

Department of Anthropology

ANTHROPOLOGY 3312F - Historical Archaeology: Interpreting the Recent Past

Draft Course Outline

Fall 2022

Version Date: July 22, 2022

Lectures: Tuesdays 1:30-4:30 pm

Classroom: UCC-63

Instructor: Neal Ferris

Office: SSC 3215

Office hours: 10:00-1:00 pm Tuesdays

Email: nferris@uwo.ca

Please note: I am cross-appointed with the Museum of Ontario Archaeology and work there on some other days during the week. If you need to meet with me other than during office hours or after class, please email me... I am happy to meet on Zoom or the Museum if I am not in the dept.

Credit value: 0.5 credit

Requisites:

Antirequisites: None.

Prerequisites: Anthropology 2229F/G or Anthropology 2233F/G.

Unless you have the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description:

We are going to explore that very rich, complex and contested part of the human past from the last 500 years or so through the archaeological record from primarily North America and the Caribbean. This time span encapsulates that period marked by the global expansion of European colonialism and the emergence of modern capitalism - global past that continues to shape our understandings of how the world works today and how it needs to change. It also, conventionally, has not been thought of as the purview of archaeology. But increasingly, historical archaeologists have come to offer unique insights into the multiple histories of this past through the material record of this period. So we will look at how historical archaeologists go about studying, thinking about and interpreting the archaeological record from this time. And how archaeologists utilize written documents and oral histories to augment the material record to offer archaeological histories that complement and differ from those known solely from written records or oral histories.

In many ways, historical archaeology is a distinct field of study - from field methodologies to documentary research to artifact analyses. These diverse, rich, and often contradictory or imperfectly "silent" datasets can allow for archaeologically-distinct interpretations on the social and economic life of the rich and poor, whether they are colonizers, Indigenous, Diasporic, or Descendant peoples. And document the aspirations and realities that differences in class, gender, race and access to institutions of power all played in shaping the lived experiences of people

between the 17th and 20th centuries. We will also consider the contemporary implications of these findings for understanding the legacies of this recent past as the heritage nations, communities, and individuals celebrate, challenge, reconcile, counter, decolonize and draw meaning from today.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Understand the historical context of doing archaeology in primarily North America and the Caribbean focused on the last 500 years;
- 2) Apply the methods unique to historical archaeology by working with, critically evaluating, and integrating written historical records, oral histories, and material culture from the last 500 years;
- 3) Enhance your appreciation of how anthropologically informed archaeology creates distinct interpretations and knowledge from the material record of the past;
- 4) Critically evaluate the logic, assumptions and biases that have shaped history and historical archaeological interpretations and how those are being revised by new data and new ways of thinking about old data;
- 5) Apply the principles of a reflexive and ethical historical archaeology when considering the contemporary heritage legacies that have been shaped by European colonialism and global capitalism.

Each class is three hours long. I expect that each week will consist of a talk on the week's topic, or in-class labs or assignments working with materials, or seminar discussions on readings, or presentations. Participation in class discussion is a critical expectation in a 3000-level course, so your engagement with the class topic, readings, in-class assignments, or other interactions will be important.

Course Materials:

There is no course text assigned. However, you will be assigned selected readings throughout the course to facilitate in-class seminar discussions (see below).

Evaluation:

Part of this course is designed to operate as a seminar, requiring students to keep up with readings, participate and lead in discussions of the readings, and provide brief reflective reviews and commentaries on in-class discussions. I will also be delivering lectures on topics during other classes or leading the class in an in-class project. Students will be evaluated based on their engagement in seminars, in-class projects, and assignments.

- 40% In-class seminar discussions on readings
- 15% In-class assignments
- 25% Research Project I
- 20% Research Project II

In-Class Seminar Discussions on Readings (Total Grade: 40%)

- 1a. *Reflections on Readings 1-5 (4 best will count, 5% each = 20%):*

Over the duration of the course we will hold five in-class seminars based on a topic variously addressed from four readings I will assign. The class will be divided into four groups (which can be

rotated week to week). Students from each group will read **ONLY** one of the papers identified for the week's theme, as assigned by me. Students will be required to write a **350-400 word** reflection based on the paper they were assigned to read. The reflection will:

Summarize the authors' argument (what was their main points).

