

**Department of Anthropology**

**ANTHRO 9127-001: Historical Material Culture**

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Fall 2024**

*September 8, 2024*

**Instructor and course information:**

Class day/time: Wednesday 9:30–12:30pm

Classroom: TBD - will announce prior to class!

Instructor: Dr. Trish Markert (she/her)

Office: SSC 3433

Office hours: Tuesday, 1-3pm or by appointment

Email: [pmarkert@uwo.ca](mailto:pmarkert@uwo.ca)

Credit Value: 0.5

Antirequisites: None

Prerequisites: None

**Course Description:**

Material culture encompasses the relationships between people and their material world (e.g., objects, landscapes, written records, architecture). This course offers a hands-on approach to the archaeological theorization, identification, recordation, and analysis of material culture of the 19th and 20th centuries. We will begin by exploring conceptual frameworks for thinking through artifacts, built landscapes, and archives. What are materials and how do they shape our lives, and vice versa? How do people mobilize things to create meaning, make places, negotiate identities, remember and forget, or simply go about their daily lives – and how do archaeologists make sense of the material remains of these processes decades or centuries later? With this theoretical foundation, we will examine diagnostic and methodological approaches to historical material culture. Students will learn to identify, catalog, analyze, conserve, and curate historic materials including glass, ceramic, and metal, as well as practice methods like photogrammetry for recording objects and buildings. Partnering with local organizations like TMHC Inc and the Museum of Ontario Archaeology, students will work with real historic collections to complete term projects, which include a public-facing exhibit design and a research essay/material culture analysis.

Materials, of course, do not exist in a vacuum; they are intimately connected to the processes, movements, and narratives that shape our lives. Therefore, we will focus on several thematic issues throughout the term: migration, colonialism, race/ethnicity, industry, heritage, and personhood. The collections we work with will sit at the intersection of one or more of these themes, and term projects will explore them in analytical depth. Students from the Migration and Ethnic Relations Collaborative Specialization will select term projects that align specifically with issues of historic migration and ethnic identity in Ontario.

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course's OWL Brightspace site before the first day of class.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

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

- Correctly identify types of 19th and 20th century artifacts including glass, ceramics, metal, architectural materials, and personal items
- Conduct individual research and analysis on an historic assemblage in partnership with a community partner
- Record architecture and the built landscape using traditional and digital mapping techniques
- Explain material culture theories and use them to conduct a sophisticated analysis of material culture in 19th and 20th century contexts
- Find and use primary and secondary archival sources to compile histories of sites, events, and/or objects
- Read and critically evaluate book-length works that deal with various aspects of material culture research
- Synthesize material data with other forms of data (e.g., spatial, oral history, archival, genealogical, ethnographic) to generate a professional output and interpretative research paper
- Explain how historic materials exist within broader social, political, and cultural contexts and intersect with issues of migration, colonialism, race/ethnicity, industry, heritage, and personhood, among other themes.
- Write across genres (e.g., analytical reports and public-facing media) to share material culture analyses with diverse audiences

### **Course Materials:**

We will read three books this term. These books provide a foundation for archaeological approaches to material culture, material culture research, and understanding materials in historic context. You will be responsible for keeping up with the reading and being prepared for book discussions when they are listed on the course schedule. I will also post short supplemental materials (e.g., short academic or public-facing articles, artifact identification guides) for some weeks on OWL, and there may be some reading (e.g., site reports) associated with your semester project.

These are available for purchase through the Western bookstore. You're also welcome to find these used or in a digital format.

1. Deetz, James (1996) *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life*. Anchor Books, New York/Random House of Canada Limited, Toronto.
2. Hannan, Leonie and Sarah Longair (2017) *History Through Material Culture*. Manchester University Press, Manchester, UK.

Available for free online through Western Libraries with login.

3. White, Carolyn L. (2024) *A Cultural History of Objects in the Age of Industry*. The Cultural History Series, Volume 6. Bloomsbury Publishing, New York. (174 pages)

OR (your choice!)

