

ANTH 797.01
The Archaeology of Identity
Spring 2009

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Office Hours: Tues. 3:30-5:30pm
Class: Tues. & Thurs. 3;40-5:00pm; Rm: HUDD 320

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A consideration of identity in archaeology provides a richer understanding of an otherwise faceless past. This advanced undergraduate seminar will cover a broad range of topics, beginning with the question of identity formation in archaeology. Archaeologists seeking to understand the human experience in the past recognize that experience is contingent on identity. Current studies of identity emphasize the dynamic nature of the processes and mechanisms through which individuals construct, maintain, negotiate, and contest identity. Scholars examine identity formation and contested identities expressed through group alliance and conflict and look at how these circumstances bring about change and continuity in the material culture of past societies.

In this course, we will discuss contemporary theory and practice for the study of identity in archaeology. We will explore the idea that human agents come into being through the markings of identity and on-going social practice, as opposed to the idea of a pre-formed, universal subject waiting to be cloaked in an identity. Critical in the study of identity is understanding the way different actors were positioned with respect to each other in a variety of interwoven social fields, including ethnicity, race, community, kinship, class, age, gender, sexuality, and more. These social formations are distinctive, but often, overlap and engage in active relationships with one another and one's identity is a combination of multiple aspects that intersect in daily social practice. We will examine these different aspects of identity each week and discuss how social practices cross-cut these divisions of identity.

Throughout the course, we will examine case studies from both ethnography and archaeology. We will explore the complex relationships that exist among identity, style and technological production in society. As ethnoarchaeological studies have shown, technical and stylistic choices are behaviors that are socially informed actions. Material reflections of these choices are not neutral entities, but rather, represent group identity and "a shared understanding of how things are done" (M. Stark 1998:4-5). Therefore, archaeologists study ancient technological and stylistic variation in material culture across space and through time in order to identify distinctive patterns representative of a particular social group and its boundaries. We will examine the question of individual versus

group identity and we will consider the limitations in detecting identity in the archaeological record. By examining case studies, students will come to understand that identity is not always a conscious expression illustrated in a particular art style or public display, but is formed through daily practice and often expressed in more mundane production activity at the household or community level.

COURSE OUTLINE

Defining Identity

WEEK 1 (Jan. 20 & 22): **Introduction**

WEEK 2 (Jan. 27 & 29): **Identity Formation and Personhood***

WEEK 3 (Feb. 3 & 5): **Religious Ideology, Power & Contested Identities***

Theorizing Identity

WEEK 4 (Feb. 10 & 12): **Social Practice and Agency Theory***

WEEK 5 (Feb. 17 & 19): **The Body and Feminist Theory***

Social Formations of Identity

WEEK 6 (Feb. 24 & 26): **Gender and Sexuality*** PARAGRAPH FOR RESEARCH PAPER DUE 2/24

WEEK 7 (Mar. 3 & 5): **Kinship and Community** 3-5 PAGE WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE 3/5 (peer-reviewed).

WEEK 8 (Mar. 10 & 12): **Presentation and Discussion of Short Topic Papers**

*****SPRING BREAK (no class March 17 & 19)*****

Social Formations of Identity (cont.)

WEEK 9 (Mar. 24 & 26): **Age and Class***

WEEK 10 (Mar. 31 & Apr. 2): **Race***

WEEK 11 (Apr. 7 & 9): **Ethnicity*** DETAILED OUTLINE & ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE 4/7 (peer-reviewed)

Materializing Identity

WEEK 12 (Apr. 14 & 16): **Style, Technology and Social Boundaries (Part I)***

WEEK 13 (Apr. 21 & 23): **Style, Technology and Social Boundaries (Part II)**

WEEK 14 (Apr. 28 & 30): **Craft Production & Exchange/Class Presentations**

WEEK 15 (May 5 & 7): **Class Presentations**

*****FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE MONDAY, MAY 11th*****

*Thursday team discussion leading (see further details below).

REQUIRED TEXT

1. Díaz-Andreu, M., S. Lucy, S. Babic, and D. N. Edwards (eds.) 2005. *The Archaeology of Identity: Approaches to Gender, Age, Status, Ethnicity, and Religion*. New York: Routledge.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

1. Barth, F. (ed) 1969. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. Boston: Little, Brown.
2. Dobres, M. and J. Robb (eds.) 2000 *Agency in Archaeology*. New York: Routledge.
3. Insoll, T. (ed.) 2007. *The Archaeology of Identities: A Reader*. New York: Routledge.
4. Jones, S. 1997. *The Archaeology of Ethnicity*. London: Routledge.

