Anthro 380K (31300): Method and Theory in Historical Archaeology

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This seminar serves as a comprehensive introduction to historical archaeology, a subdiscipline of anthropological archaeology that has experienced tremendous growth over the past 40 years. Historical archaeology encompasses research across a broad spectrum of regions and eras dating back to the exploration of the New World, and forward into the recent past. The field has made significant contributions to the scholarship on American history and on other local and regional histories in other parts of the world where it is practiced (e.g., South Africa, the Caribbean). Seminar participants will read and discuss a range of case studies in terms of geographic areas and time periods, although since most historical archaeologists work in the states, the focus will be on U.S. research. Research foci and bodies of evidence considered in the readings are intended to be diverse, and the latter will include landscapes, architecture, space, material culture, and texts.

As an interdisciplinary field that combines approaches from archaeology, anthropology, and history, practitioners derive theoretical insights from an array of disciplines including critical race studies and women’s studies. Thus, this seminar is intended not only for archaeologists, but also for students across a variety of majors whose interests lie in interpreting the relationships between society, culture, and power, and the spatial and material world. No prior experience or coursework in archaeology is necessary to enroll in the seminar.

Topics to be covered include:

- Theories of cultural exchange.
- The role of the material world in identity formation and the negotiation of collective identities.
- The analyses and interpretations of class relations.
- Feminist theory.
- Social processes and the archaeology of African diasporic peoples.
- The role of the past in contemporary politics; power and the production of history.

Course requirements:

Final grades will be determined by the percentage earned of 100 points total. Please note that the grading criteria includes the use of + and – with letter grades. Course requirements include:

- Seminar Participation = 40% (roughly 3 points per seminar meeting). Contribute to each weekly discussion by: 1) providing one question/issue for group discussion (specific topic will be provided by instructor); 2) vocal participation; 3) sharing summary critique of readings with group. The latter must be a one-paragraph statement on the readings that is emailed to all by Wednesday at noon.

- Portfolio = 60%. The portfolio should be a “scrapbook” combining text and graphics that represent your conceptualization and perspectives of, and engagement with, historical archaeology (readings, fieldwork, TV, internet, listserves, etc.). To give it focus, you can base it on your specific research interests, but this is not required. Think of the portfolio as a visual and written guide to your comprehensions, critiques, and evaluations of the discipline that will, hopefully, serve as a notebook of what you’ve learned from the seminar. As such, you will need to work on it over the course of the semester. It’s perfectly fine if it looks like a work-in-progress as you change your ideas over time. You can journal, include bulleted lists, etc. How you choose and arrange the content is up to you, but at a minimum, you must include the following topics (and have them
clearly labeled somewhere on each page): a) defining historical archaeology, b) methodology, c) theory, d) architecture, landscape, material culture and/or space, e) popular representations of archaeology, f) power, g) identity, h) the politics of the past. Please be sure to include a “references cited” where articles, websites, photos from the internet, etc., are documented. You can either do this at the end of a specific section, or collate them at the very end of the portfolio.

The portfolios must be submitted during the semester on the following dates: Sept. 19, Oct. 24, and Nov. 20 (the latter is a Tuesday). They will be returned to you within 2-3 days for pickup at the main office in Anthropology. Final due date for portfolios: December 11.

Portfolios will be graded on content (complexity and rigor of arguments/critiques/perspectives of each topic, originality of presentation, use of supporting sources), writing (grammar, organization, spelling), and how well the portfolio demonstrates your grasp of historical archaeology and how to potentially implement and evaluate the theories, methods, and practices you cover.

Required texts:


7. All other readings will be posted on Blackboard. Please note that the articles listed below are subject to change.

**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS**

**PART I: INTRODUCTION**

Aug. 29 Introduction to Seminar

In preparation for next week’s discussion, please take 20-30 minutes on the web to become familiar with some of the recent scholarship and fieldwork in historical archaeology. You can: 1) browse the web and check out Society for Historical Archaeology, African Diaspora Archaeology Network, and other sites dedicated to the discipline, 2) browse titles and abstracts in the journals Historical Archaeology, International Journal of Historical Archaeology (available on JSTOR), and/or recent books (listed on UTnetcat or Amazon). Be prepared to share your thoughts on some of the topics that appear to be popular, geographical areas of interest, methods used (GIS, geophysical surveying, etc.), debates, or how others are defining historical archaeology as a discipline or profession.

