

Introduction to Archaeology

Prof. Elizabeth Klarich
eklarich@smith.edu

~ **Class:** Tuesday/Thursday,
10:50-12:05 in **TBD**

~ **Office Hours:** M 11-12, Tu 1-2 &
by appt- 10 Prospect, #103 [[book](#)]



Course Description Ant/Arc 135, Fall 2024

This course studies past cultures and societies through their material remains and explores how archaeologists use different field methods, analytical technique and theoretical approaches to investigate, reconstruct and learn from the past. Data from settlement surveys, site excavations and artifact analysis are used to address economic, social, political and ideological questions across time and space. This course is taught from an anthropological perspective, exploring key transitions in human prehistory, including the origins of food production, social inequality and state-level societies across the globe. Relevance of archaeological practice in modern political, economic and social contexts is explored. First-year & sophomores only. Enrollment limited to 30.

Crosslist(s): ANT, ARC, HSC, MUX

Image: [Palace of Shattered Vessels](#)

Goals & Structure

Archaeologists “think from things”—we study past cultures through material remains, which may be as tiny as a chemical residue or as massive as an ancient city. In this course, students will be introduced to a wide variety of field methods, analytical techniques, and theoretical approaches to investigate, reconstruct, and learn from the past. We will discuss how different types of **archaeological data**—collected from settlement surveys, site excavations, and artifact analysis—can be used to address economic, social, political, and ideological questions across time and space. Because this course is taught from an anthropological perspective, we will explore **theoretical debates** about key transitions in human prehistory: the origins of food production, social inequality, and state-level societies. Lastly, students will be asked to consider the relevance of **archaeological practices** and the material world, more broadly, in modern political, economic, and social contexts. Can archaeology be a transformative discipline in the 21st century?

Readings, videos, etc.

- ~ Visit [course website](#) to access all readings, assignment, etc.
- ~ Textbook: *Archaeology as history: telling stories from a fragmented past*, C. Frieman (2023) [Smith [ebook](#); buy [here](#) or [here](#)]

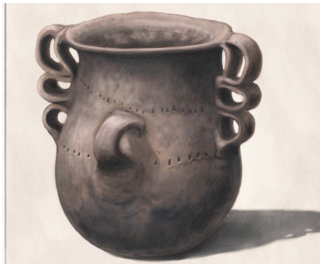
Assignments & Grading

- ~ Site Report Essay (24% of class grade), due 10/10 by 5pm
- ~ Methods Essay (24%), due 10/31 by 5pm
- ~ 21st c. Trowelblazers Project (32%), due 12/17 by 5pm
- ~ Weekly Exercises, 10 total (20%), due by class meetings
- ~ See “Course Policies” for additional information about grading.

Course Schedule

“Archaeology as a discipline is, at its core, a way of asking and answering questions about people and the worlds they built and inhabited (often in the past, but not always)” (Frieman 2023: 73)

