Many of the truths we cling to depend greatly on our own point of view.

Archaeology is about facts. If you want the truth, go next door to the Philosophy Department.
--Indiana Jones, The Temple of Doom, 1997

Course Description and Objectives

ANTH 603 is an intensive graduate-level introduction to archaeological argument and investigation. It covers issues of causality, explanation, epistemology, and methodological practice in empirical social science research, and introduces some of the dominant competing approaches to the structure of archaeological knowledge. It is ostensibly not, however, a course about abstract high-level social theory—most empirical social science research proceeds just fine without such vanity. Nor is it a course in "archaeological methods"—if by this term we mean the mechanics of data collection and analysis. Rather, it is a primer in standard Mertonian (i.e. sociological) "middle-range theory" applied to archaeology (don't confuse this definition with the idiosyncratic one of the same name coined by archaeologist Lewis Binford). The first part of the course draws heavily on the "philosophy of science" and the "critical thinking and reading" literature, in addition to some unfashionable common sense. A substantial number of early readings are in sociology, history, and political science, where a good deal of attention as been paid to such issues. In the second half of the course, we shift gears and apply what we've learned about the research process to the evaluation of knowledge claims about the human past. Case studies will be drawn largely from the complex societies literature, and a comparative analytical framework is heavily emphasized throughout. The course reading load is substantial: at least 100 pages per week, in addition to writing and other assignments. We will be reading three texts more or less in their entirety, as well as numerous other articles assigned on a week-by-week basis.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will:
1. Understand the place of archaeological anthropology within the social sciences and its connection to other disciplines;
2. Recognize the difference between "theory," inference, and explanation;
3. Become familiar with both case-based and comparative (cross-case) research;
4. Be exposed to empirically-rigorous arguments that are subject to evaluation;
5. Be exposed to major research themes and perspectives in the archaeological study of complex societies.
Course Requirements

This course has five core requirements. Students must: (1) carefully and critically read all assigned texts; (2) contribute regularly to seminar discussions with incisive and articulate commentary in verbal and written form; (3) prepare one or more in-class presentations in conjunction with another student, and jointly lead the discussions to follow; (4) produce an original, well-reasoned answer to a practice comprehensive exam question in archaeology; and (5) meet all deadlines specified in the Course Calendar below.

Lectures and Student-Led Discussions: Working in pairs, students are required to develop and present one lecture based on the assigned weekly readings during the course of the semester. These lectures will be 60–90 minutes long; use of MS PowerPoint, OO Impress, or similar presentation software, is required. Each lecture will be followed by a student-led discussion of the substantive issues raised therein. (Your instructor will moderate as needed.) Lecturers will prepare a set of discussion questions for circulation by email (in .pdf format) to all members of the seminar no later than the morning of the day before the lecture is to be presented. Students who are not presenting in a given week should come to class prepared to address these questions (and pose any others they feel are relevant). Available lecture slots are January 27, February 03, February 09, February 17, and February 24.

Melbourne Method Critiques & Responses: From March 02 onward, class will proceed according to a modified version of the Melbourne Method, a seminar format used by Marshall Sahlins at the University of Chicago, which he adopted from a visiting Australian scholar. The class will be divided into two separate groups of four people each; the roles of each group will alternate every week. Both groups will read the assigned texts. Members of the first group will critique the readings and individually circulate written comments (~2 pp. in length, single spaced, saved in .pdf format) to the rest of the class by Sunday morning; members of the second group will write short responses to these critiques (also ~2 pp. long, single spaced, and in .pdf format), which are to be circulated to everybody no later than the morning before class meets. All seminar participants are to have read both sets of documents ahead of Wednesday’s class, as they will form the basis of our discussion. The following week the roles will rotate, so that by the end of the course, each group will have performed both tasks three times. This is obviously a very demanding schedule—the seminar will only be successful to the extent that these deadlines are met. The first critique and response paper for each student are worth less than the second and third to account for any learning curve.

There are several advantages to using the Melbourne Method format: (1) students will develop rhetorical skills that are an important component of academic life; (2) by the time we meet as a class each week, many basic issues will already be on the table, so our discussions can proceed from a more advanced level, allowing us to get more out of our engagement with each set of readings and each other; and (3) students will leave the course with a robust set of notes, essays, and ideas that may prove useful in future work.