Discuss the paper's strengths and weaknesses (what was compelling about the argument, how well does the reasoning link with the data presented, what remains undefined or missing, etc.).

Be well thought out, clearly written, and proof-read.

Be submitted through the inline assignment function in OWL.

And MUST be submitted no later than 1 PM on the day the class meets. If your reflection is not on OWL before class starts, you will not be able to get a mark for that reading reflection.

1b. In-Class Seminar Discussions (10%):

At the start of each reading assignment class, students from the four groups will separate and spend up to 30 minutes discussing the paper they collectively read and wrote a reflection on. They will pool their ideas and then, in turns, present a summary of their analysis to the entire class, including a brief summary of the key points of the paper (everyone is expected to take a turn presenting summaries for their group). All students will listen to all presentations, take notes, ask questions and participate in the general discussion that emerges from the presentations.

Class participation will be a cumulative mark between 0-10 assigned at the end of term, reflecting each students' attendance, participation in their in-group discussion, their participation during other presentations and the general summary discussion, and their ability to sustain discussion.

1.c Commentaries 1-5 (4 best will count; 2.5% each = 10%):

After each seminar class, students will re-submit their reflection, adding a **200 word** commentary. The commentaries will focus on the week's theme integrating the different points of view raised by all the papers on the class topic.

These commentaries will need to:

Be added to the earlier Reflection (new section added at the end).

Be well thought out, clearly written, and proof-read.

Be submitted through the inline assignment re-submission function in OWL.

And must be submitted by 5 pm the day following the class. To be eligible for this mark, you need to have also submitted a reflection for the reading.

Grade mark will consist of an assigned score between 0-2.5.

In-Class Assignments 1-4 (3 best will count 5% each = 15%)

In four classes we will spend part of the class working with artifact collections or historical documents and undertaking a brief task with those materials, either classifying/typing objects,

dating objects, or transcribing cursive documents. You will be provided with an instruction sheet the week before the in-class assignment and provided with materials to work with in-class. Parts of these in-class assignments will be done individually, or in small groups. Your participation in these assignments will be evaluated based on your engagement in class, and any material you are asked to generate and submit before the end of class.

Grade mark for each assignment will consist of a score between 0-5.

1. Research Project 1 - Biography of a City Block (Total Grade 25%)

For this assignment you will select a city block from the core of London, and then access map, documentary, geographical and other sources available for that block and area of the city to explore the cultural history of that place up to the present day. There are many cartographic, land title, architectural, and property records available at Weldon Library's Archives, online, at the Downtown Library, and at the Land Registry office downtown that you can access for this purpose. The library also provides aids for using some of these sources. Links and more detailed instructions will be provided on OWL for this Project.

What I am looking for is the history of the transformation of that block from pre-development to the present day, how it transforms over time, and (especially if by architecture and city planning it has been the same since the first buildings were built) how have the residents/users of that block changed? The premise of the assignment is that you are telling a story of this place – which is, at its core, the point of the histories we weave together from bits of historical and artifactual data. You need to be able to talk about how the block came to be, and its various iterations over time. But part of the story should also focus on particular locales within the block, or people you discover that lived or worked there. I would also like you to conclude by making an argument about why you feel the block as a whole, or a particular building or buildings, or people from that block, deserve recognition for their contribution to the cultural heritage of the city.

As part of this assignment, we will be visiting the Wheldon Library Archives during a class, where those folks will introduce you to historical research. You will also need to visit your block in person and take a few photos of the "as is" conditions (i.e., the current end state to your biography).

