

Anthropology 802  
Issues in Archaeological Theory  
Ohio State University  
Winter, 2007

**SYLLABUS**

**Instructor:** William S. Dancey, Associate Professor  
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Office Hours: 3:30-5:00 T & R, and by appointment

**Place and Time:** 235 Lord Hall, 1:30-3:18 Tuesday and Thursday

**Course Call Number:** 01441-9

**Texts:**

- *Evolutionary Archaeology: Theory and Application*, edited by Michael J. O'Brien (University of Utah Press, 1996)
- *Archaeological Theory: An Introduction*, by Matthew Johnson (Blackwell, 1999)
- *Artifacts and Ideas: Essays in Archaeology*, by Bruce G. Trigger (Transaction Publishers, 2003)

**Other Required Reading.** In addition to the above title, the papers on the attached list are required reading for the course. They are available on-line through Oscar either as Reserves by Course or as Journals (online).

**Goals and Objectives.** This course examines the conceptual tools of the field of archaeology. Through close, critical reading of a select set of papers addressing major theoretical and methodological issues in the discipline, it is expected that the meanings and usages of the major terms in current and recent Americanist archaeology will become clear. Also of interest is how these concepts are organized to form research strategies and explanatory systems for the study of culture history, past lifeways, and culture process.

**Major Issues.** Issues of primary concern in the course are the following: (1) the goals of archaeology (especially processual archaeology); (2) the role of science and theory building; (3) systematics ("classification and typology") in prehistory; (4) the proper place of statistics in archaeological research; (5) the meaning of style and function in archaeology; (6) the role of ethnoarchaeological research; (7) the use of analogy in archaeological reconstruction; (8) the potential of archaeology for the study of biocultural evolution; (9) the utility of systems theory; (10) the place of the individual in archaeological theory; (11) the social roots of archaeological thought and practice, and (12) the relationship of archaeology to anthropology and history.

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STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING THEIR NEEDS KNOWN TO THE INSTRUCTOR, AND FOR SEEKING AVAILABLE ASSISTANCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR SEEKING AVAILABLE ASSISTANCE FROM THE OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES (292-3307), PRIOR TO OR AT THE BEGINNING OF THE QUARTER. I RELY ON THE ODS FOR ASSISTANCE IN VERIFYING THE NEED FOR ACCOMMODATIONS AND DEVELOPING ACCOMMODATION STRATEGIES.

**Outcomes.** Although actual handling of artifacts is not part of the course, the intellectual foundation for laboratory analysis is built. The course should also make the literature on world archaeology and prehistory more accessible and understandable.

**Format.** Most class sessions are devoted to discussion and to student presentations. The course opens with 3 lecture sessions devoted to defining the problem. Lectures are given infrequently during the rest of the course.

**Evaluation.**

Exams (2).....	50%
Presentation.....	10%
Term Paper.....	20%
Book Critique .....	20%

**Examinations.** Examinations are of the essay type and focus on previously untested material, although it is expected that concepts from earlier sections of the course will be retained (learned!) and applied later. The course outline indicates the dates on which the exams are scheduled.

**Critique.** Each student is required to write a critique of the book by Trigger following instructions given by the instructor that are handed out in the second week of the course. The completed critique is to be typewritten/word-processed, double-spaced, with one inch margins all around, and between five and eight pages long. Submit two copies. **Due February 23.**

**Term Papers.** Students are expected to submit term papers on topics assigned by the instructor. The papers are to be between 7-10 pages long, typewritten/word processed, and double spaced with one inch margins. Assigned topics along with specific instructions are distributed in the second week of the course. Submit two copies. **Due March 7.**

**Presentation.** Students are expected to give a presentation (20 minutes) to the class summarizing the results of their term paper research. Specific instructions for the presentation format along with dates and grading criteria are distributed in the second week of the course.

**Class Participation.** Students are expected to have completed the assigned reading before coming to class and to participate in discussions. Note is made throughout the course of each student's level and quality of participation.

**Reading.** The assigned papers have been written by archaeologists for archaeologists. They are not narrative in style and for the most part cannot be read as one reads a novel. Nor are they in a textbook style that can be "crammed". They are difficult going and must be read more than once. So, budget your time.

Almost all of the reading in the course is issue-oriented, or polemical. The authors coldly evaluate prevailing modes of thought and often aggressively criticize the writing of their colleagues. Discussion of the assigned reading in this course similarly takes a critical approach. It must be remembered, however, that critical analysis does not necessarily mean to "find fault", in the colloquial sense. Rather, it means to dig out the basic, component elements of something, to understand them, and to evaluate them in logical terms and in relation to other statements of a similar kind about the same or similar topic. Criticism of this sort does not imply a negative attitude and it is important to avoid getting caught up in a vitriolic, vituperative approach to the assigned reading.

**Grading.** Tests and other instruments of evaluation are graded according to the following scale :  
A (95-100), A- (90-94), B+ (86-89), B (83-85), B- (80-82), C+ (76-79), C (73-75), C- (70-72), D+ (65-69), D (60-64), E (Below 60)

**Student Responsibility.** Assigned projects and in-class exams are to be done individually. You are on your honor to work alone (unless instructed otherwise) and submit material that reflects your own ability. Anything else is academic misconduct and will be reported. You are also expected to take exams and submit written assignments on the days scheduled. Discuss anticipated absences or delays with the instructor in advance to avoid loss of credit. Class attendance is mandatory.

## COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNED READING

### PART I: INTRODUCTION

Sessions 1-3 (T, Jan 3; R, Jan 5; T, Jan 10) Lectures: Paradigms in Archaeology  
Johnson (1999) Archaeological Theory: An Introduction

### PART II: MAJOR EXPLANATORY PARADIGMS

Session 4 (R, Jan 12) Writing Culture Historical Syntheses  
Griffin (1967) Eastern North American Archaeology: A Summary

Session 5 (T, Jan 17) The Classification Issue  
Spaulding (1953) Statistical Techniques for the Discovery...  
Ford (1954) The Type Concept Revisited

Session 6 (R, Jan 19) Birth of the New Archaeology  
Binford (1962) Archaeology as Anthropology

Session 7 (T, Jan 24) The Culture Evolution Paradigm  
Flannery (1972) The Cultural Evolution of Civilizations

Session 8 (R, Jan 26) A Neophyte's Views of the Issues  
Charles (1992) Shading the Past...  
Pauketat (2001) Practice and History in Archaeology

Session 9 (T, Jan 31) Analogy in Archaeology  
A. Stahl (1993) Concepts of Time....

Session 10 (R, Feb 2) Review: What is a Paradigm?

Session 11 (T, Feb 7) **\*Midterm Examination\***

### PART III: EVOLUTIONARY ARCHAEOLOGY

Session 12 (R, Feb 9) Lecture: The Foundations of Evolutionary Archaeology  
O'Brien (1996) Front matter, Introduction, Chpts. 1-5, 8, & 10

Session 13 (T, Feb 14) Style and Function  
Dunnell (1978) Style and Function.... [O'Brien (1996) Chpt 6]  
Dunnell (1978) Archaeological Potential of.... [O'Brien (1996) Chpt 7]

Session 14 (R, Feb 16) Agricultural Origins  
Rindos (1985) Symbiosis, Instability...and Agriculture....[O'Brien (1996) Chpt 11]

O'Brien & Wilson (1988) A Paradigmatic Shift....[O'Brien (1996) Chpt 12]

Session 15 (T, Feb 21)      Ceramic Evolution  
Braun (1987) Coevolution of Sedentism....[O'Brien (1996) Chpt 14]  
Dunnell and Feathers (1991) Late Woodland Manifestations....

Session 16 (R, Feb 23)      Review: What is Evolutionary Archaeology?  
Discussion of Trigger

**\*Critique Due\***

#### **PART IV: ARCHAEOLOGISTS, OTHER ISSUES AND PARADIGMS**

Session 17 (T, Feb 28)      Behavioral Archaeology, Cultural Materialism, Marxist Archaeology  
Student presentations

Session 18 (R, Mar 2)      Evolutionary Ecology, Ethnoarchaeology, Post-Processual Archaeology  
Student presentations

Session 19 (T, Mar 7)      Cognitive Archaeology, Experimental Archaeology  
Student presentations

**\*Term Paper Due\***

Session 20 (R, Mar 9)      Review: Archaeology and the Future

Session 21 (T, Mar 14, 1:30-3:18)      **\*Final Examination\***

## REQUIRED READING

- Binford, Lewis R.  
1962 Archaeology as Anthropology. American Antiquity 28:217-225.
- Charles, Douglas K.  
1992 Shading the Past: Models in Archeology. American Anthropologist 94:905-925.
- Dunnell, Robert C., and James K. Feathers  
1991 Late Woodland Manifestations of the Malden Plain, Southeast Missouri. (In Stability, Transformation, and Variation: The Late Woodland Southeast, edited by M.S. Nassaney and C.R.Cobb, pp. 21-45. New York: Plenum.
- Flannery, Kent V.  
1972 The Cultural Evolution of Civilizations. (In Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics, Volume 3, edited by R. Johnson et al., pp. 399-426. Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.
- Ford, James A.  
1954 The Type Concept Revisited. American Anthropologist 56:42-54.
- Griffin, James B.  
1967 Eastern North American Archaeology: A Summary. Science 156:175-191
- Pauketat, Timothy R.  
2001 Practice and History in Archaeology: An Emerging Paradigm. Anthropological Theory 1(1):73-98.
- Spaulding, Albert C.  
1953 Statistical Techniques for the Discovery of Artifact Types. American Antiquity 18: 305-13.
- Stahl, Ann B.  
1993 Concepts of Time and Approaches to Analogical Reasoning in Historical Perspective. American Antiquity 58:235-260.

## Recommended Reading

- Dunnell, Robert C.  
1971 Systematics in Prehistory. New York: The Free Press.  
1986 Methodological Issues in Americanist Artifact Classification. In Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory, Volume 9, edited by M. B. Schiffer, pp. 149-207. Academic Press, Orlando.
- Popper, Karl R.  
1985 The Growth of Scientific Knowledge (1960). (In Popper Selections, edited by D. Miller, pp. 171-180. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Schiffer, Michael B.  
1988 The Structure of Archaeological Theory. American Antiquity 53:461-485.
- Watson, Patty Jo  
1986 Archaeological Interpretation, 1985. (In American Archaeology: Past and Future, edited by D. Meltzer, D. Fowler, and J. Sabloff, pp. 439-458. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.