Practice Comprehensive Exam Question Answer: The capstone assignment of the course is to prepare a written answer (~5 pp. in length, single spaced) to a hypothetical comprehensive exam question in archaeology. The question will be provided by the instructor, and draw upon readings assigned in class. Answers will take the form of comparative essays that synthesize and analyze information in evaluation of the specified knowledge claim. In order to do so, students will need to apply the critical thinking skills discussed earlier in the course. Practice comprehensive exam question answers must be submitted to your instructor by email as a .pdf document, no later than midnight, May 04.
Required Reading

We will be reading widely in this class. A good half of what we will read is concerned with the structure of archaeological knowledge, and the recognition of critical differences between various schools of archaeological thought. The other half is focused on the study of complex societies and use of the comparative method in archaeology. Among these assigned readings are the following “textbooks” (available online and from the UHM Bookstore):


Other required reading takes the form of journal articles and book chapters. Specific reading lists will be posted online on Laulima at least one week prior to the relevant class meetings.

Recommended Reading


Optional Textbooks for Those New to Archaeology

Students who have never taken an archaeology course before may benefit from an additional introductory textbook, or two. I recommend the following:


Grading Policy

There are a total of 100 points available to be earned in this course (each equivalent to one percent of your final grade). Students earning a cumulative total equal to or more than 83 points pass the course and will be assigned a letter grade according to the table below. Because this is an ANTH graduate core class, students earning less than 83 points (equivalent to a "B" letter grade) automatically fail the course and must retake it at a later date in order to advance through the graduate program. NOTE: Only under truly extraordinary circumstances will I consider giving an incomplete in this course.

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GRADE BREAKDOWN:
10 points—Lecture & student-led discussion (performed in twos or threes)
05 points—Melbourne Method written critique 1
05 points—Melbourne Method written response 1
10 points—Melbourne Method written critique 2
10 points—Melbourne Method written response 2
10 points—Melbourne Method written critique 3
10 points—Melbourne Method written response 3
20 points—Weekly participation in seminar
20 points—Practice comprehensive exam question answer (~5 pp.)

Laulima & Email

A course shell has been created for this course on Laulima (https://laulima.hawaii.edu/). I will post copies of the course syllabus, readings lists, articles, and assignments in .pdf format there; expect these to be updated regularly. You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to open, view, and/or print .pdf documents (available free at http://www.adobe.com).

I will email you important announcements regarding the assigned readings, class cancellations, or scheduling changes as these occur during the semester. It is your responsibility to ensure that your UH email account is set to forward these announcements to the account you use most frequently (if different from the above) and that your UH inbox is emptied regularly.

Academic Dishonesty

Each student is responsible for the content of work submitted or presented as their own. If you have any questions about what constitutes acceptable use of others’ ideas or information when making presentations, completing assignments, or writing your practice comprehensive exam question please come see me and/or consult the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s online Student Conduct Code: http://www.studentaffairs.manoa.hawaii.edu/policies/conduct_code/. Plagiarism will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Depending on the severity of the offence, sanctions may range from the receipt of lower or failing grades for the exercise or course in question to dismissal from the university without possibility of readmission. Infractions will be referred to the UH administration for disciplinary action.
Disabilities and Special Needs

Students with disabilities or in need of special classroom accommodations must contact the instructor and UHM KOKUA as soon as possible ([V/T] 956-7511 or [V/T] 956-7612; email: kokua@hawaii.edu). Additional information is available online (http://www.hawaii.edu/kokua/). KOKUA is located on the ground floor of the Queen Liliʻuokalani Center for Student Services, Room 103. Services are confidential and free of charge.
### Tentative Course Calendar

*This is a tentative schedule; all topics are subject to change. Lists of weekly readings will be distributed individually.*

#### WEEK 01
**Introduction & Logistics**
(Jan. 13)

#### WEEK 02
**What *Is* Archaeology?**  
(Jan. 20)  
*General seminar discussion*

#### WEEK 03
**The Art (and Science) of Argumentation**
(Jan. 27)  
*First presentation and student-led discussion*

#### WEEK 04
**Causality, Explanation, Epistemology & Methodological Practice**
( Feb. 03)  
*Second presentation and student-led discussion*

