Application for CLAS 349: Archaeology Fieldwork Italy
The *Excavating Sipontum* Project 2023
Summer 2023: 22 May-30 June 2023
Application Deadline: Wednesday, February 15, 2023

What you will learn
You will register for the summer course, CLAS349*: Fieldwork in Italian Archaeology*, designed to teach you the methods and interpretative reasoning that archaeologists use. You will do reading for this course, in addition to our daily fieldwork and keep a "dig journal". We will have informal seminar meetings to discuss our work in the field and move us towards broader interpretation. You will learn how to dig stratigraphically, how to prepare all the relevant paperwork for what you've excavated and uncovered, how to draw and photograph archaeological contexts, and how to collect and process finds (ceramics, animal bones, archaeobotanical remains, and "small finds" like coins and metal objects). We will spend considerable time developing critical thinking skills on site and in the lab when we process finds: how do we go from the dirt and objects in the ground to reconstructing what life was like in the past? A short two-page paper asks you to synthesize your experience with a specific aspect of the excavation experience.

We engage this methodological training in the context of the ancient Roman and medieval site of *Sipontum*, located on the Adriatic Coast of northern Puglia, Italy. Situated at the interior of a state-owned archaeological park, this site has largely remained unexcavated. Here, we hope to recover the details of both ancient and medieval urbanism: the day-to-day residues of life on a minor port town in an active sea. Our long-term approach also lays emphasis on evidence of change or transition through time. As a coastal port, *Sipontum* was also orientated toward a salty marsh that provided both benefits and drawbacks. Recovering evidence of the environmental changes and human-environment interaction at this site form central questions driving our research agenda.

Course credits can be applied to the Classics major and minor, or to elective credits for those not pursuing a degree in Classics. **This is a 3-credit course,** with per-credit cost determined by student's McGill status (Quebec resident, Canadian resident, international). **Students must pay for the credit hours in addition to the program fee and travel costs (see below).**

Program details
In addition to the cost of credit hours, there is a program fee of CAD$2925.69. This includes (1.) lodging, (2.) board during the dig week (breakfast and lunch M-F and dinner M-Th), (3.) transportation from our residences to the dig site, and (4.) tools and materials used on site for the full five-week program. This fee also includes the cost of travel and lodging for the instructor (equally divided among all student participants). **Students are responsible for the cost of airfare and making their travel reservations to Italy, as well as transportation from the arrival airport to the dig site.**

Access to all the tools and materials needed to participate in the excavation will be provided. Students are, however, responsible for purchasing or gathering in advance clothing for the dig

(old t-shirts and shorts will suffice, a good hat and lots of socks), footwear for excavation (steel-toe work boots), and basic domestic necessities for life in the apartments.

Getting to Italy: **IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A PASSPORT, you will need to start the application process **NOW**. If your passport is set to expire within three months of your trip to Italy, you might need to renew your passport **NOW**. Please contact me with questions. Covid vaccination is required, the full three doses, as a requirement for travel into Italy. Documentation must be shown at the port of arrival, and may be requested in day-to-day interactions as part of Italy's Green Pass program. I highly suggest you also check your insurance policy to ensure coverage while abroad.

Daily Dig Schedule (M-F): (tentative. Dependent on daily temperatures and logistics).
7:00am-7:45am: Wake up, breakfast, load dig vans, head to site
8:00am Dig day starts
10:30am-10:45am: First morning break
10:45am-1:00pm: Back to digging
1:00-2:15pm: Lunch break on site
2:30pm-4:30 pm: afternoon digging
4:30pm-4:45 pm: pack up and head to the lab
5:00pm-6:00pm: Laboratory work (M-Th, when needed) (washing and sorting pottery, updating site documentation); sometimes replaced by seminar.
6:00-8:30pm: Free time (for personal hygiene or other).
8:30pm: Dinner

****Remember**, archaeological fieldwork is physically rigorous. The temperatures in Puglia in June can sometimes be quite hot (between 30-37 degrees C) with strong sun. You will need to know how to manage the heat: wearing sunscreen and hats, staying hydrated and knowing your limits. On top of this, the physical work can be demanding and the hours long. We will be pickaxing, shoveling, carrying buckets, and pushing wheelbarrows, in addition to the more fine-tuned work with trowels and brushes. We will continue the day in the lab, processing our finds and having class time in archaeological methods. I state this plainly again to give you a sense of the overall project. If you have any concerns about the demands of this work and your ability to participate in it, please speak to me privately so we can evaluate whether this is the best program for you.

Weekend Trips: McGill students are very independent and good at organizing their own weekend travel. Each year, I promise to make myself available for two larger trips, outside of Puglia. These include

1.) Bay of Naples (Pompeii, Herculaneum, and the Museo Archeologico)
2.) Rome!

READ CAREFULLY TO PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

In selecting students for the project this summer, it will be helpful to know why you would like to join the project. There is no expectation that students are Classics majors. The group we recruit for this semester is between 20-25 students. Students with archaeological coursework will be given priority, but again, this is not a requirement.

Deadline: Wednesday, Feb 15, 2023. Please submit via email to darian.totten@mcgill.ca

Essay: Please write a short statement of your intentions and capabilities for joining the project. The first paragraph should explain your intentions and motivations for joining us in Italy and what you hope to learn. The second paragraph should detail why you would be a good member of the team (what are your particular strengths as a student and individual) and how you will help contribute to the experience and learning of the other students on the project.

Travel Experiences: Please also include a list of any experiences you have had traveling abroad, when, with whom, and why (leisure, research, study abroad, etc.).

List of Relevant Experiences Beyond Travel: Please list any coursework at McGill, in high school, or elsewhere that you think affords you important skills to undertake this excavation experience.

****Recommendation Letter**: A brief statement from a faculty member, former boss, or activities supervisor, attesting to your strengths and weaknesses, and abilities for participating in the field school. They can email this statement to me, *and it need not be a formal letter*. In selecting a recommender, it is far more useful for me to have someone write who has worked with you closely, especially in a team-work type setting. This is a much better choice than a letter from a professor who might have given you an "A" in a course, but doesn't know you well at all.

****Required Meeting:** I would also like to meet with each applicant for 10 minutes to get a sense of your personality and oral communication skills. This can be over Zoom. Please include your general availability on weekdays so that we can set up these meetings. I'll hold these meetings the weeks of **Feb 20-24**, and then **March 6-10**.

Bursary: I have the funds for one or two student bursaries that will help off-set the costs of the course/trip. If you have financial need, such that you cannot make the trip without some help, please let me know.

Please contact me at darian.totten@mcgill.ca if you have any questions whatsoever.