

DEPARTMENT Humanities and Social Sciences

COURSE OUTLINE – Fall 2024

AN2920(A2): Fantastical Archaeology: Ancient Aliens to Atlantis – 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours for 15 Weeks

Northwestern Polytechnic acknowledges that our campuses are located on Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral and present-day home to many diverse First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. We are grateful to work, live and learn on the traditional territory of Duncan's First Nation, Horse Lake First Nation and Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, who are the original caretakers of this land.

We acknowledge the history of this land and we are thankful for the opportunity to walk together in friendship, where we will encourage and promote positive change for present and future generations.

INSTRUCTOR:	Shawn Morton, PhD	PHONE:	(780) 539-2830
OFFICE:	C402	E-MAIL:	smorton@nwpolytech.ca
OFFICE HOURS:	W 11:00 to 12:00 or by appointment		

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: It is not always easy to separate fact from fiction in archaeology, and the human past has served as fertile ground for fraudsters, charlatans, and pseudoscientists of many stripes. Through the close examination of case studies, we will critically examine some of the most persistent (and popular) myths and mysteries concerned with the archaeological past. This course will demonstrate that a strong adherence to scientific investigation and hard evidence can uncover facts about prehistory that are as interesting as the myths.

PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE:

None.

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

Feder, Kenneth L. (2017) *Frauds, Myths, and Mysteries: Science and Pseudoscience in Archaeology*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Von Däniken, Erich (1999) *Chariots of the Gods*. Berkley Books, New York.

DELIVERY MODE(S): On-Campus

In person.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will be able to:

- demonstrate, through class discussions and in written coursework, an ability to recognise and characterize a pseudoscientific claim, particularly about the human past involving archaeology.
- explain, through class discussions and in written coursework, the proper structure of scientific argumentation and how to avoid common logical fallacies in pseudoscientific thinking.
- apply, in class discussions and in written coursework, techniques for critical thinking and for sharpening their analytical skills to critically evaluate pseudoscientific claims.
- demonstrate, through class discussions and in written coursework, an understanding of the role and popularity of pseudoscientific claims in contemporary North American culture and the power archaeology must create national, religious, social, ethnic, and political narratives.
- discuss, in class and in written coursework, how seemingly “silly” pseudoarchaeological claims have harmful and sometimes violent effects on indigenous groups in the form of social/political/religious/ethnic marginalisation, economic exploitation, and “romanticising” an “exotic other”.

TRANSFERABILITY:

Please consult the Alberta Transfer Guide for more information. You may check to ensure the transferability of this course at the Alberta Transfer Guide main page <http://www.transferalberta.ca>.

**** Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

EVALUATIONS:

You will be graded on:	Total Assignments	Points Each	Total Points	% of Grade
Reading Quizzes	5	4 pts	20 pts	10%
Media Assignments	4	30 pts	120 pts	60%
Final Exam	1	60 pts	60 pts	30%
Total Points for Grade	-	-	200 pts	100%
Extra Credit	2	5 pts	10 pts	5%

Reading Quizzes (5 reading quizzes at 4 points each for 20 points total)

You will be given 5 reading quizzes covering your syllabus and chapters in our textbooks throughout the semester. Each quiz will consist of a small number of questions (multiple choice, matching, etc.) and are intended to encourage you to keep up with your readings. They are not worth a whole lot of points in the grand scheme of things but could mean the difference between one letter grade and the next; don't let them slip past you! **Reading Quizzes are to be completed on our myClass page, will open Mondays at 8 am of the week assigned, and close Sundays at 11:59 pm (see due dates on schedule).**

Media Assignments (4 media assignments at 30 points each for 120 points total)

Our understanding of the ancient world is improving at a remarkable rate. Every day, all over the world, archaeologists are unearthing the relics of our shared heritage and helping to provide context to our modern world. Unfortunately, in this class you are often exposed to our greatest competition: an exponential increase in our exposure to pseudo-archaeology. It can often be quite difficult to distinguish between the two. Over the course of the semester, you will be expected to write up four brief summaries

(each approximately 500 words; about 1 page single-spaced) on “tales of archaeological discovery” covered in peer-reviewed academic journals.

