



**DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY  
ANTH 3012 WDE Archaeological Theory**

**Winter 2025**

**Mondays & Wednesdays, 8:30-10 am  
ZOOM**

Instructor: Dr Timothy Kaiser

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Office: ~~OA 3008~~

Virtual Office Hours: By appointment

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Course Website: MyCourseLink (D2L)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

An overview of the goals, theories, and analytical approaches of archaeology as they have developed over time, with special emphasis on the last half-century. The course explores how archaeologists go from the material remains of past peoples to statements about what those people did and thought, and why things happened as they did. What we find out about the past depends on the questions we ask. What those questions consist of, in turn, is based upon how we think about the past — in other words, upon archaeological theory. Various theoretical frameworks for archaeological interpretation will be evaluated with regard to their utility, their ability to explain observable phenomena, and aspects of the past they may overlook.

**COURSE OUTCOMES**

It is expected that students will leave the course with

- a thorough understanding of the theoretical foundations of archaeology,
- a greater understanding of the dynamic nature of archaeological thought,
- an appreciation of how and why archaeological thought has developed,
- a familiarity with the impact of different theoretical approaches on our understanding of the past,
- an awareness of issues facing archaeology today, and
- an ability to critically evaluate different ways of looking at the past.



Figurines from the Neolithic necropolis at Cernavodă, Romania.  
Hamangia Culture, early 5<sup>th</sup> millennium BCE. Fired clay. H: 11.5 cm.  
National Museum of History, Romania.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

Matthew Johnson (2019) *Archaeological Theory: An Introduction*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Wiley Blackwell. \$69.95, digital \$44.99  
Other materials online.

## EVALUATION

- Term Project annotated bibliography 10%
- Term Project 30%
- Participation – reading responses 20%
- Participation – oral contributions 20%
- Final Exam 20%

### Term Project:

The term project consists of an investigation of the contours of a theoretical approach taken by archaeologists in the last 75 years. What did this approach treat as important questions? Why did it take hold? Where did your chosen approach seek relevant data? What research exemplifies this theoretical approach? Beginning with an annotated bibliography (due March 12) your investigation will be culminated by either (a) a 15-page essay or (b) a recorded podcast of similar length (due March 26). Instructions to follow.

### Participation:

Participation is a very important part of this course, as the evaluation components listed above make clear. Students are expected not only to show up for classes *with cameras on* but also to be engaged with the subject matter demonstrated by active participation. Aspects that will be considered for grading include (1) oral participation [how often you show up, how often you speak up, and how often your contribution(s) advance(s) the conversation (20%)] and (2) written participation [bi-weekly responses to a question or two about the readings submitted in a timely fashion (5 x 4% = 20%)].

### Oral Final Examination:

The final examination will be a 10-minute individual oral examination via Zoom, with questions covering the entire semester. Exams will be held in Week 12.

### Important Dates:

**Winter Study Break:** Monday, February 17, 2025 - Friday, February 21, 2025.

**Final Day to Drop This Course:** Friday, March 7, 2025

## Schedule

Week	Date		Topic	Reading
1	Jan 6	1	Introduction to the course	
	Jan 8	2	The limits of common sense	<i>Archaeological Theory</i> , Ch 1 Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, <i>The searchers. Archaeology Essentials</i> , ch.1 (2016) D2L Other Readings.
2	Jan 13	3	The New Archaeology	Ch 2 Have a look at: Lewis Binford (1972) <i>An Archaeological Perspective</i> <a href="https://archive.org/details/ANARCHAEOLOGICALPERSPECTIVELEWISBINFORD/page/n7/mode/2up">https://archive.org/details/ANARCHAEOLOGICALPERSPECTIVELEWISBINFORD/page/n7/mode/2up</a>
	Jan 15	4		Colin Renfrew (1973) The enigma of the megaliths. <i>Before Civilisation: The Radiocarbon Revolution and Prehistoric Europe</i> , ch 7.
3	Jan 20	5	Archaeology as science	Ch 3
	Jan 22	6		David Clarke 1973 <i>Archaeology: the loss of innocence. Antiquity</i> 47: 6-18
4	Jan 27	7	Interpretation in the field	Richard Bradley (1994). The philosopher and the field archaeologist: Collingwood, Bersu and the excavation of King Arthur's Round Table. <i>Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society</i> 60: 27—34
	Jan 29	8		
5	Feb 3	9	Middle range theory	Ch 4
	Feb 5	10		Lewis Binford (1980) Willow smoke and dogs' tails: hunter-gatherer settlement systems and site formation. <i>American Antiquity</i> 45: 4-20.

6	<b>Feb 10</b>	11	Culture, process, change	Ch 5
	<b>Feb 12</b>	12		<p>Kent V. Flannery (1968). Archaeological systems theory and early Mesoamerica. D2L Other Readings.</p> <p>Elizabeth M. Brumfiel, (1992). Distinguished lecture in archaeology: Breaking and entering the ecosystem -- gender, class and faction steal the show.</p> <p>Phillip Kohl (1996). The ancient economy, transferable technologies and the Bronze Age world-system: A view from the northeastern frontier of the ancient Near East.</p>
<b>Feb 17-21 READING WEEK</b>				
7	<b>Feb 24</b>	13	Cognition, ideology	Ch 6
				Coolidge, F.L. and T. Wynn (2016) An introduction to cognitive archaeology. <i>Current Directions in Psychological Science</i> 25(6): 386-392.
	<b>Feb 26</b>	14	Postprocessual archaeologies	Ch 7
8	<b>Mar 3</b>	15	Postprocessual archaeologies	Ian Hodder & Scott Hutson (2003) <i>Reading the Past: Current Approaches to Interpretation in Archaeology</i> . Read Ch 1, at least; ambitious readers may press on.
	<b>Mar 5</b>	16	Archaeological perspectives on gender and identity	Ch 8
9	<b>Mar 10</b>	17	Cultural evolution	Ch 9
	<b>Mar 12</b>	18	<i>Annotated bibliography due.</i>	Mark Pluciennik (2005) <i>Social Evolution</i> .
10	<b>Mar 17</b>	19	Darwinian evolution	Ch 10
	<b>Mar 19</b>	20	<b>No Class</b>	Clive Gamble, 2013. <i>Settling the Earth: The Archaeology of Deep Human History</i>

