

**Anthropology 3396B/ 9105B
Special Topics in Anthropology:
Artifact Analysis & Collections Management
Winter 2017**

Class time: Thursdays 2:30-5:30

Classroom: Rm: SSC 2257

Instructor: Dr. Neal Ferris

Office: SSC 3331

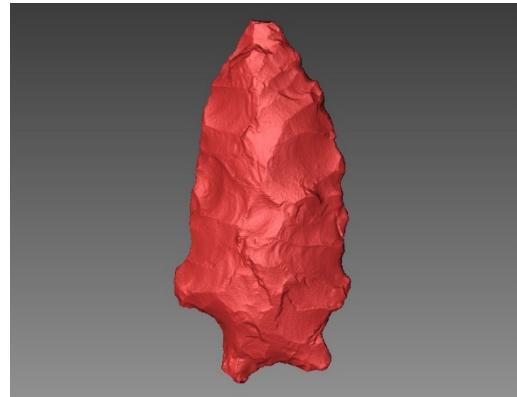
Email: nferris@uwo.ca

Office Hours: Thursdays 10:00-2:00

Please note that I am cross appointed with the Museum of Ontario Archaeology, and work over at Sustainable Archaeology other days during the week (1600 Attawandaron Road off of Wonderland near Fanshawe Park Road). So if you need to meet with me other than Mondays after class or during afternoon office hours, please email me to see if we can schedule a time to meet at the Museum, or, if mutually convenient, in the department.

Credit Value: 0.5

Requisites: Undergraduate: enrolled in 3rd or 4th year; Graduate: enrolled in MA or PhD program



Artifacts & Collections... An Introduction

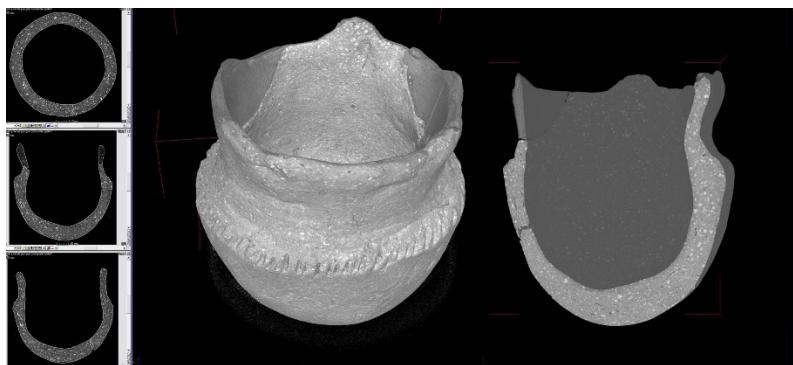
This experiential learning course will explore how archaeologists identify and analyze artifact object collections (this course will not be exploring materials such as floral or faunal remains), the work commonly done with artifacts in the lab after fieldwork. This course will provide students with an introduction to the identification, analysis and interpretation of major types of cultural materials commonly recovered from archaeological sites. Emphasis will be placed on developing practical skills and knowledge related to conducting analyses and reporting results of archaeological investigations in licence reports. The course will provide an overview of a broad range of cultural materials including: lithics, ceramics, metals, glass, and organic artifacts. As well, students will be introduced to matters of managing archaeological collections long term, including conservation, providing access, and maintaining collection integrity and contextual data. In addition, students will be introduced to basic method and theory with respect to: classification, typology, measurement, and digital analyses. By the end of the course undergraduate students will be able to work with, manage and report on archaeological collections, while graduate students will also be able to identify limitations in conventional typological and classification schemes, direct in the lab material analyses, and plan for specialist analyses on classes of artifacts from these collections.

The course has a significant "hands-on" component with collections and the cataloguing of collections. Assignments related to working with collections comprise a major part of the course grade.

PLEASE NOTE: We will be utilizing the Sustainable Archaeology online database for part of the course, and as such students will need to be logged in to the system. You will need to provide a valid email address for this purpose, and if you have one, bringing in your laptop when we get to that part of the course will be helpful for you.

In this course you will be working with artifact collections, from the department, from Sustainable Archaeology, and from the Museum of Ontario Archaeology. This will include working with collections in class, and time set aside in class to complete assignments. In those instances, it will be important to properly put away and bag up collections at the end of each class, to ensure no errors or loss of information occurs in the handling of these things. You will also work with both the Ontario Standards and Guidelines http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/publications/SG_2010.pdf, and the Sustainable Archaeology Database for recording artifact attributes <http://web.sa.uwo.ca/login>. These tools will familiarize you with expectations for identifying and recording artifacts, and the kinds of information different classes of artifacts generally contain of value.

