

**INTERDISCIPLINARY ARCHAEOLOGY MAJOR/CONCENTRATION
PROVISIONAL COURSE LIST**

Fall 2024

For more information about the Archaeology major and concentration, please visit:

<https://archaeology.columbia.edu/undergraduate/major/>

<https://archaeology.columbia.edu/undergraduate/concentration/>

UN1007 THE ORIGINS OF HUMAN SOCIETY

Day/Time: TR 11:40am-12:55pm

An archaeological perspective on the evolution of human social life from the first bipedal step of our ape ancestors to the establishment of large sedentary villages. While traversing six million years and six continents, our explorations will lead us to consider such major issues as the development of human sexuality, the origin of language, the birth of “art” and religion, the domestication of plants and animals, and the foundations of social inequality. Designed for anyone who happens to be human.

UN2028 THINK LIKE AN ARCHAEOLOGIST

Day/Time: MW 10:10am-11:25am

This course provides a comprehensive introduction to methods and theory in archaeology – by exploring how archaeologists work to create narratives about the past (and the present) on the basis on the material remains of the past. The course begins with a consideration of how archaeologists deal with the remains of the past in the present: What are archaeological sites and how do we ‘discover’ them? How do archaeologists ‘read’ or analyze sites and artifacts? From there, we will turn to the question of how archaeologists interpret these materials traces, in order to create narratives about life in the past. After a review of the historical development of theoretical approaches in archaeological interpretation, the course will consider contemporary approaches to interpreting the past.

UN3007 ARCHAEOLOGY BEFORE THE BIBLE

Day/Time: TR 11:40am-12:55pm

Please note that this is not a class on “biblical archaeology”. It is a course about the politics of archaeology in the context of Israel/Palestine, and the wider southwest Asia region. This course provides a critical overview of prehistoric archaeology in southwest Asia (or the Levant - the geographical area from Lebanon in the north to the Sinai in the south, and from the middle Euphrates in Syria to southern

Jordan). It has been designed to appeal to anthropologists, historians, and students interested in the Ancient Mediterranean and Middle Eastern Studies. The course is divided into two parts. First, a social and political history of archaeology, emphasizing how the nature of current theoretical and practical knowledge has been shaped and defined by previous research traditions and, second, how the current political situation in the region impinges upon archaeological practice. Themes include: the dominance of "biblical archaeology" and the implications for Palestinian archaeology, Islamic archaeology, the impact of European contact from the Crusades onwards, and the development of prehistory.

UN3663 The Ancient Table: Archaeology of Cooking and Cuisine

Day/Time: W 12:10pm-2:00pm

Humans don't just eat to live. The ways we prepare, eat, and share our food is a complex reflection of our histories, environments, and ideologies. Whether we prefer coffee or tea, cornbread or challah, chicken breast or chicken feet, our tastes are expressive of social ties and social boundaries, and are linked to ideas of family and of foreignness. How did eating become such a profoundly cultural experience? This seminar takes an archaeological approach to two broad issues central to eating: First, what drives human food choices both today and in the past? Second, how have social forces shaped practices of food acquisition, preparation, and consumption (and how, in turn, has food shaped society)? We will explore these questions from various evolutionary, physiological, and cultural viewpoints, highlighted by information from the best archaeological and historic case studies. Topics that will be covered include the nature of the first cooking, beer-brewing and feasting, writing of the early recipes, gender roles and 'domestic' life, and how a national cuisine takes shape. Through the course of the semester we will explore food practices from Pleistocene Spain to historic Monticello, with particular emphasis on the earliest cuisines of China, Mesoamerica, and the Mediterranean.

UN3723 AMERICAN MATERIAL CULTURE

Day/Time: TR 2:40pm-3:55pm

UN3535 IDENTITY & SOCIETY ANCIENT EGYPT

Day/Time: MW 2:40pm-3:55pm

The lives of ancient Egyptians differed tremendously based on their gender, ethnicity, class, age, profession, and spatial and temporal locality. In the first half of the semester, we'll explore how the experience of life in ancient Egypt differed according to an individual's position in and path through society. We will also look specifically at how such variables intersected and how all were affected by religious and legal institutions. In the second half of the semester, we'll focus on case studies, following the lifecycles of Middle Kingdom villagers at the town of Kahun as well as the dirty laundry and laundry

lists of the *extremely* well-documented workers in charge of building and decorating the tombs in the Valley of the Kings. By investigating these two communities in depth, as well as Egyptian social life more generally, students will gain a nuanced appreciation of the ways in which a variety of ancient Egyptians lived their lives, viewed their world, acted to better their personal circumstances, privileged certain aspects of their identities, and even interpreted their dreams.