Wilkie, Laurie A. and John M. Chenoweth, eds. (2022) *A Cultural History of Objects in the Modern Age*. The Cultural History Series, Volume 6. Bloomsbury Publishing, New York. (223 pages)

### **Semester Research Project:**

Each graduate student will work with a real historic collection or other type of material culture from an institutional partner (e.g., Museum of Ontario Archaeology (MOA); TMHC Inc.) to complete a term project. I've collaborated with these partners to create a list of potential projects that I will present to you on the first day of class. Projects could include cataloging 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century artifacts; analyzing a feature and its previously cataloged assemblage; conducting archival research; writing an analytical or interpretive report; preparing public-facing interpretative materials; and so on. Once students match with projects, you will develop a short proposal in conversation with whoever is providing the assemblage – remember, this is meant to be a learning opportunity for you while producing a useful product for them – and email it to me by Friday, September 20. I will meet with grad students individually during the fourth week of classes to talk through your proposed project and work out any remaining logistics, including lab space, resources, and project outputs. Your semester research project will form the basis for the following graded assignments: weekly lab work, final paper/products, and final exhibit.

### **Evaluation:**

Grades will be based on the following:

- Weekly lab work (20%)
- Theory forum (10%)
- Book reviews (15%)
- Final research product and paper (40%)
- Final exhibit (15%)

#### Weekly Lab Work/Research (20%)

We will have dedicated lab space in the department for semester projects, and the MOA has also offered to provide lab space and resources for students working on materials they provide. I will provide class time (usually 45 min-1 hour) to work on projects, but they will also require you to schedule lab or research time outside of class. Each week, I will ask that you submit a weekly report on what you have completed, any issues or questions, and next steps. I will be available to consult on artifact identification, analyses, and other questions as needed!

#### Theory Forum (10%)

During the fourth week of class (Sept. 25), we will hold a theory forum to discuss materiality theories that prompt us to think about the material world, objects/things, and our interactions with them in different ways. At the end of our first meeting on Sept. 11, we will assign a theory or theorist to each graduate student, who will then be responsible for researching that theory and reporting back to the class in an informal 5-7 minute presentation as part of the forum. Reading,

processing, and conveying theory in accessible ways is an important skill to develop in graduate school – so feel free to get creative with it, think about applications and examples, etc. Aside from the presentation, I will ask you to submit your presentation notes (outlines are fine!) and a works cited to OWL by 11:59pm on Sept. 25.

Book Reviews (3x5% = 15%)

Instead of weekly articles, we will be reading three full books this term. These books provide a foundation for archaeological approaches to material culture, material culture research, and understanding materials in historic context. We will build in a few book discussions throughout the term, but the main way you will demonstrate engagement with the texts is by writing a book reflection upon completion of each book. Book reflections will be short – 500-700 words, or 2-3 pages double-spaced. They will critically address one or two of the book’s major themes, connect those with broader themes in anthropological or material culture research, assess strengths and weaknesses, and present your own response, reaction, or perspective to the book. They will be due three times throughout the semester, as marked on the weekly schedule.

Final Research Paper/Product (40%)

Your final research product will depend on your semester project (e.g., an artifact catalog, analytical report, photographs, 3D models, a blog post, etc.). This product will be determined in conversation with me and the project partner early in the term. The most important thing will be that it is completable within the timeframe of the course, so be sure to be realistic about your goals – I am available to help with this. (This is the purpose of the informal proposal earlier in the term and the weekly reports!) Grad students are invited to share their project in a showcase during class on Wednesday, November 28 – the showcase won’t be graded, but is a way for you to show off what you’ve been working on all term!

In addition to this product, you will also submit an 8–10-page research paper about some aspect of your project. Instead of a report, this paper should theoretically engage with the materials by approaching them through an interpretative framework. Your paper should include a works cited page in an appropriate citation style (e.g., Chicago, American Antiquity).

Final Material Culture Exhibit (15%)

One of the course's objectives is to develop skills presenting material culture research to a popular audience. Drawing on your semester project and other projects in class, you will help curate and prepare a material culture exhibit. The shape of the exhibit will depend on how projects unfold over the term, so I will announce details of this assignment after reading week in class and on OWL.

**Term Due Dates:**

Tuesdays	Weekly Lab/Research Reports; submit to OWL Brightspace by 11:59pm
Wed, Sept. 25	Theory Forum, in class presentation
	Notes and works cited; submit to OWL Brightspace by 11:59pm
Wed, Oct. 2	Book Review 1 (Deetz 1996); submit to OWL Brightspace by 11:59pm
Wed, Nov. 6	Book Review 2 (Hannan and Longair 2017); submit to OWL Brightspace by 11:59pm
Wed, Nov. 28	Graduate student project showcase (not graded)
Wed, Dec. 4	Final exhibit (details TBA)
Fri, Dec 6	Book Review 3 ( <i>A Cultural History...</i> ); submit to OWL Brightspace by 11:59pm

Fri, Dec. 20

Final paper and research products; submit to OWL Brightspace by 11:59pm

## **Academic Statements and Policies:**

### Communication Policy:

The best way to get in touch with me is by email. I will respond to emails as promptly as possible between 9am and 4pm, Tuesday through Friday, and between 8-9am or 3-4pm on Mondays. Though you may occasionally receive emails or announcements from me outside those hours, I generally reserve evenings and weekends for my family. If your request is urgent, please place URGENT in the subject line so I can attend to it as expediently as I can.

