

ANT324L (31740) THEORIES OF ARCHAEOLOGY

"American archaeology is anthropology or it is nothing."
Gordon R. Willey and Philip Phillips (1958)

"We wish now to examine the proposal, again different from traditional and processual archaeology, that archaeology is neither history nor anthropology, but just archaeology."
Ian Hodder and Scott Hutson (2003)

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Course Description:

This course is a senior seminar for students who are pursuing studies in archaeology, and satisfies the "theory" requirement for the Anthropology degree. It is a broad survey of the major theoretical trends that have shaped anthropological archaeology over time. As such it is a course on the history of archaeological thought that highlights the major debates and key issues that have influenced the ways in which we diversely claim to know what we know about the past.

Why a course on theories of archaeology? We tend to envision archaeology as the discovery of sites and the pursuit of artifacts since field excavations dominate its public persona in the media. Yet archaeologists actually spend more time dealing with the analyses of excavated materials and moving from data to interpretations or explanations of the past than we do digging. The various intellectual approaches that we take towards drawing conclusions, if even tentative ones, are influenced by the different perspectives we have of the relationship between the past and the present, what kinds of information or meaning we believe can be derived from the archaeological record, the questions we seek to answer, and indeed, how much of the past each of us posits is knowable. Thus, what we often refer to as "archaeological theory" is best stated in the plural since there are multiple and competing ways that archaeologists theorize archaeological remains in order to interpret past societies and lifeways. That is to say, there is not a single, proven "archaeological theory" widely accepted by all. Theories are intertwined with practice/methodologies and are what frames and drives our interpretations, or what serve as the basis for our generalizing explanations of the past. Rather than bemoan the discipline's heterogeneity, it is hoped that students will come to appreciate its diversity and breadth.

While we will spend the majority of the semester addressing how archaeologists use theory to learn about past cultures and societies, we will also explore the politics of the discipline. That is, what role does archaeology play in the contemporary world with respect to urgent issues such as inequality and nationalism? Some of the topics that are now central in archaeology that will be addressed include professional ethics, social responsibility, working with the public, and Indigenous rights over their past.

A note on the format and workload of this course:

This course was designed to provide students with sufficient background knowledge of archaeological theories in order to prepare them for graduate studies in archaeology where the subject will be a core feature of the curriculum. Moreover, it will be taught mainly in the style of a graduate seminar, where student-led discussions are an integral part of the learning process. Thus, students will be expected to give careful consideration to the assigned readings in preparation for discussions. Please note that there is a relatively heavy reading load for this course, and that most of the readings are advanced and may be complicated (i.e., these are not introductory readings).

Course Goals:

By the end of the semester, students will be able to...

- ...define anthropological archaeology, and what its role is within anthropology.
- ...map the history of anthropological archaeology, noting what key questions, agendas, and major methods and theories shaped the discipline over time.
- ...explain the difference between broader schools of thought (culture history versus processual archaeology, for instance).
- ...illustrate, given a case study, how theory, method, and research goals relate to one another.
- ...assess the various theoretical positions used to interpret or explain the past: what are the strengths and critiques of each?
- ...explain why archaeology is relevant in the contemporary world using examples. How is the discipline politicized?
- ...make sound recommendations on how to conduct archaeological research that is ethical and committed to public or community service. What are our responsibilities in society and how can we meet them effectively?

Course Requirements: Final grades will be based on the percentage of points scored out of a possible “100.” The total points possible are divided as follows:

1. Co-lead 2 discussions, prepare and distribute to the class a 1-page handout (which includes a synopsis of the readings, and 3-4 questions/topics for discussion) = 10 points total
2. 4 in-class exercises = 5 points each; 20 points total
3. 2 position papers = 40 points
4. 2 take-home written exams = 30 points

Leading discussions, preparing handouts: You will be assigned two dates for leading discussions and preparing a handout for the class. You and your co-discussant will divvy up the readings for the day, and prepare a one-page handout that includes an abstract (general overview) of each reading and 2-3 questions of each that the class can discuss (2.5 points total). Your synopsis must consider the author(s) objective and a summary of their discussion. Email a copy of the handout to the instructor at least two hours prior to class so that copies can be made for distribution (or you can bring hard copies to class). In terms of leading the discussion, it is your responsibility to get it going and to field questions about your assigned reading (2.5 points total). There is no make-up for this assignment. With **prior approval** (no less than one week before your assigned date) you can switch dates with a classmate.

In-class exercises: There will be 4 exercises related to course content. These are opportunities for you to work in collaboration with your classmates in applying what you’ve learned via readings and discussions to ‘real world’ case studies. In order to receive any credit, you have to be present in class. If you are unable to complete the exercises in class, you can turn them in within one week of the date of the exercise with no penalty.

Exams: Exam questions will be based on the course objectives outlined above and the exams are intended to give you ample time to think through and develop your comprehension of the major advancements in archaeological theory. Thus, you are encouraged to use your notes and readings in writing your responses. Just be sure to cite any readings. You will be emailed the exam questions one week before the due date. Email your responses to me on the due date by 9:30am.

Position papers: Two position papers based on readings for this class are required during the second half of the semester. The questions you'll be asked to respond to will be based on some combination of the course objectives and issues raised during our group discussions of the readings. You will receive a handout with the specific requirements. Please submit your papers via email to me on the due date by 9:30am.

Assignments are due as noted in the schedule below and according to your assigned discussion days.

With prior approval, one late assignment will be accepted as long as it is submitted within one week of the original due date.

ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED. You are allowed 3 absences (including excused absences). Two points will be deducted for each absence thereafter.

Class participation: The majority of this course will be conducted as a seminar, with the expectation that students will come fully prepared to discuss and debate the readings. Your vocal participation and preparation are integral to the overall success of creating an engaged and active learning environment. Individuals will be called on to answer questions regarding the readings, and to offer insights on various topics.

Minute papers: Minute papers are akin to pop quizzes (although these will not be graded). During or after a lecture or class discussion, you will be asked to answer a question based on that day's lecture/discussion. Your responses should be brief (1-3 sentences) and to the point. Minute papers are an assessment tool. If I note problem areas in terms of students' comprehension, if there is a clear indication that a debate needed more discussion time, or if there are significant observations that should be shared, I will spend a few minutes at the beginning of the next class to address them. Examples of the kinds of questions you will have to answer include:

What did you perceive to be the major purpose or objective of today's class or readings?

Would you agree or disagree with this statement: . . .? Why?

In your opinion, what was the most useful idea discussed in today's class?

Grading Scale: 93.5-100 = A; 89.5-93.4 = A-; 86.5-89.4 = B+; 83.5-86.4 = B; 79.5-83.4 = B-; 76.5-79.4 = C+; 73.5-76.4 = C; 69.5-73.4 = C-; 66.5-69.4 = D+; 63.5-66.4 = D; 59.5-63.4 = D-; 59.0 and below = F

Required Text (available at the UT Co-op or Amazon):

Please note that you will need to purchase the 2nd edition:

Matthew Johnson, *Archaeological Theory: An Introduction*, 2nd edition, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Canvas: Grades, readings, and assignment handouts are all accessible through Canvas (canvas.utexas.edu).

Academic Integrity:

Scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and will be reported to the Dean of Students. If anyone is caught falsifying excuses in order to make-up a required assignment or plagiarizing, the case will be submitted to SJS for arbitration. Please refer to the Student Judicial Services web site for more information: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations is strongly encouraged to contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 512-410-6644 (Video Phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

Observance of Religious Holy Days

Section 51.911 of the Texas Education Code states that a student shall be excused from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy requires students to notify each of their instructors as far in advance of the absence as possible so that arrangements can be made.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND REQUIRED READINGS

NOTE: "AT" = *Archaeological Theory*; all other readings + bibliography will be posted on Canvas.

DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENTS	IMPORTANT NOTES
HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL THOUGHT AND PRACTICE			
Th: 8/30	Introduction to class.		
T: 9/4	Early history of archaeology	AT Preface & Ch. 1	Lecture
Th: 9/6	Overview of major theoretical trends	Praetzellis (Ch 1)	Lecture
T: 9/11	Overview of major theoretical trends	Harris and Cipolla (Ch 1&2)	Instructor-led discussion
CULTURE HISTORY			
Th: 9/13	Overview	Webster; Trigger (Ch 6; sections with *)	Lecture
T: 9/18	Methods and more	Ford; Steward; McKern	Group 1
Th: 9/20	Exercise 1	Seriation	
CRITIQUES & TRANSITIONS: MOVING BEYOND CULTURE HISTORY			
T: 9/25	Functionalism, conjunctive archaeology, cultural ecology	Trigger (Ch 7; sections with *); Steward and Setzler	Lecture
DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENTS	IMPORTANT NOTES
EMERGENCE OF PROCESSUAL ARCHAEOLOGY			
Th: 9/27	New Archaeology	AT Ch. 2-5	Lecture

T: 10/2	Methods and theory	Watson, LeBlanc, & Redman; Gould & Watson; Binford	Lecture Exam 1 due
Th: 10/4	Evolution and archaeology	AT Ch. 9-10; additional reading TBA	Group 2
T: 10/9	Exercise 2	Ethnoarchaeology	
POST-PROCESSUAL ARCHAEOLOGIES			
Th: 10/11	Overview	AT Ch. 6-8	Lecture
T: 10/16	New directions in archaeology	Hodder; Conkey and Spector; Leone	Group 3
CASE STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY ARCHAEOLOGY			
Th: 10/18	Gender analysis and feminist archaeology	Praetzelis (Ch 6); Brumfiel; Arthur	Group 4
T: 10/23	Gender analysis and feminist archaeology	Dr. Alan Covey, guest lecture Covey; Silverblatt	Exam 2 due
Th: 10/25	Exercise 3	Gendered pasts in popular culture	
T: 10/30	Ethics; Public archaeology	AT Ch. 12; Ludlow Collective; ABG	Group 5
Th: 11/1	Indigenous archaeology	Atalay; Watkins	Group 6
T: 11/6	Exercise 4	Ethical dilemmas in archaeology	
Th: 11/8		Dr. Mariah Wade, guest lecture	
T: 11/13	Cultural contact	Readings TBA	Group 7
Th: 11/15	NO CLASS		Paper 1 due
T: 11/20	Identity and difference	Harris and Cipolla (Ch 4); reading TBA	Group 8
Th: 11/22	THANKSGIVING		
T: 11/27	Household archaeology	Readings TBA	Group 9
Th: 11/29	CRM (Cultural Resource Management)	Doug Boyd, VP, Prewitt and Assoc. guest lecture	
T: 12/4	Inequality	Mullins; Zimmerman et al.	Group 10
Th: 12/6	Wrap-up discussion	AT Ch 13	
12/11			Paper 2 due