Regional Analysis
Anthropology M211/Archaeology M201C

The study of human interactions across space enables anthropologists to evaluate how social groups coalesce, break down, become more complex, stabilize, or perpetuate stasis. In archaeology, these interactions are traced in the material culture record of portable artifacts, resource locations, production zones, habitation areas, rock art, landscape modifications, and architecture. Techniques for the recovery of these archaeological materials ranges from simple systematic surveys that involve people walking across the terrain and counting artifacts, to the use of sophisticated satellite technology and predictive mathematical modeling. In the past ten years, the analysis of human-terrain interactions has moved beyond basic questions of economic resources and political authority to include compelling new studies of landscape, ideology, and social activities. These new research perspectives enable archaeologists to engage with broad questions of anthropological relevance, such as the dynamic between structure and agency, and the cognitive processes involved in the modifications of landscape and material culture.

In this course, we’ll look at the techniques of archaeological survey, the practical considerations of mapping and conveying the recovered information, and the implications for understanding of economic, social, political and ideological aspects of human landscape use. Grading for the course is based on four exercises, which will be undertaken in groups of two and reported to the class as formal presentations.

Week 1 (April 6): Course introduction, initial exercises, questions to consider

Whalen, Michael E. and Paul E. Minnis

Week 2 (April 13): Methodology

Read these two basic descriptions first:

Ashmore, Wendy and Robert J. Sharer

Peregrine, Peter N.

Followed by:

Cherry, J.F., J.L. Davis, and E. Mantzourani

Cromley, Ellen K.

Hodder, Ian and Clive Orton

Parsons, Jeffrey R.

Plog, S., F. Plog and W. Wait

Tomášková, Silvia

Week 3 (April 20): Readings on the economic aspects of landscape

Dennell, R.W.

Jefferies, Richard W., Victor D. Thompson and George R. Milner

Feinman, Gary M. and Linda M. Nicholas

Drennan, Robert D., Philip T. Fitzpatrick, and Heinz Dehn

Sulgostowska, Zofia

Ur, Jason

Whallon, Robert

Week 4 (April 27): Project 1 due on economic aspects of landscape (Bronze Age Greece)

Week 5 (May 4): Readings on social integration of landscapes

Fernández-Giménez, María

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Head, Lesley

Janusek, John W.

Jefferies, Richard W.

McGuire, Kelly R. and William R. Hildebrandt

Sassaman, Kenneth E.

Swanson, Steve

Week 6 (May 11): Project 2 due on social integration (Cahokia polity)

Week 7 (May 18): Readings on political integration of landscapes

Bruinzeel, Leo W. and Martijn van de Pol

Covey, R. Alan

Golden, Charles W.

Porter, Barbara Nevling

Smith, Adam T.

Smith, Monica L.

Wright, Henry T. and Gregory A. Johnson

Week 8 (May 25): Project 3 due on political integration (Roman frontier)
Week 9 (June 1): Readings on ideological integration of landscapes

Barnes, Gina L.  

Glowacki, Mary and Michael Malpass  

Hall, Simon and Ben Smith  
2000 Empowering places: rock shelters and ritual control in farmer-forager interactions in the Northern Province. In African naissance, the Limpopo valley 1000 years ago, ed. Mary Leslie and Tim Maggs, pp. 30-46. South African Archaeological Society, Goodwin Series No. 8, Cape Town. GN 861.A1 S71 No. 8

Martin, Angela K. and Sandra Kryst  

Snead, James E.  

Taçon, Paul S.C.  

Week 10 (June 8): Project 4 due on ideology (Classic Maya region)