

ANT 462M – Archaeological Field Techniques
Course Unique Number #31400 – Spring 2012

Wednesday 2:00-6:00pm T5A (J.J. Pickle Research Campus)

Instructor: Debora C. Trein
Instructor's office: SAC 4.192
Office hours: M 12:00-2:00pm
Email: d.trein@mail.utexas.edu

Teaching Assistant: Casey Hanson
TA's office: TBA
Office hours: TBA
Email: cjhanson@utexas.edu

Course Description:

This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to the field methods and techniques that are regularly employed in archaeological research. Students will be exposed to a variety of field techniques, understand where and how these are applied, and will also have the opportunity to employ them in in/out-class exercises and in limited archaeological fieldwork at the end of the semester. This course also aims to provide students with a solid base for research proposal grant-writing. Topics covered include dating in archaeology, sampling strategies, artifact sourcing techniques, tape-and-compass survey, TDS survey, excavation, on-site documentation, as well as post-excavation activities. This course will also concisely delineate some relevant points in history of archaeology as a discipline and current issues in archaeological theory.

Course Objectives:

Students will:

- Understand how archaeological sites are found and documented;
- Learn how excavations are conducted, and how these are planned depending on the project's goals, resources, and environmental conditions;
- Understand the types of activities that are involved in post-excavation fieldwork;
- Understand the importance of documentation and record-keeping in field archaeology;
- Gain some experience in academic research in the process of writing a research design.

Readings:

There will be no class textbook. Instead, readings will be assigned and posted on Blackboard for each week, at least one week in advance. These readings will either be submitted with the designation *REQUIRED* or *SUGGESTED* reading, and represent their importance in class. Required readings will be discussed in class, and you may be called upon to answer questions related to the readings.

Course Prerequisites:

ANT 304 – Introduction to Archaeology/Archaeological Studies I

Course Evaluation and Grading (subject to change):

Successful completion of this course will require students to attend ALL classes, complete ALL assignments, and read the assigned readings. Evaluations for this course will be undertaken in three ways: lab assignments, field journal, and a research design project. Grades for all assignments, field journal and research design will be posted on Blackboard.

Assignments:

Students are required to complete ALL assignments, which are exercises that are undertaken during class. Some of these assignments are due at the end of the class, while others are due in the following lecture (as noted below). A total of seven (7) assignments will be provided during this course, and these are graded out of ten (10) points. THERE ARE NO MAKE UP ASSIGNMENTS. If special circumstances require absence from classes, proper documentation MUST be provided prior to, or immediately after (1-2 days) the relevant class.

Research Design:

Students are required to complete the research design component of the course, which involves creating a research project, complete with research questions, research area, methodology, hypotheses, expected results and bibliography. The research design is a single-student project and is between 10-15 pages in length, double-spaced, 12-font. THERE IS NO MAKE UP RESEARCH DESIGN. If special circumstances require an extension of the research design deadline, proper documentation MUST be provided prior to the deadline.

Field Journal:

Students are required to keep a field journal when working in an archaeological excavation during the last three (3) class sessions. This field journal is an account of what the activities that the student performed while working in the field, and should include (but should not be restricted to) descriptions of the activities, how these were performed, what kinds of problems were encountered, and how these were overcome. Illustrations and diagrams are welcome. There is no page limit, but students are encouraged to report as much as possible on their field experience. THERE IS NO MAKE UP FIELD JOURNAL or EXPERIENCE. If special circumstances require absence from field experience, proper documentation MUST be provided prior to, or immediately after (1-2 days) the relevant class. If special circumstances require an extension of the field journal deadline, proper documentation MUST be provided prior to the deadline.

Assignment Deadlines:

- 02/08/2012 – A1: Stratigraphy
- 02/15/2012 – A2: Survey methods and sampling strategies
- 02/29/2012 – A3: Tape-and-compass map
- 03/07/2012 – A4: Contour map and TDS set-up
- 03/21/2012 – A5: Profile and plan mapping
Draft of research design
- 03/28/2012 – A6: Artifact illustration
- 04/11/2012 – Research design (presentation and paper)
- 04/18/2012 – A7: Conservation (5-page paper)
- 05/04/2012 – Field Journal

Grading:

The break-down of grading is as follows:

- Assignments, seven (7) in total. Assignments are graded out of 10 points each week (40% of the final grade);
- Research project. The research project is graded out of 40 points (40% of the final grade);
- Field journal. The field journal is graded out of 20 points (20% of the final grade).

