

Archaeological Field Techniques
Anthropology 462M (Unique 31400), Spring 2011

Wednesday: 2:00-6:00

Lecture Room: Pickle Research Campus, Building 5A, Room 1

Professor: Darrell Creel

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Office Hours: Wednesday: 9:00-11:30 am, or by appointment.

Class Philosophy and Requirements

Required Text: *Archaeology, Basic Field Methods*. By Stewart, R. Michael, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 2002

Purpose: This is a beginning course in archaeological procedures related to field work. It is a course in techniques rather than concepts or theories, though theory will, of course, be important. Archaeological Field Techniques is a preparation for fieldwork, not a field school. The single technique that is most emphasized is keeping notes and records. One of the primary themes of the course is the interplay of research goals, practice, theory, and field conditions (hard reality). You are encouraged to think about these general issues constantly throughout the course.

Attendance, readings and participation: It will be very important to attend ALL class sessions. Much material covered in the lectures and during outdoor exercises may not be presented in the text and cannot be obtained at a later time. Some of the more complex issues covered in the text will form the core of discussion in lectures. Consequently, it is important that you read the material scheduled each week (not including the first week, of course) prior to class. This is especially true when case studies and guest lectures are to be presented. And yes, if it's presented in class, in the texts, or in the field, it may well be on the exam!

Course requirements and grading: There are six (7) requirements for this course: (1) a compass-pace map and site recording form for an actual archeological site, (2) a GPS shape file for the same site (meaning you have to demonstrate ability to use a GPS unit), (3) demonstrated ability to set up and use at Total Station; (4) preparation of a surface contour map based on data from a Total Station, (5) an excavation level form and specimen inventory, (6) a profile of an excavation wall, and (7) a term paper (proposal) of 10-15 pages (see handout for details – due **May 4**). The final course grade will be computed as follows: 15% for site form and compass-pace map, 10 % for the GPS shape file, 15% for Total Station capability, 15% for the contour map, 15% for the excavation level form and artifact inventory, 10% for the profile, and 20% for the term paper.

Term paper: The term paper will be described in class, and we will have a hand-out to help guide you in writing the paper. You will be writing a professional-styled research proposal in a standard format. Term paper proposals are due on **March 30**. Turn in a brief written statement on what you will write about and how you will orient your presentation. You are urged to turn in rough drafts of your paper to the TA for comments at any time in the semester prior to the due date. **The term paper is due on May 4.**

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Regular attendance is considered essential since new information not in the textbook will be introduced during each class meeting. Attendance during days with outdoor activities is particularly important since three requirements will be done only on those days. Absences for observance of religious holidays are accommodated as per University policies.

POLICY ON SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY: Students who violate University rules on scholastic

dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University Extension program or The University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of The University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

POLICY ON ACCOMMODATION OF DISABILITIES: The University's policy on accommodation of disabilities will be followed.

Course Schedule

(This schedule is subject to change)

- January 19 **Lecture:** Introduction to course. The nature and philosophy of the course, as well as a brief discussion of course requirements. Presentation of the basic theoretical perspectives involved in, and basic to, this course: the scientific method, research design, identifying, illuminating, and solving problems in archaeological research. Importance of background research. Field records and record keeping.
Reading: Stewart: Chapters 1-4.
- January 26 **Lecture:** (1) Writing a research proposal. (2) Site designation systems. (3) Introduction to map systems (latitude/ longitude, township/range/section and 1/4 section, Universal Transverse Mercator) and (4) map reading. Ground reconnaissance.
Reading: Hand-out on Grant and Proposal Format and Writing. Stewart: Chapter 6 thru page 121
- February 2 **Lecture:** Formation processes, archaeological surveying techniques, survey project orientation, systems of designating what you find during a survey, and GPS use.
Reading: Stewart: Chapter 6, pp 121-143, Chapter 8 thru page 229.
- February 9 This entire class meeting will be devoted to an actual search for sites using systematic survey procedures. Dress for walking on a rocky surface through dense shrubs/trees that can tear clothing and skin; wear sturdy shoes/boots. You will need a clipboard, pencil and eraser (preferably mechanical), compass (type to be discussed in class), backpack, and water. **Specific meeting location at Pickle Research Campus to be provided in advance.**
Assignment: site form with compass-pace map due **Feb 16**
- February 16 **Lecture:** Spatial control techniques: datums and grids. Geoarchaeology relative to site location and assessment.
Reading: Stewart: Chapter 6, pp 145-154; Chapter 7.
- Feb 23-Mar 9 **Lecture:** Introduction to documentation and mapping using surveying instruments; weather permitting, most of this and the following 2 classes will be held outside where we will be learning to use a Total Station and transit (outside).
Reading: Stewart: Chapters 6, pp 121-133.
Assignment: contour map due **March 9**
- March 14-18 **Spring Break.**
- March 23 **Lecture:** Design of testing and excavation plans relative to research design. Types/ number of collected materials, documentation, ownership, screening, etc. Power machinery in site location, testing, excavation, and backfilling. Testing and excavation records and collections. Cataloguing, provenience, packaging, special treatment, dating samples.
Reading: Stewart: Chapter 8, pp 229-236 and Chapter 9, pp 239-304.
- March 30 **Lecture:** Testing and excavation plans and profiles. Excavation and documentation of features including human remains; legal, ethical, practical issues.
Reading: Stewart: Chapter 8, pp 304-310; Chapter 9, pp 262-270, 277-280.
Assignment: Your grant proposal term paper topic is due today! Turn in a brief written statement on the subject of your proposal and how you will orient your presentation.
- April 6 **Lecture:** Deep and/or stratified multicomponent sites. Stratigraphic excavation. Testing and excavation of non-architectural sites (including hunter-gatherer sites), caves, rockshelters, bone beds, and sites on stable surfaces. Safety. Introduction to testing

and excavation of architectural sites.

Reading: Stewart: Chapter 9 remaining portions (applies to remainder of course)

April 13 **Lecture:** Testing and excavations of mounds and agricultural features. Excavation of human remains. Field photography.

Reading: see textbook index for the various sections on photography.

Apr 20-May 4 During these class meetings, you will learn how to lay out a grid and a 1x1 meter square. You will then excavate at least one 10 cm level in test units at Rogers Spring site, document the excavation, as well as wash and catalogue any artifacts found. You will also learn to draw a profile.

Assignment: Your term paper (grant proposal), completed excavation level form, specimen inventory, and profile are due on May 4 – bring them to class.

Course evaluation