

## A/S 207

# Becoming Human Archaeology and the Origins of Culture

Fall 2001

CLASS PERIOD -- MWF 10:20 - 11:20

CLASSROOM -- 102 Clough

PROFESSOR -- Susan Kus

OFFICE -- 105 Clough

OFFICE HOURS -- M and F 1-2, Tu 2:30-3:30  
or by appointment

### COURSE STATEMENT

To be a good archaeologist one must be a combination of a rigorous scientist, a clever detective and a sensitive humanist (rather than a "tomb raider" or a "raider of the lost ark.") The major challenge of archaeology is to piece together a story of past societies from minimal and often badly preserved material evidence in much the same way that Sherlock Holmes reconstructed past activities at the scene of a crime. However, rather than pursuing arch-villains, archaeologists are pursuing the roots of our cultural and social heritage. This is why an archaeologist is also motivated by a need to understand what it is to be human and to understand how it is we got to where we are today, culturally and socially speaking. As the famous British archaeologist, Sir Mortimer Wheeler said:

*In a simple direct sense, archaeology is a science that must be lived, must be 'seasoned with humanity'. Dead archaeology is the driest dust that blows.*

This course is intended to be an introduction to the methods and theories of anthropological archaeology. This course will also explore current explanations and available data on the origins of culture from 5 million years ago until the beginnings of plant and animal domestication (approximately 10,000 years ago.) Most archaeologists can be classified as working on one of three major problems of human prehistory: (1) human origins, (2) origins of the domestication of plants and animals and (3) origins of states and empires. While this course focuses on problem area (1), you will be briefly introduced to the topics of agricultural origins and the development of rank and class societies in the last section of the course that will focus on the archaeology of the Southeastern United States. This southeastern region of the continental U.S. (where we find ourselves) not only witnessed the independent domestication of plants (which archaeologists have only recently been able to fully substantiate) but also the development of socially complex societies that built the mound structures many of you might be familiar with from this region.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class attendance is required. Besides assigned readings, this course will require the completion of a "virtual archaeological field season of survey and excavation" (Fugawiland), the completion of a series of 7 short exercises, participation in class discussion, the viewing of several films outside regularly scheduled class time, (possibly a field trip), a final book report and three exams.

The failure to successfully complete any of the assignments or exams will result in a failing grade for the course. Unexcused absences can significantly lower your grade and chronic absences (3 or more unexcused absences for instance) will result in a failing grade for the course.

Final report topics are to be approved by **October 22** and the final papers are to be handed in on **November 28**. You will be asked to give a brief summary of your final paper to the class.

Incompletes are not normally given in this class. In the rare case where an incomplete may be in order, the student must obtain permission from the instructor and complete all paper work for the Registrar before the day of the final exam.

## GRADING

Fugawiland exercise.....	10%
7 Exercises @ 5% each.....	30%
(failure to complete any exercises is grounds for failure in the course lowest grade will be dropped)	
Exam I .....	10%
Exam II .....	15%
Final Exam .....	20%
Final paper.....	10%
Class Participation and Discussion	5%

## REQUIRED READINGS

### BASIC TEXTS

Thomas, D.H. Archaeology

Praetzellis, A. Death by Theory

Price, T. D. & A. Gebauer Adventures in Fugawiland

Price, T. D. & G. Feinman Images of the Past

## DATE

## TOPIC --- READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Wed Aug 22	<i>Introduction to the course</i> <u>Exercise 1</u> : Materiality and "being in the world" handed out (due Mon Aug 27)
Fri Aug 24	<i>History of Prehistory</i> <b>READ</b> Thomas(Preface, Ch 1), Fugawiland (Intro, Chs. 1 & 2)
Mon Aug 27	<i>Archaeological reasoning</i> <b>NOTE</b> : <u>Exercise 1</u> due <b>READ</b> Thomas(Ch 2), Praetzellis (1-2), Fugawiland (Chs.3-4),
Wed Aug 29	<i>Archaeology as anthropology</i> <b>READ</b> Praetzellis (3-4), Fugawiland (Chs. 5-8)
Fri Aug 31	<b>CLASS DISCUSSION OF FUGAWILAND</b> Bring questions about Fugawiland to class.

