

### **Anthropology 4F03 – Current Debates in Archaeology**

Office: Chester New Hall Rm. 508  
Office hours: Tuesday 2:30-4:30, or by appointment

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Classes: Tuesday 11:30-2:20, Room KTH B102

The course is about the way archaeologists construct and present arguments about past cultures and their histories. We will examine the structure and content of arguments in relation to their evidentiary basis and theoretical perspective. The course will focus on identifying the elements of archaeological arguments and assessing their relative strengths and weaknesses. In-class projects and assignments will focus on case studies of research and debate in archaeology.

#### **Required text:**

Gibbon, Guy

2014 *Critically Reading the Theory and Methods of Archaeology*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press

#### **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE VALUES:**

Reading Assignments and In-Class Discussion	- 15 %
First Case Study Evaluation	- 10 %
Second Case Study Evaluation	- 15 %
Third Case Study Evaluation	- 25 %
Final Paper	- 35 %

**Reading Assignments and Preparation for In-Class Discussion:** Points will be assigned for readings and for prepared participation in class discussions related to the text-book readings and case study assignments. The combined grade will be based on the points earned from the total number available.

Reading assignments will consist of written notations or fully developed questions relating to **each** assigned readings other than textbook chapters. Each notation will highlight at least one point of particular interest from the reading or one question raised by the reading together with a very brief (2-3 sentence) explanation of why that point or question is of interest. The notation or question for each reading will be worth one point toward a final total. Reading assignments are **due on the Monday** of the week for which the reading is assigned. Late assignments will be accepted for half value for up to one week past their due date, but will not be accepted after that time unless an MSAF has been submitted.

Short-answer questions may be assigned for weekly readings from the required textbook. These will be announced and posted one week in advance. On-line submission will be worth one point. Presence in class and preparation for in-class discussion will be worth an additional point.

Discussion points focused on preparation for the written assignments will be assigned for on-line submission and in-class discussion. Their number and value will be described in the detailed assignment outlines.

**Case Study Evaluations:** There will be a series of three case-study evaluations based on research and debate in contemporary archaeology. The evaluations will be based on the elements of argument and interpretation outlined in Gibbon (2014). As the course develops, the case study evaluations will be

based on an increasing number and range of elements of research and presentation. Detailed outlines for each of these assignments will be provided.

**Final Paper:** The final paper will be an in-depth analysis and evaluation of the career contribution of an archaeologist of your choice. It will require that you read and evaluate a range of the archaeologist's publications and assess the nature and significance of their cumulative research. You will need to outline and evaluate his or her theoretical perspective, style of research and presentation, and specific elements of presentation and argument in their work as described in Gibbon (2014). You should also be able to make a case for the context and motivation that shaped the focus and direction of their research. A detailed outline of this assignment will be provided.

**For major assignments, penalty deductions of 1% of the COURSE grade per day late will apply to all late submissions unless an MSAF is submitted. For weekly assignments, a penalty of one-half the assigned value will apply unless an MSAF has been submitted.**

### WEEKLY TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS

- Sept. 6:** Introduction: Aspects of archaeological research.
- Sept. 13:** Archaeological practice. (Johnson 2011)
- Sept. 20:** The focus of research. (Gibbon 2014: Chapters 1-3)
- Sept. 27:** Argument, assumptions and presentation. (Gibbon 2014: Chapters 4-6; Ramsden 2009)
- Oct. 4:** Potential flaws. (Gibbon 2014: Chapters 7-10; Ramsden 2016)
- Oct. 11:** Mid-term recess.
- Oct. 18:** The place of statistics in archaeology. (Cowgill 2015) **Assignment 1 Due.**
- Oct. 25:** Observation and generalization. (Hayden et al. 1996; Hayden 2005; Gibbon 2014: Chapters 11-13)
- Nov. 1:** Theory and explanation. (Gibbon 2014: Chapters 14-16; Prentiss et al. 2005; Prentiss et al. 2007)
- Nov. 8:** Causes and conclusions. (Gibbon 2014: Chapters 17-20) **Assignment 2 Due.**
- Nov. 15:** Purposes of archaeological research. (Gill et al. 2007)
- Nov. 22:** The nature of historical explanation. (Yaeger and Hodell 2008, Gould 1989:271-323)
- Nov. 29:** What are the important debates in archaeology? (Kintigh et al. 2014) **Assignment 3 Due.**
- Dec. 6:** Emerging perspectives and continuing debates (Hodder 2011, Ingold 2015)

## READINGS

**Note:** Readings marked ONLINE are available for download through the Library by searching for the journal or publication in the Library Catalogue. Readings marked POSTED will be available for download from Avenue to Learn.

Cowgill, George.