Week 1	Introducing Archaeology 9/3: Course Overview	9/5: What do Archaeologists Really Do?
	Due: n/a Class: Review syllabus & course overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exercise: 1 object, 5 questions - Student questionnaire (Google Form) 	Due: Reading & Discussion Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nelson & Gonzalez 2023 - Choose one <u>archaeology</u> article from <u>Sapiens</u> (there are 335) Class: Discussion Questions (not collected)
Week 2	Situating Archaeology 9/10: Topics & Methods in Archaeology	9/12: History of Archaeology
	Due: Reading & Weekly Exercise 1 (WE1- Google) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prendergast & Sawchuk 2020 - Kintigh et al. 2014 Class: Discuss WE1 (Google Form, due before class) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group work (<i>SAA Archaeological Record</i>) 	Due: Reading & Discussion Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Archaeology as History</u> (Frieman 2023): Intro, Ch 1 & Ch 2 Class: Review Discussion Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research Design handout
Week 3	Archaeology's Roots 9/17: Victorian archaeology & Smith College	9/19: Digging through the Archives
	Due: Reading & Weekly Exercise 2 (WE2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adams 2010 (Intro & Harriet Boyd Hawes) Class: Discuss WE2, Trowelblazers & online sources	Due: Harriet Boyd Hawes Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Details TBA Class: (to confirm) Visit to Smith Special Collections
Week 4	Archaeology Today 9/24: Looking back & thinking forward	9/26: Crash Course: Terminology, History, etc.
	Due: Watching & Discussion Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Webinar: <u>Unsettling the Past</u> (2hrs) Class: Review Discussion Questions	Due: Reading & Weekly Exercise 3 (WE3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review <u>Archaeology as History</u>, Ch 1 & 2 - Review <u>Unsettling the Past</u> (2hrs) Class: Discuss WE3 & review concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handout: Site Report Essay & rubric
Week 5	Archaeological Evidence 10/1: Locating sites, high & low tech survey	10/3: Excavating sites
	Due: Reading & Watching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ur 2006; Contreras & Brodie 2010 - Video: <u>Aerial Archaeology @ Home</u> (6 min) Class: Review Site Report Assignment & pick a site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Video: <u>Archaeological Survey</u> (21 mins) 	Due: Reading & Weekly Exercise 4 (WE4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Videos: <u>Stratigraphy</u> (The Archaeologists Laboratory, 28 mins) & <u>A Day in the Life @ Jamestown</u> (2021, 12 mins) Class: Discussion of Site Report Essays & WE4

Week 6	Catch Up 10/8: Peer Review	10/10: Studying Technology
	Due: Complete & print out site report essay draft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See website for details! Class: Peer review & site group discussions	Due: Site Report Essay by 5pm, Reading & Watching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Miller 2006 (Intro, Ch 1 & 2) - Video: Indigenous Perspectives on Archaeology (2020, 16 min)
Week 7	Labwork & Analysis 10/15: BREAK	Labwork & Analysis 10/17: Studying Pottery
		Due: Reading, Watching & Weekly Exercise 5 (WE5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ellis 2013 - Videos: Pottery Analysis (2021, 23 mins) & Sherd Nerds (2019, 11 mins) Class: Pottery exercise & Discussion of WE5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handout: Methods Essay
Week 8	Telling Time 10/22: Absolute & Relative Dating	10/24: Alternative approaches to time
	Due: Reading & (optional) watching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Archaeology as History, Ch 3 - Nash 2020 - (optional) Archaeological Dating: How Does it Work? (50 minutes) Class: Archaeological Seriation (18 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seriation Exercise & discuss article options 	Due: Watching & Weekly Exercise 6 (WE6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Video: Indigenous Perspectives in Chronology Building (2021, 48 mins) Class: Discussion of WE6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss video & prep for Methods Essay w/WE6 (identifying methods, theory, etc.)
Week 9	Catch Up 10/29: Peer Review	10/31: Site Reports & Analysis (using AI?)
	Due: Complete & print out Methods Essay draft <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See website for details! Class: Peer review & group discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidelines for peer review 	Due: Methods Review Essay by 5pm Class: TBA
Week 10	Studying People [CW: human remains] 11/5: Bioanthropology & Bioarchaeology	11/7: Ethics & Repatriation
	Due: Readings & Online research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Archaeology as History, Ch 4 - Podcast: Race & Bio Anthropology (52 min) Class: Discussion & Trowelblazing model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handout: 21st c. Trowelblazers Essay 	Due: Watching & Weekly Exercise 7 (WE7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Video: Reclaiming the Ancestors - Additional online resources Class: Discussion of NAGPRA & related issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trowelblazer discussion (10 minutes)