This is a cross listed, graduate/undergraduate course. To reflect that difference, graduate students will be expected to undertake different assignments, or different contributions to common assignments.



NOTE: Graduate students are expected to have a basic ability to identify and classify artifact collections before starting the course (if this is not the case, talk to me early on). And while I have outlined expectations for graduate students here, I am also happy to tailor assignments to your interests. We can discuss this further at the end of the first class.

As this is both a graduate student course and advanced topics course for undergraduates, the course will operate as a combination of lectures, seminar discussion, identification exercises, presentations and an open conversation.... i.e., please don't come to class not expecting to talk. Your participation in discussions, questions you ask of me or whoever is presenting that day, etc., will all contribute to your participation mark. But to make this work you need to come to class prepared with questions and observations about the day's focus (that's what the course text can help you with). It'll make the class much more dynamic, and end up being reflected back to you in the final mark you receive!

The specific objectives of this course are that students:

- 1) Learn how to sort, identify and manage most major classes of artifacts found in a collection from eastern North America, either from ancient or more recent eras, and the cataloguing preferences followed in Ontario for artifacts.
- 2) Understand the steps in processing a collection – from artifact identification, classification and analysis, to digital imaging and reporting, to long term conservation and storage.

- 3) Are introduced to the strengths and limitations of typological schemes commonly used in archaeology for those major classes of artifact explored in this course;
- 4) Understand the challenges and opportunities of managing legacy collections and value-added research that can be conducted on existing collections.
- 5) Understand the immediate and ongoing obligations of the archaeologist to ensure the continuing integrity of these material collections that also represent the material heritage of a place and people.

Course Text:

Archaeological Laboratory Methods: An Introduction. Edition 6 2014. Mark Sutton and Brooke Arkush.

Note: This is a required text for undergraduate students. Graduate students should consider picking up a copy only if you have had very limited experience working with artifacts previously.

Course Evaluation:

Final grades will be based on your participation in class, and your contributions to the following assignments:

Relevant dates and the weighting of each assessed component are as follows:

Assessed Component of Final Grade	Page Length /# Under-graduates	Page Length/# Graduates	Due Date	Percent of Final Grade Undergraduate	Percent of Final Grade Graduate
Class Participation	na	na	throughout	10%	20%
Artifact Identification Quizzes	na	na	During artifact classes	2 x 10%	na
How to Conserve...	3-4	na	Presentations February 9th; write up due February 16th	20%	na
Presentation on a Specific Artifact Type	na	na	During artifact classes	na	15%
Exploring the Benefits/Problems of Destructive Analyses	na	na	March 16	na	15%
Collection Processing, Analysis, and Interpretation	Log book	Log book; 4-5 page report	Through March; group presentation on April 6th	25%	25%
Critical evaluation of requirements for	na	10-15 pages	Email the jurisdiction you	na	25%

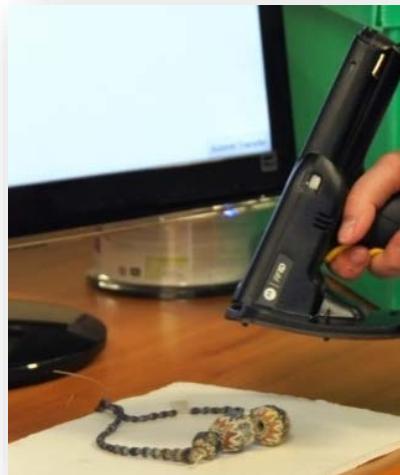
collection analysis and long term care			choose by January 26 th ; Due by end of April		
Final Exam	na	na	TBD	25%	na

Submitting Assignments: My preference is NOT to receive hard copies of your assignments. I will accept assignments emailed to me as Word (.doc or docx) or linked Google docs files.

1. **Class Participation (10% undergraduate, 20% graduate):** While the first part of the course will include a lot of talking, by the latter part of the course we'll be working on collections in a more informal context. In addition, both graduate and undergraduate students will present to the class at various times. In all these contexts I expect people to be asking questions, commenting and contributing to the discussion. In addition, I expect graduate students to take a "team lead/lab manager" role during the collections analysis. Basically, the more you participate in the class - the more you help make the course a discussion - the better your participation mark is!

