

A/S 207

# Becoming Human Archaeology and the Origins of Culture



Fall 2003

CLASS PERIOD -- MWF 8 – 9

PROFESSOR -- Susan Kus

OFFICE -- 105 Clough

CLASSROOM – 102 Clough

OFFICE HOURS -- M, W 9:10 – 10:30  
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 7 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, 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 of 3 or more classes will result in a failing grade for the course.

Final report topics are to be approved by **October 27** and the final papers are to be handed in on **December 3**. You will be asked to give a brief summary of your final paper to the class on **December 5**.

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%
(lowest grade will be dropped, however failure to complete any exercise is grounds for failure in the course)	
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 Down to Earth, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition
- Praetzellis, A. Death by Theory
- Price, T. D. & A. Gebauer Adventures in Fugawiland, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition
- Price, T. D. & G. Feinman Images of the Past, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

DATE	TOPIC --- READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS
------	------------------------------------

Wed Aug 27	<i>Introduction to the course</i> <b>Exercise 1:</b> Materiality and "being in the world" handed out (due Wed Sep 3)
------------	---

Fri Aug 29	<i>History of Prehistory</i> <b>READ</b> Thomas (Preface, Ch 1), Fugawiland (Intro, Chs. 1 & 2)
------------	--

Mon Sep 1	<b>LABOR DAY RECESS</b>
Wed Sep 3	<i>Archaeological reasoning</i> <b>READ</b> Thomas (Ch 2), Fugawiland (Chs.3-4) <b>NOTE:</b> <u>Exercise 1</u> due
Fri Sep 5	<i>Archaeology as anthropology</i> <b>READ</b> Fugawiland (Chs. 5-8)

Mon Sep 8	<b>CLASS DISCUSSION OF FUGAWILAND and DEATH BY THEORY</b> Bring questions about Fugawiland to class. <b>READ</b> Praetzellis (1-4) <b>For next class session (Wed Sep 10)</b> (1) complete exercises on pp. 94-102 and (2) Work out excavation strategy (102-103).
-----------	---

Wed Sep 10	<i>Space, time and form</i> <b>READ</b> Thomas (Ch 5) <b>NOTE:</b> discuss Fugawiland exercises pp. 94-102 and excavation strategy, do exercises on pp. 103-112 for next time.
------------	--

Fri Sep 12	<i>Archaeological fieldwork</i>
------------	---------------------------------

**NOTE:** discuss Fugawiland exercise pp. 103-112; **final report on Fugawiland is due Mon. Sept 15**

Mon Sep 15	<i>Archaeological Fieldwork (cont.)</i> <b>FILM:</b> Other peoples' garbage <b>NOTE:</b> Fugawiland final report due; <u>Exercise 2</u> Seriation handed out (due Fri Sept 19)
Wed Sep 17	<i>Chronological control</i> <b>READ</b> Thomas (Chs 3 & 4), P&F (pp. 42-43) <b>NOTE:</b> <u>Exercise 3</u> "Forensic Anthropology" handed out and will be completed in class on Friday Sept 19
Fri Sept 19	<i>In class completion of Exercise 3</i> <b>READ</b> Praetzellis (5-6) <b>NOTE:</b> <u>Exercise 2</u> due

Mon Sep 22	<i>Archaeological Analysis and MIDDLE RANGE THEORY; continue discussion of Death by 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 29)
Wed Sep 24	<i>Death by Theory Discussion</i> <b>READ</b> Praetzellis (7-9)
Fri Sep 26	<i>Analysis of Material culture</i> <b>READ</b> Thomas (7 & 8)

**Sat Sept 27 POSSIBLE FIELD TRIP TO CHUCALISSA (or Oct. 11<sup>th</sup> depending on scheduling possibilities)**

Mon Sep 29	<i>Archaeological Analysis</i> <b>NOTE:</b> <u>Exercise 4</u> will be presented in class
Wed Oct 1	<i>Archaeological Analysis (cont.)</i> <b>READ</b> the introduction to P&F (pp. 1-23) as partial review for the exam <b>FILM:</b> The Iceman
Fri Oct 3	<b>Exam I (take home, due Wednesday Oct 8)</b>

Mon Oct 6	<i>What it is to be human</i>
Wed Oct 8	<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 10	<i>The Pleistocene</i> <b>READ</b> P&F (Intro, pp 25-41)

