

DEPARTMENT Humanities and Social Sciences

COURSE OUTLINE - Fall 2026

AN2060(A2): Introduction to Archaeology - 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:	L109	E-MAIL:	smorton@nwpolytech.ca
OFFICE HOURS:	W 11:00-12:00 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)/COREQUISITE:

None

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

Muckle and Camp (2021) *Introducing Archaeology*, 3rd Ed. University of Toronto Press.

DELIVERY MODE(S):

On-Campus

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Define archaeology and articulate what distinguishes anthropology from other fields that study human beings.
- Describe archaeology as a professional discipline—who archaeologists are, what they do, and where they find employment (i.e., the parent-pleasing questions).

- Describe the general components that constitute the archaeological record and articulate how these are referenced to construct the archaeological past.
- Apply critical thinking skills to access, evaluate, and interpret information to draw conclusions and shape arguments.
- Demonstrate a scholarly mindset that is open to different perspectives, acknowledges the provisional nature of knowledge, and can identify the limits of research and understanding within the discipline of anthropology.
- Express ideas clearly and effectively in writing.
- Act with honesty and integrity to both complete academic work and conduct themselves in an academic environment.

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

<https://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
Lecture Attendance, 2 points each, for 20 points total	10%
Lab Participation, 2 points each, for 20 points total	10%
8 reading quizzes, 5 points each, for 40 points total	20%
3 assignments, 20 points each, for 60 points total	30%
Final exam for 60 points total	30%
Total = 200 points	100%
Note: All points are weighted equally for 200 points total.	
Extra credit for up to 10 points	5%

Lecture Attendance (2 points each, for 20 points total)

One key to successfully completing your course is regular attendance. To encourage you to attend regularly, part of your final grade is tied to attendance. There are 12 regular lecture periods this semester. To earn your full attendance points, you'll need to attend 10 of them. Points will be awarded at the end of each class period when you submit your single-sentence "take-home point."

Lab Participation (2 points each, for 20 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). To encourage you to participate regularly, part of your final grade is tied to taking part in these activities. There are 11 lab periods this semester. To earn your full participation points, you'll need to attend 10 of them. Points will be awarded at the end of each lab class when you submit your activity sheet.

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

You will be given 8 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. 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).**

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

You will complete three minor assignments over the course of the semester. These assignments are intended to serve two primary purposes. First, they are intended to highlight and give you hands-on experience working with some of the foundational conceptual topics associated with contemporary archaeology. Second, they are intended to be fun! I will acknowledge that my definition of "fun" may not match your own. Assignment specifics will vary with the topics covered. **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!**

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 and will follow the same format as your midterm exam. Your exam is a TAKE HOME. As we will be invoking concepts that are foundational to the discipline of anthropology, it WILL build on the material covered throughout the course. **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. Extensive research demonstrates that it is not in a student's best interest to be provided with a study guide by the instructor. You may not like it, but creating your own study guide is an important study technique in its own right. Like eating vegetables, this is for your own good. 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 to find it.

Extra Credit (MAX. 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. Extra credit opportunities (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-.**

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	Sep. 3	Introduction to course	Syllabus
Homework: Reading Quiz 1 - Due Sunday, Sep. 6, 11:59 PM			
Module 1: What is Archaeology?			
2.1	Sep. 8	What is archaeology?	Chapter 1
2.2	Sep. 10	Example: Archaeology in Action	
Homework: Reading Quiz 2 - Due Sunday, Sep. 13, 11:59 PM			
3.1	Sep. 15	A history of archaeology	Chapter 2
3.2	Sep. 17	Lab: Reading a Map	
Homework: Reading Quiz 3 - Due Sunday, Sep. 20, 11:59 PM			
4.1	Sep. 22	Archaeology today	Chapter 3
4.2	Sep. 24	Lab: Making a Map	
Homework: Assignment 1 - Considering Ethics - Due Sunday, Sep. 22, 11:59 PM			
Module 2: The Archaeological Dataset			
5.1	Sep. 29	The archaeological record	Chapter 4
5.2	Oct. 1	Lab: Typology	
Homework: Reading Quiz 4 - Due Sunday, Oct. 4, 11:59 PM			
6.1	Oct. 6	Fieldwork	Chapter 5
6.2	Oct. 8	Lab: Garbology	
Homework: Assignment 2 - Preservation - Due Sunday, Oct. 11, 11:59 PM			
7.1	Oct. 13	Labwork	Chapter 6
7.2	Oct. 15	Lab: Lithic Analysis	
Homework: Reading Quiz 5 - Due Sunday, Oct. 18, 11:59 PM			
Module 3: Doint Archaeology			
8.1	Oct. 20	Constructing the human past	Chapter 7
8.2	Oct. 22	Lab: Ceramic Analysis	
Homework: Reading Quiz 6 - Due Sunday, Oct. 25, 11:59 PM			
9.1	Oct. 27	Contextualizing the human past: environment	Chapter 8
9.2	Oct. 29	Lab: Faunal Analysis	
Homework: Reading Quiz 7 - Due Sunday, Nov. 1, 11:59 PM			
10.1	Nov. 3	Contextualizing the human past: mind	Chapter 9
10.2	Nov. 5	Lab: Epigraphy	
11.1	Nov. 10	Reading Break - No Classes	
11.2	Nov. 12	Reading Break - No Classes	
12.1	Nov. 17	Explanation in archaeology	Chapter 10
12.2	Nov. 19	Lab: Observing Change	
Homework: Assignment 3 - Documenting Identity - Due Sunday, Nov. 22, 11:59 PM			
13.1	Nov. 24	Archaeology's future	Chapter 11
13.2	Nov. 26	Lab: Telling a Story	
Homework: Reading Quiz 8 - Due Sunday, Nov. 29, 11:59 PM			
14.1	Dec. 1	Doing archaeology	
14.2	Dec. 3	Lab: Archaeological Illustration	
15	Dec. 8	Wrap-up!	
Final Exam - Take-Home - Date TBA			

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.

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;

Pursuing a report of non-academic misconduct under the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI): While you should develop a sense of how social scientists construct an argument, this is not a writing course. Using tools, including AI, to improve your prose is both allowed and appreciated. There is nothing wrong with using such tools to convey YOUR IDEAS more clearly. However, the use of Generative AI is strictly prohibited. If detected, it will result in an F grade on your assignment and an official note on your permanent record in accordance with NWP's Academic Misconduct policies.

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. Also, looking for a little extra credit? Just send me an email with "AN2060 – Extra Credit" in the subject line and the phrase "I love dirt" as the body.