

Department of Anthropology
ANTHRO 4418F-001: Historical Material Culture
BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE
Fall 2024

*Updated on August 27, 2024
(Readings added and slight modifications to Evaluation).*

Instructor and course information:

Instructor: Dr. Trish Markert

Method of delivery: In person

Credit value: 0.5

Antirequisites: None.

Prerequisites: Anthropology 2229F/G and registration in third or fourth year in any Anthropology module, or permission of the instructor.

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. 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.

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.

Course Materials:

We will be reading three books this term. Physical copies will be available for purchase in the university bookstore. You are also welcome to search for e-books or used copies online. Additional readings or supplemental materials (e.g., short academic articles, artifact identification guides, websites) will be provided on our course's OWL site.

Required Books:

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.
3. Miles, Tiya (2022) *All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family Keepsake*. Random House, New York.

Optional, related to course project:

Barton, Christopher P. (2023) *The Archaeology of Race and Class at Timbuktoo: A Black Community in New Jersey*. University of Florida Press, Gainesville.

Evaluation:

Grades will be based on the following:

- Weekly labs 30%
 - In-class, hands-on analysis or exercises to be completed during the second half of each class period.
- Material culture guide 15%
 - A brief analysis guide for a material culture type of your choice; informal presentation after Reading Week.
- Book reflections 3x5%
 - 500 words, due three times during the term.
- Final research paper and report 30%
 - Contribution to class report and an individual 5-page analytical paper.
- Participation in final exhibit 10%
 - Preparation of exhibit materials and text.

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