#### WEEK 05
**Theories of the Middle Range**
( Feb. 10)  
*Third presentation and student-led discussion*

#### WEEK 06
**Case Studies, Comparisons & Tests of Ideas**
( Feb. 17)  
*Fourth presentation and student-led discussion*

#### WEEK 07
**Natural Experiments of History**
( Feb. 24)  
*Fifth presentation and student-led discussion*

#### WEEK 08
**Modes of Comparison in Archaeology**
( Mar. 02)  
*Melbourne Method assignment 1: Group 1 critique/Group 2 response*

#### WEEK 09
**Dealing with Diversity**
( Mar. 09)  
*Melbourne Method assignment 2: Group 2 critique/Group 1 response*

#### WEEK 10
**Agents, Aggrandizers, Managers & Mooches**
( Mar. 16)  
*Melbourne Method assignment 3: Group 1 critique/Group 2 response*

#### WEEK 11
**SPRING RECESS—NO CLASS**
(Mar. 23)

#### WEEK 12
**Households, Communities & Change—Pt. 1**
( Mar. 30)  
*Melbourne Method assignment 4: Group 1 critique/Group 2 response*

#### WEEK 13
**INSTRUCTOR AWAY AT CONFERENCE—NO CLASS**
(Apr. 06)

#### WEEK 14
**Households, Communities & Change—Pt. 2**
( Apr. 20)  
*Melbourne Method assignment 5: Group 1 critique/Group 2 response*

#### WEEK 15
**Interaction, Integration & Ecology**
( Apr. 27)  
*Melbourne Method assignment 6: Group 2 critique/Group 1 response*

#### WEEK 16
**COMP. QUESTION ANSWER DUE—NO CLASS**
(May. 04)
What Is Archaeology?
Readings for Week 02

Required

Nichols, Deborah L., Rosemary A. Joyce, and Susan D. Gillespie

Schiffer, Michael B.
2011  Archaeology as Anthropology: Where Did We Go Wrong? The SAA Archaeological Record 4:22–28.

Smith, Michael E., Gary M. Feinman, Robert D. Drennan, Timothy Earle, and Ian Morris
2012  Archaeology as a Social Science. PNAS 109:7617–7621.


Cobb, Charles R.
The Art (and Science) of Argumentation
Readings for Week 03

Required

Martin, Michael

Healy, Kiren

Boyer, Pascal

Smith, Michael E.

Recommended

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, ad Joseph M. Williams

Haber, Stephen
1999 Anything Goes: Mexico's "New" Cultural History. *Hispanic American Historical Review* 79:309–330. (This is a nice discussion of the issues of ontology and epistemology in history that is also relevant to archaeology. In short, Haber asks the important question: "How would you know if you are wrong?")
Causality, Explanation, Epistemology & Methodological Practice
Readings for Week 04

Required

Tilly, Charles

Wylie, Alison

Recommended

Abbott, Andrew
2004 Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences. W. W. Norton: New York. (A fantastic primer on different ways of thinking in the social sciences and their underlying mechanics. A must read for those about to embark on research of their own. Ch. 1: "Explanation," is most relevant to this week's subject.)

Kelley, Jane H. and Marsha P. Hanen
1988 Archaeology and the Methodology of Science. University of New Mexico Press: Albuquerque. (An excellent but often overlooked text on the application of the scientific method in archaeology.)

Gerring, John
2012 Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework, 2nd Edition. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. (An excellent introduction to epistemological and methodological pluralism in the social sciences. Gerring presents a "unifying" framework for social science research based in hypothesis formulation, description and causation. Each of these three topics is associated with a set of criteria that help us to define best practice.)
Theories of the Middle Range  
Readings for Week 05

Required

Abend, Gabriel  

Merton, Robert K.  

Raab, L. Mark and Albert C. Goodyear  

Fogelin, Lars  
Case Studies, Comparisons & Tests of Ideas
Readings for Week 06

Required

Gerring, John
2006  Chapter 1: The Conundrum of the Case Study; Chapter 2: What is a Case Study?; and Chapter 3: What is a Case Study Good For? In Case Study Research: Principles and Practices, pp. 1–63. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. (This reading is not as long as it appears at first to be. Understand what Gerring is saying here, but don't get mired down in too many details.)

Tilly, Charles
Natural Experiments of History
Readings for Week 07

Required

Dunning, Thad

Kirch, Patrick V.

