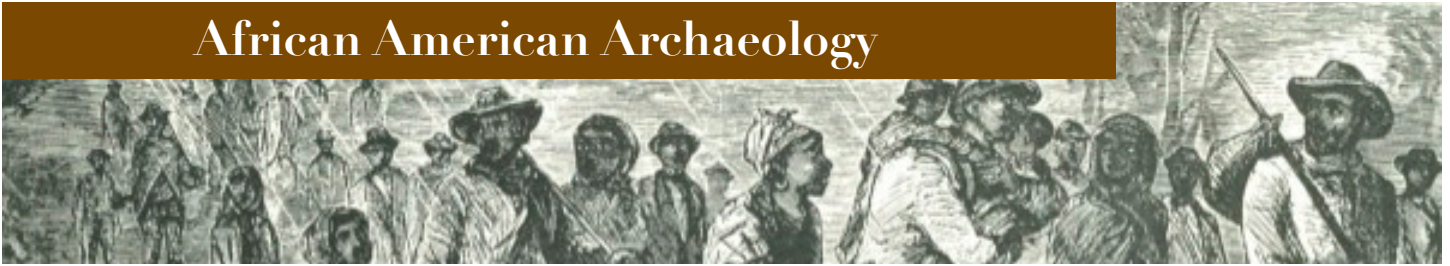


African American Archaeology



Introduction

Historical archaeology has been described as uniquely qualified to explain and understand the cultural past of underrepresented communities. In this course, students will be presented with the opportunity to examine African American culture through the unique and critical lens of historical archaeology. This course will cover historical periods ranging from the late 16th to early 20th century, examining communities in both North America and the Caribbean. It will cover a number of methodological and theoretical perspectives, and examine topics such as slavery, emancipation, dominance and resistance, creolization, gender, ethnicity, class, and spirituality.

This course is intended for students interested in archaeology, anthropology, history, and African, African American, and Caribbean Studies. It is a pro seminar, and will be restricted to 20-25 upper level undergraduate students.

Contact

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Office Hours: Days, times

Skype Hours: A Day, for an hour

Course Website: <http://terrypbrock.com/AfricanAmericanArch>

Course Objectives

This course has a number of objectives, each of which will provide you with important skills. First, students will learn how to critically engage scholarship on historical archaeology and African American culture through reading, discussion, writing, and research. Second, students will learn about processes of cultural development in the African American past, how historical archaeology can be used to inform these processes beyond the historical record, and how they can apply these research methods to their own research projects. Third, students will develop traditional and online research skills. Fourth, students will gain basic skills in online, digital literacy through working on and writing on the course website. Fifth, students will learn how to link their learning inside class to elements of society outside of class through writing, discussion, and attending events outside of class.

Technology

This course's primary home, besides the classroom itself, will be on the course website. This space will be used for regular announcements and your blog post assignments. Your professor will regularly post to this blog, reflecting on the week's classes, providing you with reminders about due dates, campus events that are relevant to the course, and posting announcements about the next week's readings. We will spend the first class period introducing you to this blog, and providing instructions about how to use it.

The idea is that this will be a "virtual classroom", where conversations and topics from class can be discussed further outside of class. You will be expected to ask each other questions, comment on posts, and respond to other student's queries (these will all be part of your "participation" grade). I will

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also be reading your posts, and providing input. It may be possible that people from outside this class may chime in as well. I will moderate the conversation to make sure that nothing inappropriate is posted, so that this can remain a safe space for learning. Please be mindful that rules of civility that dictate in class behavior are replicated on the blog.

Other course resources are available on the website, including a copy of the syllabus, course readings, and links to other relevant websites and online databases across the web. **It is required** that you either subscribe to RSS or to receive email notifications so that you are regularly updated about posts and updates to the website.

