

# ANT310L/AFR317e (Global Cultures Flag)

## Intro to African Diaspora Archaeology



### Welcome to this class

What can archaeology tell us about the people, histories and cultures of the Black Diaspora?

This course is an introduction to African diaspora archaeology where you'll learn some basics in historical archaeology and its role in documenting and interpreting Black diaspora societies in years past. Here's what you'll know more about by semester's end (MAIN COURSE GOALS):

1

#### ARCHAEOLOGY

What is archaeology?  
What are the questions, theories, & findings re: Black lifeways?

2

#### AFRICAN DIASPORA

The who, what, where, why, and how of the African diaspora, with a focus on U.S. history.

3

#### POLITICS OF THE PAST

Heritage, history, archaeology: how & why is the past politicized today?



#### Class Days/Time

MW 1-2:30 in SAC  
4.118



#### Office Hours

T 1-2, W 2:30-3:30  
or by appt. in SAC  
4.150 OR Skype via  
appt.



#### Email

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## What does archaeological research on the African diaspora involve?

This subfield of anthropological archaeology got its start in the late 1960s, influenced by the civil rights movement, rise of Black studies depts., and growing interest among archaeologists to study historically marginalized groups.

Archaeologists excavate sites once occupied by people of African descent and study artifacts, ecofacts (plant and animal remains), landscapes, and architecture to reconstruct their life ways. Since this field began in the States, the vast majority of studies have been carried out here, but has expanded to include Canada, the Caribbean, and portions of Central and South America (including Brazil). There is also related archaeological research in West Africa (especially Ghana) on sites dating to the era of the transatlantic slave trade.

Colonoware bowl,  
Yaughan Plantation, SC



**“...archaeology points official attention to silenced stories...” A. Agbe-Davies**

To date, a lot of archaeological work has focused on the institution of slavery from the colonial to the antebellum eras. How did captive blacks and Africans resist enslavement, create social institutions, and what cultural forms did they practice? Archaeologists have also branched out to study post-emancipation sites ranging from rural African American communities to 20th-century urban enclaves. Current research topics include race and racism, gender and black women’s roles in the past, African American social relations, and Black cultural production.

## ARTIFACTS ARE OBJECTS MADE, MODIFIED, OR USED BY PEOPLE IN THE PAST...

- Artifacts are generally portable, and can be made of any material.
- Those in the photo to the right were recovered from Mulberry Row, where Thomas Jefferson housed skilled enslaved laborers at Monticello. What might the dominos, mouth harp, and slate pencils reveal about their life ways?





**“For all those who were lost. For all those who were stolen. For all those who were left behind. For all those who were forgotten.”**

**Engraving on the African Burial Ground monument, National Park Service, NYC. You’ll learn about the research & politics surrounding this site.**

## What will this course cover?

This course will introduce you, via archaeology, to the social & cultural institutions, politics & everyday life ways of people of African descent. As an entry-level course, it’s not my intent to provide a comprehensive survey of the field; there’s simply too much to cover adequately in one semester. Instead, we’ll explore a number of case studies across the U.S. dating from the colonial era of slavery to the early 20th century so that you’ll have a working knowledge of archaeology and its contributions to Black history. The course is organized chronologically, and some of the major topics will include slavery & resistance, social life, race and racism, cultural practices, household economies, gender roles, Black communities, heritage & politics of the past. You’ll learn about the kinds of evidence that archaeologists rely on to interpret the past, including artifacts, the built environment, the WPA ex-slave narratives, and oral histories.

## TO ACHIEVE OUR COURSE GOALS, HERE ARE THE RELATED OBJECTIVES...

- Define & explain key terms & concepts: African diaspora, race, gender, historical archaeology
- Compare & contrast the experiences of African Americans in the U.S. from slavery to the early 20th century.
- Relate, using case studies, how archaeological research has contributed to scholarship on African American history. What are some of the key questions and interpretations?
- Demonstrate your knowledge of primary sources, artifacts, & other lines of evidence (e.g. oral histories) used to study Black history.
- Explain how the past is politicized in today’s society and discuss examples of how to implement ethical & socially responsible approaches to researching the past.

## Here's what you'll be graded on

There'll be a mix of exams, discussion questions, group exercises, etc.