You ultimately will generate a report summarizing what you have learned about the property, citing all the relevant sources you examined. This report can be a straight up written history, or take the form of a heritage consultant report, or city planning document, or it could be a video, or an interactive map using GIS, or any other form you are comfortable with that tells the biography of this block. I fully expect legible maps and photos to play an important part of whatever you create.

Regardless of format, you will be presenting a summary of your findings (5 minutes in length) in class, beginning in the class after reading week.

Evaluation will be based on the scope of your research conducted, quality of your findings and history detailed, your presentation, and the written, mapped and/or video materials submitted after your presentation.

2. Research Project 2 - Oral Histories of Things (Total Grade 20%)

For this project you will interview **2 individuals**, summarize and compile the interviews, and generate a written report that presents your data, identifies patterns in the responses, and interprets the dimensions of a material heritage conveyed by your interviewees.

The focus of your interviews will be to discuss with these people *the first automobile they ever owned*. Each interview should cover everything from the circumstances that led to them obtaining a car, why that car, what they liked or disliked about the car, what happened to it when/if it was replaced, and what decisions shaped the replacement they obtained or might obtain in the future.

Your report will both summarize these oral histories, and compare them for common and divergent themes. Your particular focus is to think about how people talk about material things (in this case a car), and, in reflecting on that thing, tie it to their own heritage and history of that time in their life. In other words, you need to think about how things become something more in the way we associate with and talk about them.

Importantly, interviewing someone to compile an oral history is not a straight-forward survey asking fixed questions, but works best as an open-ended discussion. Likewise, these oral histories need to be collated and presented anonymously. Securing consent with the interviewees and analysis of their oral histories must be respectful and consistent with an ethical research practice.

We will have a workshop in-class to go over how to conduct an oral history interview, to ethical requirements, and report on your findings. Also, detailed instructions and guides will be provided on OWL.

Your write up and analysis of these oral histories is be **due December 12th**, after classes are over. **NOTE:** your final marks for the course must be submitted by December 13th, so there will be no opportunity for further extensions for getting this assignment in. So please make sure you make the deadline.

PLEASE NOTE: Course evaluations are, by design, intended to be hands-on and participatory. As a result, there is **NO FINAL EXAM** for this course. See below for Course specific policies with respect to accommodations for these hands-on evaluations.

STATEMENT ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS

Please note that it is not possible to provide accommodations for reflections and commentaries, since they are essential for in-class discussions. But note only 4 of 5 of each contribute to your grade.

Likewise, 3 of 4 of the in-class assignments will contribute to your grade. As these are hands-on exercises done in-class, there is no ability to provide for a make-up.

Given the participatory, in-class design of this course - ***the evaluation methods described in this course outline are essential requirements for the course.***

Please consider your choice to enroll in this course if you are concerned you may not be able to participate in the in-class evaluations as designed.

Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you find yourself needing to seek accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

Academic Statements and Policies:

Statement on Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

Policy on Laptops and Cellphones in Class:

Laptops and tablets are permitted for note-taking in class but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites or using their devices for anything other than course activities, they will be asked to close the laptop and will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cellphones are turned off at the beginning of class.

Institutional Statements and Policies

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current academic policies regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation. These policies are outlined in Western's academic policies by clicking on this link: [Western's academic policies](#).

CLASS Schedule – Currently TENTATIVE:

Date	Week	Theme
Sept 13	1	Introduction... history, historical archaeology, and heritage
Sept 20	2	A brief history of the last 500 years, and history of historical archaeology
Sept 27	3	Doing Historical Archaeology
Oct 4	4	Doing Historical Archaeology
Oct 11	5	Analysing Things
Oct 18	6	Analysing Things
Oct 25	7	Analysing Things
Nov 1		FALL READING WEEK
Nov 8	8	CITY BLOCK PRESENTATIONS
Nov 15	9	Consumerism and Social Class
Nov 22	10	Identities – Genders and Race
Nov 29	11	Industrial and Contemporary Archaeology
Dec 6	12	Heritage, Colonial Legacies and Decolonization
Dec 12		ORAL HISTORY PAPERS DUE