Anthropology 2070a: Archaeological Method and Theory

Fall 2015
Monday 1:00-4:00 pm
Tozzer 102

Professor Rowan Flad
Van Serg Hall 104A
Office Hours: Wednesday 2-4 pm or by appointment
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Course Description: This graduate-level seminar considers the varied ways in which archaeologists make inferences about human behavior from the archaeological record. The course will review the principal interpretive frameworks that influence archaeological practice in the Anglo-American world. Beginning with an overview of major debates in the discipline during the past half-century, Anthro 2070a will go on to consider diverse topics that shape the field of archaeology today, including the use of analogy, Middle Range Theory, symbolism and meaning, social and cultural evolution, cognitive archaeology, feminist critiques, practice theory, and postcolonialism. The intent is to provide graduate students with a solid foundation in archaeological theory, resulting in an ability to understand, critically assess, and contribute to debates concerning the construction of contemporary archaeological discourse.

Prerequisites: Graduate or advanced undergraduate standing in the Department of Anthropology or permission of the instructor.

Grading: Grades will be based upon four criteria: general seminar participation, including Presentations and attendance (including summaries, questions and short papers during discussion-leading weeks, 40%); a 5-page paper on the culture concept in archaeology, due October 12 (20%); and a final position paper concerning science, archaeology and epistemology related to a specific topic or set of topics in archaeology (40%).

Seminar Format: Each week we will discuss a selected group of writings (to be read before class). All students are required to produce short (1 paragraph) summaries of each article, which will highlight the major points, problems, benefits, and contributions of that reading, as well as identifying the primary questions/issues raised by the article. Students will print out hard copies of these summaries and questions and turn them in at the end of class each week. Things to consider while reading include:

- What is the main point or key argument?
- What are the key concepts? How are key words defined?
- What are the author's assumptions, both explicit and implicit?
- How does this author criticize or praise other authors' works?
- How does this author propose to overcome perceived shortcomings?
- How does this article relate to the other readings assigned for this week or previous weeks?
Additionally, each week one student will be assigned to lead discussion on that week’s topic. This will entail the composition of a 2 page paper investigating the larger themes raised by that week’s readings for contemporary archaeology. THESE PAPERS ARE NOT ARTICLE SUMMARIES, but should identify common themes and/or areas of debate among the articles AND provide the discussion leader’s critical evaluation of the articles and their importance (or lack thereof) to the practice of archaeology (i.e. you must give your opinion about what you've read). These papers must be emailed to the rest of the class (through the course website) by 5 pm on the SUNDAY preceding that class. Each member of the class is then responsible for responding to this essay by formulating 2 questions/issues for discussion raised by the essay. The discussion leader will begin class by making a short (<5 minute) presentation based on her/his essay, and is in charge of leading discussion on the assigned readings.

Because this class meets only once a week and discussion is essential, attendance is compulsory. Missing class will prove detrimental not only to your final grade, but more importantly to your understanding of the material (as well as that of your classmates) and ultimately, to your development as a professional archaeologist. In the event of an emergency, students should make every effort to contact the instructor prior to class.

Recommended Texts:
Johnson, Matthew

Trigger, Bruce G.
Course Schedule and Reading List

Week 1 (Sept 2 - WEDNESDAY): Course Orientation – READ BEFORE CLASS IF POSSIBLE

Readings for Discussion (Approximately 258 pages):


Week 2 (September 14): Culture History and Processual Archaeology

Discussant: ____________________________

Background Readings:
Trigger Chapter 6 - pp. 211-313; Chapter 8 - pp. 386-444

Readings for Discussion (Approximately 212):


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**Week 3 (September 21): Behavioral Archaeology and the Nature of the Archaeological Record**

Discussant: _____________________________

**Readings for Discussion (Approximately 215 pages):**


Hodder, Ian (1989). This is not an article about material culture as text. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 8(3):250-259.


Week 4 (September 28): Postprocessual Critiques and Responses

Discussant:

Background Readings:
- Johnson, Chapters 7 and 12
- Trigger pp. 444-483

Readings for Discussion (Approximately 229 pages):
Week 5 (October 5): Analogy and Middle Range Theory

Discussant: ____________________________

**Background Readings:**
Johnson, Chapter 4

**Readings for Discussion (Approximately 211 pages):**


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**Culture Concept Paper Due OCT. 12, 5:00 pm**
Week 6 (October 19): Typology and Classification

Discussant: ________________________________

Readings for Discussion: (Approximately 226 pages)


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**Week 7 (October 26): Evolutionary Approaches**

Discussant: ________________________________

**Background Readings:**

Johnson, Chapters 9 and 10

**Readings for Discussion (Approximately 206 pages):**


**Week 8 (November 2): Practice and Agency**

Discussant: ______________________________

*Readings: (approximately 197 pages)*


Week 9 (November 9): Social Networks

Discussant: ____________________________

Readings for Discussion (Approximately 201 pages):


Week 10 (November 16): Materiality

Discussant: ____________________________
Readings for Discussion (Approximately 203 pages):


Week 11 (November 23): Theory and Ethics

Discussant: ____________________________

Background Reading:
Johnson, Chapter 12

Readings for Discussion (Approximately 149 pages):


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**Week 12 (November 30): Contemporary Issues and Debates**

Discussant: __________________________

**Background Reading:**
- Trigger, Chapter 10
- Johnson, Chapters 3, 13

**Reading for Discussion (Approximately 161):**


