SBS 224s/324s **Professor Mendoza**

Archaeology: From Map to Museum

LD 2: Archaeology and the Scientific Method

Description: Using the flow chart of the scientific method distributed in class as of late, you are to design a series of team oriented and strategically executed archaeological projects that would effectively and decisively serve as the basis for interpreting either known or unknown archaeological cultures and sites. While this exercise is largely hypothetical, you should base your proposed methods and procedures on some of those basic archaeological strategies and frameworks identified in those readings recently assigned and discussed in class.

Considerations: The following methodological considerations and procedural guidelines should be taken into account when designing your scientific approach to archaeology and the study of the past.

1. Identify the archaeological site or zone that you intend to investigate and provide some basic cultural and historical information related to what is known of the site or sites. If you are using a hypothetical site, you may fabricate the details of the culture and history under review. What is known about the site's history and what do you intend to find out as per your investigation?

2. You should first decide as a team what you intend to study in the way of problems or questions that your group considers of primary importance to the study that you will undertake. In other words, how is your study significant or relevant in terms of its potential contributions to the science of archaeology and culture history? What do you hope to achieve in the way of scientific goals?

3. In taking into account the flow chart of the scientific method, you should be prepared to identify the actual methods, procedures, and strategies that you will employ in your efforts to prepare for and anticipate your lab and field study in archaeology. For example, what source of literature or archival information might you rely on and where would you go to get the information that you need for your literature review?

4. Having identified the actual methods and procedures that you will undertake, you should reconstruct the processes and strategies undertaken, and the equipment, personnel, and resources required, in order to see through the project's objectives. How large a team and how much equipment and supplies will be required for the size of the project undertaken?

5. What problems, contingencies, and alternative plans might you put in place to assure success in the field endeavor? How might the weather, political instability, group conflicts and agendas, and other unforeseen circumstances affect the outcomes of your research project?

6. Describe the dominant types of artifacts that you anticipate recovering from your field setting, and provide an overview of the methods and procedures that you would venture require immediate attention in order to begin creating a context for artifact and data analysis and interpretation. In other words, if ceramics are the dominant material that you anticipate recovering, what lab procedures might accrue in order to process the materials appropriately?

7. Having interpreted your materials, please provide at least two hypotheses that might develop as per the types of materials and evidence that you have recovered. Describe the significance of your hypotheses, and provide an indication of how you intend to disseminate your findings to the scientific community. Who in your group will be published as the lead or principal investigator, and why?