

Anthropology 738 - Archaeology as History

Office: Virtual Office
Office hours: by appointment.

E-mail: cannona@mcmaster.ca
Classes: Wednesdays 1:30-4:20

The course examines the goals, forms, theory and methods of archaeological history. It considers parallels, contrasts and complementarities in historical and archaeological perspectives, and identifies the specific limitations and possibilities of archaeology. Readings and discussion highlight the roles of structure, agency, contingency and causality in archaeological narratives, and the implications of time perspectivism, materiality, and relational understandings of historical phenomena. Beyond its theoretical foundations, the course looks at examples of historically oriented archaeology and encourages students to examine and develop applications that match their specific areas of research interest.

Readings and discussions consider the basis and practice of archaeology-based history. The course begins with a brief overview of historical perspectives and foundational theoretical perspectives. The second half will focus on elaborations on particular topics and applications of historically oriented approaches in archaeological research. The topical focus and readings for the second half of the course will be determined in in-class discussions.

Classes: Will be scheduled synchronous seminars. The platform will be Zoom, with links for access located on Avenue to Learn.

First Half Weekly Topics and Readings:

January 13

Introduction: Elements of Archaeology as History.

January 20

What is Archaeological History?

READING: Lekson 2009:1-29, Whittle 2018:19-47.

January 27

Elements of Archaeological History.

READING: Bailey 2007, Pauketat 2001, Robb and Pauketat 2013, Sassaman 2011.

February 3

What is History?

READING: Carr 1961.

February 10

Historical Perspectives: Scale, Narrative and Transformation.

READING: Clark 1985, White 1978, 1987:26-57, Sewell 1992.

February 17

Mid-term Recess.

February 24

Archaeologists and Historians: Sewell.

READING: Beck et al. 2007, Sewell 2005:197-224.

March 3

Archaeologists and Historians: Braudel.

READING: Smith 1992, Bintliff 2010, Braudel 1980:25-54.

Assignments and value:

10% - Seminar presence, preparation, and participation

35% - Midterm paper: review a monograph-length archaeological analysis and interpretation that adopts a more explicitly historical perspective.

55% - Final paper: evaluate the implications of adopting an explicitly defined historical approach to the archaeological study and interpretation of a particular region or area of study.

Reading list:

Bailey, Geoff

2007 Time Perspectives, Palimpsests and the Archaeology of Time. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 26:198-223.

Beck, Robin A., Douglas J. Bolender, James A. Brown, and Timothy K. Earle

2007 Eventful Archaeology: The Place of Space in Structural Transformation. *Current Anthropology* 48:833-860.

Bintliff, John

2010 The Annales, Events, and the Fate of Cities. In *Eventful Archaeologies: New Approaches to Social Transformation in the Archaeological Record*, edited by Douglas J. Bolender, pp. 117-131. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Braudel, Fernand

1980 *On History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Carr, E.H.

1961 *What is History?* London: Macmillan.

Clark, Stuart

1985 The Annales Historians. In *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences*, edited by Quentin Skinner, pp. 177-198. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lekson, Stephen H.

2009 *A History of the Ancient Southwest*. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press.

Pauketat, Timothy R.

2001 Practice and History in Archaeology: An Emerging Paradigm. *Anthropological Theory* 1:73-98.

Robb, John, and Timothy R. Pauketat

2013 From Moments to Millennia: Theorizing Scale and Change in Human History. In *Big Histories, Human Lives: Tackling Problems of Scale in Archaeology*, edited by John Robb and Timothy R. Pauketat, pp. 3-33. Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press.

Sassaman, Kenneth E.

2011 History and Alterity in the Eastern Archaic. In *Hunter-Gatherer Archaeology as Historical Process*, edited by Kenneth E. Sassaman and Donald H. Holly, pp. 188-208. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Sewell, William H.

1992 A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency and Transformation. *American Journal of Sociology* 98: 1-29.

Sewell, William H.

2005 *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Smith, Michael E.

1992 Rhythms of Change in Postclassic Central Mexico: Archaeology, Ethnohistory, and the Braudelian Model. In *Archaeology, Annales, and Ethnohistory*, edited by A. Bernard Knapp, pp. 51-74. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

White, Hayden

1978 The Historical Text as Literary Artifact. In *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding*, edited by Robert H. Canary and Henry Kozicki, pp. 41-62. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

1987 *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Whittle, Alasdair

2018 *The Times of Their Lives: Hunting History in the Archaeology of Neolithic Europe*. Oxford: Oxbow.