2. **Identification Quizzes (20% undergraduate – 2 x 10% each):** Undergraduate students will be asked to sort and identify a group of artifacts in class, and record relevant attributes about the artifacts, generating a brief catalogue of the material. These quizzes will occur during the classes where we are talking about artifact materials. Students may be provided with a sample of a single artifact class, or several, but you will already be familiar with the materials by the time you are quizzed on them. You will be provided with a recording form to assist in doing the quiz. Grades will be assigned based on accuracy and completeness of your artifact analysis.

3. **Assignment: Conservation Methods (20% undergraduate):** Undergraduate students will work in groups of 2 or 3 to research how archaeologists and conservators have sought to conserve different kinds of artifact materials, either to aid in analysis, or to preserve them long term. Groups will be assigned one of the following materials: Metals, Ceramics and Glass, Bone and Shell, Wood and Other perishables. If a fifth group is needed, then metals will be broken down into iron and other metals. Your job will be to research the issues facing the material class you are exploring, both in terms of preservation, and in terms of the kinds of things archaeologists do in the field and lab that can cause the need for conservation. You will then review the differing conservation steps that can be taken to conserve the objects, and any issues associated with differing methods. You will make a presentation in class at the end of your research, in effect outlining the strengths and weakness of the methodology. Your presentation will also be about making the case for why we should allocate a limited lab budget to conserving your material over others... that means understanding how much such methods can cost, and being able to weigh the risk of loss of your material over any other. Each group member will provide a written report a week after the presentation detailing your findings, how you worked together and pulled your presentation together, and your reaction to the feedback you got during presentations. Your grade will be based 10% on the presentation, and 10% on your written summary.



4. Presentation: Teaching an Artifact Type (15% graduate):

During the January-early February classes each graduate student will present on a particular artifact class/type. The presentation should be designed as though you are teaching a workshop on the artifact type, and training individuals how to analyze the material to answer research questions. Your presentation should include information on the range of materials found for the artifact type, the various forms the type takes, its chronological and regional distribution, the types of research questions the artifact class can be used to address, and common analysis methods used for this class of artifact. The choices to present on includes smoking pipes, scraping tools, axes, and beads. Although we may touch briefly on some of these artifact types in general class discussion, your presentation should be considerably more in depth. You should also provide the class with a list of online and published references the class can use in researching this artifact type. Beyond the bibliography, there is no written component for this assignment. Your grade will be based on the thoroughness and direction of the information provided, the style and form of the presentation, your ability to teach through the presentation, and your ability to engage the class.

5. Presentation: Introduction to Destructive Analyses (15% graduate):

On March 9th, graduate students will each provide a short presentation on a different form of destructive analysis used for archaeological purposes. The choices of topic are ceramic thin sectioning, radiocarbon dating, isotopic analysis, and DNA testing (you can choose another form of analysis if you are interested in something else). The presentation should be designed as though you are making the case for undertaking this destructive analysis for our collections, by reviewing the benefits of the method and contributions it can make to research, the strengths of the process over any non-destructive alternatives, a cost benefit analysis of the study (i.e., consider how much it costs relative to the information obtained), and address any ethical issues in undertaking the study. There is no written component for this assignment. Your grade will be based on the thoroughness of the information provided, the style and form of the presentation, your ability to make a case for using this method, and your ability to engage the class.

6. Processing a Collection (25% undergraduates; 25% graduates):

Through much of March, you will be working in a team made up of undergraduate students and one graduate student with an archaeological collection brought in to class for this purpose. Each team will be assigned a distinct Indigenous-Era or Industrial-Era collection to work with. You will be identifying and cataloguing information about the collection, using the Sustainable Archaeology Database to input that information, and preparing the collections for long term care in Sustainable Archaeology's repository. Through this process you are also going to be learning about the collection, thinking about the collection, dealing with contextual limitations for the collection, and developing some interpretations from the collection. Undergraduate students will be responsible for the processing and basic analysis of the collections in the SA database and the packaging of the collections for long term care, while graduate students will be responsible for supervising the processing, undertaking a more detailed analysis the collection by reviewing relevant literature, and generating interpretations from the research you have done on these materials.

