

Anthropology 420/421 Archaeology Methods

Spring 2009

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Office Hours: Tuesday 9:00-10:30 in ASC (Building 29 –664-2820) and 2:00-3:00 Stev. 2056 (664-3950), and by appointment.

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The Course:

This is a basic, practical course in archaeological methods with an emphasis on fieldwork. It will cover the basics of survey and excavation, the two principal ways in which archaeologists collect data, as well as some work with artifacts to illustrate lab methods. A typical day will see us discussing a topic or doing an in-class exercise for an hour or two and then spending the remainder of the period out in the field or analyzing artifacts. If all goes well, we will spend more than 75% of our time actually doing field or lab work. However, we are at the mercy of the weather, so the schedule may not proceed exactly as indicated in this outline.

No SSU vehicles are available to transport students to any of the places that we will visit so students will have to find their own way to these locations. *Fill out the official SSU Volunteer and Emergency Info forms (in the class reader) and turn them in next week.*

The first portion of the class will be devoted to archaeological survey. Students will assemble at Fairfield-Osborne Preserve or other local spots, where we will survey and record archaeological and historic sites. State and county parks have a \$5 entry/parking fee that you will have to pay (sorry). Depending on the weather, we may spend some meetings doing archaeological lab analysis.

In the second part of the term we will shift our attention to archaeological excavation. At an ancient (although mythical) archaeological site on the SSU campus, students will be exposed to basic techniques used to excavate and record stratified archaeological sites; these include: troweling, layer delineation, feature exposure, mapping, profile/section drawing, and note taking. Although working on a phony site may not sound too interesting, in fact you will be exposed to a greater variety of archaeological problems here than some archaeologists encounter in years of work. Proficiency in field archaeology has more to do with the ability to "read" the soil than dusting off golden treasures in the manner of Indiana Jones/Joans.

Course Goals:

1. Introduce students to basic archaeological field and (depending on the weather) lab methods
2. Expose students to archaeological sites in the field
3. Carry out a piece of original research and report the results in a professional format.

Learning Outcomes:

1. An understanding of the basic goals, methods, and history of archaeology
2. Basic competence in
 - archaeological survey and map reading, including recognizing sites in the field
 - archaeological excavation, including field processing artifacts and recording strata
 - stratigraphic analysis

3. An appreciation of archaeological ethics and safety
4. A lot of fun!

Physical requirements:

Archaeological fieldwork requires a moderate level of physical ability and agility. The survey portion of the class will involve walking two or three miles in rough conditions in the course of each afternoon, as well as fording creeks. Excavation will involve wielding mattocks and shovels, and carrying buckets filled with soil in the late spring sun.

→ BE WARNED -- Rain will not stop us! ←

If you have a disabling condition that may substantially limit your ability to participate in this class, please contact the Disabled Student Services office in Salazar 1049, phone no. 664-2677, for confidential assistance and accommodation authorization. If you have a physical limitation that you think may affect your ability to do field work or that requires special consideration or exam facilities (or if you have any other concerns) please contact me during the first week of class.

Course Grade:

Mid-term exam 25%

Final exam 25%

Project (including copies of notes) 25%

Attendance, participation, and field skills 25%

Graduate students will have additional readings assigned to them, and will be held to a higher standard on examinations and the final project.

Please Note: The instructor has been known to employ humor and informality in class on occasion in order to encourage discussion and the flow of ideas. Students should not confuse a lack of formality with an "easy A". As long as SSU continues to employ the A-F grading system, the instructor promises to do his best to evaluate students' performance appropriately within these categories. Having said that, I do not grade on a curve so there is no reason why every single student could not get an "A" in this class.

Requirements:

Work must be neat and professional in appearance, and word-processed. This requirement doesn't include research and field notes required for the class project, but it does include the report portion of the final project itself. Scruffy work will be accepted, but penalized. Work that is not handed in on the due-date will be graded down. Students are expected to attend the entire period of every class meeting. If you can't make it, send me an email in advance. More than two unexplained absences will be penalized.

Readings:

There are required (mandatory) and suggested (non-required) readings.

1. The required materials are **The Archaeological Survey Manual** (White and King 2007) and the **Anthro 420/421 Reader**. The latter has been assembled for this class and is available at the SSU Bookstore. It has (I hope) been three-hole punched for use with a ring binder. Mark each week's readings with a thumb tab for easy reference. If you find that any pages are missing or in the wrong place, please write me a note (don't just tell me).

2. Suggested/non-required reading. Neither has been ordered from the Bookstore for this class: **Dug to Death: A Tale of Archaeological Method and Mayhem** by Adrian Praetzelis (\$22 at Amazon or SSU library or SSU Bookstore in the faculty authors' area. **A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations** by Kate Turabian (\$11.20 at Amazon).

Essential equipment: (you must have this by meeting #2)

Due to the generosity of former students who have donated their stuff (hint!!) and our friend the Governorator who gave SSU some equipment money a couple of years ago, I have some supplies to lend. The unlucky ones will have to buy their own.