2 Exams - 30 pts each = 60%. 3 exams given, w/lowest exam grade thrown out.

5 In-class exercises - 4 pts. each = 20%.

Minute papers (10), questions on readings (10) - 1 pt. each = 20%. **Questions submitted for readings will only be graded if you are also present for the discussion.**

We'll spend some of our class time covering the readings, and you'll be asked to submit questions for discussions. These need to be submitted the day before class via Canvas on the Discussion page. I'll also use minute papers to gauge your knowledge of lecture and reading materials; these will help me to determine how the class as a whole is doing, and if I need to go back over anything.

In-class assignments cannot be made up if you are TARDY or ABSENT (except for the reason listed to the right), and I don't offer extra credit. If you'll need to be absent for an exam, please let me know via email one week prior to the test date for rescheduling.

**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

### CANVAS

Grades, announcements, all readings, and all else will be posted on Canvas: <https://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/conduct/>

### OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS

If you need to be absent for this reason, please let me know 14 days in advance (this is UT policy) so we can arrange for you to make up any missed assignments.

### SSD ACCOMMODATIONS

If you have a documented disability with SSD, contact me at the start of the semester so that I can work with you on the accommodations you'll need for a successful semester.

## Tips for doing well in this class...

1. Do the reading before class. I've kept the reading load on the light side keeping in mind that this is an intro course on archaeology. We'll have time during class to discuss the readings so you'll become familiar with the concepts, terms, etc., but the discussions aren't an alternative to the readings. You'll get more out of these discussions & be better prepared for the exams if you've done the reading.

2. Check the syllabus regularly for due dates.

3. Ask questions, even (especially!) while I'm lecturing.

4. Forty-percent of your final grade will require that you are in class for the exercises, etc. Might be easier just to come twice a week for the semester rather than worry about which days there's an in-class assignment.

5. Email me at least a few days before an exam if you have questions, not at 1am the morning of that exam.

## Friendly Note...

**I hope you'll contribute to discussions, share your insights and opinions, ask lots of questions, and get to know your classmates & I. The other option, which me & Bart really don't like, is for you to sit through a lo-o-ng lecture, bored out of your mind.**







## Course Schedule

\*Please note that I may change some readings and exercise topics.

Date	Topic & Readings	Assignments, Exams, & Due Dates
W 1/23	Intro to class	Submit question for 1/28 by <b><u>1/27</u></b>
M 1/28	The African diaspora Patterson & Kelley	Submit question for 1/30 by <b><u>1/29</u></b>
W 1/30	Introducing Historical Archaeology Little; Fennell	
M 2/4	Video: Africans in America	Submit question for 2/6 by <b><u>2/5</u></b>
W 2/6	Race & slavery in the colonial Chesapeake Epperson	
M 2/11	Women & slavery Heath; White	Submit question for 2/13 by <b><u>2/12</u></b>
W 2/13	Culture & creolization in South Carolina Ferguson	
M 2/18	Video: Unchained Memories Davidson & Lytle; selection of narratives	
W 2/20	Exercise 1: WPA ex-slave narratives	
M 2/25		<b>Exam 1</b> ; Submit question for 2/27 by <b><u>2/26</u></b>
W 2/27	The Antebellum South Young; Battle-Baptiste	
M 3/4	Black cultural production Selection of primary sources; Gundaker	
W 3/6	Exercise 2: African American yards	
M 3/11	Video: UGRR: the Williams Still Story	Submit question for 3/13 by <b><u>3/12</u></b>
W 3/13	Resistance Sayers; Weik	
3/18-3/20	SPRING BREAK	

## Course Schedule (continued)

Date	Topic & Readings	Assignments, Exams, & Due Dates
M 3/25	Archaeology of Texas freedmen Texas Beyond History; Sitton & Conrad	
W 3/27	Antioch Colony, Buda, Hays County Franklin; Scott	
M 4/1	Exercise 3	
W 4/3		<b>Exam 2</b>
M 4/8	Video: Time Team America Shackel	Submit question for 4/10 by <b><u>4/9</u></b>
W 4/10	New Philadelphia Agbe-Davies; Fennell	Submit question for 4/15 by <b><u>4/14</u></b>
M 4/15	Black urbanites in Annapolis, MD Mullins; Warner	Submit question for 4/17 by <b><u>4/16</u></b>
W 4/17	Heritage, Politics Agbe-Davies	
M 4/22	Video: African Burial Ground LaRoche & Blakey	
W 4/24	Exercise 4	Submit question for 4/29 by <b><u>4/28</u></b>
M 4/29	African Americans, 'intersectional violence' & Rosewood, FL; Gonzalez-Tennant	
W 5/1		
M 5/6	Exercise 5	
W 5/8		<b>Exam 3</b>