All students will maintain a log book during this exercise (paper or digital), detailing what you are doing, the issues encountered, and how issues were resolved. On the last class, each team will review how they progressed and the issues their team encountered, and the graduate student of the team will present their interpretations about the collection. Graduate students will need to

provide a 4-5 page summary of the detailed analysis they did for the collection, including references cited for sources used. Grades for undergraduate students will be based on the quality of the processing of the collection, their log book entries, the information they each recorded into the SA database, and their part in the presentation. Grades for graduate students will be based on the leadership role they followed during in class analysis, their log books, their detailed analysis and interpretations summary, and their role in the presentation.

- 7 Graduate Final Assignment: Critiquing Collections Management Requirements (25% graduate):**
For your final assignment, you will pick a jurisdiction in Canada or the United States, determine what the requirements are in that jurisdiction, and critically review those requirements for collections identification, analysis, cataloguing, long term care, access to collections and ownership. You need to determine that there is sufficient detail available in the jurisdiction you select in order to provide a robust critique, based on everything we've explored in class, and based on contemporary issues of practice. I am particularly interested in seeing you explore the logics of those requirements (e.g., is this description for description sake, for providing researchers access to information, to only record contextual data, etc.), and whether there is a distinction made between CRM and other forms of archaeological practice in the requirements (and if so what are the implications of these). I expect this to be a thorough review that explores the nature of the requirements, what the apparent intent of the requirements seeks to serve, how reflective or rote are they in use of typologies, lexicon, etc., how they resolve/make more problematic long term care issues of collections management, and how, if at all, they address Descendant or Source community needs in those requirements as well as archaeologist and non-archaeologist access to these collections. While I would prefer you to use a jurisdiction other than Ontario – since we will be talking about their requirements in class – if you can make a case that the angle you will take is distinct, I can be convinced.

Please write your paper to *American Antiquity* format. Please email me by the January 26th class identifying the jurisdiction you wish to explore for this assignment. Please include the urls or sources for the requirements so I can review them to ensure there is enough there for you to write about.

- 8 Undergraduate Student Final Exam (24% undergraduate):**
Your final exam will focus on class and text book content, presentations, and your experiences working with collections. It will include multiple choice, short answers and artifact identification and analyses.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Note: Several classes will have in-class lab components for students to work with materials that are subject of class topics.

January 5th: **Introduction to Artifact Analysis**
Relevant reading from Course Text: Chapters 1 and 2

January 12th: **Processing and Identifying Artifacts; Ceramics**
Relevant reading from Course Text: Chapters 3, 6

- January 19th:** **Ceramics/Lithics**
Relevant reading from Course Text: Chapters 9 (pp. 173-186); 4
- January 26th:** **Lithics Continued**
Relevant reading from Course Text: Chapters 5
- February 2nd:** **Metals, Glass and Organics**
Relevant reading from Course Text: Chapters 7, rest of Chapter 9
- February 9th:** **Conservation Presentations**
- February 16th:** **Regulating Care; Issues of Legacy Collections**
- February 23rd:** **READING WEEK**
- March 2nd:** **Field Trip to Sustainable Archaeology; Digital Analyses and introduction to the SA database**
- March 9th:** **Graduate student presentations on destructive analyses; Introduction to Major Project Analysis... Processing a Collection**
- March 16th:** **Class Time for Completing Processing of assigned collections**
- March 23rd:** **Class Time for Completing Processing of assigned collections**
- March 30th:** **Who Handles, Sees, Owns These? Issues of Stewardship, Exhibition and Restriction**
- April 6th:** **Collections Analysis Presentations**

Western Standard Course 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, with links to the full policies, at: http://anthropology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/course_information/academic_policies.html

Requisites for this course - Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This 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 Syllabus - The Course syllabus is, in effect, a contract between instructor and student over mutual expectations for the course, course content, and grading. Any changes to the course after a syllabus has been finalized needs to be mutually agreed to by the instructor and a consensus of students in the class. However, NOT reading the syllabus is NOT acceptable as an excuse for not getting something done or claiming you were not informed of course expectations/assignments. At this point I would add that failure to read this syllabus, as evidenced by asking a question that is clearly answered in the syllabus, may invoke the wrath of Kahn, Voldemort, Thanos, Mugatu, Donald Trump or whatever evil being or supervillain you imagine here. Also, if you get this far, feel free to email me with the subject header "I read it through" to score a 1% bonus mark! Offer valid only until 11:59 PM, Friday, January 6th. If you have any questions about anything in the course syllabus or wish to raise a concern, please meet with me during office hours to discuss further.