ST Anthro: Doing Archaeology in South Jersey

Instructors

Primary Instructor: Kimberlee Moran (k.moran@camden.rutgers.edu; 856-203-0687)
Additional Instructors/Crew Chiefs: Alex Denning, Ani Hatza, Tovah Ross-Mitchell

General Overview

Aims: to introduce students to the theory and practice of archaeological excavation; to familiarize students with excavation techniques; to provide an overview of Cultural Resource Management and related issues, such as state regulation and historic preservation; to conduct a Phase II excavation of the Whispering Woods site in Salem Co, NJ.

Course Structure: The aims of the course will be delivered through a field experience at the Whispering Woods site in Pilesgrove, Salem Co, NJ. Students will participate in a Phase II excavation under the supervision of 4 experienced archaeologists. Students will also receive a series of lectures, health and safety training, and a visit to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHIPO) in Trenton. Course communication, assignments, and reading will all be done over SAKAI. Students should familiarize themselves with the course’s SAKAI site prior to the course.

Course Duration: Each weekly session will run for a total of 2.5 - 3 hours. The course will run over 14 weeks. Field sessions will take place weather permitting. Students will be sent a weekly e-mail confirming whether they will report to the field or to campus.

Course Assessment: Students will be assessed chiefly on their performance in the field. They will also be required to write a mid-term research paper and compile a portfolio of field documentation (logs, paperwork, report, drawings) in lieu of a final exam.

1. Mid-term research paper (5-8pgs) – 20%
2. Field paperwork – 20%
3. Excavation report (5-8pgs) – 20%
4. Site drawings – 10%
5. Artifact log – 10%
6. Photo log – 10%
7. Attendance & Preparedness– 10%

Writing: This course is a writing-intensive course. Students are encouraged to submit drafts of papers and reports prior to the assignment due date in order to develop their writing skills. Students are also encouraged to make use of the Rutgers Learning Center and the Writing Tutors on staff. All writing submissions must be done via the course’s SAKAI site and should be in .pdf, .doc, or .docx format. Coverpages, bibliographies, images and graphs/tables are in addition to the page limit. Late submissions with have 10% deducted from the final grade for every day late. It is advised that students use “The Brief Penguin Handbook” as a writing resource guide.

Required Text: There is no required text book for this course. Weekly reading assignments will be posted on the course’s SAKAI site. In addition to required reading, students will be provided with a “further reading” list for each topic for optional reading.

Required Equipment: Students are required to purchase the following equipment for use in the field. The URL’s are meant to provide examples of each item. Students may purchase these items from any vendor:

- Knee pad (http://www.homedepot.com/p/Fiskars-Kneeling-Cushion-94216974J/100534790)
Please bring these items to every session in the field. Keep them in a back pack and make sure all items are labeled with your name.

Session Descriptions

Week 1: Welcome, Course overview, Useful resources, Intro to CRM, Health & Safety training (on campus)

This session will provide an introduction to the course and the expectations of both the instructor and students. A number of useful resources will be covered such as key texts, journals, online databases, and websites. The course will officially start with an overview of CRM archaeology, excavation techniques, total station use, field health & safety, and instructions for the start of the field experience.

Week 2: Field Excavation (Whispering Woods)

Students will report to the site (Auburn Road, Pilesgrove, NJ). They will be put into 4 field crews and introduced to their crew chief. Each crew will be assigned their field equipment and excavation will commence.

Week 3: Field Excavation Cont’d (Whispering Woods)

Week 4: Field Excavation Cont’d (Whispering Woods)

Week 5: Field Excavation Cont’d (Whispering Woods)

Week 6: Field Excavation Cont’d (Whispering Woods)

Week 7: Field Excavation Cont’d (Whispering Woods) – mid-term research paper due

Week 8: Field Excavation Cont’d (Whispering Woods)

Week 9: Field Excavation Cont’d (Whispering Woods)

Week 10: Field Excavation Cont’d (Whispering Woods)

Week 11: Archaeological Theory & Material Culture

This session will cover the basics of archaeological theory and material culture. Students will learn core theoretical concepts. We will also address the profession of archaeology, types of archaeology, careers, and professional societies.
Week 12: Bioarchaeology (on campus)

This session will address bone, both human and animal. We will look at the morphology of bone and how to use human bones to create a biological profile. Students will also learn about different types of animal bones, how to identify species, and how bone can be modified by both humans and the environment.

Week 13: Artifact handling, preservation, and interpretation (on campus)

This session will cover what to do with the artifacts recovered. How should they be documented, cleaned, and catalogued? How does an archaeologist identify what the artifacts are? We will cover the types of historic and prehistoric artifacts commonly found in Southern New Jersey. We will also address the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and how it affects artifact processing. Students will use the artifacts from Whispering Woods to start to piece together a picture of the human activity that took place there.

Week 14: Overview of excavation write-up

We will review the elements required for the student portfolios. Students will work in their field groups to assemble the documentation compiled during the excavation.

Learning Goals

1. **Competence:**
   a.) **Theory.** Students who complete this course module should understand and be able to articulate, both orally and in writing, the core theoretical concepts that form the foundations of archaeological field work. Core concepts include the Harris Matrix, excavation techniques, context documentation, drawing and photography, artifact recovery and handling. Students should have an understanding of CRM archaeology and how it differs from other more traditional forms of academic archaeology.
   
b.) **Institutions.** Students who complete this course module should understand the role of archaeology within the state Department of Environmental Protection and the state Historic Preservation Office. In addition, students should know how these institutions interact with and influence each other. Finally, students' knowledge will include those agencies that regulate cultural resources, archaeology as a private industry, and the important professional associations to archaeological practitioners.
   
c.) **Research Methods.** Students who complete this course module should be familiar with the tools, techniques, and data sources necessary for empirical analysis. Students should understand the various ways that empirical analysis is used in the scientific approach: for description, for developing, and for testing theories. They should be familiar with basic research and empirical techniques within archaeology and how to clearly articulate excavation findings. They should be able to read and assess research from a wide range of sources, including general interest, academic, and government publications.

2. **Critical Thinking:** Upon completion of the course, students should be able to apply their understanding of core concepts and quantitative tools to analyze and research the Whispering Woods site. Accomplishment of this goal will require that students can apply their literacy and numeracy skills to data gathered from the site excavation and compile into the form of an excavation report.

3. **Scholarship:** Students should have an opportunity through such avenues as advanced coursework, internships, and faculty interactions to conduct further independent research on matters of central relevance to the Whispering Woods project.