



ANTH 2137 Method & Technique in Archaeology
Department of Anthropology
Winter 2026

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30–4:00 pm

Zoom Classroom: (link provided on MyCourselink)

Instructor: Samantha Walker

Email: swalker8@lakehead.ca

Office Hours: Thursdays 4:00-5:00 PM or by appointment

Email Policy: Include ANTH 2137 in the subject line of your email, use proper salutations, forms of address, and sign-offs, and ensure your question is not in the syllabus (otherwise, you may not receive a reply). You can expect a response within 24 hours during weekdays; if more than 24 hours have passed without reply, please check the email address and re-send.

Course Overview

Archaeology is a field of anthropology that studies past people and their societies as inferred by the analysis of their material remains. This course explores how archaeologists develop knowledge of the human past, and how this knowledge is continuously questioned and improved upon. We will take the position that archaeologists do not provide “final answers” to the questions we pose; our understandings change as the kinds of questions we ask and the approaches we use change. But while there may be no “right” answer, there are better and worse ones — ones with more or less supporting evidence. This course asks students to evaluate claims based on supporting evidence, and to consider how different analytical approaches influence arguments made in any source of information. While exercising evidential reasoning skills, students will become familiar with all phases of the archaeological research process and the epistemic responsibility of archaeologists for what—and whom—is included in our representations of the past.

Course Format

This course meets twice weekly on Zoom. Classes are guided by weekly themes, with Tuesdays usually devoted to lectures and short interactives, and Thursdays to small group exercises.

Learning Objectives

1. Correctly describe the archaeological research process.
2. Critically evaluate academic and non-academic sources of archaeological information.
3. Identify a selection of basic archaeological methods and apply them to given datasets.
4. Recognize the potential and limitations of archaeological methods for approaching particular kinds of research questions and objectives.
5. Develop a critical awareness of how similar methods may be differentially deployed in archaeological research and the heritage management sector.

Required Readings:

There is no required textbook for this course. Instead, students are assigned weekly readings and multimedia materials that are made available on the Mycourselink (D2L) website and outlined at the end of this syllabus in the course schedule. **A working laptop with a reliable internet connection that can access MyCourselink is required.**

**Archaeological science is a human discipline situated within an emergent social world, and is therefore, by definition, subjective. Historically, archaeology has amplified the voices of a privileged few. In preparing this syllabus, I have worked to include papers from a diverse range of scholars, though systemic constraints in academia continue to limit available materials. If you have suggestions on how to improve course materials, I encourage you to reach out during the term.*

Assignments and Evaluations

Item	Date(s)	Value
Syllabus Quiz	Jan 18 th	1%
Class Attendance & Participation	—	5%
Weekly Exercises (2% each)	—	24%
Four Open-Book Quizzes (10% each)	Feb 1 st , Feb 22 nd , March 15 th , April 19 th	40%
Archaeological Problem Set	April 12 th	30%
Total		100%

Syllabus Quiz (1%)

A short multiple-choice quiz that covers course expectations and policies outlined in this syllabus. The quiz ensures that students begin the term with a clear understanding of course requirements, assignment deadlines, grading criteria, and classroom policies. Completing the quiz confirms that you have read the syllabus carefully and are aware of how the course will run. The quiz must be submitted on MyCourselink by the posted deadline; no make-ups will be provided.

Attendance & Participation (5%)

Students are expected to attend lectures and participate in interactives (e.g, Zoom quizzes, polls, and live Q&A's), and small-group activities during sessions. I understand that life happens (e.g., illness, computer troubles). As such, you may miss two classes without impacting your grade; additional absences require documentation and/or advanced approval to be excused (note: weekly exercises must still be submitted to receive a grade). See the section Deadline and Evaluation Policies for more information.

Weekly Exercises (24%)

Each Thursday you will complete a problem-oriented exercise in small groups that is related to the weekly course topic. Instructions will be posted on MyCourselink in advance and reintroduced at the start of class, and students will be placed in Zoom Breakout rooms to complete the exercise. Exercises are intended to be completed during class time, and must be submitted on MyCourselink by 11:59pm on the respective Thursday. Each student should submit their own copy, but shared answers are appropriate. Students who miss class can complete their exercises alone – attendance and late policies apply. **It is important to complete assigned readings in advance of exercises.**

Quizzes (40%)

Four open-book quizzes (10% each) will be given over the term on MyCourselink. Quiz questions are designed to be specific to course content (e.g. lectures, readings, films) and their answers are not easily searchable on the internet (or with AI). They help ensure that students stay on top of coursework and identify gaps in their understanding early in the term. Quizzes are non-cumulative (i.e., each quiz will cover content covered since the previous quiz). Questions will be posed in selected-response format (e.g., multiple choice, matching, true/false) and

short or open answer formats. Quizzes will be available at least one week before the due date. Quizzes will be comprised of 15 questions and you will be given ~1.5 minutes per question (23 mins total). Questions can only be attempted once and will be randomized from a larger question pool to prevent answer sharing.