11	Mar 24	21	Archaeology and history	Ch 11
				James Deetz (1996) <i>In Small Things Forgotten</i> . Ian Morris (2004) Classical archaeology. In <i>A Companion to Archaeology</i> , ed. J. Bintliff, 253-271.
	Mar 26	22	Politics and culture	Ch 12
			<i>Term project due.</i>	Randall McGuire (2008) <i>Archaeology as Political Action</i> . Ch. 1.  Gordon J. Barclay & Kenneth Brophy (2020): 'A veritable chauvinism of prehistory': nationalist prehistories and the 'British' late Neolithic mythos, <i>Archaeological Journal</i> , DOI: 10.1080/00665983.2020.1769399

12	Mar 31	23		
	Apr 1	24	<i>Oral Exams, to be scheduled individually during this week</i>	



Giorgio De Chirico, *The Enigma of a Day*. 1914. MoMA.

## COURSE POLICIES

- It is your responsibility to attend classes and to do the readings. Regular absences may seriously affect your grade in this course.
- Any important announcements, including changes in due dates, will be announced in-class and posted on MyCourseLink (D2L).
- To aid your review, notes and other course material will be posted on MyCourseLink at regular intervals.
- Any course work not submitted on time **will be subject to a 5% deduction per day of unexcused lateness. No work will be accepted that is ten or more days tardy.**

### GenAI Use Prohibited

Use of GenAI systems to produce assignments for this course is not permitted. All work submitted for evaluation in this course must be the student's original work. The submission of any work containing AI-generated content will be considered a violation of academic integrity ("Use of Unauthorized Materials").

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

A breach of Academic Integrity is a serious offence. The principle of Academic Integrity, particularly of doing one's own work, documenting properly (including use of quotation marks, appropriate paraphrasing and referencing/citation), collaborating appropriately, and avoiding misrepresentation, is a core principle in university study. Students are strongly advised to familiarize themselves with the Student Code of Conduct - Academic Integrity ("[The Code](#)") - and, in particular, sections 26 and 83 through 85. Non-compliance with the Code will NOT be tolerated in this course and the Code will be adhered to in terms of disciplinary action. The Code provides a full description of academic offences, procedures when Academic Integrity breaches are suspected and sanctions for breaches of Academic Integrity.

### Assignment Integrity

By being registered in ANTH 3012 you understand and agree that:

- (a) Unless otherwise allowed by the course instructor, you must complete the assignments in this course without the assistance of anyone else.
- (b) Unless otherwise allowed by the course instructor, you must not access any sources or materials (in print, online, or in any other way) to complete any course exam.

You further understand and agree that, if you violate either of these two rules, or if you provide any false or misleading information about my completion of course assignments or exams, you may be prosecuted under the Lakehead University Student Code of Conduct – Academic Integrity, which requires students to act ethically and with integrity in academic matters and to demonstrate behaviours that support the University's academic values.

### Copyright Compliance

By being registered in ANTH 3012, you agree to the following conditions of copyright compliance:

You understand and agree that all instructional, reference, and administrative materials to which you are given access in this course (the "course materials"), whether they consist of text, still or kinetic images, or sound, whether they are in digital or hard copy formats, and in whatever media they are offered, are protected in their entirety by copyright, and that to comply with this copyright and the law:

- (a) You may access and download the course materials only for your own personal and non-commercial use for this course; and
- (b) You are not permitted to download, copy, store (in any medium), forward or share, transmit, broadcast, show, post or play in public, adapt, or change in any way any text, image, or sound component of the course

materials for any other purpose whatsoever except as expressly authorized, and only to the extent authorized, in writing, by the course instructor.

You further understand and agree that, if you infringe the copyright of the course materials in any way, you may be prosecuted under the Lakehead University Student Code of Conduct – Academic Integrity, which requires students to act ethically and with integrity in academic matters and to demonstrate behaviours that support the University's academic values.

## **STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES**

Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities/medical conditions. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities/medical conditions to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability/medical condition and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, please email [sas@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:sas@lakeheadu.ca) or visit <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/sas>

*Lakehead University respectfully acknowledges its campuses are located on the traditional lands of Indigenous Peoples. Lakehead Thunder Bay is located on the traditional lands of the Fort William First Nation, Signatory to the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850. Lakehead Orillia is located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg. The Anishinaabeg include the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Pottawatomi nations, collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy. Lakehead University acknowledges the history that many nations hold in the areas around our campuses, and is committed to a relationship with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples based on the principles of mutual trust, respect, reciprocity, and collaboration in the spirit of reconciliation.*



Red Figure kotyle, 5<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, Vilina Cave, Croatia