

HIST 689/ANTH 610  
**HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY**

Winter 1997

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Office Hours: W, F 1:00-3:00 p.m., and by appointment

**COURSE PROSPECTUS:** This course presents an in depth overview of the field of Historical Archaeology. Its primary focus is an examination of the impact of European colonialism and capitalism on the development of social life in eastern North America over the past five hundred years, with a particular interest on the 19th century. This spatial and temporal emphasis reflects my own areas of expertise. A major goal of the course is to explore some of the ways in which historical archaeologists combine documentary and material evidence to understand how groups constitute and transform themselves in the arena of broad, often global-scale, social interactions. The field is currently burgeoning with numerous theoretical and methodological approaches to a wide range of case studies from all corners of the world. To begin to sample this diversity, we will confine ourselves to a "limited" number of programmatic and case studies to provide a sense of the directions and potential of this dynamic field of anthropological and historical inquiry.

I subscribe to an Anthropology that is holistic, comparative, systemic, and global, and I find this perspective useful in examining the material world. (I outline the implications of this perspective in a separate section below entitled "Tenets of a Historical Archaeology from a Novice Practitioner.") An anthropological perspective provides insights that are considerably different from those held by art historians, architectural historians, historians of technology, engineers, and others interested in material objects. Most of the authors that we will read attempt to situate and interpret material objects and patterns in their social, political, and economic contexts to better understand their makers and users.

The logic and format of the course will be as follows: we will begin by looking at how the field of Historical Archaeology has been defined and what theories and methods practitioners find of use. This will lead us to a more careful examination of the sources available to the historical archaeologist. We will then turn our attention to a series of topics which historical archaeologists have studied, beginning with the archaeology of European expansion. By this time in the semester (Feb. 4), I expect students to have selected a research paper topic for their literature review. The course continues with a look at a number of topics in historical archaeology that crosscut theory, method, and geographical region. The course concludes by examining the roots of modernity as expressed in industrial archaeology, assimilation, and modern material culture of the 19th century through the present. In addition to this material, students will also be exposed to broader research questions, such as:

- (1) How can we account for the varied ways in which human societies organize themselves by analyzing their material remains?
- (2) What social, political, and ecological processes contribute to continuity or change in social forms (and material objects)?
- (3) How do we recognize ethnicity, class, and gender archaeologically and how do these categories structure the archaeological record?
- (4) How does capitalism develop, expand, and come to dominate Western economies? What

strategies were effective in its expansion and its resistance?

(5) How can information about the past be used to inform the present (or the future)? How does the present influence our interpretations and constructions/reconstructions of the past?

(6) Why should anyone care about any of this?

Through the readings and class discussions students will gain an anthropological understanding of:

(1) how archaeologists have interpreted the physical remains of historic and modern America,

(2) some of the theories, models, and methods that have been used in these interpretations, and

(3) the role that historical archaeology can play in making visible those peoples who have fallen below the threshold of documentary history (the "people without history"), and help us to underscore their role in the creation of America's past, present, and future.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** The class meets in a seminar format to discuss the assigned readings on Tuesday evenings (6:30-9:00 p.m.) in Moore 01030. You are expected to read the assigned materials before class and come to class prepared to discuss relevant information. Discussions will involve critical evaluation of the assigned readings, as well as opportunities to offer alternative perspectives or interpretations of the materials. You may be asked to lead the discussion of the readings one or two weeks during the semester.

For your final semester project, you will be expected to write a comprehensive review article on some topic or issue in historical archaeology. I expect you to select your topic in consultation with me outside of class. An abstract, outline, and annotated bibliography of some of the major sources that you will consult for your 15-25 page paper will be due at various points throughout the semester (see below). I will provide more detailed instructions on how to prepare a review article; several examples are contained in the course pack.

Your grade in the course will be based upon performance in the following:

(1) regular attendance and weekly participation in class discussions (30%),

(2) leading class discussion (20%),

(3) abstract, outline, and annotated bibliography (20%),

(4) final research paper (30%)

**REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS** (available in the WMU Bookstore):

Ferguson, Leland

1992 Uncommon Ground: Archaeology and Early African America, 1650-1800.  
Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C.