When you email me, please include your full name and the course you are enrolled in. Indicate why you are contacting me in the subject line and include any details I might need to address your questions or problem in the body of the email.

### Academic Integrity - Statement on Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

Please read and familiarize yourself with the "[Academic Offences](#)" section of the University's Academic Policies. These offenses are taken very seriously by the University and are treated as such. Penalties range from a failing grade for the assignment or the course to suspension or even expulsion from the University. I will provide you with the tools to properly reference and acknowledge other's work in class. Never hesitate to ask if you have a question about academic honesty.

### Course Specific Conditions Required to Pass this Course:

In order to pass this course, students must satisfactorily complete the weekly lab and/or other research work required for their term project and submit the final paper and product.

### Late Assignment Policy:

For all written assignments, I offer a two-day flexible submission window. If you need to take a day or two past the deadline, contact me **by the original deadline** to let me know when to expect your assignment. This applies to all assignments submitted on OWL, including the final paper. I cannot guarantee extensions beyond that submission window, even with academic considerations, but please do email me if you are having trouble meeting a deadline so we can discuss your options. For in-class presentations, the Missed Class policy applies.

### Missed Class Policy:

We meet 13 times during the term and will be covering a lot of material each class period. Attendance and participation in class activities are a large part of succeeding in the course. That said, things happen and life is unpredictable! Do your best to be in class but familiarize yourself with the following attendance policy so that you know your options and do not fall behind in the course:

- I offer two options for absences:

- **Option 1: contacting me before the missed class (x1).** If you need to miss class, you may email me before the start of class to let me know you will be absent and schedule a time to make up missed lab work. Everyone may make use of this option once (except for the final exhibit on Dec. 4), for any reason at all.
  - **Option 2: academic considerations through the Student Absence Portal (x1 with no documentation, then with appropriate documentation).** You can use the [Student Absence Portal](#) to ask for academic consideration any time, whether or not you make use of Option 1. To receive credit for the lab, you still must contact me within 48 hours of the missed class to schedule make-up work.
- Between both options, you can take two absences without documentation – but in both cases, you must contact me to schedule a time to make up missed lab work for credit.
  - All lab work and in-class presentations must be completed by the last day of classes for credit, regardless of considerations. In general, lab work must be completed within two weeks of the missed class to stay caught up with course material.
  - If you miss three classes, I will schedule an office hours appointment with you to check in about your progress in the course and determine whether you need any additional support.
  - After your first two absences, I will not provide the opportunity to make up lab work without academic consideration with documentation.
  - I will record the lecture and post it weekly to OWL Brightspace. If you miss class, I expect that you will watch the lecture before our next class period.
  - *Graduate students:* this policy also applies to you, but I encourage you to email me any time you miss class. Making up missed class periods might look different for you – extra lab time outside of class, meeting with me to go over missed material, checking in on projects, etc.

These policies are meant to lend flexibility in the case of minor illness, travel, or unexpected conflicts. In the event of my own illness, I will be in touch about changes to the course schedule, which might include a virtual class option or activities.

**A note on sickness:** if you are feeling ill or believe you might be contagious, it is important to take care of yourself and others by staying home! Please do not come to class sick. Do not hesitate to email me if you are concerned about missing class due to an illness and want to talk about your options. I will also have masks available for anyone who would like to use them during the term.

#### Assignment Submission:

All written assignments, unless otherwise specified, must be submitted to TurnItIn.com using the links on the course OWL site. Assignments should adhere to the following formatting guidelines provided in the assignment instructions provided in class or on OWL. Students should use an established citation style like Chicago, APA, or MLA for submissions. It is the student's responsibility to make sure that all in-text citations and bibliography entries are formatted properly and contain the correct information. Failure to cite sources appropriately in submissions (e.g., legibly, consistently, and with all necessary info) will result in point deduction. If you have questions about citation or academic honesty, I am happy to talk during office hours!

#### Academic Consideration:

University policy on academic considerations is described [here](#) and [here](#). This policy requires that all requests for academic considerations must be accompanied by a self-attestation. Further information about academic considerations, and information about submitting this self-attestation with your academic consideration request may be found here. Please note that any academic considerations granted in this course will be determined by the instructor, in consultation with the academic

advisors in your Faculty of Registration, in accordance with information presented in this course outline.

