



**Anthropology 201
Introduction to Archaeology**

Prof. Lisa Overholtzer
Email: lisa.overholtzer@mcgill.ca
Office Hours: T/Th, 1-2 pm and by appt

Term: Winter 2021, Remote delivery
Class Day: Tuesday/Thursday
Class Time: 11:35-12:55

Students must reserve 15-minute appointments during office hours at:
<https://calendly.com/lisa-overholtzer/15min>

Office hours are on Zoom:
<https://mcgill.zoom.us/j/2921378674>

Please note that this course will be delivered synchronously (i.e. at the normally scheduled class time) by Zoom due to COVID-19. Regular attendance on Zoom is required, but in case of the occasional internet failure, illness, etc., students may gain access to a class recording by emailing their TA.

Email Policy:

For questions regarding conference sections, please email the Tomlinson Teaching Fellow for your assigned section. For questions about assignments, due dates, tech issues, and other non-confidential issues, please email your assigned Teaching Assistant. Please email the professor for confidential matters, when advised by your TA or Tomlinson Fellow, if you need to request an appointment outside of office hours, or if you want to talk about archaeology in general.

****Please include Anth 201 in the subject of your email, use proper forms of address, and make sure the answer to your question is not in the syllabus. See this guide:**
<https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-afcf64ae0e4087>

You can expect a response to your email within **24 hours during weekdays**; if more than 24 hours have passed without a reply, please check the email address and subject heading and re-send.

Teaching Assistants:
TBA

If your last name begins with A-H, _____ is your TA. If your last name begins with I-Q, _____ is your TA. If your last name begins with R-Z, _____ is your TA.

Tomlinson Teaching Fellows:

Hana Bobrow-Strain (hana.bobrow-strain@mail.mcgill.ca)
Alyssa Cohen (alyssa.cohen2@mail.mcgill.ca)
Ren Kennedy (loren.kennedy@mail.mcgill.ca)
Mailys Laprevotte (mailys.laprevotte@mail.mcgill.ca)
Robyn Nakano (robyn.nakano@mail.mcgill.ca)

Thomas Shang (xiaozheng.shang@mail.mcgill.ca)

Your Tomlinson Teaching Fellow is based on the conference section schedule you select in the 3rd week of the semester.

Course Description:

Put simply, this course teaches how we know what we know and learn what we learn about the past through archaeology. Note that this course is **not** a world prehistory survey. It is about theories, methods, and approaches to the ancient (and historic) past. Put more explicitly, this course explores how archaeologists reconstruct what people's lives were like in the past. It introduces students to the ways in which these scholars attempt to understand anthropological issues and make inferences about the experiences of people in the past by examining material remains, including human remains, buildings, art, trash, and texts. The course will provide students with an introduction to the goals, theories, research questions, methodologies, and dissemination methods of anthropological archaeologists today, and will address the importance of the discipline within the contemporary world.

This course takes as a beginning assumption that archaeologists do not provide “final answers” to questions posed. 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, and ideas proposed today might later be challenged and new ideas proposed. However, not all ideas are created equal; the material remains of the past constrain possible explanations. There may be no “right” answer, but there are better and worse ones—ones with more or less supporting evidence. This course will ask students to evaluate explanations based on the supporting evidence, and to consider how the theoretical and methodological approaches used influence arguments made in any source of information. The course therefore teaches students to exercise critical thinking skills.

After a brief definition of the field of archaeology, the course will be structured in 3 parts:

- Part I)** introduces the discipline and its **historical** and **epistemological context** and questions its significance in the modern world, probing ethical concerns of how and why we **engage public and descendant communities**.
- Part II)** familiarizes students with the **methodologies** used to address research questions and support academic arguments in archaeology.
- Part III)** compares and contrasts the major **theoretical paradigms** that have guided archaeological research questions since the 20th century.

Course goals: Students will become familiar with the field of anthropological archaeology, specifically with all phases of the research process—from theory to research question to methodology to interpretation and dissemination.

Learning Outcomes (LOs):

By the conclusion of this course students will be able to:

- 1) Correctly describe the archaeological research process
- 2) Explain, compare, and contrast the major theoretical paradigms of contemporary archaeology
- 3) Apply archaeological methods to a given dataset, case study, or artifact collection

- 4) Debate archaeology's contemporary relevance and the ethics of how archaeologists interact with the public

Evaluation Scheme:

Class attendance and active participation in lecture, activities, and discussions (10%)

Conference section activities (10%)

Weekly reading quizzes on myCourses (20%)

Podcast assignment, in pairs (20%)

Final poster assignment

Giving peer feedback on April 8 (5%)

Mock conference poster session participation on April 13 (5%)

Final poster (30%)

Course lectures, films, discussions, in-class exercises, and conference activities are intended to expose students to course material in various forms, engage students on ethical, theoretical, and methodological controversies in the field, give students experience thinking through archaeological methods and arguments, and help students practice the higher-order thinking skills assessed in the course. Assessments encourage students to apply methods and concepts covered in class to the real world.

