

COURSE OUTLINE
ANTHROPOLOGY 9101B
Research Methods in Archaeology/Bioarchaeology
Fall 2020

Class Meetings: Fridays 9:30-12:30 pm
Classroom: Zoom, Synchronous

Instructor: Neal Ferris

Office: SSC 3215

Office hours: 1:30-4:30 pm Mondays through a scheduled Zoom meeting time

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***Please note:** I am cross-appointed with the Museum of Ontario Archaeology, which means I have duties there (virtually or physically) on other days during the week that may preclude my access to Zoom. If you need to see me other than Mondays during office hours or after class, please email me to schedule a time to meet.*

Credit value: 0.5 credit

Calendar Description: This course offers an introduction to a range of issues related to the practice of anthropological research. Among the topics we will address through readings, presentations, and discussions are research design, ethics, and the advantages and limitations of different approaches to data collection, analysis, and presentation of results. This course is required for all graduate students working in archaeology or bioarchaeology.

Course Syllabus:

This course will examine methodological conceptions and challenges to undertaking archaeology and bioarchaeology research, the way methodologies are informed by and inform research, and can shape or be shaped by data. We will also examine the process of envisioning a research design - from the questions to ask, data to collect, to interpreting findings so they are of anthropological relevance. The class will also explore issues around balancing intellectual curiosity and academic freedom with broader societal accountabilities and ensuring ethical research. This course will not review basic methodologies in archaeology and bioarchaeology, but rather focus on the selection and justification of method(s) you anticipate using in your MA research. In other words, this class will very much be shaped by your specific interests and needs as you begin to plan for undertaking your research, and help you to start to think about what that will entail.

Learning Outcomes:

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

- 1) Consider what data is, and how methods not just compile but shape that data;
- 2) Describe a range of the methodological approaches used to engage research in archaeology and bioarchaeology;
- 3) Conceive and communicate your MA research by completing a preliminary draft of a research design for your project, explaining both the methods you expect to apply, and the broader research design informing that work;
- 4) Explore how your research engages with ethical expectations and can be accountable beyond itself.

PLEASE NOTE: As this course is intended to help you consider and frame the research you plan on doing, it will be very much about you. So your participation in discussions, class assignments, questions you ask of me or whoever is presenting that day, readings you wish the class to read and discuss, your own framing of a research design, etc., will all contribute to the success of the course for you.

Course Materials:

Required readings, for the most part, will be determined on a week by week basis by the choices you select to help facilitate in-class discussions.

In addition, we will be using the following text as part of class discussions and as a “behind the scenes” insight into framing archaeological research:

Engaging Archaeology: 25 Case Studies in Research Practice. Edited by Stephen Silliman, Wiley Blackwell 2018.

Note that this volume is available online through the Western Libraries system catalogue (though only through one of the online links gives you access as of the start of September!).

Evaluation:

This course is designed to operate in an open discussion seminar format, requiring

you to keep up with weekly readings, participate and lead in the discussion of the assigned readings, class presentations, and complete assignments.

1) Participation = 10%:

A key part of this class is that we will work as a group to help all of you develop and hone your planned research projects, and how you communicate about them. That means you will need to participate in class discussions and break out group interaction, and generally in providing each other with open and constructive feedback – and support – as we work our way through this less than ideal iteration of learning.

Part of the challenge we will face is the limitations of technology, and my and your limitations in “fixing” technological failings when they are encountered. That may mean we will need to tweak course expectations and the nature of participation for some or all of us, as the term wears on. But generally, if you keep up with readings and class expectations, and are willing to share some of the excitement you have for the research you will be doing as part of your degree, you will do fine in the course!

2) Initial Elevator Pitch = 10%:

In the second class, you will present on your planned research project, as you currently are thinking about it.

In your presentation, you will need to indicate a) the topic and what you feel is the core research question of your project; b) what kinds of data you plan to generate for the project using what kinds of methodologies; c) what you anticipate, at this point, being the challenges to undertaking this research or getting useable findings (COVID and non-COVID related), and the contingencies you may need to take into account; and d) how you feel your findings will be anthropological in orientation. You should also tell us why you personally find your planned research exciting to you, and what you expect to get from your degree. And, since all research is collaborative, you should give us a sense of how much you and your supervisor have kicked around ideas to help shape your project.

