

ANTH 1710/UGEC 1633 Understanding Archaeology

Term 2 2020-2021

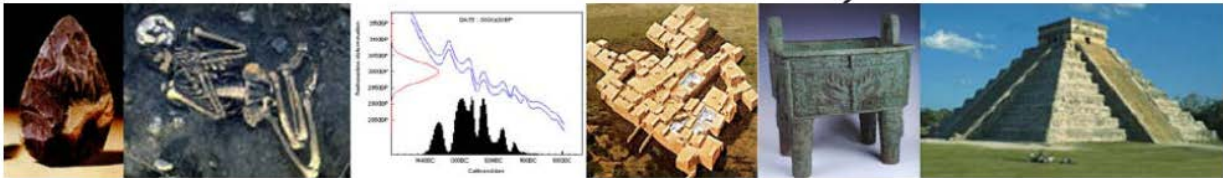
Lecture time: Wednesday 10:30-12:15 pm

Location: Esther Lee bldg LT4

Zoom id: 973 7461 6522

TA Chen Yutong (BeiYuchen@outlook.com)

Understanding Archaeology



Course Description

More than 99% of human existence can only be understood through archaeology. In the course, we consider how we know what we *think* we know about ancient civilizations and long extinct societies. We will also discuss the meanings of archaeological remains in our contemporary societies, and how we can learn from those amazing archaeological discoveries. No prior knowledge on archaeology is required for this course.

Major contents of this course

In this class, you will learn some of the nuts and bolts of how archaeologists do their everyday work, as well as how scientific reasoning is used to interpret and impart meaning to an imperfect archaeological record. These major contents include:

- What is the real archaeology? Archaeology as a scientific discipline vs. “archaeology” presented by media.
- How do archaeologists know where to dig? How do they know the date of what they find?
- How do archaeologists analyze materials that are commonly discovered at sites (i.e., ceramics and lithic)?
- Significant archaeological discoveries in the world, which tell us about ourselves and our culture.
- How to critically evaluate claims made about the past and understand how the past is used for modern and social agendas?

Course structure and learning activities:

Two 1-hour lectures and one 45-min tutorial per week for one semester. Tutorial will take various forms, including a fieldtrip to visit archaeological sites in Hong Kong.

Each tutorial will consist of either discussion or lab section to demonstrate how archaeologists work. Discussion will be designed to go through essential concepts and terminologies in readings of each week and give you first-hand experience in how archaeological research is conducted. Thus, assigned readings should be completed **PRIOR** to the day of each meeting.

Course assessment and policies

The final grade for the course is based on:

- 1) **Attendance (in the format of quiz/ureply)# (15%)**
- 2) **Tutorial participation, short-questions in hand-out (a total of eight times), and performance (25%)**
- 3) **Mid-term exam (20%)**
- 4) **Final group project oral presentation 20%**
- 5) **Final paper (individual paper of the group project) 20%**

Note:

#Attendance will be counted in the format of after-lecture quizzes. But no need to be panic! Each quiz will be an open-book exercise. If you are sick or cannot come for legitimate reasons, please email me or our TA in order to let you take the make-up later.

Readings

The required textbook is *Archaeology essentials: theories, methods, and practice* (2018) by Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn (the pdf of chapters required would be available on blackboard). But for students who want to know more about archaeology, we also recommend a more comprehensive version *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice* (the latest is the Eighth edition in 2019) by the same authors. We will also provide the corresponding reading of each week in *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice* (2015), which were labelled as “extend reading”. If you prefer Chinese version, you can also check 考古學：理論、方法與實踐 (第六版).

Notes: Students must attend all classes. Attendance and participation are an important component of your grades, determined on the basis on participation in weekly discussions, exercises and short reaction papers or reports. Any anticipated absences for legitimate reasons must be clear in advance with the teaching staff. Late assignments will be down-graded one half letter grade for each 24 hour period they are late and will not be accepted more than five days past the due date. There **WILL** be readings for each week. These readings will be announced and available on the website at least one week prior to the section for which they are assigned. Please be prepared to read these **BEFORE** each meeting for which they are assigned.

I understand all of you come from a variety of backgrounds and have various strengths and weaknesses. If you have any questions or feel unsure about any class material, see me during office hours as soon as you recognize a problem. We will work together to find a solution. **DON'T** wait until the end of the semester. *My goal as an instructor is not just to grade, evaluate, and test, but to help you gain a valuable anthropological perspective to carry outside the class, into whatever discipline you choose.*

Submission and academic honesty

As required by the university, from Sept. 2008, students must submit a soft copy of their computer-generated text assignments to VeriGuide at a specified URL. The system will issue a receipt containing a declaration of honesty statement. Students should sign the receipt, print a hard copy of their assignment, and submit the hard copy and the receipt to teachers for grading. The university says that assignments without the receipt will Not be graded.

Please check the website “Honesty in Academic Works” at:

<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/> for more information on plagiarism and on how to submit papers through VeriGuide.

Grade Descriptors

A	Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
A-	Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
B	Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
C	Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
F	Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

Weekly Schedule (*THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. ANY CHANGES WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN CLASS*)

Week 1 (13th January)

Introduction: What is archaeology and why should we care about what happened in the past?

Week 2 (20th January)

Ancient site mapping and digging: how do archaeologists discovery sites?

Reading:

Renfrew and Bahn 2018:64-74, 82-89, 90-97.

Week 3 (27th January)

Dating archaeological sites: Archaeological chronology and site formation

Reading:

Renfrew and Bahn 2018: 110-114, 116-121, 123-126, 128-130, 132-133.

Week 4 (3rd February)

Human origins and peopling the world: Where do we come from?

Reading:

Ward, P.

2009 What will become of *Homo Sapiens*? *Scientific American*, January 2009:68-73.

Ambrose, Stanley H.

2001 Paleolithic technology and human evolution. *Science* 291:1748-1753.

Week 5 (10th February)

Agricultural origins and domestication: Where does our food come from?

Reading:

Diamond, J.

1987 The worst mistake in the history of the human race. *Discover Magazine* (8):99-103.

Leonard, W.R.

2002 Food for thought: dietary change was a driving force in the human evolution. *Scientific American*, December 2002:65-71.

Renfrew and Bahn 2018: 181-186; 191-195.

Week 6 (17th February)

Chinese New Year

Week 7 (24th February)

Mid-term

Week 8 (3rd March)

Technological change, social complexity, and the origins of social inequality

Reading:

Renfrew and Bahn 2018:143-164.

Week 9 (10th March)

Trade, migration, and globalization: what can we predict for the future from the past?

Reading:

Renfrew and Bahn 2018: 217-230.

Week 10 (17th March)

Archaeology of religion and ritual: can we excavate ancient beliefs?

Reading:

Renfrew and Bahn 2018:253-265, 267-272.

Johnson, Matthew

1999 *Archaeological theory: an introduction*. Pp. 85-97. Malden: Willey-Blackwell.

Week 11 (24th March)

Archaeological reasoning and Public archaeology

Reading:

Holtorf, Cornelius

2005 *From Stonehenge to Las Vegas: Archaeology as Popular Culture*. Pp. 1-15. Walnut Creek, CA.: Left Coast Press.

Renfrew and Bahn 2011:16-23.

Week 12 (31st March) [Reading week]

Week 13 (7th April) [Public Holiday]

Week 14 (14th April)

Gender and the archaeology of identity

Reading:

Johnson, Matthew

1999 *Archaeological theory: an introduction*. Pp. 116-131. Malden: Willey-Blackwell.
[this will be hard for doing the public archaeology debates]

Week 15 (21th April)

The use and abuse archaeology: nationalism and ethic issue in archaeology

Readings:

Braden, M.

2006 Trafficking in Treasures. *Archaeological Ethics, 2nd edition*. Pp.27-33. Vitelli K.D. and C Colwell-Chanthaphonh, eds. London: Altamira Press.

Chase, Arlen, et al.

2006 Archaeology and the Ethics of Collecting. *Archaeological Ethics, 2nd edition*. Pp.19-26. Vitelli K.D. and C Colwell-Chanthaphonh, eds. London: Altamira Press.

Topics for tutorials:

Week 1

No tutorials.

Week 2

Lab session: categorizing archaeological artifacts and stratigraphy

Week 3

Lab session: using typology and stratigraphy to date Coca cola bottles.

Week 4

Lab session: evolution of skulls and basic human osteology.

Week 5

Lab session: identifying plant remains

Week 6

Chinese new year-no tutorial

Week 7

Mid-term, no tutorial.

Week 8

Lab session: identifying stone-tool techniques

Week 9

Lab session: identifying ceramic techniques

Week 10

Lab session: identifying the sex and age of human skeletons

Week 11

Virtual fieldtrip: H.K. heritage discovery center (subjected to the pandemic situation, and may be changed to the discussion of the social impact of Indiana Jones)

Week 12

No tutorial

Week 13

No tutorial/Preparation for the final group project

Week 14

Group project presentation.

Week 15

Group project presentation.