Mrozowski, Stephen A., Grace H. Ziesing, and Mary C. Beaudry

1996 Living on the Boott: Historical Archaeology at the Boott Mills Boardinghouses of Lowell, Massachusetts. University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst.

Orser, Charles E. Jr., and Brian M. Fagan

1995 Historical Archaeology. HarperCollins, New York.

There is also a coursepack of required readings for HIST 689 (#212).

**COURSE OUTLINE: TOPICS AND READINGS**

DATE	TOPICS	READINGS
1/7	Introduction to Historical Archaeology: History, Science, or Anthropology?	
1/14	Theory and Method in Historical Archaeology	O&F, chs. 1-2; CP 1-3
1/21	Sources for the Historical Archaeologist: The Written and the Wrought	O&F, chs. 4, 7, 9-10
1/28	The Archaeology of European Expansion: The Contact Period in Eastern North America	CP 4-8
<b>2/4</b>	<b>Research Paper Titles and Abstracts Due</b>	
2/4	Mortuary Archaeology	CP 9-11
2/11	Plantation Archaeology I: An Overview of the Field	CP 12-14
2/18	Plantation Archaeology II: Contested Meanings of Ceramics and Settlements	Ferguson, entire book
2/25	Military Sites (Video: History Recovered)	CP 15-16
3/4	<b>SEMESTER RECESS</b>	
<b>3/11</b>	<b>Research Paper Outlines and Annotated Bibliographies Due</b>	
3/11	Landscape Archaeology	CP 17-20
3/18	Gendered Spaces	CP 21-23
3/25	Consumerism, Industrial Archaeology, and Class Relations	CP 24-26
<b>4/1</b>	<b>Introduction to Your Research Paper is Due</b>	
4/1	The Domestic Side of Industrial Life book	Mrozowski et al., entire
4/8	Ideology and Assimilation	CP 27-29
4/15	The Archaeology of Us: Modern Material Culture	CP 30-31
<b>4/22</b>	<b>Research Papers Due</b>	

ANTH 610/HIST 689 - Historical Archaeology  
 Michael S. Nassaney  
 Reading List  
 Winter 1997

1. Schuyler, Robert L.  
 1978 Emergence and Definition of a New Discipline. In Historical Archaeology: A Guide to Substantive and Theoretical Contributions, edited by R. L. Schuyler, pp. 1-2. Baywood Publishing, New York.
2. Leone, Mark L., and Parker B. Potter, Jr.  
 1988 Introduction: Issues in Historical Archaeology. In The Recovery of Meaning: Historical Archaeology in the Eastern United States, edited by M. P. Leone and P. B. Potter, Jr., pp. 1-22. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D. C.
3. Harrington, J. C.  
 1978 Dating Stem Fragments of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Clay Tobacco Pipes. In Historical Archaeology: A Guide to Substantive and Theoretical Contributions, edited by R. L. Schuyler, pp. 63-65. Baywood Publishing, New York.
4. Dincauze, Dena F.  
 1985 Getting in Touch with the Contact Period: Interdisciplinary Perspectives at the Edge of History. Conference on New England Archaeology Newsletter 4:6-9.
5. Mitchem, Jeffrey M.  
 1996 Investigations of the Possible Remains of De Soto's Cross at Parkin. The Arkansas Archeologist 35:87-95.
6. Brenner, Elise M.  
 1988 Sociopolitical Implications of Mortuary Ritual Remains in 17th-Century Native Southern New England. In The Recovery of Meaning: Historical Archaeology in the Eastern United States, edited by M. P. Leone and P. B. Potter, Jr., pp. 147-181. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D. C.
7. Robinson, Paul A., Marc A. Kelley, and Patricia E. Rubertone  
 1985 Preliminary Biocultural Interpretations from a Seventeenth-Century Narragansett Indian Cemetery in Rhode Island. In Cultures in Contact: The European Impact on Native Cultural Institutions in Eastern North America, A.D. 1000-1800, edited by W. W. Fitzhugh, pp. 107-130. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C.
8. Nassaney, Michael S.  
 1989 An Epistemological Enquiry into Some Archaeological and Historical Interpretations of 17th Century Native American-European Relations. In Archaeological Approaches to Cultural Identity, edited by S. J. Shennan, pp. 76-93. Unwin Hyman, London.
9. Deetz, James F., and Edwin S. Dethlefsen  
 1978 Death's Head, Cherub, Urn and Willow. In Historical Archaeology: A Guide to Substantive and Theoretical Contributions, edited by R. L. Schuyler, pp. 83-89. Baywood Publishing, New York.
10. Wurst, LouAnn  
 1991 "Employees Must Be of Moral and Temperate Habits": Rural and Urban Elite Ideologies. In The Archaeology of Inequality, edited by R. McGuire and R. Paynter, pp.