Archaeological Problem Set (30%)

The final assignment assesses your understanding of archaeological methods introduced over the term and your ability to apply analytical skills to a realistic interpretive scenario. You will work individually or in pairs to identify, sort, and justify archaeological data and claims presented in an assigned problem set. Each problem set includes its own case-specific questions and instructions. Your final report will also include responses to an additional set of guiding questions posted on MyCourselink. Submissions should be written in essay format (750-1000 words, excluding the bibliography); one submission is acceptable for pairs. Strong submissions will clearly explain how interpretations are reached and connect evidential reasoning to course content, with a minimum of six cited sources from course materials (e.g. lectures, readings).

Note: Problem sets are based on hypothetical cultures and periods; they cannot be solved by looking up external answers, including through AI tools, and require “showing your work”.

Deadline and Evaluation Policies

All assignments are to be submitted in PDF format via the MyCourselink portal by the time listed on the class schedule — usually, 11:59 pm on the day listed.

Writing assignments will be accepted for up to a week after the deadline, but 5% will be deducted for each day the assignment is late; a new day begins after the initial due date and time. To waive this policy, students must discuss the possibility of an extension with the instructor (with a valid reason) at least **48 hours before** the deadline has passed. Otherwise, the student must provide appropriate documentation that justifies their failure to adhere to this policy, or late marks will be applied. If an academic obligation conflicts with a deadline, some sort of documentation must be provided in advance (e.g. an email from a Lakehead instructor). Please set your schedule according to the assignment dates provided on the class schedule to prevent scheduling conflicts.

I review performance for the term when assigning grades and reserve the right to raise a final grade when on-time completion of assignments and an upward trend throughout the term make it clear that extra effort has been invested. As such, I do not negotiate “grade bumps” on individual assessments without a sound argument for reassessment. **If you would like to request a grade change**, you must email the instructor with a detailed explanation outlining the key elements/subjects of the assignment that you believe need to be re-evaluated. **This statement should be a minimum of 120 words in length**: email requests that do not meet these criteria may not receive a response.

Academic Honesty and Regulations

Academic honesty, civility, and integrity are essential to our community. Students must understand and follow the codes of conduct that support these values. This means submitting original work and properly citing all sources, **including AI. Violations, such as plagiarism or cheating (including the presentation of AI-derived writing as your own), may result in severe consequences.**

I understand and agree that:

(1) Unless otherwise allowed by the course instructor, I must complete the assignments in this course without the assistance of anyone else.

(2) Unless otherwise allowed by the course instructor, I must not access any sources or materials (in print, online, or in any other way) to complete any course exam.

I further understand and agree that, if I violate either of these two rules, or if I provide any false or misleading information about my completion of course assignments or exams, I 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.

University Related Requirements: It is the responsibility of each student registered at Lakehead University to be familiar with, and comply with all the terms, requirements, regulations, policies and conditions in the Lakehead University [Academic Calendar](#). This includes, but is not limited to, Academic Program Requirements, Academic Schedule of Dates, University and Faculty/School Policies and Regulations and the Fees and Refund Policies and Schedules ([Lakehead University Regulations webpage](#), 2025).

Class Policies

It is expected that students be on time, be prepared for discussions, have completed the appropriate readings/assigned media, and participate actively.

Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging

As the instructor of this course, I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment that celebrates diversity in perspectives and respects your identities — whether related to gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, religion, or ability. I ask that you show the same respect for your classmates in discussions and speak with me if something said in class (by anyone) was hurtful in this regard. I also ask that if you have a name or set of pronouns that differ from those listed in your UBC records, that you let me know.

Student Wellness, Accessibility, and Achievement

I care about your wellness and recognize that academia may present challenges to that wellness. If you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me. In addition, I encourage you to contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) and to seek out other relevant university supports:

- [Health and Wellness](#)
- [Student Accessibility Centre](#)
- [Library](#)
- [Academic Support Zone](#)
- [Indigenous Student Services Centre](#)
- [International](#)
- [Student Central](#)

