

COURSE OUTLINE - Fall 2025

AN2060(A2): Introduction to Archaeology - 3 (2-0-1) 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: Matt Longstaffe **PHONE:** (780) 539-2710
OFFICE: C402 **E-MAIL:** mlongstaffe@nwpolytech.ca
OFFICE HOURS: W 12:30-15:00 or by appointment

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: Basic principles of archaeology. Introduction to the nature, methods, and theory of anthropological archaeology, i.e. how archaeological remains are located, recovered, and interpreted. Emphasis in this course is on the principles of reconstruction of past societies from archaeological evidence.

PREREQUISITE(S):

None

COREQUISITE(S):

None

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Muckle, Robert J., and Stacy L. Camp (2020) *Introducing Archaeology*, 3rd Ed. University of Toronto Press/

Praetzellis, Adrian (2003) *Dug to Death: A Tale of Archaeological Method and Mayhem*, 1st Ed. Bloomsbury Publishing, UK.

DELIVERY MODE(S): On-Campus

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will be able to:



- define 'archaeology' and articulate what distinguishes archaeology from other fields that study human beings.
- define 'social science' and articulate why archaeology is both scientific and humanistic.
- define 'pseudo-science' and demonstrate how it differs from scientific forms of inquiry.
- describe archaeology as a professional discipline, who archaeologists are, what they do, and where they find employment (i.e., the parent-pleasing questions).
- describe a history for the development of archaeology as a discipline. Where did it come from? Why do we do it?
- define 'formation processes' and articulate what distinguishes cultural from natural formation processes.
- describe the kinds of information that archaeologists can derive from their finds given appropriate preservation.
- describe (in general terms) the process of finding and recording the "provenience" of archaeological sites, features, and objects.
- explain why association and attention to context is essential for archaeological interpretation.
- define both relative and absolute dating methods, both generally and specifically.
- describe the opportunities and limitations represented by various dating methods in archaeology.
- explain why association and attention to context is essential for archaeological interpretation. Further, they will be able to articulate how a control of the temporal dimension of the archaeological record allows for the production of narratives relevant to understanding cultural and social processes over time.
- describe the four most basic levels (and the material components) of Service's model of social complexity.
- contrast the concepts of social "progress" with social "change." describe some of the ways that social organization (including aspects such as status, power, prestige, and wealth) are inferred from the archaeological record and will demonstrate this knowledge in a related assignment.
- describe how archaeologists reconstruct ancient environments at various scales from the global to the local, including the plant and animal populations that characterize those environments.
- describe some of the ways that humans have extracted their subsistence from the available resources, and some of the pressures driving change in these strategies.
- explain some of the relationships between food production and social complexity.
- describe some of the ways that archaeologists go about analyzing material culture.
- describe some of the basic material correlates for different kinds of economy in the archaeological record.
- describe some of the kinds of information that archaeologists hope to learn from a close study of human remains.
- describe some of the basic methods for determining age, sex, health, and other biological characteristics from human remains.
- describe some of the ways that objects become symbols (i.e. carry meaning that might be ascertained).

- describe how the ancient Mayan hieroglyphic script was deciphered and the kinds of things it tells us.
- describe some of the ways that archaeologists explain change (from historical, processual, and post-processual perspectives).
- describe examples of process at work in ancient civilizations.
- describe some of the ways that archaeological narratives (and other constructions of the past) are used and abused.
- describe the controversy and perspectives surrounding the study of human remains in North America.
- describe some of the ways that archaeology and anthropology matter as an applied discipline.

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.alberta.ca>

**** For courses with alpha (letter) grading, a 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:

Assessment	Weight
8 reading quizzes, 5 points each, for 40 points total	20%
3 assignments, 20 points each, for 60 points total	30%
10 lab participation, 4 points each, for 40 points total	20%
Final exam for 60 points total	30%
Total = 200 points	100%
Note: All points are weighted equally for 200 points total	

Reading Quizzes (8 reading quizzes at 5 points each for 40 points total)

You will be given 6 reading quizzes covering your syllabus and chapters in our textbook 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. Individual quizzes are not worth a whole lot of points in the grand scheme of things, but cumulatively, they add up; 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).

Assignments (3 assignments at 20 points each for 60 points total)

You will complete 3 minor assignments over the course of the semester. These assignments are intended to highlight and give you hands-on experience working with some of the foundational conceptual topics associated with contemporary archaeology. These are

supposed to be fun, so jump in and enjoy! Assignments 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). Don't worry, no prep work is required!

