

**COURSE OUTLINE**  
**ANTHROPOLOGY 3308G-001**  
**Archaeology: Theory and Practice**  
**Winter 2024**

*Version date: Feb 9, 2024*

Instructor: Neal Ferris

Office hours: 10:00 am-1:00 pm Mondays

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*Please note: I am cross appointed with the Museum of Ontario Archaeology, and I work there too. If you need to meet with me other than Mondays during office hours or after class, please email me to schedule a time to meet in person at the Museum or Department, or online on Zoom.*

Credit value: 0.5 credit

Prerequisites: Anthropology 2229F/G.

Antirequisites: none

**Course Syllabus:**

When we think about archaeology, we tend to think about things, places, and time, and, perhaps, what we can learn about the past. But the practice of archaeology is less discovering that past and more the ways we reason and empathize with the material record to shape what we think we know about the past. In this course, then, we will explore how we practice archaeology and think about the material record we document – that distinctive way we as archaeologists conceive, study, and make meaning from the material record, and why this imperfect record leads us to distinctly think about materially-lived human life in place and time. In doing so, we will get a sense of how archaeology in practice today is as much about us as practitioners, and our own notions of how we fit and strive for a better/different world to live in, as it is about human lived pasts from things.

**Learning Outcomes:**

- 1) Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to -
- 2) Advance their skills at reading, summarizing and critically evaluating archaeological literature and ideas;

- 3) Be familiar with the range of key conceptual framings – and limitations - to shaping archaeological knowing;
- 4) Understand how archaeological practice allows us to interpret material culture, places and landscapes, time, and socially lived lives through those human lived experiences of materiality;
- 5) Understand how differing conceptual constructs shape the questions we ask and interpretations we draw from the archaeological record;
- 6) Apply our insights into the process of archaeological meaning making to critically evaluate how we represent the past beyond archaeology;
- 7) Evaluate the personal and disciplinary limits of archaeological knowledge as a distinct ontology, one that lives alongside – neither better nor worse – other ways of knowing peoples’ heritage in the present.

### **Course Materials:**

We’re going to be doing a lot of reading for this course... and talking about our readings. Though I should also add that we’re not going to read everything from the assigned texts, and you will work in groups to divvy up readings.

All volumes assigned are available online or otherwise will be provided to you.

*-Archaeological Theory in the New Millennium Introducing Current Perspectives.* Oliver Harris and Craig Cipolla. Routledge. 2017

*-Archaeological Theory in Dialogue Situating Relationality, Ontology, Posthumanism, and Indigenous Paradigms.* Rachel Crellin, Craig Cipolla, Lindsay Montgomery, Oliver Harris and Sophie Moore. Routledge. 2021

You may find the following manuscript helpful... or really annoying... I haven’t decided yet for myself! But it is relatively easy to read. So, I offer it here.

*-An Unauthorized Companion to American Archaeological Theory.* Lars Fogelin 2019. Free to download at: <https://arizona.academia.edu/LarsFogelin>

Additionally, there are two projects that will support in-class presentations. These assignments are detailed below. The publications are:

*-Engaging Archaeology: 25 Case Studies in Research*, Stephen Silliman (editor). Wiley Blackwell 2018 (available online from Western libraries)

*-Strung Out on Archaeology An Introduction to Archaeological Research*. Laurie Wilkie. Left Coast Press 2014 (not available online; relevant excerpts will be provided).

Lastly, your group work for this course will include selecting a “case study” article on a topic relevant to the ideas we are exploring in four of the Readings discussion classes. How that will work is discussed below.

### **Evaluation:**

This course is designed to be an open discussion, seminar format, requiring you to keep up with readings, participate and lead in discussions, and provide reflections and commentaries on in-class discussions. In most classes where you will be discussing readings, you will break out into groups at the start of class, and take the first half hour to prepare for class discussions.

You will be evaluated based on your engagement in discussions, projects, written assignments, and participation.

