Method and Theory in Archaeology
New College of Florida

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Class meets Monday and Thursday 2-3:20 pm in College Hall 214
URL for syllabus: http://sites.ncf.edu/baram/courses
Course materials are available on Moodle

Catalogue Description:
This seminar surveys the field and analytical methods of archaeology and scrutinizes its theoretical premises. The course examines the structure and history of the subdiscipline, approaches and interpretations of the past, social change, and material culture, and temporal and behavioral frameworks used in archaeology as part of anthropology. Readings and case studies will focus seminar discussions. Prerequisite: an introductory course in archaeology, or permission of the instructor. The course is a requirement of the Anthropology AOC.

Prospectus:
Archaeology faces a grand challenge: taking the materiality that remains from human societies to reveal insights into material culture, human behaviors and actions, and social and cultural change. Bridging objects from the past to concerns, academic and otherwise, in the present requires methods and theory. Although it is a nice image, the stones do not talk; anthropologists analyze and interpret meaning. This course explores the history of archaeological theory, significant methodological concerns, and a range of contemporary theoretical approaches as well as ethics, representations, and presentation of archeology today. The main assignments for the course - seminar-style discussion and a case study using a theoretical approach – are central to a satisfactorily completion of this upper-level requirement for the Anthropology Area of Concentration.

Goals for the Course:
For students focusing on archaeology, the course title fits the goals for the course. The course surveys, examines, and considers methods and theories in archaeology as well as techniques and significant scholarship in archaeology. The subfield has a large and increasingly interesting range of approaches and understandings of artifacts, human material activities, and the past and we will endeavor to gain a sense of the variation of theories and methods and struggle to situate our work within the context of the subfield.

For students focusing on one of the other components of anthropology, the course title can be shifted to Method and Theory from Archaeology to Illuminate the Role of Theory and Method in Anthropology. As the study of the range of human variation across all time and as the study of material culture, archaeology can and does contribute to general anthropology. The goal for cultural anthropology students can revolve around the contribution of various schools of thought to our understanding of diachronic change, human interactions with the physical world, and understandings of material culture.
Archaeological analyzes, interpretations, and presentations from around the world constitute the core materials for this course. With *Survey of Archaeology* as the prerequisite for the course, students are expected to know the basic background for the epochs and for the culture areas employed in the readings. The culture history background is available in *Survey*’s textbook: T. Doug Price and Gary Feinman 2013 *Images of the Past*; the basic overview of method and approaches was found in Clive Gamble 2008. *Archaeology: The Basics*. Other courses from the anthropology program should provide further depth in culture areas, regional archaeological traditions, and theory. One research skill for this upper-level anthropology is being able to locate the appropriate context for the various arguments being made in the readings and class presentations for archaeology, anthropology, and the social sciences in general. Another skill is the ability to organize a diffuse set of concerns, examples, and paradigms into a meaningful structure both in articulating points during class discussions and in your written work for the course that should highlight anthropological concerns.

Uniting the subfields of Anthropology is concern over the human variation and diversity. This course covers several approaches to conceptualizing those aspects of the study of human variation that have been used in archaeology for analyzing and interpreting material culture, tangible heritage, and landscapes in terms of the diversity of human societies. Woven throughout the topics are engagements with contemporary ethics. Understanding the means by which archaeologists recover, document, analyze, interpret, and represent the past and human societies constitute a central goal for the course.

**Format:**
As an upper-level requirement for the Anthropology area of concentration, the course will be run as a seminar. The success of seminars comes from the active participation of all members of the class. Quality, not quantity is the key for in-class discussions. I expect you to use your background in anthropology to work through the major ideas in this course and the contributions of the various scholars and publications. I like to think of discussion as an opportunity to work through notions and to engage in a dialogue and discussion with your fellow students, the professor, and the scholars we are reading. Raising questions is an expected part of your contribution to class discussion. The final evaluation will include commentary on preparation for class discussions. I am always willing to talk over any issues and concerns, including suggestions on improving written work and oral communications, during my office hours or via email.

**Requirements:**
This syllabus contains details on readings, topics, assignments, and expectations; look over the syllabus throughout the semester to keep track of assignments and topics as well as course goals.

* You are required to use this syllabus
* You should bring pen & paper or an electronic device for note-taking during class sessions
* You need to read the assigned chapters and articles *before* class meets and bring either the readings or your notes on the readings to class
* You are expected to respond to emails from the professor and to check the course’s Moodle page
* You are required to attend each and every class during the semester. If you need to miss a class meeting, let the professor know ahead of time via email, voice mail, or a note in the divisional mailbox (in the Social Science Building); all standard reasons for missing class will be accepted; skipping class is a basis for an unsatisfactory evaluation for the course.
* All assignments are expected to be completed by their deadline – missing any assignment can lead to a preemptive unsatisfactory evaluation for the course.
WRITTEN WORK:
There are four written assignments for the course. Details will be provided in a timely manner in class and on Moodle.

a. Creative Representation: what does archaeological theory look like?
b. Presentation on an archaeological technique
c. Observations of an archaeological/heritage site
d. Research Paper: a theoretically-informed case study

Texts:

The Henson volume will serve as a textbook, to provide key concepts and raise concerns for discussion. Kaiser offers insights into the history and inequalities of the discipline; useful lessons for the present. And please note, the 2nd edition of *Contemporary Archaeology in Theory* is completely revamped from the 1st edition. The books are available at the Campus Bookstore and the usual online sources; they are also on reserve at the Cook Library. The articles and book chapters listed in the outline of readings are available via Moodle.

Outline of Topics and Readings

Mini-Class: 1/29

The Archaeological Turn

I. Background on Theory and Method in Archaeology

2/1 Introduction: Visualizing Method and Theory in Archaeology
Readings:
1. Hansen Chapter 1 What is archaeology?

