

Anthropology 4407G/9112B
Digital Archaeology and Digital Heritage
Provisional Course Outline
Winter 2023

Version date: June 13, 2022

Instructor: Dr. Neal Ferris

This course is cross-listed with graduate and undergraduate students and has limited enrolment. An application is required for interested undergraduate students provided by the Anthropology Department.

NOTE: *Assignments for this Course and grade percents are tentative. Final decisions on assignments and grade percents will be set closer to the start of classes.*

If circumstances allow, students will be given the opportunity to use digital equipment at the Museum of Ontario Archaeology's digital lab (1600 Attawandaron Road). Students are responsible for getting to the Museum on their own and follow lab safety practices.

Antirequisites: None

Prerequisites: Registration in fourth year in Anthropology and permission of the instructor. Application required.

Course Description:

This course will explore the implications of digitizing the practice of archaeology and bioarchaeology, as well as interacting with and creating the past digitally. What are the possibilities and issues when a material, tangible heritage is interacted with digitally and intangibly? What does it mean for archaeology/anthropology to be “done” virtually and online? How does this digital world change methodologies, analyses, and even how we come to know the past and value heritage in society today? What are the implications when the material heritage is made accessible and becomes engaged with, challenged, and re-imagined online and within social media and a global digital community?

The intent of this course is to understand the implications of digital practices for archaeology, bioarchaeology, and heritage. It is **NOT** a how-to course, though you will learn about digital technologies, digital data management, Web 3.0, etc. Digital novices as well as seasoned veterans should easily manage the expectations for this course, including the hands-on experiences using digital equipment.

Learning Outcomes

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

- 1) Synthesize the history of how digital technologies have been used in archaeology, and the unique opportunities those technologies provide for research;
- 2) Communicate the implications of an archaeology made digital, as a science, as a social media, and as a heritage consumed online, based on your exploration of what making archaeology and heritage digital encompasses, and as part of social media expectations for the course;
- 3) Synthesize the key issues and debates inherent in digitizing archaeology, from issues of accuracy, authenticity, and authority in presentation; challenges of making meaning from “big data”; negotiating cultural intellectual property issues inherent in 3D models, immersive environments, and 3D printing; potential of gaming, AR and VR as cultural heritage learning and empathy; and alternate archaeologies arising from re-purposing digital data;
- 4) Identify the limitations and real risks involved in embracing an archaeological heritage dependent on hardware and software that are so transitory and so quick to become obsolete in a profession whose aim in part is to preserve the record of the past;
- 5) Apply the principles of an informed and reflexive digital archaeology through hands-on use of digital technologies and media that can preserve, convey or re-imagine the archaeological record as heritage.

Course Evaluation:

Class Participation (10%)

Blogging Digital Archaeology (10%)

Assignment: Archaeology Communicating Digitally - Website/Social Media review (30%)

Digital Project (20%)

Final Paper or Project (30%):