#### *In-Class Participation (Ongoing, 10%):*

Yep, this is NOT a class where you will just take notes from me talking at you. So, a participation mark is essential because we will undertake several activities that require your participation and discussion. That includes in-group and full-class discussions of selected readings, presenting your group reading to the rest of the class, open discussion from those presentations, etc.

Class participation will be a cumulative mark between 0-10 assigned at the end of term, reflecting your attendance, participation in presenting and discussing topics, responding to other presentations and general summary discussion, and your ability to sustain or even advance class discussion.

#### *Reflections on In-Class Assigned Readings & Discussion (Ongoing, best 4 of 5 x 5% = 20%):*

Beginning January 22<sup>nd</sup>, we will be discussing assigned readings. Your group will read one of several assigned readings in connection with that class’s discussion theme.

You will be required to write no more than a **300 word** reflection based on *the assigned reading you read*. The reflection will:

Summarize the broader topic raised in the assigned reading (why are they focusing on that particular concept/issue).

Discuss how the authors framed the theoretical concepts they are examining as archaeological and beyond archaeology, and the implications these concepts shape how we might think about and practice archaeology (why do we need to read about these ideas in a class about archaeological concepts and practice).

Give your sense of the differing take of Harris & Cipolla's, and Fogelin's, approaches to theory from the chapters your group was assigned to read for the January 22<sup>nd</sup> class. For the classes where we discuss Crellin et al, give your sense of how well or not the dialogue chapters helped clarify or at least draw out the key themes from the accompanying single-authored chapter.

Be well thought out, clearly written, and proofread.

Be submitted through the inline assignment function in OWL.

**MUST** be submitted no later than **Noon on the day** the class meets to discuss the readings.

Grade mark will consist of an assigned score between 0-5

*Marti Gras Epistemologies (January, 5% + 5% = 10%):*

During January, when we set up our in-class groups, you will receive a distinctive artifact assemblage, to help you think about analyzing a collection from a particular interpretive focus, as determined by an assigned chapter from Wilkie as your guide. As a group you will plan for a presentation you will make to class on your assemblage and assigned reading. We will give over two classes to groups planning and presenting on their interpretive themes from Wilkie, and discuss how well, or not, your assemblages offer insight into these archaeological ways of knowing.

Everyone will submit a **450 word** reflection on how your group has worked through your assemblage and Wilkie's chapter. The reflection will also:

Reflect on how well the interpretive focus from Wilkie worked for your assemblage, and how that focus emphasized and de-emphasized aspects of your assemblage.

The limitations of your data in substantiating your findings.

How well did your group work as a “community of practice?”

You may note “additional research” you explored about Marti Gras beyond Wilkie that might have a bearing on your interpretive focus, but I don’t expect you to cite additional sources.

Be well thought out, clearly written, and proofread.

Be submitted through the inline assignment function in OWL.

MUST be submitted no later than 5PM on February 6th.

Grade mark will consist of an assigned score between 0-5 for your group in-class presentation, and a 0-5 for your individual written reflections.

*In-Class Discussion of “Case Studies” (Ongoing, best 3 of 4 (2% + 3%) = 15%):*

In the four readings discussion classes using Crellin et al, each group will read and present to the full class a “Case Study”... basically an article your group has selected from those cited in the assigned reading for the week. NOTE: each group will need to select an article that another group has NOT selected. You will let me know the article you chose a week earlier in class.

At the start of class, you will break out into your groups and discuss the case study article your group selected, and decide how you want to talk about it to the class... how it fits (or not) with the conceptual topic being talked about in the assigned reading. When the full class comes back together, you will then present (no more than 10 min in length) on your article. Your presentation will:

Provide a brief summary of the topic of the article and its main findings;

Provide your group’s sense of how the article does or does not do a good job of illustrating the concept the assigned reading is exploring.

Everyone will contribute by engaging with the various presentations, and especially during the “bigger picture” discussion of the topic after all case studies have been presented.