—— Class Schedule and Readings on Next Page ——

Week #	Class Dates	Class Topic	Assigned Readings and Due Dates
Week 1	Tuesday, Jan 6th Thursday, Jan 8th	Who cares about archaeology?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Renfrew and Bahn (2020) - Introduction- Watch What is Archaeology? Exercise: Museum Exhibit Review
Week 2	Tuesday, Jan 13th Thursday, Jan 15th	Why is there an archaeological record?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Renfrew and Bahn (2020) – Chapter Two Exercise: Garbology
Syllabus Quiz Due Sunday, Jan 18 @ 11:59pm			
Week 3	Tuesday, Jan 20th Thursday, Jan 22nd	How do we find archaeological remains?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Renfrew and Bahn (2020) – Chapter Three: 74-108- Watch: Sarah Parcak 2016 TED Prize Talk Exercise: Remote Sensing (Recommended only) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fradley and Sheldrick (2017) <i>Satellite imagery and heritage damage in Egypt: a response to Parcak et al.(2016)</i>. <i>Antiquity</i> 2017 91(357), 784-792.
Week 4	Tuesday, Jan 27th Thursday, Jan 29th	How do we recover archaeological remains?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Renfrew and Bahn (2020) – Chapter Three: 108-129 Exercise: Harris Matrix
Quiz 1 Due Sunday, Feb 1st @ 11:59pm			
Week 5	Tuesday, Feb 3rd Thursday, Feb 5th	How do we organize and classify archaeological remains?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Renfrew and Bahn (2020) – Chapter Four: 130-135- Watch: Flinders Petrie - Egyptology's Problematic Fave Exercise: Typology
Week 6	Tuesday, Feb 10th Thursday, Feb 12th	How do we know how old things are?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Renfrew and Bahn (2020) – Chapter Four: 135- 162- Birch et al 2022 <i>The role of radiocarbon dating in advancing Indigenous-led archaeological research agendas</i>. <i>Nature Humanities and Social Sciences Communications</i>: 9.1 Exercise: C14 Dating Calibration
Reading Week (Feb 16-20)			
Quiz 2 Due Sunday, Feb 22 @ 11:59pm			
Week 7	Tuesday, Feb 24th Thursday, Feb 26th	How do analogies inform archaeology?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Schmidt Dias (2014) <i>Analogy in archaeological theory</i>. <i>Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology</i>: 205-209- Binford (1967) <i>Smudge pits and hide smoking: the use of analogy in archaeological reasoning</i>. <i>American antiquity</i> 32.1: 1-12. Exercise: Potters of Burr Heybe (must watch film first)

Week 8	Tuesday, Mar 3 rd Thursday, Mar 5th	How do we build inferences from biological and chemical evidence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Renfrew and Bahn (2020) – Chapter Seven: 305-312 - Renfrew and Bahn (2020) – Chapter Eleven: 469-475 - Price et al. (2000) Immigration and the ancient city of Teotihuacan in Mexico: a study using strontium isotope ratios in human bone and teeth. <i>Journal of Archaeological Science</i> 27.10: 903-913.
			Exercise: Molecular Archaeology TW: Discussion of human remains
Week 9	Tuesday, Mar 10th Thursday, Mar 12th	How do we interpret movement and settlement practices?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ashmore (2002) <i>Decisions and dispositions: Socializing spatial archaeology</i>. American Anthropologist 104.4: 1172-1183. - Supernant (2022) <i>Archaeology sits in places</i>. Journal of Anthropological Archaeology 66: 101416.
			Exercise: Little Bison Basin
Quiz 3 Due Sunday, March 15 @ 11:59pm			
Week 10	Tuesday, Mar 17th Thursday, Mar 19th	How does archaeological theory shape evidential reasoning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flannery (1982) <i>The golden Marshalltown: a parable for the archeology of the 1980s</i>. American anthropologist (1982): 265-278. - Todd (2016) <i>An Indigenous Feminist's take on the ontological turn: 'Ontology' is just another word for colonialism</i>. Journal of historical sociology 29.1: 4-22
			Exercise: Perspectives from a Pot TW: imagery (drawings) of human remains
Week 11	Tuesday, Mar 24th Thursday, Mar 26th	How do we evaluate the credibility of source information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sukharev (2019) <i>A quick how-to user-guide to debunking pseudoscientific claims</i>. arXiv preprint arXiv:1906.06165.
			Exercise: Source Criticism
Week 12	Tuesday, Mar 31st Thursday, Apr 2nd	Where is Archaeology Headed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gattiglia (2025) <i>Managing artificial intelligence in archeology. an overview</i>. Journal of Cultural Heritage 71: 225-233.
			Exercise: Ethics Bowl
Week 13	Tuesday, Apr 7th	Course Review, Learning Archaeology at Lakehead, and Careers in Archaeology	
Archaeological Problem Set Due Sunday, April 12 @ 11:59pm			
Quiz 4 Due Sunday, April 19 @ 11:59pm			