Week 11	Studying People [CW-human remains] 11/12: No Class, Otelia Cromwell Day	11/14: Foodways, Disease & Migrations
		Due: Watching & Online reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Video: Anthropologist Debunks the Paleodiet (2019, 45 min) & Lab link - Video: This Ancient DNA revolution... (2018, 6 minutes) & Lab link - (optional) Jennifer Raff & Ancient DNA Class: Discussion & Trowelblazer Group Meeting
Week 12	Transforming Archaeology 11/19: Changing the World?	11/21: Case Studies & Trowelblazing
	Due: Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Archaeology as History, Ch 5 & Conclusion - Transforming Archaeology (Sonya Atalay et al. 2014): Intro & Chapter 1 [e-book] - Connections to your Trowelblazer??? Class: Discussion & Trowelblazer Group Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TB article choices (to be read by Thursday) 	Due: Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selected Trowelblazer article - Case Studies TBA Class: Discussion & Trowelblazer Group Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Article discussion & Website workshop - Guidelines reviewed for final presentations
Week 13	North American Foodways: Past & Present 11/26: No Class, but see below!	11/28: No Class, Thanksgiving Break
	Due: Reading & Weekly Exercise 8 (WE8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Podcast: The History & Archaeology of Thanksgiving (2021, 60 min) - Sean Sherman (Lakota)— the Sioux Chef & Indigenous Food Lab - Native American Food Sovereignty, Explained (2024, 9 min) - NMAI Thanksgiving Resources 	
Week 14	Wrapping up! 12/3: Peer editing, etc.	12/5: Presentations, Day 1
	Due: Complete & print out/share TB essay draft Class: Trowelblazer Meetings & Course Evals (20m) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peer Review of TB essays - Editing website & presentation prep 	Due: Keep working on Trowelblazer Essays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TBA Class: Presentations, Day 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group Evaluation Handouts (WE9)
Week 15	Wrapping up! 12/10: Presentations, Day 2 & Final Thoughts	
	Prep: Working on Final Paper & presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TBA Class: Presentations, Day 2 & Wrap Up! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group Evaluation Handouts (WE10) 	Final Essay uploaded via Google Forms Due: Tuesday, December 17 by 5pm

Course Policies & Logistics

~ **Student Questionnaire.** Please take a few minutes and fill out the [Google Form](#) shared via a link on the website. I will review these during the first week of the semester and address your questions, concerns, etc. as soon as possible.

~ **Course Information.** Some basic information will be available on Moodle the first week and you will receive emails from me via Moodle throughout the semester (please check your email!). However, the [course website](#) is the “place to go” for readings, assignments, updates, etc. Please let me know if any links are not working.

~ **Participation.** The success of this course depends on your attendance and active participation. There is a sign-in sheet passed around at the beginning of each class to make sure that students are attending regularly; please get in contact with me ASAP if anything comes up that will impact your ability to make it to class and/or contribute to discussions or group work.

~ **Technology Use.** I have a flexible policy for computer/tablet use during class so that students can access online readings, take notes, or collaborate with group members. I know it may be tempting to off-task during class (checking social media, surfing the web, texting), but it can be very distracting and disruptive for me and your classmates. Please silence/close/turn-off non-course related tools during our class meetings. I will change this policy, if needed, and contact students individually if technology use becomes a distraction.

~ **Working Groups.** I will divide the class into small groups (4 students in each) to facilitate class discussions, which we may switch around mid-semester. My hope is that having stable groups will help everyone to feel comfortable, dig more deeply into the materials, and share notes, etc. in case of absence.

~ **Office Hours:** Take advantage of this time to stop by and discuss assignments or course materials, chat about archaeology, etc. This is also an opportunity to share what you are learning if you are hesitant to speak up in class. Just email me to make an appointment if the weekly time doesn't work with your schedule.

~ **Communication:** I return emails during business hours (9-5) and will generally respond within 24 hours (weekends may be longer). Please do not wait until the last minute to reach out if you have a question, especially about an assignment. I will also expect students to read class emails from me that will alert everyone of changes in timing or content.

~ **How do I get an extension?** Ideally, everyone will be able to complete the assignments by their due dates/times, but I know that illness, etc. can make that challenging at times. Please contact me as soon as you know you won't be able to finish your assignment (at least 24 hours before the deadline) and we can discuss options. There may be some grading penalties, depending on the circumstances, and I will not accept assignments more than 72 hours after their due date (this can lead to falling behind). For the final essay, if you cannot complete it during Final's period (by 12/18) it will be necessary to ask your [Class Dean](#) for an extension (this request must come from you). The Deans do not always grant extensions to students and they cannot be applied to earlier work in the course. Please keep the lines of communication open if you are having trouble keeping up with the readings or written work in the course— I am happy to help!