The grading system to be used in this course will be the +/- (plus/minus) system in use throughout the UT system (i.e. 100-93=A; 92-90=A-; 89-87=B+; 86-83=B; 82-80=B- and so on.)

Course Schedule (Subject to Change):Week 1 – Introduction to the course (01/18/2012)

In this introductory lecture, we will go over the syllabus, outlining the philosophy of the course, course requirements, course evaluation, grading, course schedule, and classroom policies. We will also briefly review the discipline of archaeology in terms of its definition, goals, and history. We will analyze the importance of fieldwork in archaeological research and some safety concerns. Finally we will examine some issues concerning the modern practice of archaeology in the US, paying particular attention to the legislation concerning archaeology in the US and differences between CRM and research archaeology.

Week 2 – Formation Processes and Types of Archaeological Data (01/25/2012)

In this lecture we will understand the formation processes that create the archaeological record, processes that are both natural and cultural in character. We will also cover some of the most common terminology utilized in archaeology, and the types of data that are present in the archaeological record, and how these data can be used by archaeologists to investigate different aspects of past people's lives.

Week 3 – Dating in Archaeology (02/01/2012)

In this lecture, we will examine how archaeologists place ancient people, and their material culture, in time. We will briefly examine the trajectory of chronological classification in archaeology, and its pivotal role in establishing archaeology as a stand-alone discipline. We will then examine the uses and applications of relative dating and absolute dating.

Assignment 1: Class exercise: Stratigraphy (***Due 02/01/2012***)

Week 4 – Survey Techniques, Sampling Strategies and Sourcing Techniques (02/08/2012)

This week, we will cover some of the ways that archaeologists can find and place archaeological sites, features and artifacts in space – by establishing their location and dimensions in a landscape, determining how large an area to investigate, and understanding where artifacts originate from.

Assignment 2: Class exercise: Survey methods and sampling strategies (***Due 02/08/2012***)

Week 5 – Research Design (02/15/2012)

In this lecture we will discuss the importance of research design in archaeology. We will be analyzing where and why the research design is employed, and what it consists of. This class will also be an opportunity for students to start thinking about their research design due in the latter part of the semester, by creating a mock-research design in groups of 5. Students will give a **short presentation** based on their mock-research design, of approximately 5-7 minutes each.

Week 6 – Documentation and Mapping of Archaeological Sites I (02/22/2012)

This week we will be covering basic surveying techniques, in particular tape-and-compass mapping, which will produce a topographic map of an archaeological site. This lecture will entail a classroom component and a **field** component, and as such **hardy shoes** (tennis shoes or field boots) and **field-appropriate clothes** are required (long pants, long-sleeved shirt). A **backpack**, at least **2 liters of water**, **compass** (to be discussed in class), **mechanical pencil** and **eraser** are also required. Clipboards and metric measuring tape can be provided.

Assignment 3: Field exercise: Tape-and-Compass Map (*Due 02/29/2012*)

Week 7 – Documentation and Mapping of Archaeological Sites II (02/29/2012)

This week we will be discussing topographic mapping with a Total Data Station (TDS), in which we will understand how to set up a TDS and start on the data gathering to produce a contour map of an archaeological site. This lecture will entail a classroom component and a **field** component, and as such **hardy shoes** (tennis shoes or field boots) and **field-appropriate clothes** are required (long pants, long-sleeved shirt). A **backpack**, at least **2 liters of water**, **compass** (to be discussed in class), **mechanical pencil** and **eraser** are also required. Clipboards can be provided.

Week 8 – Documentation and Mapping of Archaeological Sites III (03/07/2012)

In this session we will complete the data gathering component of the TDS contour map exercise. This lecture will entail a classroom component and a **field** component, and as such **hardy shoes** (tennis shoes or field boots) and **field-appropriate clothes** are required (long pants, long-sleeved shirt). A **backpack**, at least **2 liters of water**, **compass** (to be discussed in class), **mechanical pencil** and **eraser** are also required. Clipboards can be provided.

Assignment 4: Field exercise: TDS Contour Map (*Due 03/21/2012*)

Spring Break (March 12-17)

Week 9 – Excavation (03/21/2012)

Why excavate? Where? And how much? In this lecture we will cover the basics of archaeological excavations. Different excavation techniques and their proper application in the field will be discussed, in terms of project goals and field conditions. Some issues in management of archaeological sites and public involvement will also be examined.

