

ANTH 60a – Introduction to Archaeological Methods – Fall 2017



When: Fridays, 2:00 to 4:50pm

Where: Brown 218 or the Harrington House (Rabb School for Continuing Education)

Instructor: Ryan H. Collins

Office Hours: 1:00 to 2:00pm Fridays and by Appointment

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COURSE OVERVIEW

“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”-Confucius

Archaeology seeks to investigate human societies, both ancient and contemporary, through the materials they leave behind. Its practice focuses not only on the excavation process, but on the active analysis and interpretation of those materials through close “hands-on” examination. The practice of archaeology is experiential by nature. Designated as an Experiential Learning course, this class will place you in an environment of active and engaged learning through collaborative work with your field team. The Goals of which are to formulate research questions, collect archaeological data, and interpret your findings within broad historical contexts. During this process, you will reflect on the evidence you recover from excavations and archival research. Scientific in its approach, archaeology is an exercise in hypotheses testing via discovery. In process, you and your teammates will need to routinely evaluate and re-calibrate (as well as sometimes entirely alter) your planned courses of action in response to the new archaeological data you uncover each week.

As a practicum, Anthropology 60a will involve readings and lectures – but the core of the class is experiential, hands-on learning. You will “do” archaeology. With that in mind, this course is designed as an introduction and assumes no prior fieldwork or knowledge of the subject matter. Readings, class discussion, and lectures will prepare students to practice anthropology and critically think about the stories material remains tell us about past peoples and their lives. As part of this course, you and your team will have the opportunity to interpret and contextualize the archaeological materials you recover; as well as compile and present original research that documents your finds, synthesizes the knowledge you gained from your fieldwork, and offers recommendations for future activity at the site.

Questions to keep in mind throughout the class: How will the data you recover change our understandings of the Harrington House site at which we’ll be working? Will your findings support or subvert the historical record? How will your own past experiences affect your interpretations of the data? How will your work at Harrington House shape future cultural heritage initiatives and garner public interest in archaeology at Brandeis?

COURSE MATERIALS

No Required Course Textbook, All Readings Available via Latte and links from this Syllabus, unless otherwise specified

Required Field Gear:

- ***Field appropriate attire***—Archaeological fieldwork is dirty, active work conducted outdoors. On days in which we are in the field, you should come prepared to get dirty and sweaty while exposed to the elements. It will be warmer at the beginning of the semester and get colder as we approach November, so you will need a range of appropriate clothing—layers of clothing are good. You ***must*** also always wear closed-toed sneakers or boots always; ***absolutely no*** sandals, flip-flops, or open-toed shoes should be worn. If you show up to class inappropriately dressed for fieldwork, you will be sent home and given an unexcused absence for the day.

- **Water bottle(s)**—Be sure to bring at least one liter (though two if preferable) of water to the site each day.

- **Sunscreen**—While we are working in the field, we will be exposed to direct sunlight. I suggest you bring hats, long sleeved shirts and SPF 30 sun block.

- **Notebook/clipboard**—In addition to completing excavation forms and drawing profiles and plans of your excavation units, you will also be expected to keep a running written narrative in which you document the decisions your group made and the reasoning behind them. This is an integral part of any excavation documentation; when it comes time to write a report of your work, it will be much easier to remember the logic behind your work if you take the time to write it down. The field notebook will also be a component of your field notes grade (see below).

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND OBJECTIVES

In this course, you will learn the fundamentals of archaeological field methods, including surveying, planning and conducting excavations, 'reading' stratigraphy, identifying features, recovering artifacts, and recording all aspects of the archaeological process. And more broadly, you will learn why we do archaeology in the first place. The course is a practicum. It aims to teach students the basics of archaeology through field experience, which take place at the Samuel Harrington House (now the Rabb School of Continuing Studies) and in the Archaeology Laboratory in the Brandeis Anthropology Department (Brown 213). After meeting in the Archaeology Lab for our first two classes, we will spend the next several weeks conducting archaeological fieldwork at the Samuel Harrington House. Students will design research, set up and excavate an archaeological site, recover and process artifacts, and critically interpret their findings all within the paradigm of standard modern archaeological practice. Readings and field/classroom discussions and lectures will focus on giving students practical archaeological skills and on providing interpretive tools with which to understand findings—the basic foundations of archaeological scholarship.

1. Attendance – Attendance is a vital part of this class. *We only meet thirteen times* during the semester so consistent attendance is essential to succeeding in this course. You are expected to show up to class dressed appropriately with all necessary tools/gear that you will need. The first time you fail to attend class or to attend adequately prepared, you may write a three-page analysis of the week's assigned readings or suffer a 1/3 of a letter grade penalty to your **FINAL GRADE**. Future infractions will automatically result in a 1/3 of a letter grade penalty to your final grade. In rare instances, excused absences may be granted, but you should not expect this to be the case.