2015 Some Things I Hope You Will Find Useful Even if Statistics Isn't Your Thing. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 44:1-14. ONLINE

Gill, Richardson B., Paul A Mayewski, Johan Nyberg, Gerlad C. Haug, and Larry C. Peterson

2007 Drought and the Maya Collapse. *Ancient Mesoamerica* 18:283-302. ONLINE

Gould, Stephen Jay

1989 *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History*. New York: Norton. POSTED

Hayden, Brian

2005 The Emergence of Large Villages and Large Residential Corporate Group Structures among Complex Hunter-Gatherers at Keatley Creek. *American Antiquity* 70:169-174. ONLINE

Hayden, Brian, Edward Bakewell, and Rob Gargett

1996 The World's Longest-Lived Corporate Group: Lithic Analysis Reveals Prehistoric Social Organization near Lillooet, British Columbia. *American Antiquity* 61:341-356. ONLINE

Hodder Ian

2011 Human-Thing Entanglement: Towards an Integrated Archaeological Perspective. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) 17:154-177. ONLINE

Ingold, Timothy

2015 Things Tied Up: An Archaeology for All Seasons. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) 21:924-926. ONLINE

Johnson, Matthew H

2011 On the Nature of Empiricism in Archaeology. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) 17:764-787. ONLINE

Kintigh, Keith W.; Jeffrey H. Altschul, Mary C. Beaudry, Robert D. Drennan; Ann P. Kinzig, Timothy A. Kohler, W. Frederick Limp,; Herbert D.G. Maschner; William K. Michener, Timothy R.

Pauketat, Peter Peregrine, Jeremy A. Sabloff, Tony J. Wilkinson, Henry T. Wright, and Melinda A.

Zeder

2014 Grand Challenges for Archaeology. *American Antiquity* 79:5-24. ONLINE

Prentiss, Anna Marie, Natasha Lyons, Lucille E. Harris, Melisse R.P. Burns, Terrence M. Godin

2007 The Emergence of Status Inequality in Intermediate Scale Societies: A Demographic and Socio-Economic History of the Keatley Creek Site, British Columbia. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 26:299-327. ONLINE

Prentiss, William C., Michael Lenert, Thomas A. Foor, Nathan B. Goodale

2005 The Emergence of Complex Hunter-Gatherers on the Canadian Plateau: A Response to Hayden. *American Antiquity* 70:175-180. ONLINE

Ramsden, Peter

2009 Politics in a Huron Village. In *Painting the Past with a Broad Brush: Papers in Honour of James Valiere Wright*, edited by David L. Keenlyside and Jean-Luc Pilon, pp. 299-318. Mercury Series Archaeology Paper 170 Gatineau, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization. POSTED

Ramsden, Peter

2016 The Use of Style in Resistance, Politics and the Negotiation of Identity: St. Lawrence Iroquoians in a Huron-Wendat Community. *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 40:1-22. POSTED

Yaeger, Jason and David A. Hodell

2008 The Collapse of Maya Civilization: Assessing the Impact of Culture, Climate, and Environment. In *El Niño, Catastrophism, and Culture Change in Ancient America*, edited by Daniel H. Sandweiss and Jeffrey Quilter, pp. 187-242. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks. POSTED

**The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.**

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, Appendix 3, <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one’s own for which other credit has been obtained. (*Insert specific course information, e.g., style guide*)
2. Improper collaboration in group work. (*Insert specific course information*)
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations. (*If applicable*) In this course we will be using a software package designed to reveal plagiarism. Students will be required to submit their work electronically and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

### **FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES E-MAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion. Email Forwarding in MUGSI:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html>

\*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link  
(Approved at the Faculty of Social Sciences meeting on Tues. May 25, 2010)

### **MSAF**

- The MSAF should be used for medical and non-medical (personal) situations.
- Approval of the MSAF is automatic (i.e. no documentation required)
- Rules governing the MSAF are as follows:
  - The timeframe within which the MSAF is valid has been reduced from 5 days to 3 days.

- The upper limit for when an MSAF can be submitted has been reduced from ‘less than 30%’ to ‘less than 25%’ of the course weight.
  - The ‘one MSAF per term’ limit is retained.
  - As per the policy, an automated email will be sent to the course instructor, who will determine the appropriate relief. Students must immediately follow up with their instructors. Failure to do so may negate their relief.
- Policy: The MSAF policy can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar under General Academic Regulations > Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work or here: [http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1698#Requests\\_for\\_Relief\\_for\\_Missed\\_Academic\\_Term\\_Work](http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1698#Requests_for_Relief_for_Missed_Academic_Term_Work)

#### **AODA**

If you require this information in an alternate/accessible format, please contact Eszter Bell at 905-525-9140 extension 24423 or email [bellesz@mcmaster.ca](mailto:bellesz@mcmaster.ca)