



MAST 250 Archaeological Field Methods

Fall 2019

Friday 9 AM-1 PM

Location: TBA

Instructor Information

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Catalog Description

Fundamentals of archaeological field methods, including surveying, planning and conducting excavations, interpreting stratigraphy, identifying features, recovering artifacts, sampling for environmental analysis and recording all aspects of archaeological process.

Course Structure

This course will meet once weekly, on Fridays, and will consist of practical sessions and lectures. Please wear weather appropriate clothing to get dirty, sturdy footwear, and bring water and sun protection.

Learning Outcomes:

- Discover a variety of methods of archaeological survey, excavation, and recording, and demonstrate the ability to choose the most appropriate method depending upon the circumstances of the project at hand.
- Critically analyze the techniques used by other archaeologists in past excavations, and judge whether the techniques and research design were appropriate and effective.
- Explain the ethical and legal considerations of archaeological excavation.
- Recognize hands-on archaeological techniques and gain proficiency in carrying out practical skills demonstrations.
- Design a research plan when given a series of project parameters.

Core Curriculum Objectives and Evaluations (Life and Physical Sciences)

At the end of the semester, students will demonstrate:

- *Critical Thinking Skills:* creative thinking; innovation, inquiry; and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
 - This course enhances critical thinking skills through reading and class discussion of key concepts and ideas in archaeology. Critical thinking will be necessary to use Middle Range Theory in order to use archaeological remains to draw conclusions about the past. Furthermore, critical thinking skills will be necessary to determine which methods of archaeological analysis are most appropriate, and why. Critical thinking skills will be evaluated through the grading of a mock research proposal, through the oversight of field notes, and through the grading of a critical analysis of field reports completed by professional archaeologists.
- *Communication Skills:* effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
 - Students' proficiency in written communication will be evaluated through the grading of their written essays, see details below. Students' oral and visual communication will be evaluated through their submission of a presentation at the end of the term, and through oversight of their group communication during group projects.
- *Empirical and Quantitative Skills:* manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions
 - Students will be required to complete empirical and quantitative analysis during class exercises, particularly in the exercises for excavation and for mapping. Archaeology is the most scientific of the

social sciences, and a significant amount of empirical data will be collected and analyzed during this course.

- **Teamwork:** ability to consider different points of view and work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.
 - Students will be expected to either work in groups to complete a number activities throughout the term, including oral/visual presentations, and in- and out-of-class exercises.

Textbook and/or Resource Material

- Renfrew, C. and Bahn, P., 2016 Archaeology: Theory, Methods, and Practice 7th edition.
- All other required readings will be provided on e-learning.

Grading Policies

Grade scale (%): A=100-90, B=89-80, C=79-70, D=69-60, F=less than 60

| Grading Assignment | Percentage of Final Grade |
|---|---|
| Group Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey • Mapping • Excavation and Recording • Geophysical Survey | 40% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% • 10% • 10% • 10% |
| Field Notes | 20% |
| Analysis/Comparison of Excavation Reports | 20% |
| Research Proposal | 20% |
| Writing | • 10% |
| Presentation | • 10% |

Additional detailed information about the assignments, other than what is listed at the end of this syllabus, will be given in separate handouts.

Make-up Policies

There are mandatory in-class demonstrations and activities; therefore, days that you miss must be made up within 30 days with proper documentation/university approved excuse. Failure to notify and/or document properly may result in an unexcused absence. Falsification of documentation is a violation of the Honor Code. Student will provide a medical confirmation note from his or her medical provider within one week of the last date of the absence (see Student Rules 7.1.6.1) Student will provide one or both of these (at instructor's discretion), within one week of the last date of the absence: (i) Texas A&M University Explanatory Statement for Absence from Class form available at http://www.tamug.edu/studentrules/Academic_Rules/Absence%20Statement.pdf or (ii) Confirmation of visit to a health care professional affirming date and time of visit.