**Sat Oct 11 POSSIBLE FIELD TRIP TO CHUCALISSA**

Mon Oct 13	<i>Lower Pleistocene</i> <b>READ</b> P&F (pp. 43-73) <b>Film 6-8 PM</b> (Leakey #2 & #3)
Wed Oct 15	<i>Lower Pleistocene (cont.)</i> Arrange an appointment to discuss book report selection for final report ( <b>choice to be made by Mon Oct 27</b> )
Fri Oct 17	<i>Middle Pleistocene</i>

**READ** P&F (pp. 74-95)

**NOTE:** Exercise 5 due

Mon Oct 20  
Wed Oct 22

**FALL RECESS**

*Middle Pleistocene (cont.)*

**READ** Thomas (11)

**Film 6-7 PM** (Leakey #4)

Fri Oct 24

*Upper Pleistocene*

**READ** P&F (pp. 96-123)

Exercise 6: Conventions of arch. drawing handed out  
(due Mon Oct 29); Exercise 7 handed out (due Mon Dec 8)

Mon Oct 27

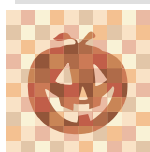
*Upper Pleistocene (cont.)*

**NOTE:** choice of book for report is to be finalized by this date

Wed Oct 29

*Upper Pleistocene (cont.)*

Film: Leakey #5



**Fri Oct 31**

*Upper Pleistocene (cont.)*

**READ** P&F (pp. 124-139)

**HALLOWEEN FUN** – come to class dressed as your favorite artifact or favorite archaeologist



Mon Nov 3

*Post-Pleistocene*

**NOTE:** Exercise 6 due

**READ** P&F (pp. 158-173)

Wed Nov 5

*Modern Gatherers and Hunters*

**READ** P&F (pp. 193-195)

Fri Nov 7

*Occupation of the New World*

**READ** P&F (pp. 144-157)

Film: The Search for the First Americans

Mon Nov 10

**EXAM 2 (in class)** Individual articles to be assigned for Friday

Wed Nov 12

*Archaic*

**READ** Thomas (9), P&F (pp. 182-189)

Fri Nov 14

*Archaic (cont.)*

**READ** P&F (pp. 256-263), Individual articles to be discussed

Mon Nov 17

*Woodland and Hopewell*

**READ** Thomas (10), P&F (pp. 212-213, 226-227, 239-241, 250-255)

Wed Nov 19

*Woodland and Hopewell (cont.)*

**READ** P&F (pp. 264-269)

Fri Nov 21

*Moundbuilders*

Film: "Myth of the Moundbuilders"

Mon Nov 24

*Beginning of the Mississippian*

**READ** P&F (pp. 270-281, 300-303)

Wed Nov 26      **THANKSGIVING RECESS**  
Fri Nov 28      **THANKSGIVING RECESS**

Mon Dec 1      *Mississippian*  
Wed Dec 3      *Decline of the Mississippi*  
                    **BOOK REPORTS due**  
Fri Dec 5      *Archaeology in the Present*, Presentation of book reports in class  
                    **READ** Thomas (12)

Mon Dec 8      Presentation of book reports in class (cont.)  
                    **NOTE:** Exercise 7 due  
Wed Dec 10     *Final remarks*

<b>FINAL EXAM    Friday, December 12<sup>th</sup> 8:30-11 A.M.</b>
--



## FINAL PAPERS

A/S 207 On becoming human  
Fall 2003

Suggested length for this paper is 7-10 pages. The core of the paper will focus on a recent book-length professional publication in archaeology and should concern a topic, a culture and/or a region that is of personal interest to you. 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. You can also find the American Anthropological Association Style Guide (in most cases this is virtually identical to the American Antiquity style guide) on the Web site of the Writing Center of Rhodes College. **You will be penalized if you do not conform to such style guidelines.**

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 brief discussion of the individual articles in the book.

III Extended Conclusion (several paragraphs): 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 paper what you have learned in class from lectures, discussions and readings will play a critical role in the grading of this paper.**

You should have a topic chosen and **approved by Monday Oct 27<sup>th</sup>**.

The papers are **due Wednesday Dec 3**. Keep a copy of your paper for use in class presentations beginning **Friday, December 5th**.