2. Participation – Thorough preparation and participation in class discussions are vital to your and everyone's learning. We value diverse, thoughtful comments and insights from all class members, both on our class discussion board online and during in-person conversations.

3. Punctuality – Classes will begin on time, and being regularly late will also affect your participation grade.

4. Professional Conduct – This class may engender active dialogue. Be passionate, but please also, be respectful of your fellow students and the professionals also working at Rabb. As with any field site, we are the privileged guests of the community who is allowing us the opportunity to

conduct professional scholarly research on their grounds. Please give back the same professionalism which has been bestowed upon you. Open debate is expected and welcomed, but as a community let's work together to create a positive, collaborative – and challenging – atmosphere.

5. The Written and Spoken Word – Please use specific examples to back up your points whenever possible, and do not hesitate to make use of the Brandeis University Writing Center (<http://www.brandeis.edu/writingprogram/writingcenter/>) if you would like extra support during the writing process.

6. Timeliness – Prepare and submit your work on time. Unless you have arranged for an extension in advance, your grade will drop one letter grade each day it is late.

7. Communication – Please feel free to ask any questions you might have, and to share any concerns regarding the course with during the semester. Take advantage of my office hours, set up appointments, or communicate by e-mail if you have any questions or open issues.

GRADING Course grades will be determined by six main components; (1) preparedness and class participation; (2) preliminary research report; (3) take-home midterm exam; (4) field notes; (5) final group report; and (6) final group presentation.

Preparedness and class participation 20%

Preliminary research report 10%

Midterm exam 15%

Field notes 15%

Final group report 25%

Final group presentation 15%

PREPAREDNESS AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

This course is based on hands-on group experience and as such, your engaged participation at each class meeting is crucial. This includes completing assigned readings prior to class, meeting on-time at the site, participating in discussions of course materials, and working respectfully with other members of the class to accomplish our collective goals. Preparedness and participation is worth 20% of your grade.

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH REPORT

Archaeologists must learn and understand all the information available on the site at which they plan to conduct research—the Harrington House is no exception. You will prepare a 2 to 3-page research report that will be due at the start of class on September 29 to show your understanding of the field site. This report will outline what is known about the history of the Samuel Harrington House. Reports should address the following questions: When was the house built, and by whom? Who has lived there through the years? How have the house and its surrounding landscape changed through time? How were these changes shaped by historical, cultural and/or political processes? What are our primary sources of information on the Harrington House? The use of imagery and figures is encouraged. Please be sure to cite your sources using the Chicago Manual of Style (<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>). Worth 10% of final grade.

TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM

The midterm exam will focus on topics and materials covered in course readings, class discussions, and fieldwork practices. The exam will be distributed on October 12 at 2PM. You will have until the start of class on October 13 to complete the exam. You will be permitted to consult the class readings and your notes, but are not permitted under any circumstances to work with other members of the class. We will discuss the midterm more fully at the start of October. This will be worth 15% of your final grade.

FIELD NOTES Thorough notes on archaeological work are perhaps the most important task in the field. Detailed and extensive notes will allow you, and others in the future, to reconstruct your excavations and survey work after it has been completed. Field notes are an essential tool for tracking data needed to write accurate and detailed reports. Your notes may consist of text, maps, sketches, field forms, and any other format that documents and details the specifics of your work. Individually kept field notes are required and should be written in a notebook that is separate from any other work related to this course or others. Other items such as lot forms and maps will be shared amongst students in each group. A digital copy of your completed field notes is due on December 8th. Notes will be graded on clarity, thoroughness, detail, and organization. 15% of the final grade will be based on field notes.

FINAL GROUP REPORT

You and your group members will compile an archaeological report describing the process of excavating your assigned units, processing the resulting artifacts, and analyzing the data recovered. This report should be formatted in accordance with standard archaeological reports, meaning you should provide background material about the site's history (i.e.— your Preliminary Report), excavation goals, methodologies, findings from the field, analysis conducted in the lab, and final interpretations and conclusions. Included in your report should be a catalog of artifacts recovered from the field, as well as photographs, drawings, and maps created in the field. The report should be approximately 12 pages in length. The report will be graded on quality, not quantity, and is based on content, adherence to guidelines, clarity of presentation, flow, structure, and logic of thesis, arguments, and conclusions. The final group report is due on December 14th and is worth 25% of your final grade.