The **Podcast Assignment** assesses student learning in Part I of the course. It asks students to create a 5-10 minute podcast with a partner, modeled after the SAPIENS podcast. The episode's subject will be archaeology, the history of archaeological engagement with Indigenous peoples, collaborative archaeologies today, and the case of Kwäday Dän Ts'inchí (Long-Ago Person Found). You must turn in both the audio file (e.g. <https://www.sapiens.org/archaeology/khipus-podcast/>) and a written transcript (e.g. <https://www.sapiens.org/transcript-stringing-together-an-ancient-empires-stories/>) to myCourses by midnight, **February 11**.

The **Methods Poster Assignment** assesses student learning in Parts II and III of the course. It asks students to present mock findings of a theoretically engaged archaeological research project carried out in 3000 C.E., which found evidence of a widespread societal collapse due to environmental degradation beginning around 2100 C.E. As with all archaeological projects, yours will be the result of a multi-staged research design, and incorporate many different specializations and lines of evidence, e.g. survey and remote sensing, excavations, artifact and ecofact analyses, bioarchaeology, etc. You will give feedback to a peer in class on April 8, and you will submit your final, revised poster in a pptx format to myCourses by class time on **April 13**. That final class will be a virtual mock conference, where you will be able to see other student posters.

Grading scale:

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.

| Grade | Grade Points | 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 | 1.0 | 50-54% |
| Fail | 0 | 0-49% |

Conference sections:

Conference sections provide students with the opportunity to engage in hands-on archaeological analyses, and they take the place of five lectures during the second section of the course. Analytical activities are designed by the professor, and conference sections are led by the Tomlinson (TEAM) mentors. Students will sign up for conference sections that fit their schedule in Week 3. Sign-ups are via myCourses (groups function). Half of the conference section groups will meet during our normally scheduled class time and half will meet at another time on Wednesday or Thursday. Those times are: Wednesdays 10-11:30, 11:30-1, 1-2:30, and 2:30-4; Thursdays 10-11:30; and Fridays 11:30-1. All conference sections are held by Zoom; the Zoom link for your section will be posted in your group on myCourses.

Late policy:

Writing assignments will be accepted after the deadline, but 10% may be deducted for each calendar day the assignment is late; in addition, if points are assigned for peer feedback and you do not give peer feedback on time, you cannot make up those points. **I do not accept late reading quizzes, nor can you make up a missed conference section, except by attending another during the same week.** However, because I understand that “life happens,” **I drop the lowest reading quiz grade, and you may miss one conference section.**

Strategies to prepare students for graded assessments:

These correspond to three levels based on Bloom’s taxonomy:

- 1) Reading quizzes help students practice basic understanding of content (what are the major theoretical paradigms and methods employed);
- 2) Conference and in-class exercises, activities, and movie discussions help students practice applying content (identifying theoretical approach, interpreting assumptions of authors), first for midterm project and later for final paper;
- 3) Case study discussions and practice evaluations help students develop criticism skills needed for the final paper.

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.

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. This is far more likely during the pandemic circumstances we currently are experiencing.

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.

Wellness and Academia:

“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”

-Audre Lorde

I care about your wellness and recognize that academia can present many challenges to that wellness. The Student Wellness Hub is a resource for students for access to basic physical and mental health services. Their team includes general practitioners, nurses, psychiatrists, counsellors, social workers, dietitians, and health promotion staff. In addition to individual

appointments, they offer free workshops in such diverse topics as mindfulness and meditation, skills for managing exam anxiety, research skills, trauma sensitive yoga, and self defense. For more information, see: <https://www.mcgill.ca/wellness-hub/>

Office for Students with Disabilities:

If you face barriers to success in classes due to disabilities, mental health issues, chronic health conditions, or other impairments (whether they are temporary, permanent or episodic), please register with the Office for Students with Disabilities: <https://www.mcgill.ca/osd/>. They can help you determine what resources and accommodations you might need in courses such as this one in order to succeed. I can only grant such accommodations if you are registered with OSD.

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:

Renfrew, Colin and Paul Bahn. 2018. *Archaeology Essentials: Theories/Methods/Practice*, 4th edition (note that you cannot use an earlier edition). This book is available as both paperback and as an eBook from the publisher at: <https://www.vitalsource.com/en-ca/products/archaeology-essentials-theories-methods-and-paul-bahn-colin-renfrew-v9780500841495>

All other required readings are available on myCourses.