Following our discussions in class, you will write a **250 word** commentary based on our discussions around all the case articles. The reflection will:

Summarize the main conceptual themes that emerged from the in-class discussion.

Discuss how well or not the case studies explored helped the class better understand the broader concept being explored from the assigned reading.

Be well thought out, clearly written, and proofread.

Be submitted through the inline assignment function in OWL.

MUST be submitted no later than 5 PM the following day of the class (i.e., the Tuesday).

Grade mark will consist of an assigned score between 1-2 on the group presentation, 1-3 on the individual reflection.

PROJECT 1 - WHAT ARE THEY THINKING (5% + 15% = 20%)

This assignment will include group and individual work.

At the end of January, each group will be assigned 4 chapters from the *Engaging Archaeology* volume, which consists of short papers written by archaeologists describing the conception and implementation of an archaeological research they conducted.

Your presentation will be 20 minutes long, and you will summarize the four projects discussed in those chapters, the way in which the authors variously came to shape their research focus, how they recognized the data they needed to address their research focus – or not, how and why that focus may have changed, and how well they feel their research did or didn't achieve something. Your presentation should be less a summary of the 4 projects and more drawing out commonalities and differences across the four examples... how does archaeological research look in practice, according to their descriptions? Did the authors have a specific theoretical focus or know why they wanted to explore their research topic before starting? How did that research, or the conceptual framings they adopted, change for each of them? Why or why not?

Your Presentation will occur during the Feb 26<sup>th</sup> class and should also:

Use a PowerPoint;

Be designed so each member of the group can speak about some aspect of your findings.

Provide for an additional 5 minutes of Q&A afterwards.

Separately from your presentations, you will each submit a short paper on the insights you've gained into archaeological practice from both the readings your group looked at AND through an interview with an archaeologist where you discussed their process of conceiving, doing and achieving archaeological research and practice.

It is highly recommended that you conduct your interview BEFORE the presentation week of the 26<sup>th</sup>, even though those interviews will not part of the group presentations. This will give you enough time to complete your paper.

Your paper will discuss archaeology making as a craft/science/industry done by a community of practice. Drawing from our discussions in class from Silliman, and your interview, your paper will speak to the insights you've gained of what "being" archaeology means. More details for this assignment, including directions on who to interview, will be uploaded to the Assignment Information Tab on OWL before the assignment of chapters from Silliman.

Your Paper Must:

Engage with both the Silliman chapters you've read (you are allowed to read others, too, if you feel they can help) and your interview. You are also free to use other references that explore the practice of archaeology.

Be no more than **1000 words** (plus references)

Be well thought out, clearly written, and proofread

Be submitted through OWL

Be submitted by end of the day on **Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>**.

Grade mark will consist of a score between 0-5 for the group presentation, and 0-100 for the paper, and include comments.

*PROJECT 2 ON REPRESENTING ARCHAEOLOGY BEYOND ARCHAEOLOGY (25%):*

Our last two classes of the term will be given over to visits to the [Museum of Ontario Archaeology](#), where we will explore how, what, and why Museum staff do what they do, and how the Museum attempts to represent the past known from archaeological findings, and negotiates that past as also the heritage of descendants and of this place we now call London.

Arising from those visits you will write a final paper for the course. Your paper will:

Discuss the theme of “representations of past/heritage from/as archaeology” from a theoretical point of view, drawing from your experience during the visits, the course readings, and other relevant readings or experiences. See Possible Themes to focus on for Project 2 in the Assignment information Tab on OWL.

Include at least two figures (photographs, diagrams, or other visuals).

Be no more than **1500 words** (plus references).

Be well thought out, clearly written, and proofread.

Be submitted through OWL.

Be submitted by the end of the day on **Friday April 12th**

Grade mark will consist of a score between 0-100 with comments

**Note: There is no Final Exam Assigned to this Course**

### **Museum Workshop Costs**

Costs for visiting the Museum are the following:

Museum of Ontario Archaeology **costs \$25**

Both trips to the Museum will start at 1 pm and will end by 4. Students will need to arrange their own transportation to the Museum.

