

## DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

### COURSE OUTLINE – Fall 2022

#### 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:** C-402      **E-MAIL:** [smorton@nwpolytech.ca](mailto:smorton@nwpolytech.ca)  
**OFFICE HOURS:** M/W 12:30-13:30 or by appointment

#### CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

This course covers basic principles of anthropological archaeology, an 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:

Bahn, Paul & Colin Renfrew (2018) *Archaeology Essentials: Theories, Methods, and Practice*, 4th Ed. Thames & Hudson.

#### DELIVERY MODE(S):

In person.

#### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To introduce the discipline of archaeology, its general scope, interests, and frameworks.
- To contextualize archaeology as an academic discipline and career/vocation.

- To sketch a history of the discipline of archaeology and query where it may be going.
- To introduce students to the formation processes that lead to the sites archaeologists find.
- To highlight the conditions leading to variable preservation and explore the potential of excellent preservation.
- To introduce the concept of survey and mapping in archaeology.
- To explain why we care about the spatial dimension and associations of our finds.
- To introduce the concepts of relative and absolute dating in archaeology.
- To explore why we care about the temporal dimension and associations of our finds in local and global contexts.
- To introduce the concept of social complexity and define the various “levels” of Service’s model.
- To explore the concept of social organization and some of the various markers of social status, hierarchy, and identity in the archaeological record.
- To introduce the methods and data that allow archaeologists to look at ancient environments/ecosystems.
- To explore various ways that humans made/found/extracted subsistence from the environment, and some of the consequences of the various strategies employed.
- To introduce the methods and data that allow archaeologists to look at technology and material culture.
- To explore various ways that humans structured their economies.
- To introduce the topic of bioarchaeology and the methods/datasets used by bioarchaeologists.
- To introduce the topic of cognitive archaeology and the various methods and pieces of data that archaeologists use in an attempt to reconstruct the thoughts of past peoples.
- To introduce the topic of culture/social/economic (etc.) change and how archaeologists study/model/interpret this change.
- To introduce a discussion of ethics in archaeology.
- To introduce a discussion of archaeology as heritage management. How do we future proof the past?

## **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.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:

Assessment	Weight
8 reading quizzes, 5 points each, for 40 points total	20%

4 assignments, 25 points each, for 100 points total	50%
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%

### **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. 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 (4 assignments at 25 points each for 100 points total)**

You will complete four minor assignments over the course of the semester. These assignments are intended to serve two primary purposes. First, they are intended to highlight the dynamic and developing possibilities within archaeological research and public dissemination. Second, they are intended to get you to engage critically and creatively with the materials that archaeologists produce (by writing short travelogues, reports, etc.). While the requirements of these assignments vary significantly with the topics covered and resources available, they are each intended to give you an opportunity to explore some of the various topics that archaeologists grapple with (their methods and subjects) in a less structured context. 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!**

### **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.**

**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	90-100		C+	2.3	67-69
A	4.0	85-89		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)
1.1	Sep. 5	Labour Day - No Classes	
1.2	Sep. 7	Introduction to course	Syllabus
Homework: Reading Quiz 1 - Due Sunday, Sep. 11, 11:59 PM			
<b>Module 1: What is Archaeology?</b>			
2.1	Sep. 12	Archaeology as anthropology	
2.2	Sep. 14	A history of archaeology	Chapter 1
Homework: Reading Quiz 2 - Due Sunday, Sep. 18, 11:59 PM			
<b>Module 2: What, When, and Where?</b>			
3.1	Sep. 19	Taphonomy and preservation	Chapter 2
3.2	Sep. 21	Lab	
Homework: Assignment 1 - Imagining Taphonomy - Due Sunday, Sep. 25, 11:59 PM			
4.1	Sep. 26	Survey and excavation	Chapter 3
4.2	Sep. 28	Lab	
Homework: Reading Quiz 3 - Due Sunday, Oct. 2, 11:59 PM			
5.1	Oct. 3	Dating methods	Chapter 4
5.2	Oct. 5	Lab	
Homework: Reading Quiz 4 - Due Sunday, Oct. 9, 11:59 PM			
6.1	Oct. 10	Thanksgiving - No Classes	
6.1	Oct. 12	Reading Break - No Classes	
<b>Module 3: Topics in Archaeology</b>			
7.1	Oct. 17	Social archaeology	Chapter 5
7.2	Oct. 19	Film	
Homework: Assignment 2 - Mapping Identity - Due Sunday, Oct. 23, 11:59 PM			
8.1	Oct. 24	Environment and subsistence	Chapter 6
8.2	Oct. 26	Film	
Homework: Reading Quiz 5 - Due Sunday, Oct. 30, 11:59 PM			
9.1	Oct. 31	Technology and exchange	Chapter 7
9.2	Nov. 2	Film	
Homework: Assignment 3 - Replicating the Past - Due Sunday, Nov. 6, 11:59 PM			
10.1	Nov. 7	Bioarchaeology	Chapter 8
10.2	Nov. 9	Film	
Homework: Reading Quiz 6 - Due Sunday, Nov. 13, 11:59 PM			
11.1	Nov. 14	Cognitive archaeology	Chapter 9
11.2	Nov. 16	Film	
Homework: Reading Quiz 7 - Due Sunday, Nov. 20, 11:59 PM			
12.1	Nov. 21	Explanation in archaeology	Chapter 10
12.2	Nov. 23	Film	
Homework: Reading Quiz 8 - Due Sunday, Dec. 11, 11:59 PM			
<b>Module 4: Doing Archaeology</b>			
13.1	Nov. 28	Ethical conundrums in archaeology	Chapter 11
13.2	Nov. 30	Lab	
Homework: Assignment 4 - Considering Ethics - Due Sunday, Dec. 4, 11:59 PM			
14.1	Dec. 5	Heritage management	Chapter 12
14.2	Dec. 7	Lab	
15.1	Dec. 12	Wrap-up	
<b>Final Exam - Date TBD</b>			

## 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 PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and there will be penalties. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, refer to the Student Conduct section of the Northwestern Polytechnic Calendar at <https://www.nwpolytech.ca/programs/calendar/> or the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy which can be found 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.