

Anthropology 256
A History of Archaeological Thought

Semester II, 2008-2009
Mr. Kohl

A History of Archaeological Thought

A History of Archaeological Thought is an intermediate level course intended to introduce students to the development of archaeological theory from the early 19th century realization that the remote past could be reconstructed solely on the basis of the archaeological record to later developments, such as attempts to identify ethnic/linguistic groups exclusively from material remains. It will trace the emergence of archaeology as a sub-field within anthropology and its continuing close interaction with broader developments in anthropological theory. The course contrasts perspectives that emphasize internal social evolution and adaptation to local environmental settings with post-modern responses that stress multiple perspectives on a contingent past. Students will be introduced to different theoretical approaches to interpreting the archaeological record, such as cultural ecology and neo-evolutionary processual archaeology, archaeologies of identity and place and landscape, Marxist historical materialism and world systems theory, and so-called symbolic/cognitive archaeology. This course reviews different theoretical approaches for explaining the past, emphasizing the positive interaction between accumulating archaeological discoveries and their interpretation and analysis. Social theories, originally formulated in sociology and social anthropology, are evaluated for their adequacy in understanding the material culture record of archaeology. The suitability of these theoretical approaches for interpreting the archaeological record will be critically examined.

An essay quiz will be given in class on **March 20th**. There will be no final exam. During the course of the term, each student will make **2-3 short oral reports in class (5-10 minutes each)**, summarizing a specific assigned or recommended reading and, after spring break, make a **longer oral presentation (15 minutes) on the subject of their final paper**. This **final paper (c. 15 to 20 pages)** may consist of an analysis of a specific theoretical approach (e.g. world systems theory; or the archaeology of identity/ethnicity) and/or focus on the writings of a specific archaeological theorist, such as C. Renfrew, T. Earle, or K. Flannery. Students should consult with Prof. Kohl early in the term to discuss their final paper topic, and they are encouraged to meet with him regularly throughout the term, particularly during his office hours, which are Tuesdays and Fridays 1:15 to 3:00 PM (Pendleton East 345, ex. 2146).

Books Available at Wellesley College Bookstore

AHAT – *A History of Archaeological Thought* by B.G. Trigger, 2nd ed.

FMM – *Frauds, Myths, and Mysteries* by K. Feder, 6th ed.

AT – *Archaeological Theory* by M. Johnson

FSA – *Foundations of Social Archaeology: selected writings of V. Gordon Childe*, ed. by T.C. Patterson and C.E. Orser, Jr.

ATT – *Archaeological Theory Today*, ed. by I. Hodder

IPP – *In Pursuit of the Past* by L. Binford

LT – *The Leopard's Tale* by I. Hodder

Listed Books with Assigned or Recommended Readings

HA – *Histories of Archaeology* ed. by T. Murray and C. Evans

RP – *Reading the Past* by I. Hodder, 2nd or 3rd edition (with S. Hutson)

P-MHM – *Prehistory: the making of the human mind* by C. Renfrew

BAE – *Bronze Age Economics* by T. Earle

TTC – *Theory of Culture Change* by J. Steward

ATA – *Archaeological Thought in America* by C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky

AT-WSA – *Archaeological Theory: who sets the agenda?* ed. by A. Sherratt and N. Yoffee

MAS – *Myths of the Archaic State* by N. Yoffee

IPP – *Ideology, Power, and Prehistory* ed. by D. Miller and C. Tilley

PL – *The Political Landscape* by A.T. Smith

TT-EPA – *Thinking from Things: essays in the philosophy of archaeology* by A. Wylie

MPA – *Marxist Perspectives in Archaeology*, ed. by M. Spriggs

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 (Feb. 3rd & 6th) – Science and Pseudo-Science in Archaeology

