

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

M-W 3:45- 5:15
C3 Cooper Hall

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Office Hours: MW 8-10; 1-3
Or by
appointment

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INTRODUCTION

This course will introduce you to how archaeologists analyze and interpret material culture to give meaning to the past. Most people equate archaeology with field work even though the actual analysis and interpretation of the materials recovered in the field assume the vast majority of any archaeologists time. We will proceed using a “hands on” approach to archaeological analysis, using in-class discussion, exercises and lab time to cover topics such as research design, sampling, typology, classification, database management, lithic, ceramic, faunal and floral analytical techniques, and archaeological illustration and writing.

Through the discussion of these various topics, you will gain a clearer understanding of the problems and prospects of interpreting the past based on archaeological remains and material culture. I have designed this course to be much more about “doing” rather than “hearing about” how archaeologists work. In this regard, there will be a series of in-class assignments and labs, as well as a larger, semester-long class project. Do not underestimate how much time these projects will take, and you will need to schedule extra time to collect your data, deal with various categorization issues, enter your data into the database, and analyze and interpret your data. The archaeology lab will be open most times to schedule this time. Just let me know when you plan to come in. There will be no exams, reflecting the amount of time and effort these projects/papers will require.

TEXTS

There is one required text for this class:

E. B. Banning (2000) *The Archaeologist's Laboratory: The Analysis of Archaeological Data*. Springer, New York.

This book has been ordered from the Barnes and Noble Student Bookstore. You will also be responsible for additional readings that are specified in the syllabus, or may be added at my discretion. All readings are specified on the course outline below. Readings **MUST** be done prior to the class it is listed for, and you should come to class prepared to discuss these readings.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Because of the "practical" nature of this course, your grade will be based on a series of analytical research projects. These requirements are all the kinds of things archaeologists have to do on a regular basis. The bulk of your grade (60%) will be based on a research project analyzing artifacts collected from this past summer's archaeological field school in the Finger Lakes National Forest. Throughout the semester we will be working on and discussing various aspects of this project.

In addition, there will be two other small research reports based on in-class activities. Each of these will count for 10% of your final grade. The breakdown of each project with point/percentage of grade information is listed below, and totals 100 points for the class. Your final grade will be based on the total points for all assignments, and all assignments must be completed to pass this course (thus, if you do not complete an assignment, it does not mean simply 10 points off of your final grade, it means that you will fail this course). The final grades will be assigned based on a standard A-E scale.

ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY. This course is designed around in-class projects and discussion. Any material that you miss cannot be made up. You will receive a lower grade for each un-excused class missed.

Dunham II Site Analysis Project	
Annotated Bibliography	10%
"Conference" Presentation	20%

Final Analysis Report	30%
Experimental Archaeology Report	10%
Flotation Analysis Report	10%
Class Participation/ Discussion/ Attendance	20%

COURSE OUTLINE

1. Aug 28 Introduction: Making Sense of the Past
READ: Banning preface and Chap 1
- Aug 30 Class Project: The Dunham II Site
2. Sept 4 No Class- Labor Day
- Sept 6 Research Design and Sampling in Archaeology
READ: Banning Chap 4
3. Sept 11 Typology and Classification
READ: Banning, Chap 3 pp. 35-57
- Sept 13 Dealing with Data: Quantifying Archaeological Research
READ: Banning Chap 2
4. Sept 18 Dealing with Data: Database Management
READ: Banning Chap 3 pp. 57-72
- Sept 20 Class Project Work Session
5. Sept 25 Units of Analysis: Sherds vs Vessels
READ: Banning Chap 5 pp. 93-103; Sussman 2000
- Sept 27 Chronology: Dates as Data
READ: Banning Chap 13-15
6. Oct 2 Site Formation Processes: How did that Stuff Get there?
READ: Schiffer 1983; McCarthy and Ward 2000
- Oct 4 Experimental Archaeology
READ: Deuel 2006
7. Oct 9 In-Class Experimental Archaeology Project
ASSIGNMENT: Experimental Archaeology Report

- Oct 11 Class Project Work Session
8. Oct 16 No Class: Mid Semester Break
- Oct 18 Lithic Analysis: What do we do with all these stones?
READ: Banning Chap 8
9. Oct 23 Pottery
READ: Banning Chap 9
- Oct 25 In-Class Lab: Dunham II Ceramics
10. Oct 30 Dealing with Diet: Faunal Analysis
READ: Banning Chap 10
- Nov 1 In-Class Lab: Dunham II Faunal Remains
11. Nov 6 Dealing with Diet: Flotation Techniques and Plant Remains
READ: Banning Chap 11
In-Class Lab: Floating Food
ASSIGNMENT: Flotation Analysis Report
- Nov 8 In-Class Lab: Floating Food
12. Nov 13 In-Class Lab: Floating Food
- Nov 15 Class Project Work Session
13. Nov 20 Presenting the Past: Archaeological Illustration
READ: Banning Chap 16
- Nov 22 No Class- Thanksgiving Break
13. Nov 27 Presenting the Past: Archaeological Writing
READ: Hodder (1992)
- Nov 29 Class Project Work Session
14. Dec 4 Preserving the Past: Curation and Storage
READ: Banning Chap 7

Dec 6 Putting it all Back Together: Archaeological Analysis in
Comparative Perspective

Citations:

Hodder, Ian

1992 *Theory and Practice in Archaeology*. Routledge, London.

Schiffer, Michael B.

1983 Toward the Identification of Formation Processes. *American Antiquity*, Vol. 48,
No. 4. (Oct., 1983), pp. 675-706.

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