- 125-149. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
11. Garman, James C.  
1994 Viewing the Color Line Through the Material Culture of Death. Historical Archaeology 28(3): 74-93.
  12. Orser, Charles E., Jr.  
1984 The Past Ten Years of Plantation Archaeology in the Southeastern United States. Southeastern Archaeology 3:1-12.
  13. Singleton, Theresa A.  
1995 The Archaeology of Slavery in North America. Annual Review of Anthropology 24:119-140.
  14. Stewart-Abernathy, Leslie C.  
1995 Separate Kitchens and Intimate Archaeology: Constructing Urban Slavery on the Antebellum Cotton Frontier in Washington, Arkansas. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology, Washington, D. C.
  15. MacDonald, J. Douglas, et al.  
1991 The Northern Cheyenne Outbreak of 1879: Using Oral History and Archaeology as Tools of Resistance. In The Archaeology of Inequality, edited by R. McGuire and R. Paynter, pp. 64-78. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
  16. Martin, Terrance J.  
1991 An Archaeological Perspective on Animal Exploitation Patterns at French Colonial Sites in the Illinois Country. In French Colonial Archaeology, edited by J. A. Walthall, pp. 189-200. University of Illinois Press, Urbana.
  17. Paynter, Robert, Susan Hautaniemi, and Nancy Muller  
1994 The Landscapes of the W. E. B. DuBois Boyhood Homesite: An Agenda for an Archaeology of the Color Line. In Race, edited by S. Gregory and R. Sanjek, pp. 285-318. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick.
  18. Adams, William Hampton  
1990 Landscape Archaeology, Landscape History, and the American Farmstead. Historical Archaeology 24(4):92-121.
  19. Rotman, Deborah, and Michael S. Nassaney  
1996 Archaeological Approaches to Historical Landscapes: An Example from Southwestern Michigan. Manuscript submitted for review to Historical Archaeology (under revision).
  20. Mascia, Sara F.  
1996 "One of the Best Farms in Essex County": The Changing Domestic Landscape of a Tenant Who Became an Owner. In Landscape Archaeology, edited by R. Yamin and K. B. Metheny, pp. 147-174. The University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville.
  21. Brashler, Janet G.  
1991 When Daddy Was a Shanty Boy: The Role of Gender in the Organization of the Logging Industry in Highland West Virginia. Historical Archaeology 25:54-68.
  22. Stine, Linda France  
1992 Social Differentiation Down on the Farm. In Exploring Gender Through