Assigned reading: FMM – entire or as much as you can

- Week 2 (Feb. 10th & 13th) – From Antiquarianism to the Birth of the Idea of Prehistory
Assigned Reading: AHAT – chapters 2-4, pp. 40-165.
Recommended Readings: AT – chapter , pp. ; and *The Idea of Prehistory* by G. Daniel (for oral report?)
- Week 3 (Feb. 17th & 20th) – Late 19th Century “Unilinear” Evolutionism
Assigned Reading: AHAT – chapter 5, pp. 166-210, FSA – chapters 1, 3, and 7 (for oral reports)
Recommended Readings: Prehistoric Times by Lord Avebury (Lubbock) skim for oral report; “The Evolution of Culture” by Gen. A. Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers (essay for oral report)
- Week 4 (Feb. 24th & 27th) – Culture-Historical Archaeology and the Social Archaeology of V. Gordon Childe
Assigned Readings: AHAT – chapters 6 (entire) and chapter 7 through section on Grahame Clark or through p. 360;
FSA – chapters 2, 4-6, 8-13 (for oral reports)
Recommended Reading: “Star Carr: a case study in bioarchaeology” by Grahame Clark (for oral report)
- Week 5 (March 3rd & 6th) – The Birth of Archaeological Theory and the Emergence of the New Neo-Evolutionist Processual Archaeology
Assigned Readings: AT – chapters , pp. ; AHAT – chapter 7 from pp. 361-385 and chapter 8, pp. 386-418;
TCC – chapters 1-3, 6-9, and 11 (for oral report)
Recommended Readings: *The Evolution of Urban Society* by R. Mc.Adams (for oral report?); BAE – chapters 1-3 (for oral report?); HA – chapter 3 “Introduction and Polemic” by D. Clarke (oral report?)
- Week 6 (March 10th & 13th) – Archaeology as Anthropology, Middle-Range Theory, and Reinterpreting the Palaeolithic: the new archaeology of L.R. Binford
Assigned Readings: IPP – chapters 1-7
Recommended Readings; TT-EPA – part one and part two, chapter 3 (for oral reports)
- Week 7 (March 17th) – Systems Theory and the Cultural Evolutionism of K.V. Flannery
Assigned Readings: “Archaeological Systems Theory and Early Mesoamerica (xerox),” by K. Flannery; “The Cultural Evolution of Civilizations (xerox),” by K. Flannery; and “Formative Oaxaca and the Zapotec Cosmos (xerox),” by K. Flannery and J. Marcus;
Recommended Readings: “The Golden Marshalltown: a parable

for the archaeology of the 1980s,” by K. Flannery in American Anthropologist 1982, vol. 84 (2): pp. 265-278 (for oral report); “On the Resilience of Anthropological Archaeology,” by K. Flannery in Annual Review of Anthropology 2006, vol. 35: 1-13 (for oral report)

March 20th – First Essay Quiz

Week 8 (March 31st & April 3rd) – Marxist Archaeology and World Systems Analysis

Assigned Readings: AHAT – chapter 8 pp. 414-444; AT – chapters, pp. , MPA – article by Gilman and ATA-articles by Gilman and Kohl
Recommended Reading: “World Systems and Modeling Macro-Historical Processes in Later Prehistory: an examination of old and a search for new perspectives (xerox),” by P.L. Kohl (for oral report)

Weeks 9 -11 (April 7 & 10th and April 14th & 24th and April 28th & May 1st) – The Post-Processualist Reaction and the Proliferation of Perspectives on the Past

[note no Classes on April 17th (possibly to be made up?) and April 21st (Monday schedule due to Patriot’s Day)]

Begin Student Oral Presentations on Final Paper Topics

A. Week 9 – The Emergence of Post-Processual Archaeology and the Rejection of Materialism

Assigned Readings: AT – chapters , pp. ; AHAT – chapter 8, pp. 444-483; RP (2nd edition) – chapters 1,2, 5, 7, and 8
Recommended Readings: ATT – chapters 4 and 5

B. Week 10 – Multiple Perspectives on the Past 1: evolutionary archaeology; agency in the archaeological record; and archaeologies of identity and place and landscape
Assigned Readings: ATT – chapters 3, 6, 7, and 8

C. Week 11 – Multiple Perspectives on the Past 2: American material culture and post-colonial archaeology; Limits to post-processual diversity
Assigned Readings: ATT – chapters 9-11, AHAT – 9, pp. 484-528

Recommended Readings: AT-WSA introduction and articles by Kohl and Chippendale

Week 12 (May 5th & May 8th) – Entering the Socially Constructed World of the Late Neolithic: the extended case study of the excavations at Catalhoyuk
Assigned Reading: LT – entire;

End Student Oral Presentations on Final Paper Topics

Week 13 (May 12th) – Whither Archaeology?
Assigned Readings: AHAT – chapter 10; “Shared Social Fields: Evolutionary Convergence in Prehistory and Contemporary Practice,” by P.L. Kohl in American Anthropologist 2008, vol. 110 (4), pp. 495-506