Week 10 – Recording and Documentation of On-Site Archaeological Remains (03/28/2012)

We will discuss the recording and documentation of archaeological material that is essential in any archaeological excavation. This entails the adoption and use of standardized ways to record archaeological contexts in written (lot forms) and graphical formats (plan-maps, profiles, and cross sections). Part of this class will be conducted **outdoors**, so please wear **appropriate clothing** (see clothing and equipment requirements in weeks 7 and 8).

Assignment 5: Field exercise: Profiling and plan mapping of an archaeological feature (**Due 03/28/2012**)

First Draft of Research Design Due

Week 11 – Post-Excavation, Interpretation and Publication (04/04/2012)

This session we will be discussing the activities undertaken by archaeologists after the excavation is completed. This includes the analysis and cataloguing of recovered archaeological material, illustration and photography of archaeological material (most often these are artifacts), and subsequent publication of findings. The interpretation of archaeological data will also be discussed, using the material learnt and accumulated from previous weeks.

Assignment 6: Class exercise: Illustration of two artifacts (**Due 04/04/2012**)

Week 12 – Conservation (04/11/2012)

In this lecture we will discuss conservation in archaeology. This involves a definition of conservation, how it applies to archaeology in the US and the wider world. We will also look at some of the techniques used by conservators to preserve archaeological materials on-site as well as post-excavation, as well as some of the ethical issues that must be considered in the conservation of archaeological remains.

Assignment 7: 5-page paper: “*A hoard of Roman Silverware was discovered in Norfolk, England in 1962, and is now on display in the British Museum. The hoard included a number of special silver cups which had been deliberately damaged before burial in a specially dug hole. Outline some of the issues that would have been considered in deciding whether to restore the cups to their original form. What other strategies would you suggest?*” (**Due 04/18/2012**)

Research Design Due

Week 13 – Field Work at Rogers Spring Site (04/18/2012)

This week we will start with the field experience component of the course. No reading is required, but students are required to keep a field journal of their experiences in the field. While field equipment will be provided (trowels, shovels, screens, picks, etc), students are required to dress in **field appropriate clothes** (see clothing requirements for weeks 7 and 8), and come prepared with at least **3 liters of water, hardy shoes and gloves**. Class may be cancelled in the event of inclement weather.

Week 14 – Field Work at Rogers Spring Site (04/25/2012)

See instructions for week 13.

Week 15 – Field Work at Rogers Spring Site (05/02/2012)

See instructions for week 13.

Field Journal Due 05/04/2012

Important Dates:

- January 20: Last day of the official add/drop period; after this date, changes in registration require the approval of the department chair and usually the student's dean.
- February 1: Twelfth class day; this is the date the official enrollment count is taken; last day an undergraduate student may add a class except for rare and extenuating circumstances; last day to drop a class for a possible refund.
- April 2: Last day an undergraduate student may, with the dean's approval, withdraw from the University or drop a class (Q drop) except for urgent and substantiated, nonacademic reasons. Last day a student may change registration in a class to or from the pass/fail or credit/no credit basis.
- After April 2, students must go to the non academic advisors in their college Dean's office. To be eligible for an **incomplete** you must have a letter grade of **C-** or better and a written, verifiable excuse for missing the last test. This is a **necessary** but **not sufficient** condition for receiving an incomplete.

Classroom Policies:

In order for you to get the most out of this class, please respect the following:

- Attend all scheduled classes and arrive on time;
- Please do not schedule other engagements during this class time;
- Please turn off all cell phones, etc during class;
- Please let me know immediately if you have any problem that is preventing you from performing satisfactorily in this class.

(adapted from Lasorsa 1990)

Every student is accountable for his or her actions.

University Policies:

University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

- University of Texas Plagiarism Policy:

Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity. In simplest terms, this occurs if you represent *as your own work* any material that was obtained from another source, regardless how or where you acquired it. It is the student's responsibility to read and abide by the

requirements for presentation, referencing and avoidance of plagiarism to be found in:
http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis_plagiarism.php

If a student has been found to have committed plagiarism, the grade for the assignment and/or the course will be reduced at the professor's discretion, and the student will be referred to Student Judicial Services.

Documented Disability Statement

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students

E-mail is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your e-mail for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently—I recommend daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>

Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence, provided notification has been given.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>

References:

Lasorsa, Dominic L.

1990 Theories of Mass Communication. Syllabus for a large class in Journalism at the University of Texas at Austin.