

Anthropology 214: The Logic and Practice of Archaeology.

University of Chicago
M. Lycett

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Winter Quarter 2007
TTH 9:00-10:20

This course offers an overview of the concepts and practice of anthropological archaeology. We will focus on consideration of the archaeological record: how does it come into being, and how is it transformed by natural and human action? More importantly, we will consider how archaeologists use their data to make inferences about the past. The course can be broken down into three sections. First, we will briefly consider the nature and formation of the archaeological record. Next, we will discuss the ways in which archaeologists make observations, collect data, and organize that data. During the final third of the course, we will consider the analysis of archaeological data and the construction of arguments about the past. Throughout the course, you will be asked to examine methods of archaeological inquiry through substantive examples of research from throughout the world.

Each of you will be assigned one of 4 or 5 project sites as a basis for discussion. In addition to the individual assignments for the course, you will be asked to work in small groups to produce two in-class presentations on these project sites.

Office Hours

My office hours are **M 1:00-3:00** or by appointment. My office is in **Haskell Hall, room 224**. My office phone number is 2-6040. My email address is m-lycett@uchicago.edu. Routine questions should be handled by email.

Readings

Renfrew, C. and P. Bahn

2004 *Archaeology: Theories, Methods, and Practice*. 4th edition. Thames and Hudson, New York. This text will provide background material for lectures and discussions. It will be your primary resource for methods.

In addition, I will post several topical case studies on the CHALK website.

Finally, each small group will be given a bibliography for their project site. This is your primary resource for substantive data.

Grading

Grades will be based on **TWO in-class group presentations**, each worth 50 points, **TWO short papers** based on those presentations, each worth 100 points, and **a final presentation** and discussion of archaeological ethics (Golden Ears Rock) worth 20 points. In addition, you will be evaluated on the basis of class participation including attendance and discussion during **FOUR Laboratory sessions**, each worth 20 points. In order to pass the course, you must complete **all** assignments and attend all Labs and discussions/ presentations. Assignments must be typed or machine printed on plain white paper. Guidelines for both papers, 1) a critical review of your project site, and 2) a research Design based on your project site are included herein. Guidelines for all other assignments will be posted on CHALK.

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Course Outline

Refer to the Course Calendar on CHALK for more details

Lecture I. Introduction.

READING: RENFREW AND BAHN pp. 12-52.

Lecture II. The Archaeological Record. Site Structure and the Formation of Regional Landscapes. Depositional and Post-depositional processes.

READING: RENFREW AND BAHN pp. 53-70.

Lecture III. Archaeological Approaches to Landscapes. Research Design, Survey methods, and Regional Analysis.

READING: RENFREW AND BAHN pp. 77-120.

CASE STUDIES: Binford 1983a, Wilkinson 1992; Redman 1987.

Lecture IV. Archeological Approaches to Locations. The Site and Excavation Methods.

CASE STUDIES: O'Connell 1987, Binford 1983b.

Lecture V. Environments and Anthropogenesis. Geoarchaeology. Paleoethnobotany. Environmental Aspects of Faunal Analysis. Anthropogenic environmental change.

CASE STUDY: Kirch et al. 1992.

Lecture VI. Subsistence, Economy, and Population Biology. Dietary Reconstructions from biological and technological data. Paleopathology and Paleodemography.

READING: RENFREW AND BAHN pp. 429-468.

CASE STUDIES: Voorhies et al. 1991; Henneberg and Henneberg 1992.

Lecture VII. Production, Circulation and Social Organization. Production and Distribution. Physicochemical Studies. Reconstructing Social, Political, and Economic Organization from Artifact Distributions.

READING: RENFREW AND BAHN pp. 357-390.

CASE STUDY: Hodge 1992.

Lecture VIII. Landscape, Economy, and Society. Settlement Pattern and Subsistence-Settlement Systems. Procurement, Manufacture, Use, and Deposition of Technology. Reconstructing Social, Political, and Economic Organization from Spatial Distributions.

READING: RENFREW AND BAHN pp. 177-230.

Lecture IX. Responsibility in the Practice of Archaeology.

READING: RENFREW AND BAHN pp. 547-578.

CASE STUDIES: Perry and Blakey 1997; Handsman and Lamb Richmond 1995.

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Important Dates:

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| <i>January 30th and February 1</i> | <i>1st in-class presentation</i> |
| <i>February 15</i> | <i>1st paper due</i> |
| <i>February 22 and 27th</i> | <i>2nd in-class presentation</i> |
| <i>March 6</i> | <i>Golden Ears Rock: in class presentation and discussion.</i> |
| <i>March 15</i> | <i>Final Paper Due</i> |

Lab Sessions in Haskell Basement 01:

Each of these sessions will include a tutorial session in the analysis of one or more materials routinely recovered in archaeological analysis and a period for discussion based on the results of the tutorial session. No written assignments will be collected; however, participation is mandatory.