Nunn, Nathan

Banerjee, Abhijit, and Lakshmi Iyer

Diamond, Jared, and James A. Robinson

Recommended

Dunning, Thad
2012  *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences: A Design-Based Approach*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. (An extensive, up-to-date treatment that covers the discovery, analysis, and evaluation of natural experiments.)
Modes of Comparison in Archaeology  
Readings for Week 08

Required

Smith, Michael E., and Peter Peregrine  

Smith, Michael E.  

Trigger, Bruce G.  

Peregrine, Peter  

Earle, Timothy, and Kristian Kristiansen  

Recommended

Kirch, Patrick V.  
1984 *The Evolution of the Polynesian Chiefdoms*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge. (Kirch, like everyone else working on Polynesia, relies unduly heavily on ethnographic information, even though by the time this volume appeared there was beginning to be some useful archaeological data to provide time depth. Despite what I see as some conceptual confusion about what Kirch is up to, it’s a classic work anyone seriously interested in comparative archaeology must read sooner or later.)

Earle, Timothy  
1997 *How Chiefs Come to Power: The Political Economy in Prehistory*. Stanford University Press: Stanford. (Earle compares three regions: the Upper Mantaro Valley [Peru], Thy [Denmark], and Hawai‘i. He places aspiring elites’ self-aggrandizing strategies at the core of the forces of social change in each region. Earle identifies three such forces: economic, ideological, and military. Although he considers political power in all societies to be based on a shifting balance of all three forces, finally, it is control over economic production that carries the day for Earle.)
Smith, Adam T.  
2003  *The Political Landscape: Constellations of Authority in Early Complex Polities*. University of California Press, Berkeley. (A very good book by the intellectual successor to Bruce Trigger [who died in 2006]. Like Trigger, it is similarities, not differences that Smith finds compelling and in need of explanation).

Peregrine, Peter N., Carol R. Ember, and Melvin Ember  

Blanton, Richard, and Lane Fargher  
2008  *Collective Action in the Formation of Premodern States*. Springer: New York. (Blanton and Fargher are the current belles of the comparative archaeology ball. Their concern is in studying egalitarianism [that is, democratizing mechanisms] in early state structures. They utilize a standard causal analysis of HRAF-variable codings for a large number of archaeological and historical cases.)

Mann, Michael  
Dealing with Diversity
Readings for Week 09

Required

Feinman, Gary M.

Wilson, Gregory D., Jon Marcoux, and Brad Koldehoff

Drennan, Robert D., Christian E. Peterson, and Jake R. Fox

Lillios, Katina T.

Recommended

Sahlins, Marshall D.

Sanders, William T., and David Webster

Rautman, Alison E.

Feinman, Gary M., Kent G. Lightfoot, and Steadman Upham
Agents, Aggrandizers, Managers & Mooches  
Readings for Week 10

**Required**

Clark, John E., and Michael Blake  

Spencer, Charles S.  

Smith, Eric Alden, and Jung-Kyoo Choi  

Eerkens, Jelmer W.  

**Recommended**

Hayden, Brian  

Weissner, Polly  

Kennett, Douglas J., Bruce Winterhalder, Jacob Bartruff, and Jon M. Erlandson  

Kohler, Timothy A., Denton Cockburn, Paul L. Hooper, R. Kyle Bocinsky, and Ziad Kobti  
Households, Communities & Change—Pt. 1
Readings for Week 12

Required

Arnold, Jeanne E.

Van Gijseghem, Hendrik, and Kevin J. Vaughn

Peterson, Christian E., and Gideon Shelach

Hastorf, Christine A.

Recommended

Lesure, Richard G., and Michael Blake
Households, Communities & Change—Pt. 2
Readings for Week 14

Required

Drennan, Robert D., and Christian E. Peterson

Peterson, Christian E., and Robert D. Drennan

Kuijt, Ian
Interaction, Integration & Ecology
Readings for Week 15

Required

Berrey, C. Adam

Kennett, Douglas J., Bruce Winterhalder, Jacob Bartruff, and Jon M. Erlandson

Fletcher, Roland

Artursson, Magnus, Timothy Early, and James Brown

Recommended

Kohler, Timothy A., Denton Cockburn, Paul L. Hooper, R. Kyle Bocinsky, and Ziad Kobti

Kolb, Michael J.

Wills, W. H., and Wetherbee Bryan Dorshow