**For next class session (Wed Sep 5)** (1) complete exercises on pp. 84 - 92 and (2) Work out excavation strategy.

Mon Sep 3 Wed Sep 5	<b>LABOR DAY RECESS</b> <i>Space, time and form</i> <b>READ</b> Thomas (Ch 5) <b>NOTE:</b> discuss Fugawiland exercises pp. 84-92 and excavation strategy, do exercises on pp. 93-101 for next time.
Fri Sep 7	<i>Archaeological fieldwork</i> <b>NOTE:</b> discuss Fugawiland exercise pp. 93-101; final report on Fugawiland is due Mon. Sept 10
Mon Sep 10	<i>Archaeological Fieldwork (cont.)</i> <b>FILM:</b> Other peoples' garbage <b>NOTE:</b> Fugawiland final report due; Exercise 2 Seriation 'handed out (due Wed Sept 12)
Wed Sep 12	<i>Chronological control</i> <b>READ</b> Thomas (Chs 3 & 4) <b>NOTE:</b> <u>Exercise 2</u> due; <u>Exercise 3</u> "Forensic Anthropology" handed out and will be completed in class on Friday Sept 14
Fri Sept 14	<i>In class completion of Exercise 3; initiate discussion of <u>Death by Theory</u></i> <b>READ</b> Thomas (Chs. 3 & 4), Praetzellis (5-6)
Mon Sep 17	<i>Archaeological Analysis and MIDDLE RANGE THEORY</i> <b>READ</b> Thomas (Ch 6) -- please be sure to read this chapter with your full attention <b>NOTE:</b> <u>Exercise 4</u> "Analysis of material culture' handed out (Due Mon Sep 24)
Wed Sep 19	<i><u>Death by Theory Discussion</u></i> <b>READ</b> Praetzellis (7-9)
Fri Sep 21	<i>Analysis of Material culture</i> <b>READ</b> Thomas (7 & 8)
Mon Sep 24	<i>Archaeological Analysis</i> <b>NOTE:</b> <u>Exercise 4</u> will be presented in class
Wed Sep 26	<i>Archaeological Analysis (cont.)</i> <b>FILM:</b> The Iceman
Fri Sep 28	<b>Exam I (take home, due Monday Oct 1)</b>
Mon Oct 1 Wed Oct 3	<i>What it is to be human</i> <i>What it is to be human (cont.)</i> <b>Film 6-7 PM</b> (Leakey #1) <u>Exercise 5:</u> 'Archaeology on the Web' handed out (due Fri Oct 12)
Fri Oct 5	<i>The Pleistocene</i> <b>READ</b> P&F (Intro, pp.7-41)
Mon Oct 8	<i>Lower Pleistocene</i> <b>READ</b> P&F (pp. 43-73) <b>Film 6-8 PM</b> (Leakey #2 & #3)
Wed Oct 10	<i>Lower Pleistocene (cont.)</i> Arrange an appointment to discuss book report selection for final report (choice to be made by Fri Oct 22)
Fri Oct 12	<i>Middle Pleistocene</i> <b>READ</b> P&F (pp. 75-97) <b>NOTE:</b> <u>Exercise 5</u> due