Other absences may be excused at the discretion of the instructor with prior notification and proper documentation. In cases where prior notification is not feasible (e.g., accident or emergency) the student must provide notification by the end of the second working day after the absence, including an explanation of why notice could not be sent prior to the class. If you have an unexcused absence, your attendance and participation grade will reflect accordingly based on the grade guidelines. Information concerning absences is contained in the University Student Rules Section 7 (http://www.tamug.edu/stulife/Academic_Rules/7_Attendance.html). The University views class attendance as an individual student responsibility. All students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments. Please consult the University Student Rules for reasons for excused absences, detailed procedures and deadlines as well as student grievance procedures (Part III, Section 45).

Decorum and Civility

Because this class is so focused on student interaction and group discussion, discourteous behavior will not be tolerated. Discourteous behavior includes playing on cell-phones or laptops in class, excessive off-task discussion, and disrespectful behavior toward your peers or instructors. Penalties for discourteous behavior at its worst may result in ejection from class. You may read more about classroom behavior in the TAMU Galveston student rules: http://www.tamug.edu/studentrules/Academic_Rules/21_Classroom_Behavior.html

Course Schedule (Tentative)

- 1 **Week I**
 - i. Syllabus, expectations, research design and research questions
- 2 **Week II**
 - i. Intro to field archaeology, archaeological ethics and laws
- 3 **Week III**
 - i. The survey process (field walking, shovel testing, coring, aerial photography)
- 4 **Week IV**
 - i. Mapping: pace and compass and triangulation
- 5 **Week V**
 - i. Mapping: total station and transit/theodolite
- 6 **Week VI**
 - i. Excavation: practical concerns and setting up the trench
- 7 **Week VII**
 - i. Excavation: sediments, soils, stratigraphy, and environments
- 8 **Week VIII**
 - i. Excavation: profiles, field recording, and documenting
- 9 **Week IV**
 - i. Excavation: buried deposits and special features, sampling strategies for environmental and dating evidence
- 10 **Week X**
 - i. Geophysical Prospection and Remote Sensing: ground penetrating radar and resistivity
- 11 **Week XI**
 - i. Geophysical Prospection and Remote sensing: magnetometry and metal detection
- 12 **Week XII**
 - i. Chemical methods of prospection
- 13 **Week XIII**
 - i. Field Artifact Processing: cleaning, cataloging, documentation
- 14 **Week XIV**
 - i. No class: Thanksgiving
- 15 **Week XV**
 - i. Makeup class
- 16 **Final Exam**
 - i. Presentations

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Counseling Office, Seibel Student Center, or call (409)740-4587. For additional information visit <http://www.tamug.edu/counsel/Disabilities.html>.

Academic Integrity

For additional information please visit: <http://www.tamug.edu/HonorSystem>

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do."

Statement on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of educational records by limiting access to these records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their educational records and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate and misleading data through informal and formal hearings. Currently enrolled students wishing to withhold any or all directory information items may do so by going to <https://howdy.tamu.edu> and clicking on the "Directory Hold Information" link in the Student Records channel on the MyRecord tab. Directory items include name, UIN, local address, permanent address, email address, local telephone number, permanent telephone number, dates of attendance, program of study (college, major, campus), classification, previous institutions attended, degrees honors and awards received, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, medical residence location and medical residence specialization.

The complete FERPA notice to students and the student records policy is available at the Office of the Registrar webpage: <http://registrar.tamu.edu/Catalogs,-Policies-Procedures/FERPA/FERPA-Notice-to-Students#0-StatementofRights>.

Items that can never be identified as public information are a student's social security number, citizenship, gender, grades, GPR or class schedule. All efforts will be made in this class to protect your privacy and to ensure confidential treatment of information associated with or generated by your participation in the class.

Statement on Course Evaluations

The PICA (Personalized Instructor/Course Appraisal) is an online course evaluation for Texas A&M. We highly encourage you to complete an evaluation for each course on your schedule. Student input is a critical component used to improve curriculum and teaching. Each faculty member values your input to improve his/her methodology. Your comments can also significantly impact the mix and membership of faculty. The PICA website is available at <http://pica.tamu.edu> or your Howdy portal.

