maria, et al. 2020. The Future is Now: Archaeology and the Eradication of Anti-Blackness. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 24:753-766.
- Barnes, Jodi A. 2020. Behind the Scenes of Hollywood: An Archaeology of Reproductive Oppression at the Intersections. *American Anthropologist* (Early View).

Final papers and presentations are due during the scheduled final exam time, TBA.