

Introduction to Archaeology

Anthropology 103-003, Boise State University
Fall 2009, Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 8:40-9:30, MP101

Instructor: Dr. Christopher Hill

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Course Description

This course is a general introduction to the goals, methods, and discoveries involved in the scientific study of the human past. Archaeology is the study of the human past, using evidence from artifacts and archaeological features, in addition to environmental (biological and earth-science) information.

Using a combination of lectures, readings, computer-based learning, and report preparation, this course reviews the basic scientific methods used to discover the human past and introduces some of the ideas and theories that have been developed from archaeological discoveries.

To understand the human past, archaeologists study artifacts along with their environmental context. This course provides an introduction to the history of archaeology, the nature of the archaeological record, the techniques used to investigate the physical, biological, and behavioral adaptations of ancient humans, and an overview of current scientific theories about the human past. Significant archaeological discoveries will be used to illustrate major concepts and methods.

Course Goals and Objectives

The primary goals of this class are to develop strengths in several subjects related to archaeology.

- Gain a basic understanding of what archaeology is and how it has developed as an academic and scientific discipline.
- Learn about the variety of scientific methods used to understand the human past.
- Develop a broad understanding about famous and important discoveries as they relate to the history, theory, methods, and techniques of archaeology.
- Gain a perspective on current theories about the human past based on archaeological studies.
- Strengthen ability to organize archaeological sites and discoveries in time and space.

Learning Outcomes

There are a variety of learning outcomes in critical thinking, communication skills, and perspectives that are part of *Introduction to Archaeology*.

- Identify achievements (concepts, theories, and scientific discoveries) of archaeology and recognize the basis for different interpretations about the human past.

·Gain experience in taking notes and preparing summaries as a means of writing effectively.

·Identify what kinds of methods, techniques and quantitative information can be used to answer questions about the human past.

·Recognize the achievements of humans at different times and places based on the evidence of the archaeological record.

Required Text

Archaeology Essentials: Theories, Methods, and Practice. 2007. By Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn. Thames and Hudson, London.

Optional Texts

A Brief History of Archaeology: Classical Times to the Twenty-First Century. Fourth Edition. 2005. By Brian Fagan. Pearson Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

The Long Summer: How Climate Changed Civilization. 2004. By Brian Fagan. Basic Books, New York.

The Great Warming: Climate Change and the Rise and Fall of Civilizations. By Brian Fagan. Bloomsbury Press, New York.

Web Links

The BLACKBOARD web site is: <http://blackboard.boisestate.edu>

The web site for the required text is:

http://www.thamesandhudsonusa.com/web/archaeology_ess/index.shtml

Methods of Evaluation

Examinations

You are expected to participate with regular class attendance and by keeping current on the required readings. There will be three exams. Each exam will count for 20% of your grade. The exams are non-cumulative. There will be no make-up exams.

Exams are conducted using BLACKBOARD at the online testing center (Education 418 ;<http://itc.boisestate.edu/testinglab/default.asp>). Exams are based on information presented in readings (from the required text), in class presentations and discussions, and on the class BLACKBOARD site. You are responsible for the information provided in the required reading, in class lectures and activities, and materials available on the BLACKBOARD site.

Grades

Your final grade will be based on the total score accumulated from the three exams plus a set of additional assignments. Each exam counts towards 20% of your final grade (you can earn up to 60% of your total final score based on the three exams). You can prepare two short papers (famous sites, dating methods) and three sets of time charts and maps each worth 5% for a total of 25% of your grade. In addition, up to 15% of your score can be obtained by preparing and handing in three short summaries based on the optional readings or videos. Each chapter or video summary is potentially worth 5% of your grade; you can hand in two these for a total of 15% of your total final score. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the deadline date. No credit for late assignments.

Exams and Summaries	
Exams (3 X 20%)	60%
Short Papers, Time Charts/ Maps (5 X 5%)	25%
Summaries (3 X 5%)	15%
Total (60% + 25% + 15%)	100%

Grades Based on Total Percentage Earned	
100-96%	A
96-90	A-
89-88%	B+
87-82%	B
81-80%	B-
79-78%	C+
77-72%	C
71-70%	C-
69-68%	D+
67-62%	D
61-60%	D-
Below 60%	F

Course Outline: General Topics

Topics for Exam 1

The History, Theory and Development of Archaeology. What is archaeology? What are the goals of archaeology? A short history of important and famous archaeologists and archaeological discoveries. The importance and value of archaeology. *Required Reading: Introduction and Chapter 1, Renfrew and Bahn, pages 8-35.*

How the Prehistoric Record is Formed. How is the archaeological record created? The processes of site preservation and archaeological taphonomy. *Required Reading: Chapter 2, Renfrew and Bahn, pages 36-57.*

Methods of Discovery and Excavation. The techniques used to find and dig archaeological sites. Field and mapping methods. *Required Reading: Chapter 3, Renfrew and Bahn, pages 58-95*

Topics for Exam 2

Scientific Methods of Determining Time and Age. Relative dating techniques. Laboratory techniques for estimating the age of archaeological materials. Absolute dating methods—geochronology, paleoclimates, and prehistory. *Required Reading: Chapter 4, Renfrew and Bahn, pages 96-129.*

Ancient Environments and Environmental Archaeology. Plants and Animals:

Archaeobotany and Archaeozoology. Methods used to determine the kinds of environments in the human past; ancient diets and food resources. Ancient physical and biological landscapes (physical geography, plants, and animals). *Required Reading: Chapter 6, Renfrew and Bahn, pages 162-193.*