You will need to provide a 1-2 Powerpoint slidedeck to go along with your presentation. That file should be uploaded to Owl (labelled with your name) by the end of the day, September 17th. Doing so will ensure that, if you have internet issues and have to call into the class, we can still view your presentation.

Everyone else should be prepared to comment or ask questions following each presentation.

3) Student-Led Readings-Based Deconstruction of Research = 15%:

On weeks where we are going to talk about research methods, data, and ideas, class discussion will be led by two students. A week in advance of these classes, the two students leading their discussion groups will assign two research articles/chapters/papers (you'll need to make sure these are available online or otherwise accessible to the students in your group). Each discussion group will consist of half the class, and each group will be responsible only for reading the assigned readings for their group.

Assigned readings should be works the student is already familiar with and either like or really dislike, or ideally, one of each! They should be directly related to your field of research, though they could be an unrelated piece of research you have encountered that left an impression. They should clearly convey methods used (so no synthetic, theoretical, or thought-pieces), and data interpreted. These readings should be good or bad examples that detail a range of methods and analyses of data of interest to you, that conceivably reflects methods and data analyses you might want to use in your own research.

Class discussion will start by the group leads explaining why they chose these readings and some basic context for understanding the research. You will then deconstruct and critically review the articles. Your job is to draw out the links between research design or intent, methods, data, and interpretation, as well as what you think the theoretical orientation (or lack of one) is that the author(s) rely on. The best way to do this is to try and extract from the two articles what the research questions seem to have been for each study, how they generated or compiled data, and what data they emphasized (or ignored) to achieve (or not) their research aim. You may find it easiest to represent that research process in a flow chart for each paper.

I then want you to consider whether or not the findings are unassailable, i.e., whether a different research context, set of methods, theoretical orientation, or if differing analytical/statistical tools and emphases on data could have generated alternative interpretations. Can YOU see a way to interpret the findings differently, regardless of whether you are sympathetic to the findings?

I expect you to generate a brief PowerPoint for your presentation in leading discussion. These should be uploaded to OWL by the evening before class, so everyone will have access to the presentation, even if they can only call into Zoom.

At the start of class, each of the two groups will move to breakout rooms on Zoom to discuss their set of readings. This time is a chance for the student leading discussion to "test" their presentation and get feedback from their group.

After a half-hour, we'll join up. We will discuss each group of readings after their presentation, and this is where the one group should note any insights on the readings they got during their break out discussion. After each group has presented, we'll then all talk about the broader themes drawn out from the collective readings.

Note that there is no written component to this assignment. Your evaluation will arise from the articles selected, the PowerPoint you generate, and your presentation and leading discussion.

4) Class Discussion Commentaries 2 x 5% = 10%:

On two of the four weeks when you are not leading the class discussion, you will be responsible for writing a **500** word commentary based on your involvement in the break out discussion, and full class discussion. Your commentary will integrate the different points of view raised by the papers discussed and the issues raised in class, taking into consideration both the papers you read and the readings discussed by the other group. You will need to note what, if anything, was a surprise, what you disagreed with, and why you feel the discussion of research design, methods, and use or misuse of data was relevant, or not, to your research. You will submit your commentary directly on OWL. Your commentary is due by the following day at 5 PM.

5) Ethics Discussion & Reflection = 15%:

We will discuss and explore the ethics of research in Class 8, based on assigned readings. At the start of class each group will go into Zoom breakout rooms for a half hour to discuss their readings and plan how you wish to address the questions I assign below to shape the discussion.

Readings (all available online through the Western Library catalogue):
Each group needs to select four readings from the list below, including two chapters from Squires et al. Please co-ordinate so there is no duplication of readings between groups.