~ **Accommodations.** Let me know if you have (or are in the process of getting) accommodations from the [Accessibility Resource Center \(ARC\)](#) so that we can work together to adjust the timing and/or format of any assignments.

~ **Writing Resources.** There are extensive resources at Smith for getting feedback on your writing assignments, managing your time, and other important skills. I recommend that everyone visit the [Jacobson Center for Writing, Teaching & Learning](#) and set up an appointment with a writing instructor or peer tutor, if needed. Also, it is important to review the [Academic Honor Code](#) and ask me if you have any questions about citation

practices, research methods, working with classmates, etc. As you surely know, there are many debates about the (new) role of AI technology/Large Language Models (or LLMs, e.g. ChatGPT, etc.) in higher education and we will use some of these tools for in-class exercises. However, using LLMs to generate actual content for this course will be considered plagiarism. I am happy to discuss, I know this can be confusing.

~ **Other Stuff.** We may have to adjust our course schedule for unexpected events (like Mountain Day!); I will keep in touch with any changes via email and through updates to the website. Please keep the lines of communication open with me and your small group so we can have a successful semester together.

~ **Time Expectations.** This 4-credit course is designed to engage students for 12 hours/week, which translates into 3 hours in class and 9 hours of work outside of class. If you are finding the work to prepare for class—readings, podcasts, videos, and writing assignments— to take more than the allotted time I would appreciate hearing from you. I may be able to help with some time-saving strategies and/or remove some materials if I had unrealistic expectations for a particular week of the semester or the complexity of an assignment. Thanks!

~ **Assignments & Grading.**

- **Weekly Exercises (100 points).** There are a total of 10 Weekly Exercises (10 points each) assigned throughout the semester, which are due at the beginning of class and designed to help prepare for discussion and/or essay writing. The exercises are typically entered on a Google Form and should require 15-30 minutes to complete. I do not grade them individually for content, but return them with brief comments (especially if you ask me a question!). Students will receive 10 points for each submission and if you cannot finish them before class I will accept them within 24 hours for full credit (and I am happy to grant more time for illness or emergencies).
- **Essays (400 points total)** are expected to closely follow the requirements of the assignment, be well-written and clearly organized, and reflect your thoughtful engagement with course materials. **Drafts** are evaluated by degree of completeness and effort; the more time you can spend preparing a draft before the class meeting, the more detailed (and useful) the feedback from your peers. I will share rubrics to guide the essay writing and the peer review process, which will generally be anonymous or limited to a small group.
 - **(1) Site Report Essay (20 points draft, 100 points essay).** Students choose an archaeological site (from 8 options), “visit” that site with Google Earth, conduct online research, and write a descriptive essay (1000 words, 4-5 pages) that will be peer-reviewed during class and then turned in as a final version.
 - **(2) Methods Essay (20 points draft, 100 points essay).** Students choose a pottery analysis article (from 3 options) to evaluate in an analytical essay (1000 words, 4-5 pages) that will peer-reviewed during class and then turned in as a final version.
 - **(3) Trowelblazer Project (20 points draft, 40 points presentation, 100 points essay).** Students will work collaboratively (in a group of 4) to research the career of an archaeologist who is doing innovative and inspiring work. The group will compile their findings on the course website, which will serve as a resource for the class, and also do a brief **Group Presentation** about the process (5-10 minutes). Each student will also write an individual essay draft and a final essay (700 to 1000 words) inspired by the public-facing profile essays on the Trowelblazer website. Tons more information to come!
- The assignments total **500 points** during the semester and students should be able to track their progress at any point (ask me if you need assistance and/or have questions).
 - A (93-100%)= 463 to 500
 - A- (90-92%)= 448 to 462
 - B+ (87-89%)= 433 to 447
 - B (83-86%)= 413 to 432
 - B- (80-82%)= 398 to 412
 - C+ (77-79%), C (73-76%), C- (70-72%), D+ (67-69%), D (63-66%), E/F for under 60%