announcements

- next class
  - course review: the “Big Questions”

- FINAL EXAM
  - Tuesday, December 11, 2007
  - 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM
  - Location: Fowler A103B

- MULTIPLE CHOICE EXAM
- BRING A SCANTRON 882-E AND PENCILS

course has focused on...

- the questions that archaeologists ask about the past
- the major events of World Prehistory

but, there are broader questions...

- Why, beyond the reasons of scientific curiosity, do we want to know about the past?

- What does the past mean to us?

- What does the past mean to other people with different viewpoints?

- Whose past is it anyways?
IS THE PAST WORTHY OF PROTECTION LIKE AN ENDANGERED SPECIES?

If looting of ancient sites is to be deplored, should it not be stopped, even if the sites on privately owned land?

WHO OWNS THE PAST?

archaeologists’ responsibility...

is critical because excavation DESTROYS the archaeological record

Charles McGimsey’s prediction...

“The next 50 years – some would say the next 25 – are going to be the most critical in the history of American archaeology. What is recovered, what is preserved, and the goals of which are accomplished during this period will largely determine for all time the knowledge available to subsequent generations of Americans concerning their heritage from the past. The next generation cannot study or preserve what already has been destroyed.”

1972!
Break-neck pace of construction globally

The grand irony...
- Increasing public interest → increased destruction of the archaeological record
- Looters & illicit excavators
  - Looters → use the results of scientific archaeology to improve their ability to find and plunder sites
  - Public education → encourages flow of plunder into private collections & public museums

Lascaux, closed to tourism new regs in 2001 for Machu Piccu trek

The past is BIG BUSINESS
- EarthWatch & Eco-tourism to Sotheby’s & eBay!

El Brujo, Peru
landscape pockmarked with looters’ pits
What can we do about problems of destruction of the archaeological record?
- Cease all archaeological excavation?

Need to figure out what it is about the past that makes it important and valuable to us...
- i.e., what “need” does looting satisfy?

The Anti-Dig!

The red wolf: doomed by a lack of authenticity?

The Meaning of the Past: The Archaeology of Identity
- people define themselves to different degrees on basis of (distant) past...
- meanings based on many domains of experience (not just physical remains)
- the past means different things to different people...

Archaeology of Identity
- Archaeology almost everywhere is PRIMARILY about establishing, defining and perpetuating Nationalist goals
  - Mao Zidong and the People’s Revolution in China
  - Gustav Kossina and the Nazi agenda
  - Hindus, Muslims and the Ayodhya temple
  - Custer’s last stand…
- archaeology is about achieving political goals!
- we have to draw a line between what is right and what is wrong...

achieve political goal vs. meet scientific standard?

Monuments of Moghul Rule, South Asia
The “Prime Directive”
- the goal of archaeology must be to provide people in general with a better understanding of the human past...
- ... so that we can better define ourselves...

William D. Lipe...
- the primary public service of archaeology comes from being able to provide an authentic and accurate picture of human behavior in the past

What if authenticity and accuracy make us confront uncomfortable aspects of our past?
- Cannibalism in the Anasazi Southwest...
- Cow butchery at an ancient Hindu temple...
- Daily life in a Japanese-American internment camp during WWII...
- Organization of slave compounds at Virginia plantations...

Should such things be censored and, if so, who has the right to decide what is censored and what is not?

Who owns the past?
- colonial mentality…
  - natural for “spoils” of colonial occupation to end up in museums and major collectors in the West

Who owns the past?
- Difficult questions...
  - Should antiquities acquired for Western Museums during the colonial era be returned to their lands of origin?
  - Should archaeologists be free to excavate the burials of groups whose modern descendants may object on religious or other grounds?
  - Or, should human patrimony outweigh that of any particular group to ensure the preservation of the past for future generations?

No straightforward answers...
**Repatriation**
- the return of cultural properties and human remains to the lands and peoples from which they were originally taken.
- the legal and moral issues of repatriation
  - treaties still in effect?
  - universal human interest v. national & ethnic interests of modern nation states...
- rather than repatriating one nation’s antiquities, would it be more enriching to share the great works of one’s own cultural traditions

**Excavating human burials: Should we disturb the dead?**
- can archaeologists reconcile a respect for the people of the past with the deliberate disturbance of their remains, destruction of their tombs, and removal of their bodies and grave goods against the wishes of modern groups who, for religious or other reasons, see themselves as the living descendants of the deceased?
- only way forward lies in negotiation and compromise

**Native Americans & Repatriation**
- NAGPRA 1990 (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act)
  - Federal legislation requiring all federally-funded institutions and agencies (including UCLA) to return Native American skeletons, funerary and sacred objects, and items of profound cultural importance to American Indian tribes and Native Hawai’ians

**What does this mean to you?**
- So many questions and very few answers!
- Key points are that
  - you have a responsibility to the past
  - the past has value (myriad values in fact)
  - you have a role to play in determining Who Owns the Past, Who Interprets the Past and ultimately the Meaning of the Past