January 18: READING: RENFREW AND BAHN pp. 317-354.

January 25: READING: RENFREW AND BAHN pp. 121-174.

February 8: READING: RENFREW AND BAHN pp. 275-316

February 15: READING: RENFREW AND BAHN pp. 231-274.

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Guidelines for the first Paper and Presentation: critical review

In order to complete this assignment, you must write a summary and critical review of the research that has been done on your project site. Describe the area and the research problems, archaeological methods, and substantive results discussed in the literature. Evaluate the usefulness of this literature as a basis for further research in this area. You are not responsible for any theoretical arguments and analytical procedures which have not been introduced in class or the textbook. A set of criteria on which you should base your evaluation are listed below. You should pay most attention to describing the research strategy and methods employed in that strategy. Address these questions in a well structured essay. Your essay should not exceed **five** typed, double spaced pages. You may use any source material you wish; however, if sources other than class notes or the provided handout are used, you must reference this work by listing the author's last name and the date of publication in parentheses, e.g. (Renfrew and Bahn 2004). The full citation for referenced works should appear at the end of your essay.

I. Description of the Project Site.

- A. Discuss the area under investigation. What is the environmental, archaeological, and historical background to this research? Briefly characterize the archaeological database or body of knowledge for this area.
- B. Discuss the research problems that have been investigated using this site or area.

Focusing on one of these problems, discuss the following:

II. Goals.

- A. What are the goals of this research?
- B. Are these goals clearly stated and understandable?
- C. Is the research a useful way of investigating these goals?

II. Theoretical Perspective.

- A. How would you characterize the theoretical basis of the approach?
- B. Is the theoretical argument clear?
- C. Is the research problem clearly stated?
- D. Is the research area an appropriate place to study this problem?
- E. What are the archaeological expectations or implications of the research problem?

III. Methods.

- A. Describe the research strategy and data recovery techniques.
- B. Are the specifics of data acquisition described clearly and in detail?
- C. What analyses were conducted with recovered data?
- D. How well do these methods and analyses relate to the research problem?

IV. Evaluation.

- A. Briefly summarize the research, discussing its proposed goals, its clarity, and attention to detail.
- B. What unsolved problems or new questions can you identify on the basis of this work?
- C. How would you modify this project to address these questions in future research?

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Guidelines for Second Paper and Presentation: Research Design

Using your project site as a base, you should first identify a research question then specify its relevance and relationship to source material appropriate to that question. You should then address the question of how the problem has been approached and how you intend to approach it. Finally you should address your expectations for the results of your research and the significance of your results. I will place most emphasis on the research design itself rather than the sophistication of the problem statement or theoretical background. Exclusive of abstract, figures, and references, your proposal should not exceed 5 typed, double spaced pages. Your research design should be prefaced by a one page abstract that summarizes the problem, theoretical and substantive background, data sources, methods to be employed, expectations, and significance.

I. **Brief Statement of the research problem.** (i.e. what do you want to know and why?)

A. Describe the problem to be investigated, including a brief description of the relevant theoretical background of the problem. Describe why you think this research question is important and relevant to your interests. Discuss what you expect to learn from investigating this problem. Try to choose a question that is as well defined as possible. Your problem must be specific enough to have empirical implications. Discuss these implications in terms of the material you have chosen.

II. **Brief Background.** (i.e. why these data, from this place and time, in light of your problem?)

A. Discuss the sources of your archaeological data. What does the reader need to know about these materials in order to assess your proposal? Where do they come from? How will they be collected or defined? What are the strengths and weaknesses of these data?

B. Discuss the relevance of these data for your research problem. Why are these data appropriate? What kinds of questions can you address with these data? What kinds of questions cannot be addressed without new data?

III. **Research design.** (i.e. how will you get at your problem)

A. Outline the steps you will follow in collecting, systematizing, and analyzing these sources. Be as specific as possible.

B. At each step specify the methods and materials to which they are to be applied. You should be as specific as possible in stating both *how* and *why* these procedures are relevant to your research problem.

C. At each step, identify your expectations and their implications. What results do you expect? Why? What do specific findings imply for the problem that you began with?

IV. **Significance.** (i.e. why should anyone care?)

A. Discuss the implications of your research for current understandings of and future research into this problem. Be sure to include the substantive and methodological contributions of your research.

B. What will your results suggest about current theoretical and methodological approaches to your research problem and the broader issues it derives from?