For each, I want you to find a peer-reviewed academic journal article published within the last calendar year. After summarizing the article, can you tell fact from fiction? Reference the “Pseudoscience Cheat Sheet” in your text. Does the academic paper successfully avoid the hallmarks of pseudoscience? If not, where do they slip? What evidence and argumentation *do* they use?

You must cite your article in a format that allows me to locate it (i.e., author, title, journal).

Assignments must be turned in on our myClass page, will open Mondays at 8 am of the week assigned, and close Sundays at 11:59 pm (see due dates on schedule).

Final Exam (60 points total)

You will have a scheduled final exam in this class; HOWEVER, your exam WILL NOT require you to be physically present on campus. Your exam is a TAKE HOME. It will build on the material covered throughout the course. Your final exam will be worth 60 points and consist of a single essay question and response that will be provided in advance and will be related to the book by von Däniken that we are reading this semester (*Chariots of the Gods*). **Your final is to be completed on our myClass page and will open on the Monday (at 8 am) of the last week of scheduled classes. The exam is due and will close by 11:59 pm on the date scheduled by the registrar. I will let you know when this information is available.**

Note: I do NOT provide study guides. Significant quantities of research have served to demonstrate that it is not in a student’s best interest to be provisioned with a study guide by the instructor. You may not like it, but the reality is that production of your own study guide is an important studying technique in its own right. Like eating vegetables, this is for your own good. That being said, you are encouraged to ask questions in class and to approach me in office hours for guidance. Although this isn’t a course where you need to memorize a lot of information, you do need to be familiar with what we’ve covered and where you can find it. Use the tables of objectives included in each module to structure your study guide.

Extra Credit (up to 10 points)

Extra credit is as stated, extra points above and beyond your regular class assignments. These points are somewhat easy to acquire, but to receive any point you must do exactly as asked. Opportunities for extra credit (worth 5 points each) will be announced throughout the semester.

GRADING CRITERIA:

Please note that most universities will not accept your course for transfer credit **IF** your grade is **less than C-**.

Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines
A+	4.0	95-100	C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-94	C	2.0	63-66
A-	3.7	80-84	C-	1.7	60-62
B+	3.3	77-79	D+	1.3	55-59
B	3.0	73-76	D	1.0	50-54
B-	2.7	70-72	F	0.0	00-49