I will also be using Twitter regularly during this course. You can follow me @brockter (<http://twitter.com/brockter>), or use the hashtag “#CourseNumber” to follow along through a search (<http://search.twitter.com>). I will regularly post updates about the class, links to relevant articles or topics found on the web. If you are unsure about using Twitter, I would encourage you to try it out. It is not required, however.

There will also be online office hours. See below.

Office Hours

I will be holding office hours regularly. I will also be holding office hours on Skype for one hour each week. If these times do not work well for you, please email me or send me a message on twitter so that we can schedule a time that will fit both our schedules. I strongly urge you to come visit me at the office. University’s are a valuable resource, and your faculty are a part of that resource. I consider Office hours to be an extension of the classroom, so if you are having trouble with the content, need advice about research, or have other issues that are effecting your ability to learn, please make an appointment and come see me.

Assignments

Participation (30%) - You are expected to come to class on time, everyday, with the articles read and prepared for class discussion. You are also expected to read and comment on their classmates blog posts. See “Attendance Policy” (below) for more information.

Why? Learning and reading scholarship and articles critically is only half of the battle. It is important to be able to articulate how you have interpreted the arguments in the article, what you agree with and disagree with, and engage in discourse with your peers.

Research Paper and Presentation (35%) - You will be required to complete a 15-20 page research paper on a topic that you and I have discussed and I have approved. I will provide you with a suggested timeline to guide the completion of this paper. A 10 minute presentation on their research will be required during finals week.

Why? Learning to do proper academic research is a critical skill that you will use beyond your time in class. Learning how to gather evidence and make links between data, draw conclusions, and defend those conclusions is a critical element of most jobs, albeit at different scales. Public speaking is equally if not more relevant to your careers.

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Student Blog Response Posts (25%) - Students will be expected to contribute to the class blog weekly. Since I know this is a large expectation, so only 10 of those posts will count towards your grade. Posts can cover a number of different topics chosen by the student, but must connect to the class content. Topics may include reflections on class topics or readings, connections you see between the course and elements outside the course, or discussions about your research paper. Four posts have mandatory topics, and are listed here.

1. Personal Introduction: Who are you? Why are you here? What are you hoping to get out of this class? What are some of your concerns? Due by the first week of class.
2. Event Response: Please attend an event such as a lecture, performance, talk, exhibit or workshop and write a response about how it relates to the course. There are always a number of talks on campus, but you can also visit museums, lectures, or performances in the community.
3. Research Introduction: Once you have discussed your research topic with the instructor, write a blog post introducing your topic and research questions to the class. Students are encouraged to write subsequent posts about their research, as the class community can help you out with ideas.
4. Student Articles: See Below.

Why? Writing in digital environments is an increasingly important part of everyday life. Many jobs will expect you to be able to engage with people through online formats, and it is important to learn how blogs work, and how to write effective and meaningful posts. Additionally, reflecting on the course topic, and looking for connections between it and things happening “in the real world” will make the course topic more relevant to you and your lives.

Article Assignment (10%) - For final weeks of sections 2, 3, and 4 of the semester the content will be provided by you, the students. This means that the articles read for that week will be researched and selected by you. The articles must be selected from reputable sources, such as scholarly edited volumes or academic journals. Groups will be chosen at the beginning of the semester. There will be six groups, one for each class period (2 class periods per week, 1 week per section). The groups will be responsible for finding three articles that relate to the section topics, receive approval from me to use them, and then write a blog post introducing the articles and why they were chosen.

Why? This assignment encourages you to develop critical research skills by giving you the opportunity to examine article bibliographies, familiarize yourself with online databases, and work in the library. You may even get to talk to a librarian.

Classroom Policies

Attendance - In order for this course to be successful, we must have a full class everyday. For each unexcused missed day, you will be docked 5% of your participation grade. If you are going to be absent from class, please discuss your absence with me in advance.

Cell Phones - Vibrate or off. Please. It's distracting.