2/4 From Discoveries to Research Designs and Ethics in Archaeology
Readings:
1. Hansen Chapter 2 How did archaeology begin?
2. Kaiser Introduction
3. Kaiser Part I: Mary Ross Ellingson’s Archaeological Adventure

2/8 Places of Archaeology, and their Representation: Phillippi Estate Park
Meet in NCPAL, prepared for processing artifacts and ecofacts
Readings:
1 CAT Part I: The New Pragmatism
2. Hansen Chapter 3 Which pasts do we study?
3. Hansen Chapter 4 Understanding Our Place in Nature
4. Kaiser Part II: Sexism and Scholarship
Data, Method, and Theory in Archaeology: Phillippi Estate Park and Previous NCF Examples

Meet in NCPAL, continue processing artifacts

Suggested Readings:
1. Hansen Chapter 5 Understanding People
2. Lee Bloch 2014 The Unthinkable and the Unseen: Community Archaeology and Decolonizing Social Imagination at Okeechobee, or the Lake Jackson Site. *Archaeologies* 10(1):70-106
   [http://www.diaspora.illinois.edu/news0909/news0909.html#2](http://www.diaspora.illinois.edu/news0909/news0909.html#2) or
   [http://www.diaspora.illinois.edu/news0909/news0909-2.pdf](http://www.diaspora.illinois.edu/news0909/news0909-2.pdf)

Where has Archaeology Been and Where is Archaeology Going?: From Culture History to New Archaeology, then Post Processualism and the Values of Archaeologists

Readings:
2. Hansen Chapter 6 Where Archaeologists Work

Where has Archaeology Been and Where is Archaeology Going: From Post Processualism to the New Pragmatism, and on to Heritage

Readings:
1. Hansen Chapter 7 Which pasts do we study?
2. Kaiser Epilogue

II. Methods and Techniques of Archaeology

What to do with a Trowel: Presentations on Archaeological Techniques

Readings:
3. Hansen Chapter 8 World Archaeology
4. Hansen Chapter 13 How to do Archaeology

Humans in the Biological World: Evolution and Archaeo-Critiques of Contemporary Paleo

Readings:

Humans and the Environment: Ecological Approaches: The Challenge of Rising Sea Levels

Readings:
3/3 Classification and Artifact Analysis: Organizing and Making Sense of Material Culture
Readings:

3/7 Theory and Methods for Landscapes
Readings:
1. CAT Part 2 Landscapes, Spaces, and Natures: chapters 1 (Ingold), 2 (Taçon), 4 (Erickson)

3/10 What do you see when you see an archaeological site?
Reading:

III. Now and Then
3/14 Activist Approaches: Marxism and even Punk in Archaeology
Readings:
1. Hansen Chapter 12 Activist Archaeology

Special Event on Intangible Heritage: Michael Twitty - Wednesday March 16th at 6 pm at Sainer

3/17 Intangible Heritage in a Material World: Thoughts on Culinary Justice
Readings:
1. Hansen Chapter 10 Archaeology as Part of Heritage
2. Hansen Chapter 15 Archaeology is Fun

Spring Break

3/28 Why Wait?: Approaches to Material Culture and the Contemporary
2. Henry Glassie 1999 Material Culture in Material Culture, pp. 41-86.

3/31 Material Culture, Prestige, and Information Exchange: Style and its Issues
Readings:

4/4 Archaeology and Practice: Agency, Actions, and Academia
Readings:
1. CAT Part 3 Agency, Meaning, and Practice: chapters 5 (Pauketat), 7 (Sassaman), 8 (Lightfoot, Martinez, Schiff)
2. CAT Chapter 15 (Echo-Hawk and Zimmerman)
4/7 No Class
Assignment: Work on final project

4/11 History and Archaeology: Focused on Egypt
Readings:
1. Leslie White 1948 Ikhnaton: The Great Man Vs. the Culture Process. From The Science of Culture

Possible Guest Lecture on April 14th – if not:

IV. Social Divides and Their Productive Approaches

4/14 Identities: Race, Class, and Gender in Archaeological Analyzes
Readings:
1. CAT Part 4 Sexuality, Embodiment, and Personhood: chapters 9 (Wylie) and 11 (Joyce),
2. CAT Part 5 Race, Class, and Ethnicity: chapters 14 (Jones) and 16 (Wurst)

4/18 Archaeologists focusing Inequality: Grand Monuments and Archaeology
Readings:
1. CAT Part 6 Materiality, Memory, and Historical Silence: chapters 18 (Mills), 19 (Shackel), and 20 (Schmidt and Walz)
2. CAT Part 7 Colonialism, Empire, and Nationalism: chapters 22 (Sinopoli), 23 (Bahrani), and 24 (Handsman and Lamb Richmond)
2. Greg Borgsted and Jason Yaeger 2008 “Notions of Cultural Continuity and Disjunction in Maya Social Movements and Maya Archaeology” In Archaeology and the Postcolonial Critique, pp. 91-107.

4/21 Contemporary Concerns for, and Approaches to, the Archaeo-Past
Readings:
1. CAT Part 8 Heritage, Patrimony, and Social Justice: chapters 25 (Appadurai), 26 (Meskell), 27 (Blakey), and 28 (Horning)

4/25 Bacc days

4/28 Communities and Collaboration, Partnerships and the Future of Research
Readings:

VI. Representing the Past

5/2 Class Presentations
Suggested Readings:
5/5 Class Presentations
Suggested Reading:

5/9 Ethics in Contemporary Archaeology: Pragmatism and Representations the Human Past Today
Readings:
1. CAT Part 9 Media, Museums, and Publics: chapters 29 (Atalay), 30 (Talalay), and 32 (Nicholas and Bannister)