RESERVE READING

The remaining reading for this course will be selections from journals, edited volumes, and scholarly books that will be available either on Blackboard (www.blackboard.unh.edu), through e-reserves or, in some cases, available in hard copy in the Anthropology office (309 Huddleston) for photocopying. You are responsible for getting the readings off blackboard and e-reserves and making photocopies when necessary from hard copies distributed in the department. Optional readings and relevant web-links will be posted on blackboard during the course.

COURSE GRADING:

Attendance/Discussion Leading 20%

This breaks down as follows: if you come to class every time (you can miss 2 classes without penalty) you will earn 10% of this automatically. The remaining 10% is earned through your participation in discussion. You will be divided into teams of 4 (this may change with class size shifts) and your team will be responsible for leading discussion at least 3 different Thursdays during the semester. As discussion leaders, you are responsible for distributing at least 8 questions (2 per teammate) derived from the week's readings to the rest of the class no later than the PRIOR Tuesday class (These can be emailed to the class, but a HARD COPY must be given to me as well). You will lead the in-class discussion based on, but not restricted to, your distributed questions. You will be graded on the timeliness of the distribution of your questions (if you fail to distribute them on time you will automatically lose 5% of your overall grade), the content of these questions, and how you work as a team to lead and direct in-class discussion. If you skip on EITHER of the times your team is responsible for leading discussion you will automatically lose 5% of your overall grade.

Peer Reviewed 3-5 Page Written Assignment 20%

Students will choose from a list of selected topics and write a 3-5 page (double-spaced) paper. The paper will explore topics in more detail that have been introduced in class discussion and readings. Some additional outside research will be necessary. This assignment will be due 03/05. This must be submitted in the Digital Dropbox and handed in on the due date to ensure full credit for the assignment. The electronic copy will be circulated to the entire class and each student will be responsible for peer-reviewing one another's papers and will come to class prepared to discuss the papers.

Class Presentation 10%

A short 10-minute presentation will be given based on your 3-5 page paper. Everyone will have read your paper and will come prepared to discuss the topic in class. Peer-reviewers will come to class with at least 2 prepared questions based on the paper they reviewed.

Final Research Paper 50% of Grade, Broken Down Accordingly:

Topic Paragraph: 5% (due Feb. 24)

Detailed Outline & Annotated Bibliography: 15% (due Apr. 7; peer-reviewed)

Class Presentation of Research Paper: 20% (due Apr. 30-May 7)

Final Research Paper: 60% (due May 11)

The main component of your grade is a 15-20 page (double-spaced) research paper. Your paper must have at least 10 citations from peer-reviewed journals (we will be discussing what this means). This paper process has the following steps:

On 02/10 we will go to the library to explore together researching topics through avenues besides google or wikipedia (these can form first source options for you to familiarize yourself with your topic but these cannot be your primary sources!).

On 02/24 a paragraph describing your paper topic will be due. I will return this to you on 02/26. If I approve the topic, you can go forward with your research. If I do not approve it, we will meet between 03/02 and 03/06 and decide on a new topic together and your new paragraph will be due 03/10.

On 04/09 a detailed outline and annotated bibliography for your paper is due to me and will be circulated to classmates for peer-review.

The week of 04/13 - 04/17 individual meetings about papers may be scheduled during office hours (and, of course, we can discuss the paper any time throughout the term during office hours).

You will have 04/23 off as a work day for your paper.

Class presentations will be on 04/30, 05/05, and 5/07. These last three classes dedicated to student presentations will be our own mock archaeology academic conference. That is, I will group the papers by topic and give each session (one per class) a title. You will present for 15 minutes, using power point if you wish (I recommend it), and question and answers will follow the session. Your presentation will be graded on preparation effort, composure, and content. It should be related to your paper (obviously) but can include other information and/or less information than your paper so as to make it a concise presentation.

The **final research paper** will be **due** in the DropBox on Blackboard by midnight **Monday May 11th**.

****All written assignments are to be double-spaced, using Times New Romans 12pt font with margins no wider than 1.25"**