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Computers - They're allowed, because you may want them for your readings, to access the class website, or to take notes. Do not, however, use them for other activities, such as playing video games or chatting with your friends on Facebook. I will happily dock your [participation grade](#) if I notice it. It's disrespectful to me and your classmates.

Arriving Late - It happens, I get it. Please be respectful of the class and slip in quietly.

Leaving Early - If you know you will have to leave early before class, send me an email or talk to me before class about your reasoning. If you're leaving because you're bored or would rather not be in class, you should come talk with me about what about this class isn't conducive to your learning. If you don't want to do that, you should drop the class, because you are not doing me, yourself, or your classmates any good by leaving early and not participating.

Why? A number of reasons: first, you're in college to prepare for the rest of your life. Not showing up to your job will result in you losing that job; not showing up to class will have consequences. Second, because your classmates depend on you to be present, both physically and mentally, so that we can have a lively and thought provoking discussion. Third, you're paying thousands of dollars to be in class, not to skip, be late, or play video games.

Readings

The course is divided into five sections. Each section covers a specific topical area where a great deal of research has been completed studying African American culture. These sections will begin with a lecture introducing the topic, placing it within a larger anthropological and archaeological framework. Each day, **three** articles will be assigned to be discussed in class. You are responsible for reading and being ready to discuss **two** of these articles. Each class period, students will break into small discussion groups for each article and formulate discussion questions about it. Then, we will reconvene to discuss the readings and questions as a whole group. For the final weeks of sections 2, 3, and 4, you will select the articles to be discussed (see "Article Assignment" above).

Two text books will be used throughout the course and are required:

Singleton, Theresa A. (editor), 1999 *"I, Too, Am America" Archaeological Studies of African-American Life*, The University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Ferguson, Leland, 1992 *Uncommon ground: archaeology and early African America, 1650-1800*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C.

These texts will be supplemented with articles on specific topics as needed, which will be posted on the website.

Course Schedule

Section 1: Introduction, What is African American Archaeology? (Weeks 1-3)

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This week will cover basic introductions to the course, website, and each other. It will also cover basic concepts of historical archaeology, and how it is uniquely suited to study underrepresented communities, particularly the African American communities.

Section 2: Social Relationships on the Plantation (Weeks 4-7)

Included here are various topics relating to the relationships between the different social groups that occupied plantations. This section will cover multiple geographic regions, from the Caribbean to the American North, to allow a comparative look at the ways in which power was manifest in many aspects of daily life. We will examine how the institution of slavery fostered a relationship of power between the planter and enslaved communities.

Section 3: Searching for African American Identity in the Archaeological Record (Weeks 8-11)

This section will examine how archaeologists have used methodology and theory to identify elements of African American Identity within the material record. It will cover topics such as gender, spirituality, creolization, religion, and ethnicity.

Section 4: The African Diaspora off the Plantation (Weeks 12-14)

In order to expand the understanding of the African Diaspora to sites outside of the plantation, we will present case studies examining both free and bonded labor in urban and post-emancipation contexts. This section will include tenant farms of the deep south to African American logging camps in Michigan.

Section 5: African Diaspora and Public Archaeology (Week 15)

When utilizing the archaeology of the African Diaspora in the public arena, historical archaeologists have the ability to challenge preconceived and popular notions of African American history. We will use studies from archaeologists that explicitly confront these notions and the challenges inherent within this approach. We will provide the student with the opportunity to express how their preconceived notions of African American history have been challenged throughout the course.

Finals Week: Papers and Presentations

Papers will be due on Finals Day. Presentations will be held during exam time.

Evaluation

Half way through semester, students will be provided with an opportunity to provide feedback about the course. I want to know if the activities are stimulating, effective, too much, too little, what you expected or not what you expected at all. They will be confidential, and, if necessary, we'll talk about potential changes. This is **our** class, not my class, so I want to make sure that we are meeting our objectives. Additionally, there will be a similar assessment at the end of the course, so that I can work to improve this class for next time.