- A **compass** with a rotating bezel and a sighting mirror. The Anthropology Dept. has compasses to lend, but you may want to buy your own for future fun in the great outdoors. "Silva" brand is a good buy at most camping stores. Buy one that has a sighting mirror, such as the Trekker Type 20 (about \$25). The Landmark (about \$35) has a sighting mirror but no declination scale; I don't recommend this one. The top-of-the-line Ranger (about \$80) allows you to set declination permanently -- but do not set the declination for this class. The Ranger is overkill for this class.
- **U.S.G.S. Glen Ellen.** I have copies of this map for sale/lease/loan.
- Cheap, plastic **protractor**.
- Cheap, one-foot, wooden **ruler**.
- **Clipboard**.
- Pad of engineer's ruled **paper** (5 squares to the inch); three people could share a pad.
- Steel **tape** measure (6-foot minimum).
- Suitable **field clothing, hat,** and waterproof **footwear** (it will be cold and wet at times, but archaeologists are tough!). Running shoes are dangerous in wet conditions.

You won't need the following until week #8

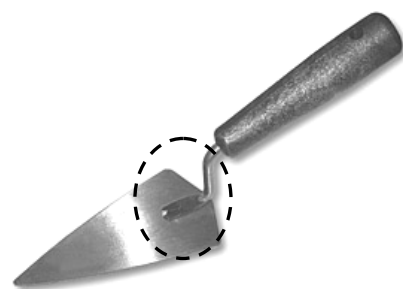
- A 4-1/2 inch, mason's pointing **trowel** (+/- \$9). "Marshalltown" brand is best. "Goldblatt" brand is of the same material quality but lacks the mythic status of the Marshalltown. A hardware store is the place to find one. Don't buy a trowel whose blade is riveted to the tang (the handle bit). Any gardening trowel that appears on site will be confiscated, chopped into very small pieces, ground into dust, and buried at sea.



Pointing trowel (good)



Gardening trowel (bad)



Trowel w/riveted tang (evil)

Optional, but recommended, equipment:

- Tetanus shot. If you are alive now and plan to stay that way as an adult, get a tetanus shot.
- A "kneeler" or knee pads. Tough, manly-man archaeologists disdain them—but on the other hand those are the people with arthritis in their knee joints.

SCHEDULE, Spring 2009

MEETING #1 (1/30)

Topic: Introduction to class; field safety, equipment, logistics. What is archaeology?

Reading: W&K Chap 3

Field trip: none

MEETING #2 (2/6)

Topic: Using map and compass

Reading: Class reader "Stone Tool Technology"; W&K Chaps 1, 2, 4, 5

Field trip: around campus

Assignment due: Completed volunteer form; ½ participation grade deducted if form is late.

MEETING #3 (2/13)

Topic: More practice with compass, plus the UTM system

Reading: W&K Chaps 6, 7, 8

Field trip: Fairfield-Osborne Preserve

MEETING #4 (2/20)

Topic: Archaeological survey methods and strategies

Reading: W&K Chaps 9, 10, 11, 12

Field trip: Fairfield-Osborne Preserve

MEETING #5 (2/27)

Topic: Pre-survey research using archaeological, ethnographic, and historical sources.

The Information Center System..

Reading: W&K Chap 9 (review prefield research section)

Field trip: Archaeological Information Center and Crane Canyon Park (\$5 parking fee... sorry)

MEETING #6 (3/6)

Topic: Recording sites in the field: mapping and graphics methods; review for mid-term exam.

Topic: The California State guidelines for recording sites.

Reading: W&K Chap 13; Class reader "Instructions for Recording Historical Resources..." pp. 1 to 35; Appendix VIII (Notes on Archaeological Site Mapping) from "Instructions for recording historical resources..."

Field trip: Fairfield-Osborne Preserve

Assignments Due: (1) Completed FOP site record form

(2) Study area for survey project (see Class Project Description).

Note: ½ grade deduction for late work -- an A on the project → A-

MEETING #7 (3/13)

MID-TERM EXAMINATION

Bring compass, clipboard, blue books, class reader, UTM calculator, and ruler.

MEETING #8 (3/20)

Topic: Site formation processes; site structure and content

Reading: Class reader "Excavation" [in "A Guide to ..."] pp. 83 to 95.

"How to lay out an Excavation Unit."

Field trip: Site of the ancient earthen bank (on the SSU campus)

Assignment Due: Photocopy of pre-field research notes; ½ project grade deducted for late work

MEETING #9 (3/27)

Topic: Excavation strategies; history and goals of excavation; mapping

Reading: Class reader "Techniques of Archaeological Excavation" pp. 68 to 94.