FINAL GROUP PRESENTATION

You and your group members will present the findings and analysis discussed in your final report to your classmates on December 8th. Your presentation should be 10–15 minutes in length and should include some sort of digital visual aid (e.g., Powerpoint, Keynote, Prezi). Your presentation should emphasize the results and interpretations you and your group formulated. Each team member is expected to speak for an equal amount of time during the presentation; you should practice your presentation ahead of time to iron out any wrinkles and ensure that you meet the specified time range. Full content expectations will be discussed in class. This is worth 15% of your final grade.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All acts of dishonesty in any work constitute academic misconduct and I uphold a **Zero Tolerance** policy with respect to academic misconduct or misrepresentation. This includes, but is not limited

to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of information, misrepresentations, and abetting of any of the above. At a minimum, any confirmed violation of academic integrity will result in a failing grade for this class and would lead to referral to the Academic Conduct Committee. If you are at all uncertain about the definition of misconduct, plagiarism, “cheating” or “academic dishonesty” please refer to the student handbook or the university website for a full description. Please be aware that this issue is extremely serious and any confirmed incidents will be referred to the appropriate university administrator for additional disciplinary action, including the possibility of dismissal from the university (<http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai>).

DISABILITIES

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately. If you have a disability but have not contacted the Office of Disabilities Services and Support, please call (781) 736-3470 or visit the office on 415 South Street, Waltham, MA to register for services.

CLASS SCHEDULE

<p>CLASS #1 1 September Location: Brown 218</p>	<p>Introduction to the Course —What is archaeology? —Review of syllabus and Arch. Laboratory and field site rules Principles of Archaeological Ethics – SAA Guide</p>
<p>CLASS #2 8 September Location: Brown 218, the Field site</p>	<p>The Material Record, and the importance of Archaeological Context —Brief of history of archaeology as a discipline —What archaeology can tell us that history cannot? —Preparing for the field</p> <p><i>Assignment:</i> Renfrew and Bahn 2008 Chapter’s 1 and 2 Beaudry, Mary. 2004. A Pernicious Influence? Japanese Water Drop Ware. Ceramics in America 2004</p>
<p>CLASS #3 15 September Location: Field site</p>	<p>Designing a Research Agenda and Documentary Resources —Fieldwork begins! —Field site research strategies, field notes and planning <i>Assignment:</i> Renfrew and Bahn 2008 Chapter 14 Research Guide – To be handed out in class</p>
<p>22 September</p>	<p>Rosh Hashanah: No university exercises.</p>
<p>CLASS #4 29 September Location: Field site</p>	<p>Archaeological Mapping and Survey —Mapping techniques and methods <i>Assignment:</i> Renfrew and Bahn 2008 Chapter 3 *****Preliminary Research Report due at beginning of class*****</p>
<p>CLASS #5 6 October Location: Field site</p>	<p>Archaeological Excavation <i>Assignment:</i> Renfrew and Bahn 2008 Chapter 11</p>
<p>CLASS #6</p>	<p>Archaeological Excavation (pt. 2)</p>

13 October Location: Field site	— Sediments, Soils, Stratigraphy, and Environments <i>Assignment:</i> Renfrew and Bahn 2008 Chapter 6 Renfrew and Bahn 2008 Pages 122 to 128 *****Take Home Midterm due at beginning of class*****
CLASS #7 20 October Location: Field site	Archaeological Excavation (pt. 3) — Profiles, Field Recording and Documentation <i>Assignment:</i> National Parks Service on Archaeology and Documentation
CLASS #8 27 October Location: Field site	Archaeological Excavations (pt. 4) —Buried deposits and special features <i>Assignment:</i> Inomata and Triadan 2015 Middle Preclassic Caches from Ceibal, Guatemala Collins and Stanton n. d.
CLASS #9 3 November Location: Field site	Archaeological Mapping and Survey (pt. 2) —Mapping techniques and methods in the field <i>Assignment:</i> Garrison et al 2008; Chase et al 2010
CLASS #10 10 November Location: Field site	Integrating Archaeological Tools and Data-sets —Remote Sensing, Geographic Information Systems — Field Records, Documentation and Conservation <i>Assignment: TBD</i> Possible Field Use of Drone with Dr. Charles Golden
CLASS #11 17 November Location: Field site	Finishing at Field site —Final recording, documentation and backfilling <i>Assignment:</i> Compile field notes, begin final report Rnfrew and Bahn 2008 Chapter 12
24 November	Thanksgiving holiday: No university exercises
CLASS #12 1 December Location: Brown 218	Artifact Processing – TBD (Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association) — Cleaning, cataloguing, documentation <i>Assignment:</i> Continue to work on final report Review the following websites: http://www.sha.org/bottle/ https://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/histarch/gallery_types/
CLASS #13 8 December Location: Brown 218	Group Presentations —LAST CLASS <i>Assignment: Digitized field notes due at the start of class</i> Group presentations in class today
14 December	*****EXCAVATION REPORT FINAL DRAFTS DUE*****

***Syllabus is subject to change during the semester**