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MAST ????: Archaeological Field Methods

Group Assignments and Discussions (40%)

At the beginning of the course, you will be assigned to a group randomly, who, barring major disaster, you will complete group work with for the rest of the term.

- *In-Class Exercises (4 x 10% = 40% total)*
 - You will complete 4 in-class exercises which require hypothesis formulation, data collection, data processing, and the drawing and revision of conclusions based on what you learn. Generally speaking, you will be guided through these exercises with worksheets, and will be required to hand them in at the end of class on the class day one week FOLLOWING their introduction. Only one copy will be needed per group.

Field Notes (20%) DUE November 22

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 November 22. Notes will be graded on clarity, thoroughness, detail, and organization.

Analysis of Field Reports (20%) DUE October 11

Choose two publications relating to a similar/comparable type of excavation or field project (e.g., the excavation publications of two Neolithic burial mounds, or two Roman villas, or two landscape surveys) and write a 1500 word essay which discusses the various ways in which each report uses text, imagery, format/layout, and specialist reports to present the information, and the effectiveness of this for each report.

Write up your analysis in such a way that it is understandable to the grader without them necessarily having access to the two publications concerned: to facilitate this you can include in your essay up to a maximum of six pages made up of photocopies from your chosen reports — to provide examples of styles of text, layout and imagery which characterize your chosen reports. MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW!

Proposal (20%)

In this class, you will be responsible for completing a research proposal that details a proposed course of action to explore all facets of survey, excavation, and field conservation for a theoretical archaeological site of your choosing. You'll need to have your site approved by me in the third week of class.

Think of this proposal as a document that you might use to convince a funding body to give you enough money/support/time to complete your proposed analysis. A proposal should consist of a brief introduction, a literature review of your materials and proposed methods, an explanation of how the methods will be used, a justification for why your methods are necessary (as opposed to other methods), a budget, and a timeline.

Please keep in mind that the sky is the limit when it comes to choosing your proposed sites. Be creative! Consider asking other professors here about some of the things they've come across on their excavations. You are welcome to choose something REALLY challenging to write a short proposal over (e.g. a complex site including burials, or a heavily stratified urban site, or an underwater site) or something simple (e.g. a chert source site). Either way, your proposal should reflect all facets of survey and excavation that might be anticipated. MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW!

We will go over the details of this assignment (and read some actual proposals) later in the term, but keep in mind that your proposal needs to be no more than 4 pages, bibliography non-inclusive.

You will be required to briefly present your proposal to the class at the end of term. Please do your best to give your colleagues an informed portrait of what you are proposing, and use some sort of presentation aid (PPT, Prezi, etc.). The rubric by which your work will be graded is attached.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism consists of passing off someone else's ideas, words, or writing as your own. You are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you have the permission of that person. **PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU MUST BE PARTICULARLY VIGILANT AGAINST PLAGIARISM IN A CLASS WITH WRITING ASSIGNMENTS.** For example, if you write a COMPLETELY original paper based on several sources but do not cite these sources clearly in the text and in the bibliography, you are committing plagiarism. Evidence of plagiarism will result in a failing grade. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for it destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. For more information about plagiarism, please consult the Texas A&M University Galveston Student Rules: <http://www.tamug.edu/honorsystem/descriptions.html>

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Presentation Rubric

Date: _____

Name: _____

Subject: _____

Total Time of Presentation (less than 15 minutes): _____ (0/5)

1. Was the presentation organized and did it follow a logical progression?

1 2 3 4 5

2. Was the information presented accurate and free of error?

1 2 3 4 5

3. Did the presenter involve students, hold their attention, and control the class as needed?

1 2 3 4 5

4. Was the estimated time of the lesson used effectively?

1 2 3 4 5

5. Was the topic presented enthusiastically?

1 2 3 4 5

6. Was the presentation innovative or creative?

1 2 3 4 5

7. Was the presentation polished and professional?

1 2 3 4 5

8. Was the presenter adequately prepared to answer questions?

1 2 3 4 5

9. Did the presenter adequately address the question prompts in the syllabus?

1 2 3 4 5

TOTAL _____

NOTES: