

ANTHROPOLOGY 3300

ARCHAEOLOGY IN NORTH AMERICA

Fall 2017

3 credits

Professor: Steven Simms s.simms@usu.edu

Class sessions: Tuesday and Thursday 1:30 – 2:45 am Eng 106

Consultation: Email me or contact me after class if you would like to schedule a consultation.

This course employs *Canvas* for syllabus download, required readings additional to the textbook, assignments, some course content, and grading. Please examine our course on *Canvas* soon.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an introduction to the ancient history of North America as known through archaeology. It is a general education depth course designed for non-majors, but assumes a strong general education foundation, advanced reading skills, and university-level communication skills.

We begin by introducing the notion of “alternative histories” to draw attention to the largely independent cultural developments of the Americas. We will discover that many popular notions about Indians and America’s past are reflections of our own culture, from the romanticized to the ethnocentric, rather than a portrayal of a Native American history. Even thoroughly American concepts such as “wilderness”, “frontier”, and European concepts such as “primitive”, are artifacts of alternative histories. This vantage may be uncomfortable at first, but it is my hope that you will find your growing knowledge of ancient American history overcomes the ethnocentric and romanticized stereotypes so commonly applied to the First Americans.

There are many ways to “know” the past, but the only scientific path we have into America’s deep past is archaeology. Before jumping into the ancient history of North America, we provide a brief introduction to the nature of scientific archaeology, and the method and theory that engages the problem of “decoding” the archaeological record. At first glance, archaeology appears to be a social science because it deals with people. In practice however, archaeology is a natural science. We will have a reading and lecture to explain how and why. We also provide a cursory introduction to archaeological dating methods. This is however, not a course in how archaeology is done.

My hope for you is to take away much more than an ensemble of stories. I seek more than an imagination of other people’s pasts, or currently fashionable politically correct interpretations. The past is fascinating without being gratuitous. But short of having a time machine, no one can know what actually happened on a day to day basis, in a particular place, thousands of years ago. Nor can we know what “they” were thinking, their motives, and beliefs. Archaeology however, does inform us about matters that occur on scales of time and place that *transcend the lives, feelings, and psychology of individuals*. As such we learn to appreciate history in terms of *big time* - scales of centuries and millennia, rather than motives and feelings during the brief life of a human. Through this big picture we at times glimpse “them”, if by no other means than understanding aspects of their natural and cultural contexts. We also learn to appreciate the concept of *place* on larger scales. Native Americans were not Robinson Caruso’s living in primitive isolation nor struggling to survive any more than other peoples in history. The Americas were fully occupied, and during some periods such as the A.D. 1000 – 1200s, some parts of North America had towns and cities on the scale of Europe of the same era and more people on the landscape than live in the same places today.

Scientific findings are the basis for most of the interpretations presented, but we will allow some indulgence for speculation to add humanity to an admittedly murky past. In the end, perhaps the greatest value of learning to rationally evaluate the past is the glimpse we gain of ourselves and our present world. The study of archaeology is thus a *distant mirror* that both enlightens and disturbs.

REQUIRED READINGS

Textbook

Fagan, Brian M.

2012 *The First North Americans: An Archaeological Journey*.

Textbook reading must be completed *before* the class day it is assigned. See Course Outline for schedule.

You can obtain the book via the USU Museum of Anthropology Amazon.com web portal.

<http://anthropology.usu.edu/museum/anthromuseum>

A portion of the proceeds go to the student-run museum. The textbook is also available at the USU Bookstore.

Other Readings

Additional required readings are PDF on Canvas. The schedule of reading is shown on the Course Outline and on Canvas. I may assign additional readings beyond these.

These readings are largely from the professional journal literature, and a few from the educated general literature. They are the basis for class discussion and you will be called upon.

ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance and Punctuality (50 points)

One of Woody Allen's famous lines is "99% of life is showing up." Attendance matters. Your first two absences are free. After that 10 points are deducted for each unexcused absence. I do not excuse absences for discretionary matters – you must make choices. If you must be absent for a good reason, please email me and explain before the day you expect to be absent. Punctuality is also important and points may be deducted if this becomes habitual.

Participation (50 points)

Oral communication is part of the intellectual world. I am not talking about "public speaking", but rather practice in the articulation of complex subject matter. In addition to practicing this skill, class participation shows whether you are reading and comprehending the assigned material from the primary literature. I will inquire at large and individually with questions or prompts about these readings. I will assign a score of Excellent (1), Adequate (2), Less than adequate (3) and tally these at the end of the term. If you feel tense about this aspect of the course, then let me help you learn how to voice your analyses of academic material. It is a skill that must be practiced, but there are ways to ease you into it. I wish someone had helped me with this as it took many years to develop.

Quizzes (2@ 30 points each = 60 points)

Quizzes may consist of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions drawn from the readings, from class, or a synthesis of the two.

Final Exam (50 points)

A final exam is scheduled during Finals Week on Tuesday, December 12 at 1:30 am in our regular classroom. The exam will be cumulative, but with greater weight to material subsequent to Quiz 2.

Research Project/Presentation (100 points)

Additional details about this assignment are found under Assignments on Canvas.

This assignment provides you the opportunity to study a topic in North American archaeology of interest to you. You may work in groups of no more than two if you prefer teamwork. Working in a group is not a requirement should you prefer to work alone. To incentivize the selection of presentations that occur in the first 5 weeks of the semester, and to reward those who pioneer the assignment by going first, they will receive 10 points of extra credit. These points will not affect the grades of those who select topics that fall later in the semester. Presentations will begin Thursday of Week 3.

Your research will lead to a class presentation from 10 to no more than 15 minutes long. This assignment, provides you real-life practice in organization of subject matter, finding a message, and exercises oral communication skills.

Since students conduct research to find a topic and the associated research problems that accompany all topics, this assignment is an important, student-centered learning opportunity for the entire class. Ideas for research are provided on Canvas under Assignments. Topics are organized by time period and geography in North American archaeology. Thus, presentation days occur throughout the semester. Since your research presentations are structured by geography and time period, I will strongly guide the allocation of topics. To ensure that you begin the selection and research process soon, there are two due dates you must follow:

1. Week 2 Friday, September 15 by 11:30pm please submit on Canvas in the text box for the Research Project: Preliminary Ideas. This will be a brief identification of your topic, geographic region, and time period. This should be more than a sentence or two. You will have to spend some time doing research – do not write off the top of your head. Problem development requires knowledge of the subject, not just the selection of a topic. Use the course outline and the text to help you. Consult with me by emailing me your ideas *in written form* beforehand. This assignment counts 10 points toward the final grade on the assignment.

2. Week 5 Friday, September 29 by 11:30pm please submit on Canvas in the text box for the Research Project: Title/Abstract. This will be a complete title and a 250 word abstract of your research topic. At this point I will finalize the scheduling of presentations. Use the aid on Canvas, “A Scrutiny of the Abstract” because the quality of the abstract is important. There are many professionals that write crummy abstracts. This assignment counts 10 points toward the final grade on the assignment.

3. Your final assignment is the class presentation. Criteria for grading will be the sophistication and substance of your research question and topic, evidence of research beyond course material and beyond web based sources, the quality and clarity of reporting, staying on time, and selecting a question that is on-topic. I strongly encourage you to share your Powerpoint with me *several days* or more before you present. This way we can avoid embarrassing moments of unintended “alternative facts”.

Some tips (additional tips can be found on Canvas):

- Your topic must center *archaeological*, not just something about “Indians”.
- Introduce your topic, and also identify your thesis (your message). Describe the research you did, and your findings. Return to your thesis at the end.
- Do not simply read a Powerpoint. Prepare an oral presentation that supplements the Powerpoint.
- Use the guide on Canvas on Powerpoint Tips.
- Practice and rehearse. The audience is the class, not the professor.
- Include a References Cited at the end. Citation format is your choice.
- Presentations should be at least 10 minutes, but no longer than 15 minutes. Practice and don’t try to wing it on time.
- Expect a brief Q & A from the audience and me. Your research typically opens up all kinds of topics that I can use to extend the learning much deeper. I think you will find that we cover some interesting ground based on your research and presentations.

Points and Grades

To aid tracking your letter grade, I employ as a rough guide: 90% A, 80% B, 70% C, 60% D, <60% F. I decide borderline cases on their own merits.

Research and presentation	=	100 points (including 10 points each for submissions Weeks 2 & 5)
Quiz 1 and 2 @ 30 points each	=	60 points
Final exam	=	50 points
Attendance and punctuality	=	50 points
Quality of course participation	=	<u>50 points</u>
Total	=	310 points

Extra credit for early research presentation = 10 points

EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

Simms basic rules:

You must attend all classes and be prepared.

You must do the work at the level of an upper division university course.

You are *responsible* for everything that happens in class *whether you are present or not – mind and body*.

Exam make up policy

Quizzes *may* be approved for make up under *exceptional* circumstances and by *prior arrangement*. No make ups will be given more than one week after the quiz was administered in class.

The Final exam cannot be made up, but may be administered early under *exceptional* circumstances and by *prior arrangement*. Reasons for make-ups include calls to military duty, hospitalization and things of this magnitude. Reasons that do not qualify include: weddings, non-school related trips, a job, family reunions etc.

General University Policies

USU policies on dropping courses, incompletes, plagiarism, and cheating are adhered to and can be found in your Class Schedule or on the university web site.

Students with Disabilities

Any student with a disability who requires accommodation must contact the instructor. The disability must be documented by the Disability Resource Center. Course materials may be requested in alternative formats. If you have a documented disability and need reasonable accommodation to participate in this course, please visit with me *immediately*, or notify the Disability Resource Center to contact me so we can make reasonable accommodations.

FERPA

In compliance with the Family Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA), it is the policy of our department to maintain the confidentiality of students' records. Quizzes and assignments will be returned only to the individual student.

COURSE OUTLINE

Topic

Reading

Fagan = class text

OR = Other reading: See Canvas

Week 1 August 28

- T Course introduction.
- Th Alternative histories and North American archaeology.

Fagan Preface
OR: Mann

Week 2 September 4

- T How archaeology is done. The Archaeological Record.
- Th Chronology: Archaeologists date any old thing.

OR: Binford

Week 3 September 11

- T The Earliest Americans: Explorers, Colonists, and Settlers.
- Th The Peopling of America. Presentations may begin.
Paleoindians and Pleistocene megafauna.

Fagan C 1; OR: Goebel et al.
OR: Speth

Week 4 September 18

- T After Clovis: Archaic Foragers.
- Th Field trip to the Quad.

Fagan C2; OR Simms; Elston

Week 5 September 25

- T The Arctic and Subarctic. Quiz review.
- Th **Quiz 1.**

Fagan C3

Week 6 October 2

- T Foraging the West Coast.
- Th Before the Pueblos. Farming and language?

Fagan C4
Fagan C5; OR: Diamond & Bellwood

Week 7 October 9

- T People of the Plains. Eastern Woodlands: Nuts, Native Plants, and Earthworks.
- Th The Far North: Norton, Dorset, Thule.

Fagan C6&7
Fagan C 8

Week 8 October 16

- T The West Coast: Not a Garden of Eden.
- Th No class. Attend Friday classes.

Fagan C 9

Week 9 October 23

- T Topics in California archaeology.
- Th The Southwest: First Farmers and Cultures

OR: Fagan: Chumash
Fagan C10

Week 10 October 30

T The Puebloan Southwest. Presentations.

Th A Delicate Subject: Violence and Cannibalism in the Ancient Southwest.

OR: LeBlanc

Week 11 November 6

T The Fremont of Utah. Rock Art. Review for Quiz 2

Th **Quiz 2.**

OR: Simms & Stuart

Week 12 November 13

T Video: Myths and the Moundbuilders.

Th The Eastern Woodlands: Moundbuilders.

Fagan C 11

Week 13 November 20

T No class

Th Thanksgiving Break

Week 14 November 27

T The Mississippian: Eastern Woodlands Climax.

Th The Northeast: Algonquians and Iroquoians.

Fagan C 12

Fagan C 13

Week 15 December 4

T Epilogue

Th Being an archaeologist: Cultural Resource Management. Review for Final.

Fagan C 14

Final exam. Tuesday, December 12 at 1:30 pm in our regular classroom.

LEARNING GOALS AND ASSESSMENT

The Utah State University Anthropology Program identifies learning goals to guide students through the coursework in a discipline. The USU web site identifies goals generic to the Anthropology Program

<http://www.usu.edu/sswa/assessment.htm> and the list below describes goals and assessment specific to this course.

1) Develop baseline culture-historical knowledge about ancient North America.

Assessment goals: Know patterns of culture and the chronology of ancient America. Know basic archaeological terms as they apply to topics in the archaeology of North America.

2) Know some of the general issues in North American archaeology using lecture, reading, and student presentations.

Assessment goals: Knowledge of what the major issues are in North American archaeology (e.g., colonization of Americas, development of agriculture, regional interaction spheres, Native American graves repatriation, ethics and archaeological site destruction).

3) In-depth knowledge of specific topics in North American archaeology gained through research and class presentations (e.g., Anasazi abandonment, the Eastern Agricultural complex, Mississippian social inequality, Iroquois warfare, disease and depopulation).

Assessment goals: Your research for the 3 Minutes Papers and the Class Presentation provide three opportunities for you to conduct research, and present your findings to the class audience.

4) Introductory ability to use archaeological data relative to other kinds of information encountered in the social sciences. Critical thinking as practiced in archaeological science. Distinguish between scientific and other forms of knowledge.

Assessment goals: Practice in reading and discussing the primary literature. Opportunity to ask questions and to learn from the class discussion, not just the professor.

5) Experience in spoken communication skills.

Assessment goals: Three class presentation assignments requires oral communication as students work singly or in groups of two. Spoken communication is also important during frequent class discussions on readings from the primary literature.