Chamoun, Tony

2020 Caring Differently: Some Reflections. Historical Archaeology 54:34-51.

Ferris, Neal and John Welch

2015 New Worlds: Ethics in Contemporary North American Archaeological Practice. In *Ethics and Archaeological Praxis*, edited by Cristobal Gnecco and Dorothy Lippert, pp. 69-92. Springer Books.

Kelvin, Laura, and Lisa Hodgetts

2020 Unsettling Archaeology. *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 44:1-19.

Nash, Stephen and Chip Colwell

2020 NAGPRA at 30: The Effects of Repatriation. *Annual Review of Anthropology* (pre-release).

Squires, Kristy, David Errickson, Nicholas Márquez-Grant

2019 *Ethical Approaches to Human Remains: A Global Challenge in Bioarchaeology and Forensic Anthropology*. Springer. **NOTE:** Each group select 2 chapters from this volume for their readings.

Also, you will review two codes of ethics (one bioarchaeological, one archaeological) from the list below. Again, do not overlap:

Bioarchaeology

American Association for Physical Anthropologists

<https://physanth.org/about/committees/ethics/>

Canadian Association for Physical Anthropology

<https://capa-acap.net/ethics-physical-anthropology-0>

British Association of Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology

<https://www.babao.org.uk/publications/ethics-and-standards/>

Archaeology

Society for American Archaeology

<https://www.saa.org/career-practice/ethics-in-professional-archaeology>

Canadian Archaeological Association

<https://canadianarchaeology.com/caa/about/ethics/principles-ethical-conduct>

The Ontario Archaeological Society

<https://www.ontarioarchaeology.org/OAS-policies>

In class, I would like you to frame discussion around the following questions:

- *What is the basis for the ethical codes we are expected to follow?* Western adheres to the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-eptc2_2018.html), and professional organizations articulate the context for their members conducting ethical research. Why? What are the principles and philosophies behind these codes?
- *What is our responsibility to the communities/participants we work within and with?* Do we have any responsibility to the communities and countries in

which we do our work? What about the individuals we interact with doing that work?

- *How should the people, pasts, and anthropology be represented in our research?* Is it important to account for how people and communities see themselves and understand their history and heritage in our interpretations and research writing?
- *Should/does anyone "own," manage, and control access to data/research?* Who, in effect, does, and who should? What if that control precludes us from being able to do research?
- *Finally, what has been your experience?* Can you think of an example of an ethical dilemma in practice or research? What was the outcome?

Following our discussion, you will write a reflective paper on how you see your own research in light of this discussion. Does your research directly or indirectly overlap with issues of ethical practice? Do you think you will need to obtain formal ethics approval to undertake your research, or otherwise consent from a source community? If not, why not? How do you think your research could be accountable beyond scholarly pursuits?

I'm looking for you to offer an honest, reflexive piece on where you think you fall in that spectrum, and how your research could or couldn't change to be less or more "ethical," however you understand that term to mean. This paper should be **1200-1500 words** in length, and is due **November 8th**.

6) Research Statement & Supervisor Interview = 15%:

Once we are back from reading week, we will focus on crafting a draft research design for your project. As a first step in that process, you will develop a research question statement (we will review and work on that during Week 9). You will then interview your supervisor, sharing with them your original elevator pitch and your draft research statement. The idea is to get their feedback on how your research project and design as it is beginning to take shape in your head. What are your supervisor's thoughts? What questions or comments did they raise, assumptions they flagged as challenges, especially anything that you hadn't considered previously? Are the two of you on the same page at this point? Did that discussion shift your focus or planned methodologies at all?

You will then present, in Week 10, your draft research question statement, and the results of your discussion with your supervisor. We will talk about the kind of feedback people have been receiving and what that feedback is highlighting. You will need to upload the statement you shared with your supervisor to the class the

day before. Your mark for this assignment is based solely on your presentation.

6) *Final Research Design Document = 25%:*

Your final assignment will be to develop a draft research design for your planned research. We will be working on different sections of a research design in the last weeks of class, refining each section to develop a complete draft. You will upload your drafts of sections we've been working on each week two days before class, to facilitate discussion in class on those drafts. So think of this as a writing workshop to generate something that will be helpful to get to the research proposal you will eventually need to develop next April, and for writing grants.