- Archaeology: Selected Papers from the 1991 Boone Conference, edited by C. P. Claassen, pp. 103-109. Prehistory Press, Madison, Wisconsin.
23. Yentsch, Anne  
1991 The Symbolic Divisions of Pottery: Sex-related Attributes of English and Anglo-American Household Pots. In The Archaeology of Inequality, edited by R. McGuire and R. Paynter, pp. 192-230. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
  24. Paynter, Robert  
1988 Steps to an Archaeology of Capitalism. In The Recovery of Meaning: Historical Archaeology in the Eastern United States, edited by M. P. Leone and P. B. Potter, Jr., pp. 407-433. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D. C.
  25. Nassaney, Michael S., and Marjorie R. Abel  
1993 The Political and Social Contexts of Cutlery Production in the Connecticut Valley. Dialectical Anthropology 18:247-289.
  26. Shackel, Paul A.  
1991 Consumerism and the Structuring of Social Relations: An Historical Archaeological Perspective. In Digging Into Popular Culture, edited by R. Browne and P. Browne, pp. 36-47. Bowling Green State University Popular Press, Bowling Green, Ohio.
  27. Potter, Parker B., Jr.  
1992 Critical Archaeology: In the Ground and on the Street. Historical Archaeology 26:117-129.
  28. Stewart-Abernathy, Leslie C.  
1989 "A Good Man in Israel": Zooarchaeology and Assimilation in Antebellum Washington, Arkansas. Historical Archaeology 23(2):96-112.
  29. Lindauer, Owen  
1996 The Archaeology of Americanization. In CRM 19(9):37-41. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.
  30. Nassaney, Michael S., Uzi Baram, James C. Garman, and Michael Milewski  
1996 Guns and Roses: Ritualism, Times Capsules, and the Massachusetts Agricultural College. Ms. to appear in Old-Time New England.
  31. Rathje, William L., and others  
1992 The Archaeology of Contemporary Landfills. American Antiquity 57: 437-447

Tenets of a Historical Archaeology by a Novice Practitioner  
(with Some Notes on Material Culture)

Michael S. Nassaney  
January 1997

Historical archaeology:

1. is anthropological
  - a. holistic - i.e., concerned with the whole of the human condition
  - b. comparative - seeks to identify shared (regularities) and unique (variation) human characteristics.
2. is historical - i.e., prior conditions influence the nature and scope of societal change.
3. is multidisciplinary - relies upon a range of sources and practitioners to reconstruct past lifeways and explore the role of material culture in creating, reinforcing, and transforming social relations.
4. is synthetic - works to understand the complementary, contradictory, and/or interrogatory relationships between written, oral, and material approaches to the past.
5. is global and systemic - recognizes that human groups since the 15th century have been enmeshed in global systems of interaction that often require large spatial frames of reference to study.
6. is multiscalar
  - a. collections of limited use for one purpose may be useful to others at different scales.
  - b. what appears to be homogeneous at one scale may appear heterogeneous at another scale.
7. is processual - exhibits interest in the process of social change and social reproduction, the causes of which may lie at individual, local, regional, national, and/or global scales.
8. is critical and reflexive - archaeological interpretations may reflect the concerns of the dominant society (serve as a form of ideological reproduction). Critical archaeologists examine interpretation as ideology and seek to place it in a social, political, and economic context.
9. is emancipatory and empowering - seeks to expose the roots of the cultural conventions that we take for granted in the modern world and expose these as arbitrary (e.g., conceptions of time as a commodity).
10. strives to be democratic, by giving voice to the people without history
11. is public
  - a. subject to public scrutiny and accountability (its major source of funding)
  - b. should strive to disseminate information about the past beyond the archaeological community
12. is a product of Western intellectual practice.

Material culture:

1. is tangible.
2. is fragmentary - subject to differential preservation due to both natural and cultural formation processes.
3. consists of both artifactual and documentary remains.
4. consists of objects which are both material and mental phenomena.
5. occurs in systemic and archaeological contexts.
6. has formal, spatial, and temporal dimensions.
7. is a medium of communication.
8. embodies meaning to its makers, users, and viewers.
9. is actively constituted/recursive (both product and precedent of human activity).
10. is multivocal - no single meaning.

**SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCES:** Those of you with little background in archaeology (or in need of a review) should consult one of the following sources. Most of these books should be available in the Waldo Library.

Ashmore, W., and R. J. Sharer

1988 *Discovering Our Past: A Brief Introduction to Archaeology*. Mayfield, Mountain View, CA.

Fagan, B.

1994 *In the Beginning: An Introduction to Archaeology*. 8th edition. HarperCollins.

Renfrew, C., and P. Baugh

1991 *Archaeology: Theories, Methods, and Practice*. Thames and Hudson, London.

Schiffer, M., and W. Rathje

1982 *Archaeology*. Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich, New York.

Thomas, David H.

1989 *Archaeology*. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Fort Worth, Texas.

Webster, D., S. T. Evans, and W. T. Sanders

1993 *Out of the Past: An Introduction to Archaeology*. Mayfield.