Lab Participation (10 labs at 4 points each, for 40 points total)

While class lectures will focus on the theoretical or explanatory elements of archaeology, we will also dedicate time to hands-on learning in the form of short "labs" (note, this class does NOT count as a lab credit). There are **ten labs in total**, and you will be assessed based on your participation in these labs. You will be asked to participate in activities and sometimes complete short written exercises. These teach important skills, so to get full marks you must attend and engage! **Don't worry, no prep work is required!**

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. This Exam will be invoking concepts that are foundational to the discipline of archaeology, it will build on the material covered throughout the course. Your final exam will be worth 60 points and consist of an essay question and response that will be provided in advance. 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.

GRADING CRITERIA:

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

Grading Chart

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	Sept 4	Introduction to the course	Syllabus
Homework: Reading Quiz 1 – Due Sunday, Sept 7, 11:59 PM			
Module 1: What is Archaeology?			
2.1	Sept 9	What is Archaeology?	Muckle: Chapter 1
2.2	Sept 11	Film: Archaeology – A Secret History	Praetzellis: Chapter 1
Homework: Reading Quiz 2 – Due Sunday Sept 14, 2025			
3.1	Sept 16	A history of archaeology	Muckle: Chapter 2
3.2	Sept 18	Lab: Reading maps	Praetzellis: Chapter 2
Homework: Assignment 1 – Considering Ethics – Due Sunday Sept 21, 11:59 PM			
4.1	Sept 23	Archaeology today	Muckle: Chapter 3
4.2	Sept 25	Lab: Making maps	Praetzellis: Chapter 3
Homework: Reading Quiz 3 – Due Sunday Sept 28, 11:59 PM			
Module 2: The Archaeological Dataset			
5.1	Sept 30	No Classes – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation	
5.2	Oct 2	Lab: The archaeological record	Muckle: Chapter 4 Praetzellis: Chapter 4
Homework: Assignment 2 – Preservation – Due Sunday Oct 5, 11:59 PM			
6.1	Oct 7	Fieldwork	Muckle: Chapter 5
6.2	Oct 9	Lab: Typology	Praetzellis: Chapter 5
Homework: Reading Quiz 4 – Due Sunday Oct 12, 11:59 PM			
7.1	Oct 14	Labwork	Muckle: Chapter 6
7.2	Oct 16	Lab: Lithic Analysis	Praetzellis: Chapter 6
Homework: Reading Quiz 5 – Due Sunday Oct 19, 11:59 PM			
Module 3: Doing Archaeology			
8.1	Oct 21	Constructing the human past	Muckle: Chapter 7
8.2	Oct 23	Lab: Ceramic Analysis	Praetzellis: Chapter 7
Homework: Reading Quiz 6 – Due Sunday Oct 26, 11:59 PM			
9.1	Oct 28	Contextualizing the human past: environment	Muckle: Chapter 8
9.2	Oct 30	Lab: Faunal analysis	Praetzellis: Chapter 8
Homework: Reading Quiz 7 – Due Sunday Nov 2, 11:59 PM			
10.1	Nov 4	Contextualizing the human past: mind	Muckle: Chapter 9

10.2	Nov 6	Lab: Human osteology	Praetzelis: Chapter 9
11.1	Nov 11	Reading Break – No Classes	
11.2	Nov 13	Reading Break – No Classes	
Homework: Assignment 3 – Documenting Identity – Due Sunday, Nov 16, 11:59 PM			
12.1	Nov 18	Social Organization	Muckle: Chapter 10
12.2	Nov 20	Lab: Archaeological illustration	Praetzelis: Chapter 10
13.1	Nov 25	Explanation in Archaeology	Muckle: Chapter 11
13.2	Nov 27	Lab: Epigraphy	Praetzelis: Chapter 11
Homework: Reading Quiz 8 – Due Sunday Nov 25, 11:59 PM			
14.1	Dec 2	Archaeology's Future	
14.2	Dec 4	Doing archaeology	
15.1	Dec 9	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.** Make note of the due dates (and as you see, there is a lot of flexibility to complete and submit the assignment, BEFORE the due date)

Attendance and Participation: Attendance will be taken during labs, and, as you have seen above, a small part of your grade is directly tied to attendance/participation in these labs. 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.

Use of Generative AI in Assignments and Exams: We all know that Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) can create pieces of writing and other creative outputs. These tools include ChatGPT, Claude, Microsoft Copilot, and so on. These tools are now with us, so it is important to learn how to use them responsibly. You may use AI

tools to learn and practice concepts in this course but remember to use a critical eye to what it is telling you. However, you **may not** use AI to write your class assignments or exams for you. This course policy is designed to promote learning and development and help you reach the course learning outcomes. You're here to learn and learning how to communicate ideas through writing is one of the most important parts of being a student.

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/polytechnic-leadership/policies-directory>.

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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: I'm here to help you! Ask me questions. Talk to me after class. Come to my office hours.