### **STATEMENT ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS**

No accommodations can be granted for submission of reflections and commentaries, or participation of in class evaluative content, since they are essential for in-class discussions. **But note only 4 of 5 reflections and 3 of 4 Case Study discussions will contribute to your grade for this part of the course.**



No accommodations can be provided for students who do not contribute to group work, even if they still submit commentaries and reflections.

*Statement on Seeking Special Accommodations:*

No accommodation will be granted retroactively after an assignment's due date. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodation 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.

*Policy on Laptops and Cellphones in Class:*

Laptops and tablets are permitted for note-taking in class but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites or using their devices for anything other than course activities, they will be asked to close the laptop and will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cellphones are turned off at the beginning of class.

## **Institutional Statements and Policies**

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.

## CLASS Schedule:

Date	Week	Theme	Readings	Assignment Due Dates
Jan 8	1	<b>Introduction... Conceptualizing and Practicing Archaeology</b>	Harris & Cipolla (H&C) – Ch 1 Fogelin (F) – Ch 1	
Jan 15	2	<b>Archaeological Epistemologies – Interpreting Things</b>	H&C – Ch 2 F – Ch 2	
Jan 22	3	<b>Readings Discussion Why archaeology can Interpret the same things differently</b>	Break out and Class discussion of one of H&C – Ch 3, 4, 5, 6, 8; and one of F – Ch 3, 4, 5	Reflection due by <b>Noon of the 22<sup>nd</sup></b> .
Jan 29	4	<b>In-Class Marti Gras... Knowing from Things</b>	Group Presentations of your collection using One of Wilkie (W) – Ch 6,7 8,9,10	
Feb 5	5	<b>In Class Marti Gras... Knowing from Things con't</b>	Cont'd	Reflection due by <b>5PM on Feb 6th</b>
Feb 12	6	<b>Relational Archaeologies</b>  <b>NOTE: this will be an ONLINE CLASS done over Zoom</b>	Break out and Class Discussion of Crellin, Cipolla, Montgomery, Harris and Moore (C et al) – Ch 2/3; group selected “case study”	Reflection on assigned reading due by <b>Noon of the 12<sup>th</sup></b> ; Commentary on case study due by <b>5PM of Feb 13th</b>
Feb 19		Reading week		
Feb 26	7	<b>What were they thinking?</b>	Class Presentations from Silliman	Paper due by <b>5 PM on March 3rd</b>
Mar 4	8	<b>Indigenous Alterity</b>	Break out and Class Discussion of C et al – Ch 4/5; group selected “case study”	Reflection on assigned reading due by <b>Noon of the 4<sup>th</sup></b> ; Commentary on case study due by <b>5PM of Mar 5th</b>
Mar 11	9	<b>Phenomenology and Posthumanism</b>	Break out and Class Discussion of one of C et al – Ch 6/7 or 8/9; group selected “case study”	Reflection on assigned reading due by <b>Noon of the 11<sup>th</sup></b> ; Commentary on case study due by <b>5PM of Mar 12th</b>
Mar 18	10	<b>Multiple/Meta Ontologies</b>	Break out and Class Discussion of C et al – Ch	Reflection on assigned reading

			10/11; group selected "case study"	due by <b>Noon of the 18<sup>th</sup></b> ; Commentary on case study due by <b>5PM of Mar 19th</b>
<b>Mar 25</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Representation &amp; Heritage: Museum of Ontario Archaeology Workshop Pt. 1</b>		NOTE: Plan an outline for your final paper; if you can get it to me before the 30th, I will give you feedback on what you are proposing
<b>Apr 1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Museum of Ontario Archaeology Workshop Pt. 2</b>		Paper Due <b>Friday April 12<sup>th</sup></b>