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Week	Date	Topic(s)	Reading(s)
Getting Started			
1.1	Sep. 3	Introduction to course	Syllabus
Module 1: What is Archaeology?			
1.2	Sep. 5	What is archaeology?	Feder Ch. 1 & 2
Homework: Reading Quiz 1 - Due Sunday, Sep. 8, 11:59 PM			
2.1	Sep. 10	How do we know what we know?	Feder - Ch. 3
2.2	Sep. 12	Anatomy of an archaeological hoax and an introduction to Erich von Däniken	von Däniken - Forward & Intro
Homework: Reading Quiz 2 - Due Sunday, Sep. 15, 11:59 PM			
Module 2: Topics in Pseudoarchaeology and Archaeology			
3.1	Sep. 17	Pittdown Man and other tales of early humans.	Feder - Ch. 4
3.2	Sep. 19		von Däniken - Ch. 1 & 2
Homework: Media Assignment 1 - Due Sunday, Sep. 22, 11:59 PM			
4.1	Sep. 24	The first Americans: Sorting fact from fiction.	Feder - Ch. 5
4.2	Sep. 26		von Däniken - Ch. 3
Homework: Reading Quiz 3 - Due Sunday, Sep. 29, 11:59 PM			
5.1	Oct. 1	Vikings, Templars, Africans, and ancient Chinese in the Americas?	Feder - Ch. 6
5.2	Oct. 3		von Däniken - Ch. 4
Homework: Media Assignment 2 - Due Sunday, Oct. 6, 11:59 PM			
6.1	Oct. 8	Reaching further afield: The apparent mystery of the moundbuilders.	Feder - Ch. 7
6.2	Oct. 10		von Däniken - Ch. 5
7.1	Oct. 15	Everything you never wanted to know about Atlantis and other lost continents, pt. 1	Feder - Ch. 8
7.2	Oct. 17		
Homework: Reading Quiz 4 - Due Sunday, Oct. 20, 11:59 PM			
8.1	Oct. 22	Everything you never wanted to know about Atlantis and other lost continents, pt. 2	von Däniken - Ch. 6
8.2	Oct. 24		
9.1	Oct. 29	Ancient Aliens: Flying millions of lightyears to show us how to stack rocks.	Feder - Ch. 9
9.2	Oct. 31		von Däniken - Ch. 7
10.1	Nov. 5	Ancient ancient Egypt: Are there deeper secrets in Egypt than science is willing to admit?	Feder - Ch. 10
10.2	Nov. 7		von Däniken - Ch. 8
Homework: Media Assignment 3 - Due Sunday, Nov. 10, 11:59 PM			
11.1	Nov. 12	Reading Break - No Classes	
11.2	Nov. 14	Reading Break - No Classes	
12.1	Nov. 19	Psychics and archaeology: Why dig when you can feel the past?	Feder - Ch. 11
12.2	Nov. 21		von Däniken - Ch. 9
Homework: Reading Quiz 5 - Due Sunday, Nov. 24, 11:59 PM			
13.1	Nov. 26	Creationism and Intelligent Design.	Feder - Ch. 12
13.2	Nov. 28		von Däniken - Ch. 10
Homework: Media Assignment 4 - Due Sunday, Dec. 1, 11:59 PM			
14.1	Dec. 3	When archaeologists are the perpetrators of fraud.	von Däniken - Ch. 11 & 12
Module 3: Wrapping it up in a Neat Bow			
14.2	Dec. 5	Real mysteries of a veritable past. Why do we seem to prefer the fantasy?	Feder - Ch. 13
15.1	Dec. 10	Wrap up	
Final Exam - Date TBD			

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Late Assignment/Make-up Policy: You are expected to follow the schedule as posted and **late assignments will not be accepted**, except with my permission. Contrary to a popular idiom, it is always better to ask for permission than forgiveness; if you know that you are going to miss a deadline, please let me know in advance.

Attendance and Participation: Attendance will not be taken, and no part of your grade is directly tied to attendance/participation. You are paying good money for this class and committing a significant amount of time to it. To get the most for your money and effort, **attendance is strongly encouraged**.

Classroom Climate Expectations: To create and maintain a safe and productive learning environment in the classroom, standards of behaviours are expected as follows:

1. **Listen** attentively and TAKE NOTES.
2. **Communicate** clearly and actively when asking questions or during discussions.
3. **Be respectful** when asking questions/discussing topics with EVERYONE. This does not mean that you need to agree with all the views/opinions expressed but note that there is a difference

between being critical or engaging in a productive conversation and being confrontational or abusive.

4. **Refrain** from excessive talking or use of technology for NONACADEMIC PURPOSES. You are supposed to be in class, so BE IN CLASS.

If you choose to violate the above expectations, either once or repeatedly the following consequences will be enforced:

1. Verbal warning;
2. Meeting after class/in office hours, or;
3. Pursuing a report of non-academic misconduct under the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated. For a more precise definition of academic misconduct and its consequences, refer to the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy available at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/about/administration/policies/index.html>.

**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

Additional Information:

Note that you should not take your performance in this course as an indication of how much I like or respect you. No, that will depend on whether you laugh at my jokes (that was a joke). It goes without saying that post-secondary education is a process. You'll figure out what works for you. I'm here to help.