And, to share in the experience and offer examples, I will (sigh!) share with you the less than stellar drafts of a research design I had to develop for my own PhD research, and the unsuccessful and successful research design statements in the grant applications I refer to in Silliman. The idea is that these examples will offer a sense of process, and at least what worked for me; not something that is either right or wrong or something you need to model after. We will share drafts each week through OWL.

Two weeks after the last class, you will submit a final version of a full research design for your project as you, at that moment, are envisioning it. You should also include a **750 word** reflection on how close or far this research design is from that original elevator pitch you presented to class way back when, and how your understanding of how research works has or hasn't changed.

Course Specific Statements and Policies:

Statement on Accommodations for Students' Readings Reflections and Commentaries:

No accommodations can be granted for submission of reflections and commentaries, since they are essential for in-class discussions. **But note only 6 of 8 contribute to your grade for this part of the course.**

Statement on Seeking Special Accommodations:

No accommodations will be granted retroactively after an assignment's due date. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

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.

Institutional Statements and Policies

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current academic policies regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation. These policies can be found at <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/academicPolicies.cfm?SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=> or by clicking on this link: [Academic Policies](#).

CLASS Schedule:

Date	Week	Theme	Assignment/Materials due
Sept 11	1	Course & research introductions... Who are we? Zooming as a group Please review the two links: https://thecoteriewestern.wixsite.com/website-11/post/how-to-online-student-benefits-of-online-learning https://thecoteriewestern.wixsite.com/website-11/post/how-to-online-student-	
Sept 17			Elevator Pitch Powerpoints due by the end of day
Sept 18	2	Elevator Pitches – What’s your Research? Research Making – Peeking under the lid	For class discussion, please read Rizvi (Ch. 5), Perry (Ch. 17), Agbe-Davis (Ch. 20), Sterling (Ch. 25), Robb (Ch. 26), from <i>Engaging Archaeology</i> (as option, read Steve’s intro to get the intent of the volume)
Sept 24			Students leading Week 3 discussion upload Powerpoints by end of day
Sept 25	3	Readings Discussion – Deconstructing research 1	
Sept 26			Commentaries due by end of day
Oct 1			Students leading Week 4 discussion upload Powerpoints by end of day
Oct 2	4	Readings Discussion – Deconstructing research 2	
Oct 3			Commentaries due by end of day
Oct 8			Students leading Week 5 discussion upload Powerpoints by end of day
Oct 9	5	Readings Discussion – Deconstructing research 3	
Oct 10			Commentaries due by end of day
Oct 15			Students leading Week 6 discussion upload Powerpoints by end of day
Oct 16	6	Readings Discussion – Deconstructing research 4	
Oct 17			Commentaries due by end of day
Oct 22			Students leading Week 7 discussion upload Powerpoints by end of day
Oct 23	7	Readings Discussion – Deconstructing research 5	
Oct 24			Commentaries due by end of day
Oct 30	8	Ethics Discussion	

Nov 6		Reading week, no class	
Nov 8			Ethics reflection Paper due by end of day
Nov 13	9	Research Designs: Communicating Research and Designing Questions	Read my chapter in <i>Engaging Archaeology</i> ; Michael Smith 2015 "How can Archaeologists Make Better Arguments?" <i>SAA Archaeological Record</i> (September) 18-23; Anne Marie Snoddy et al 2020 "Sensationalism and Speaking to the Public" <i>International Journal of Paleopathology</i> 28:88-91
Nov 19			Upload your draft Research Statements
Nov 20	10	Research Design: Research Statements and Supervisor Interview presentations	
Nov 25			Upload your draft Section to your Research Design
Nov 27	11	Research Design: Discussing/working on drafts	
Dec 2			Upload your draft Section to your Research Design
Dec 4	12	Research Design: Discussing/working on drafts	
Dec 18			Complete Research Design/Reflection Ddue by end of day