Field trip: Site of the ancient earthen bank (on the SSU campus)

MEETING #10 (4/3)

Topic: Soils in archaeology

Reading: Class reader "Introduction to Environmental Archaeology"

Field trip: Site of the ancient earthen bank (on the SSU campus)

Topic: Stratigraphic analysis

Reading: Class reader "Chapter 5: Laws of Archaeological Stratification" [in "Principles of Archaeological Stratification"]

Field trip: Site of the ancient earthen bank (on the SSU campus)

Assignment Due: Photocopy of your field survey notes

APRIL 13-17 2009 SPRING BREAK – SSU CLOSED**MEETING #12 (4/24)**

Site of the ancient earthen bank (on the SSU campus)

MEETING #13 (5/1)

Topic: Drawing archaeological cross-sections

Field trip: Site of the ancient earthen bank (on the SSU campus)

Reading: Class reader "Chapter 8: Archaeological Sections" [in "Principles of Archaeological Stratification"]

MEETING #14 (5/8)

Topic: Review/Q&A for Final Exam

Reading: Everything since the mid-term exam

Field trip: Site of the ancient earthen bank (on the SSU campus)

MEETING #15 (5/15)

No class meeting.

Complete the Project and turn it in.

Assignment Due: Class Project to be placed in my Anthropology Dept mailbox by 5:00 pm today. Please note that a full grade on the project is deducted if the assignment is turned in at the final exam (an A on this project becomes a B).

Mid Term Examination: 13 March 2009 in our classroom and elsewhere on campus

Final Examination: 20 May 2009 11 a.m.-12:50 p.m. in our classroom

Project Description

This project involves performing an archaeological/cultural resources survey and writing a short report on it. The project will count as 25% of your course grade. It is due in my mailbox on **5/15/09**. Points will be deducted if the report or other required submittals are late. If you turn in the final report at the final exam, a full grade will be deducted from the project grade (an A on the project will become a B).

Please follow all the following instructions very carefully. Questions? Ask me.

1. Two people (undergraduates only) may cooperate to produce a single report, but it had better be good! **Write** me a note stating that you intend to do a two-person report before you begin. If you decide to do a joint report, the partners must work out **in advance** who will contribute what elements to the work and attach a memo to the finished product explaining who did what. This memo is required; it is part of your grade. Copying portions of an existing report or archaeological record form is, of course, not allowed. If it looks plagiarized, you can be assured that I will track the source down and throw out your entire project.

2. First, sometime between now and **3/6/09** chose a piece of land about five acres in size to study and mark it on a map with the statement that you have permission to be there or that it is public land. On **3/6/09** give it to me for approval. This is part of your grade. You may wish to survey a portion of a State or County Park or part of your own vast ancestral estate.

3. Next, between **3/6/09** and **3/20/09** perform the basic level, pre-field **research** (as described in class meeting #5) at the Historical Resources Information Center. Make arrangements beforehand with the staff. If you turn up unannounced they may tell you to make an appointment and come back later. First determine whether or not the area you have chosen to survey has *already* been surveyed by an archaeologist. If it has, chose again and have me approve the new location. On **4/10/09**, hand in a photocopy of your pre-fieldwork research notes to me. The notes will not be graded so please do not go to a lot of trouble over them. I will not return these copies. By handing the notes in, you show me that you've done the research. This is part of your grade.

4. Decide on a survey strategy (as described in class meeting #4), and perform your fieldwork. Make sure that you're not trespassing and that you're allowed to be there. *Do NOT collect any archaeological artifacts that you may find while doing your survey. Leave them where you found them.* On **4/10/09** turn in a photocopy of your field notes (i.e., the notes you took while on your field survey). The notes will not be graded, but this way I know that you've done the survey. This is part of your grade.

5. This is important: Write your report using the basic report outline that I presented in class. Use scholarly style and referencing format. Don't forget to include a map that clearly shows the area that you examined and the locations of sites (if any) that you found.

6. Your final product **must** include a DPR 523 Primary Form and an Archaeological Site Form completed using the guidelines in the State Instructions manual, for a site that you discovered or recorded during the survey. These forms are available at <http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/> click on "DPR 523 forms". Photographs may be useful, but they are not mandatory. If you didn't find any sites you should invent one based on something that you saw at Fairfield Osborne Preserve or the other places we visited, and turn the record in with your project. Mark the form "EXAMPLE, NOT A REAL SITE" to avoid confusion. [Note: even when they don't find any sites, archaeologists must still write the report to say there's nothing there.] The product is due in my mailbox on **5/15/09**.

7. For undergraduates, the report (excluding the site record form) will be a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 6 double-spaced, typed pages of text, with 1-inch margins, using 11 point font. The report and the form will be word-processed, the latter making use of the appropriate form template. If two people are cooperating, the report will be 6-8 pages total. State who did what in your introduction. This statement is part of your grade. You will NOT get this report back, so keep a copy if you wish.

8. For graduate students, the report will be 12-16 double-spaced, typed pages of text, with standard 1-inch margins. The report will include, with appropriate citations, detailed ethnographic/historic context and research design sections.