It is important to communicate with me as soon as you know you will need additional considerations (beyond course policies) to complete coursework or assignments, including exams. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking academic consideration based on medical or compassionate grounds ("[What is Academic Consideration](#)"). It is your responsibility to keep me informed about considerations and provide the appropriate documentation so that I can work with you on ways to stay caught up in class. All missed work must be made up by the end of the exam period in the applicable term.

#### *Accommodation for Religious Holidays:*

Students should review the policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays. Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

#### *Use of Generative AI Tools:*

We will discuss the ethical use of generative AI tools like ChatGPT on the first day of class. There is a lot to consider here; it is a rapidly changing landscape! It is essential that you critically evaluate any AI-obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop your own ideas, arguments, and perspectives. The following are policies I expect every student to adhere to in our class:

1. Using generative AI tools to do your work (e.g., reading, completing writing assignments) counts as academic dishonesty and is prohibited. If detected, it may result in a 0 for assignments.
2. If you use generative AI for general web or information searches, you must provide a short note at the bottom of the assignment stating what tool you used and how you used it. Like Google, this can be a starting point, but you should never use raw information you receive from an AI tools (see next point).
3. I will not accept citations of generative AI tools. If you find some useful information in your searches, it is your responsibility to fact check that information by tracking down the original and/or another external source and including an appropriate citation in addition to your AI statement.
4. I strongly discourage you from using AI to edit or revise your writing. I think there is value lost in the blanket voice that AI imposes on individual writing styles – I would much prefer to mark assignments your own voice, even with some imperfections, than a formulaic revision in the standard AI voice. (I really can't emphasize enough how boring it is to read AI-generated writing.)
5. I have seen a lot of AI generated writing, and while it generally appears clean and easy-to-read, the writing is almost always formulaic and lacks nuance. AI responses will set the tone for what C work in this course will look like. A and B work will need to demonstrate more nuance, critical thinking, engagement with course materials, and originality of voice than I see in AI responses.

I know AI tools increasingly offer functions that aid in many academic processes. However, building these skillsets is an important part of the course objectives, so my stated expectation is that you will actively work on developing those skills rather than using AI.

#### Accessible Education:

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. Please see [Accessible Education](#) for information.

#### Academic Rights and Responsibilities:

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current [Academic Policies in the Academic Calendar](#) which include, but is not limited to, academic consideration for medical illness, accommodation for religious holidays, academic appeals, academic accommodation for students with disabilities, as well as scholastic discipline.

#### Gender Based Violence:

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts [here](#).

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

#### Mental Health Support:

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

### **Weekly Topics and Readings:**

This is still subject to some change before our first meeting on Sept. 11! I list a topic for each week, and you will see my current thoughts on lecture topics in parentheses. I will provide a finalized course schedule when we meet. Beyond that, any additions or adjustments will be announced in advance in class and on OWL.

#### Week 1: Beginning of the term

Course outline posted to OWL Brightspace page.



Week 2: Material Culture (Archaeological and Interdisciplinary Perspectives) (Sept. 11)

Week 3: Artifacts (Making Sense of Things) (Sept. 18)

Week 4: Materiality (Making Sense of Materials) (Sept. 25)

Graduate Student Theory Forum

Week 5: Glass (Identifying Historic Bottles) (Oct. 2)

Book Review Due (Deetz 1996)

Week 6: Archives (Material Culture in/of the Colonial Archive) (Oct. 9)

Possible trip to Special Collections & Archives

Reading Week (Oct. 12-20)

Week 7: Ceramics (at the MOA!) (Oct. 23)

Field trip to the Museum of Ontario Archaeology (cost covered; we will figure out carpool in advance)

Week 8: Metal (and Gendered Assemblages) (Oct. 30)

Historical Material Culture Guides due (undergrad); "lightning" presentations in class

Week 9: Small Finds (Personhood in Belongings) (Nov. 6)

Book Review Due (Hannan and Longair 2017)

Week 10: Landscape/Architecture (Heritage/Memory/Contestation) (Nov. 13)

Week 11: Materials in the Modern Age (Moving People, Moving Materials) (Nov. 20)

Week 12: Curating Material Culture (Challenges, Ethics, Possibilities) (Nov. 27)

Graduate Student Research Showcase

Week 13: Final Material Culture Exhibit (Dec. 4)

Details TBD!

~ End ~