UN3823 ARCHAEOLOGY ENGAGED: THE PAST IN PUBLIC EYE

Day/Time: T 4:10pm-6:00pm

This course provides a panoramic, but intensive, inquiry into the ways that archaeology and its methods for understanding the world have been marshaled for debate in issues of public interest. It is designed to examine claims to knowledge of the past through the lenses of alternative epistemologies and a series of case-based problems that range from the academic to the political, legal, cultural, romantic, and fraudulent.

UN3712 African Climate and History

Day/Time: R 2:10pm-4:00pm

This course examines how Africa's climate has changed in the past and with what consequences for the people living on the continent. It looks at the scope, duration and intensity of past climate events and their impacts, while using these historical climate events to teach fundamental climate concepts. Central to the course is the human experience of these events and the diversity of their responses. The major question underpinning this course is, therefore, how have people responded to past climate events, whether short-term, decadal or longer in scope? This question is predicated on the complexity of human society and moves away from the binary of collapse vs. resilience that dominates much thinking about the impact of climate changes on past societies. This framing recognizes the significance of climate for food production and collection, as well as trade and cosmologies. It does not take climate to be the determining factor in history. Rather it foregrounds the myriad ways people acted in the face of, for example, multi-decadal below average rainfall or long periods of more reliable precipitation.

**Potential Class: EEBUN3997.002 Group Independent Study in Human Osteology—
The Skull**

Students interested in this course should email Dr. Jill Shapiro. No prerequisites.

GU4721 Archaeology and Heritage in the Ottoman Lands

Day/Time: W 4:10pm-6:00pm

“Archaeology and Heritage in the Ottoman Lands” is an undergraduate/graduate seminar focusing on archaeology, museology, and the notion of heritage throughout the lands under Ottoman rule during the ‘long’ nineteenth century. The objective is to critically reassess the nature of Western antiquarian and archaeological endeavors, and to focus on the local dimension of the question to fill numerous gaps and inconsistencies in the ‘grand narrative’ of Near Eastern archaeology and heritage.

GU4001 THE ANCIENT EMPIRES

Day/Time: MW 11:40am-12:55pm

The principal goal of this course is to examine the nature and histories of a range of early empires in a comparative context. In the process, we will examine influential theories that have been proposed to account for the emergence and trajectories of those empires. Among the theories are the core-periphery, world-systems, territorial-hegemonic, tributary-capitalist, network, and IEMP approaches. Five regions of the world have been chosen, from the many that could provide candidates: Rome (the classic empire), New Kingdom Egypt, Qin China, Aztec Mesoamerica, and Inka South America. These empires have been chosen because they represent a cross-section of polities ranging from relatively simple and early expansionist societies to the grand empires of the Classical World, and the most powerful states of the indigenous Americas. There are no prerequisites for this course, although students who have no background in Anthropology, Archaeology, History, or Classics may find the course material somewhat more challenging than students with some knowledge of the study of early societies. There will be two lectures per week, given by the professor.

W4149 The Roman Art of Engineering (RAE): Traditions of Planning, Construction, and Innovation

Day/Time: Mon-Wed 4:10-5:25 pm

This is a flagship Cross-Disciplinary Frontiers course that provides an interdisciplinary study of ancient Roman engineering and architecture. It addresses the questions of how and why infrastructure was built and critically why these questions are relevant today. Through a holistic examination of Roman buildings, monuments and infrastructure that draws upon the fields of engineering, architecture, archaeology, and history, we will articulate principles used for the construction of roads, bridges, and aqueducts, including iconic buildings and lesser-known examples. Themes that will be addressed throughout the course include: building materials and their affordances; the organization of labor and power hierarchies; the standardization of construction procedures; the epistemological premises of technological innovation and its societal consequences; the role of failure and error; the aestheticization and politicization of engineering “feats”; engineering and empire; and dissemination and transformation of engineering knowledge beyond Roman antiquity. Special lectures will be devoted to cross-cultural comparisons with other pre-modern societies across the globe.

GIS COURSES

**** N.B. GIS courses that aren't explicitly archaeological will generally qualify as 'related' courses. Students wishing to count a GIS course fully towards the major should plan on doing an archaeological final project, developed in consultation with an archaeology faculty member.****

UN2200 INTRODUCTION TO GIS METHODS

Day/Time: TR 10:10am-11:25am

Prerequisites: Must attend first class for instructor permission. Students create maps using ArcGIS software, analyze the physical and social processes presented in the digital model, and use the data to solve specific spatial analysis problems.