Course Schedule:

Reading quizzes for the week are due at midnight on Monday of the week they are listed, i.e. before the week's classes. For example, the quiz for Week 2 (on Hurst Thomas 2000 and Trigger 1984) is due by Monday, January 11 at midnight.

Learning outcomes (LO #) are listed when students either practice or are evaluated for that particular outcome.

Week Content, Readings, In-Class Activities, and Assessments

PART I—THE DISCIPLINE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ITS CONTEXT

- 1 Introduction to archaeology
Readings: Renfrew and Bahn Chapter 1 (no reading quiz); watch Why Study Archaeology? video.
January 7: Syllabus overview
- 2 Who Owns the Past; Epistemology (content warning: violence)
Reading: Hurst Thomas 2000 Prologue; Trigger 1984
January 12: Lecture and discussion
January 14: *Bones of Contention: Native American Archaeology* video and discussion (LO 4)
- 3 Contemporary relevance, NAGPRA, and public, community, and collaborative archaeologies
Reading: Atalay 2006, Atalay 2019; watch Ethics and Responsibilities video in Digital Resources
January 19: Lecture and discussion.
January 21: *Lost City of Zimbabwe* video and discussion (LO 4 & 5)
- 4 Legal mandates, CRM, cultural heritage management
Readings: Renfrew and Bahn, Chapters 11 and 12 and watch Protecting our Cultural Heritage video in Digital Resources
January 26: *Privy to the Past* video and discussion (LO 4 & 5);
Explanation of podcast assignment
January 28: Lecture and discussion

PART II—ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODS

- 5 Methods: archaeological research process, survey, excavations
Readings: Renfrew and Bahn, Chapters 2 and 3; Casana et al. 2017
February 2: Lecture
February 4: No class—attend **‘Below the Surface’ garbology conference** at your scheduled time (LO 3)
- 6 Methods: archaeological dating and typology
Readings: Renfrew and Bahn Chapter 4, Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966, and Michelaki 2007; watch Radiocarbon Dating Video in Digital Resources
February 9: Lecture and Explanation of Poster Assignment
February 11: No class—attend **Sketchfab ceramic seriation and Harris Matrix conference** at your scheduled time (LO 3)
Podcast Assignment (LO 1, 4) due by midnight February 11, bringing course readings from Part I into conversation with case study from *Teachings from Long Ago Person Found*:
https://issuu.com/royalbcmuseum/docs/kdt_highlights

- 7 Methods: Analogy and identifying activities
Readings: Renfrew and Bahn Chapters 5 and 6 and Binford 1967; watch Social Organization Video in Digital Resources
February 16: Lecture and *Potters of Buur Heybe* video (LO 3 & 5);
February 18: No class—attend **Foodways analysis conference** at your scheduled time (LO 3)

- 8 Methods: Spatial analyses
Readings: Renfrew and Bahn Chapter 7, Mills et al. 2013, and Chase et al. 2012, and watch Trade and Exchange video in Digital Resources
February 23: Lecture and Spatial analysis activity (LO 3 & 5)
February 25: No class—attend **Spatial analysis conference** at your scheduled time (LO 3)

STUDY BREAK: No class March 2 or 4

- 9 Methods: Bioarchaeology (age, sex, pathologies, and trauma)
Readings: Renfrew and Bahn Chapter 8 and New Directions in Bioarchaeology, Part II; watch Bioarchaeology video and An Introduction to Isotopes video in Digital Resources
March 9: Lecture and osteological data analysis activity in-class
March 11: No class—attend **Osteology analysis conference** at your scheduled time (LO 3)

PART III—THEORETICAL PARADIGMS

- 10 Archaeological theories
Readings: Renfrew and Bahn Chapter 10 and Harris and Cipolla Chapters 1 and 2
March 16: Archaeological Theories lecture
March 18: *Perspectives from a Pot* interpretive activity in-class (LO 2 & 5)
- 11 Theoretical case studies (sex: feminist and queer archaeologies)
Readings: Weismantel 2011 and Battle-Baptiste 2007
March 23: In-class discussion of articles (LO 5)
March 25: Final project workshop session and Q/A
- 12 Theoretical case studies (power: imperialism, colonialism, capitalism)
Readings: Overholtzer 2020 and Ng and Camp 2015
March 30: In-class discussion of articles (LO5)
April 1: Data analysis activity in class
- 13 Theoretical case studies (things: object agency and ontology)
Readings: Joyce 2015 and Johansen and Bauer 2018
April 6: In-class discussion of articles (LO 5) and class wrap-up

April 8: Peer feedback on final project

Poster assignments in pptx format due in class for our mock conference poster session at 11:35 AND uploaded to the Assignments folder on myCourses on Tuesday, April 13 (LO 5)