Sept. 5 Introducing Historical Archaeology

*Defining the discipline; tracing historical archaeology’s development* (suggested reading order):

Orser, Charles and Brian Fagan

Deetz, James (*In Small Things Forgotten*…Chapter 1).

Deagan, Kathleen

Little, Barbara J.

De Cunzo, Lu Ann

Beaudry, M. C.

Hall, Martin and Stephen Silliman (editors)

**PART II: METHODOLOGY AND EVIDENCE**

Sept. 12 *Approaches to Artifacts, Texts, and Oral History*

Beaudry, M. C., L. J. Cook and S. A. Mrozowski

Loren, Diana DiPaolo

Purser, Margaret

Wilkie, Laurie A.

Yentsch, Anne and Mary C. Beaudry

Sept. 19 *The Built Environment and the Use of Space*

Yentsch, Anne Y.
Byrne, D. R.

*De Cunzo, Lu Ann
*Exploring the Institution...*

Whitridge,

Brandon, Jamie and James Davidson

Silvana Buscaglia, Maria Ximena Senatore, Eugenia Lascano, Victoria Bongiovanni, Matías de la Vega and Ana Osella
2004 To Project an Order: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Spatial Construction in the Spanish Colony of Florida Blanca (Patagonia, Eighteenth Century). *Historical Archaeology* 42(4).

Praetzellis, Adrian and Mary Praetzellis

**PART III: THEORETICAL PATHS TO INTERPRETATION**

Sept. 26 **Structuralism** (Case study: J. Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten...*)

Oct. 3 **Class and Socioeconomic Status**

Paynter, Robert, and Randall H. McGuire

Cabak, Melanie A. and Mark D. Groover

Nassaney, M. S. and M. R. Abel

Scott, Elizabeth M.

Walker, Mark

Wall, Diana diZerega, Nan A. Rothschild and Cynthia Copeland
*Wurst, LouAnn
   
   A Class All Its Own...

Yamin, Rebecca

Oct. 10 Consumerism and Social Difference (Case study: P. Mullins…*The Archaeology of Consumer Culture*)

Oct. 17 Ethnicity and Cultural Heterogeneity

Dawdy, Shannon

Delle, James A.

Fennell, Christopher C.

Howson, J. E.

Nassaney, Michael and Deborah L. Rotman, Daniel O. Sayers, Carol A. Nickolai

Weisman, Brent R.

Oct. 24 Cultural Contact in a Multi-ethnic Community (Case study: S. Silliman…Lost Laborers)

Oct. 31 Archaeologies of Race

Bell, Alison

Dubois, W.E.B.

Davidson, James M.
Mullins, P. R.  

Orser, Charles E., Jr.  

Paynter, Robert  

**Nov. 7  Gender Analyses, Feminist Theory**

Allison, Penelope M.  

Kruczek-Aaron, Hadley  

Rotman, Deborah L.  

Spencer-Wood, Suzanne M.  

Thomas, Brian and Larissa Thomas  

*Voss, Barbara L.  
Engendered Archaeology...*

Williams, Bryn  

**PART IV: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: THEORY, PRACTICE, POLITICS**

**Nov. 14  Positionality, feminist politics, intersectionality** (Case study: W. Battle-Baptiste…Black Feminist)

**Nov. 21  NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Holiday)**

**Nov. 28  Neomarxism, critical theory** (M. Leone…*Critical Historical Archaeology*)

**Dec. 5  Feminist theory, whiteness and masculinity** (Case study: L. Wilkie…The Lost Boys)

**Dec. 11  Portfolios due.**