Artifacts, Raw Materials and Ancient Trade. Stone, bone, and metal tools. The importance of pottery in archaeology. Ancient economic interaction: evidence for exchange in the archaeological record. Review of techniques used to infer the movement of materials by ancient humans. *Required Reading: Chapter 7, Renfrew and Bahn, pages 194-217*

Topics for Exam 3

Biological Archaeology, Forensics, Paleoanthropology. The evolution of mammals with a focus on hominids. Evidence from physical remains. Disease and ancient human populations. *Required Reading. Chapter 8, Renfrew and Bahn, pages 236-245.*

Ancient Human Behavior and Society. Comparisons between small and large societies based on archaeological discoveries. Archaeological evidence for human views of the world: ancient art, ritual, and religion. The use of symbols, and the development of language and writing. *Required Reading: Chapters 5 and 8, Renfrew and Bahn, pages 131-161 and 218-235.*

The Value of the Human Past. Explanations of Human Origins and Adaptations to Environmental Change. Major theories on the ways human groups have changed through time. Human adaptation to environmental and social change; evolutionary archaeology. Examples based on archaeological discoveries. Contributions of archaeology to our understanding of the human past. Time, space, and human diversity. The significance of archaeology; science, environmental and climate change, conservation, economics and government. *Required Reading. Chapter 9, Renfrew and Bahn, pages 246-267. Chapters 10, Renfrew and Bahn, pages 269-289.*

Rules for the Famous Sites Paper

1. 10% Must be handed in on time (no credit for late papers).
2. 5% Must have your name, class, section title, date of submission (no name, no credit!).
3. 10% Clearly indicate the source of the information (sources cited/references).
 - a) Include: title, inclusive page numbers, title of book or journal, date of publication, publisher (for book), place of publication. Provide http address for web citations.
4. 50% Your short paper needs to be 2 full pages of text in length, not including a title page.
 - a) Double spaced.
 - b) 10-12 font, on 8.5 X 11 inch sheets of paper.
 - c) 1 page on famous/important Old World site or archaeologist.
 - d) 1 page on famous/important New World site or archaeologist.
 - e) Include the following information:
 - 1) Location,
 - 2) Age,
 - 3) Reason for importance,
 - 4) Techniques (such as types of fossils/artifacts, environments, excavators, when studied).
5. 25% Grade will be partly based on grammar, spelling, writing structure.

Rules for the Time Charts and Maps

1. Must be handed in on time (no credit for late papers).
2. Must have your name, class, section title, date of submission (no name, no credit!).
3. Time charts and maps must include all sites introduced as part of the course (see “map and ordering” list on the Blackboard study guide). These are sites presented in class or selected from the readings.

Remember to obtain any credit for a review or summary they must be handed in at the beginning of class.

Rules for the Summaries

Option 1: You can choose to produce a summary of any chapter in the optional texts.

Option 2: You can also hand in a summary of any of the videos that are placed on reserve in the main library or in the Anthropology Department. If you want, you can choose to summarize another book or paper on archaeology or a video relating to archaeology, but you must get prior approval.

1. 10% Must be handed in on time (no credit for late papers).
2. 5% Must have your name, class, section title, date of submission (no name, no credit!).
3. 10% Clearly indicate the source of the information (sources cited/references).
 - a) For a chapter summary: title of chapter, inclusive page numbers, title of book, author of book, date of publication, publisher, place of publication.
 - b) For video summary: title of video.
4. 45% Your summary needs to be 3 full pages of text in length, not including a title page. Each page of text is worth 10% of your score on the summary.
 - a) Double spaced.
 - b) 10-12 font, on 8.5 X 11 inch sheets of paper (30% of score on paper).
5. 30% Grade will be partly based on grammar, spelling, writing structure.

Remember to obtain any credit for a summary it must be handed in by the beginning of class.

Introduction to Archaeology: Schedule for Fall 2009	
Week 1: Aug 24-28	Introduction; History and Development of Archaeology
Week 2: Aug 31-Sept. 4	History and Development of Archaeology
Week 3: Sept. 9-11	History and Development of Archaeology and How the Prehistoric Record is Formed
Week 4: Sept. 14-18	How the Prehistoric Record is Formed Hand in Famous Old and New World Sites Paper at Beginning of Class (5%) on September 11th
Week 5: Sept. 21-25	Methods of Discovery and Excavation Hand in Time Chart/Maps at Beginning of Class (5%) on September 25th
Week 6: Sept. 28-Oct. 2	FIRST EXAM THIS WEEK (20% of grade) Hand in Summary 1 at Beginning of Class on October 2 (5%)
Week 7: Oct. 5-9	Scientific Methods of Determining Time and Age
Week 8: Oct. 12-16	Environmental Archaeology--Physical Settings and Landscapes Hand in Paper on Dating Methods at Beginning of Class (5%) on October 16th
Week 9: Oct. 19-23	Biotic Resources and Human Ecology--Plants and Animals
Week 10: Oct. 26-30	Artifacts--Sequence and Techniques
Week 11: Nov. 2-6	Ancient Trade and Exchange--Concepts and Methods Hand in Time Chart/Maps at Beginning of Class (5%) on November 6th.
Week 12: Nov. 9-13	SECOND EXAM THIS WEEK (Nov. 9-11)(20% of grade) Summary 2 Due at Beginning of Class (5%) on November 13th
Week 13: Nov. 16-20	Biological Archaeology, Forensics and Paleoanthropology
Week 14: Nov. 23-27	Thanksgiving Break
Week 15: Nov. 30-Dec. 4	Ancient Human Behavior and Society
Week 16: Dec. 7-11	The Value of the Human Past Summary 3 (5%) and Time Chart/Maps (5%) due at Beginning of Class on December 11
Week 17 Dec. 14-17	FINAL EXAM THIS WEEK (20% of grade)