Mon Oct 15	<b>FALL RECESS</b>
Wed Oct 17	
	<i>Middle Pleistocene (cont.)</i>
	<b>READ</b> Thomas (11)
	<b>Film 6-7 PM</b> (Leakey #4)
Fri Oct 19	<i>Upper Pleistocene</i>
	<b>READ</b> P&F (pp. 98-121)
	<u>Exercise 6</u> : Conventions of arch. drawing handed out (due Mon Oct 29)
Mon Oct 22	<i>Upper Pleistocene (cont.)</i>
	<b>NOTE</b> : choice of book for report is to be finalized by this date
Wed Oct 24	<i>Upper Pleistocene (cont)</i>
	Film: Leakey #5
Fri Oct 26	<i>Upper Pleistocene (cont)</i>
	<b>READ</b> P&F (pp. 122-135)
Mon Oct 29	<i>Post-Pleistocene</i>
	<b>NOTE</b> : <u>Exercise 6</u> due
	<b>READ</b> P&F (pp. 137-159; 230)
Wed Oct 31	<i>Modern Gatherers and Hunters</i>
	<b>READ</b> P&F (pp. 171-173)
Fri Nov 2	<i>Occupation of the New World</i>
	<u>Film</u> : The Search for the First Americans
Mon Nov 5	<b>EXAM 2 (in class)</b>
Wed Nov 7	<i>Archaic</i>
	<b>READ</b> Thomas (9), P&F (pp. 160-167)
Fri Nov 9	<i>Archaic (cont)</i>
	<b>READ</b> P&F (pp. 235-241), <u>Individual articles to be assigned</u>
Mon Nov 12	<i>Woodland and Hopewell</i>
	<b>READ</b> Thomas (10), P&F (pp. 242-247)
Wed Nov 14	<i>Woodland and Hopewell (cont)</i>
	<b>READ</b> P&F (pp. 175-181; 204-205; 216-219; 228-230)
Fri Nov 16	<i>Moundbuilders</i>
	<u>Film</u> : "Myth of the Moundbuilders"
Mon Nov 19	<i>Beginning of the Mississippian</i>
	<b>READ</b> P&F (pp. 248-259; 279-281)
	<u>Exercise 7</u> : Archaeology (ab)use in the present handed out (due Fri Nov 30)
Wed Nov 21	<b>THANKSGIVING RECESS</b>
Fri Nov 23	<b>THANKSGIVING RECESS</b>
Mon Nov 26	<i>Mississippian</i>
Wed Nov 28	<i>BOOK REPORTS due</i>
	<b>NOTE</b> : Be prepared to discuss your report in class
Fri Nov 30	<i>Decline of the Mississippian</i>
	<b>NOTE</b> : <u>Exercise 7</u> due
Mon Dec 3	<i>Archaeology in the Present</i>
	<b>READ</b> Thomas (12)

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**FINAL PAPERS**  
**A/S 207** On Becoming Human  
Fall 2001

This paper should be 9-12 pages in length. The core of the paper will focus on a recent book-length professional publications in archaeology and should concern a topic, a culture and/or a region that is of personal interest to you. (Some sample themes are listed below.) The book should be chosen in consultation with me. The paper should follow the style guide for the journal, American Antiquity, which is to be found in Volume 57, no. 4, October 1992 at the end of the issue.

Papers should conform roughly to the following outline:

I Introduction: What is the question or issue in prehistory that you are addressing? Why is the question or issue of interest in terms of our understanding of human development and/or the nature of cultural behavior and/or the nature of archaeological research? If applicable, what is the way researchers have gone about trying to answer or study the question or issue (e.g., methods, information sources, basic assumptions)?

II Book Report: This section should be a lengthy resume and critical discussion of the book upon which you have focused your attention. If you are reading a book written by a single author or a co-authored book, you should discuss the thesis, organization, etc. of the work. If you are reading an edited volume you should include both a discussion of the overarching and unifying theme of the book as well as a discussion of the individual articles in the book.

III Extended Conclusion: As part of your final remarks add some personal statement on what you learned in researching your topic. That is, have you learned anything interesting about archaeology and archaeologists while doing this paper?

\* Your ability to integrate into this discussion what you have learned in class from lectures, discussions and readings will play a critical role in the grading of this paper.

\*\* Some suggested topics: populating the New World, the “disappearance” of Neanderthals, post-pleistocene faunal extinctions and the role of human intervention, how animals are domesticated, what is involved in paleoethnobotanical research, what is involved in the analysis of human remains, contemporary Native Americans and archaeological research (e.g., reburials), ethnoarchaeology, underwater archaeology, deciphering Maya glyphs, archaeoastronomy, the archaeology of slavery and plantation life, engendering archaeology, Chinese prehistory, archaeology of the Pacific islands.

**You should have a topic chosen and approved by October 22.  
The papers and their class presentation are due December 6**