Conquest: Archaeology and Colonialism
ANTH 68B
Tuesday/Thursday 3:30–4:50PM
Department of Anthropology
Brandeis University

Professor Travis Parno
Office Hours: Tuesday 2–3pm, and by appointment, Brown 203
Email: tparno@brandeis.edu
Telephone: TBA

The worst thing that colonialism did was to cloud our view of the past. Barack Obama

Colonialism. The enforced spread of the rule of reason. But who is going to spread it among the colonizers? Anthony Burgess

Recent global history has been shaped by the forces of colonialism. From modern border disputes to geopolitical social divides to language dispersals, the effects of colonial efforts conducted over the last 500 years have affected profoundly the state of contemporary society. Yet colonialism is not a recent development; it has been practiced in various parts of the world for the last 5,000 years. Because of its multidisciplinary approach to studying the past, archaeology is uniquely situated to shed light on colonial practices. This course takes a comparative approach to colonialism, drawing on perspectives from post-colonial theory and anthropology as well as archaeology. Because it focuses on the material aspects of human life, archaeology has a perspective complementing those drawn from many elements of post-colonial theory that do not attend in detail to the material world. We will consider a range of case studies, from early Mesopotamia, Greek settlements, the Roman Empire, the Incas and Aztecs, with particular emphasis on European colonial projects in the early modern era.

Course Expectations

The primary requirement of the course is participation: doing the reading, coming to class, and participating in discussion. Throughout the semester, you will reflect critically on the course readings and generate thoughtful questions about the material. These responses are not graded, but are required, and will help you fully engage in discussion. You will also

1628 woodcut by Matthaeus Merian depicting attacks on English settlements in Virginia by Powhatan warriors
take a midterm in class and complete a final exam outside of class. Towards the end of the semester, you will write a research paper on a particular aspect of colonialism throughout history. Example topics include analysis of an artifact or assemblage in relation to its colonial context, discussion of a contemporary excavation and its importance to colonial archaeology, or reflection on a theoretical issue relevant to archaeology and colonialism. I expect that you will meet with me to discuss your plans for this project prior to week 8. You will present the results of your analysis in the final week of class. For all assignments, you are required to follow the APA rules of style (a guide to these conventions can be found on the course website). It will tell you what you need to know about margins, spacing, footnotes, punctuation, etc.

Course Texts
All readings for this class other than the required text below are available through the course website.

Required:

Course Grading
Course grades will be determined by five main components: (1) participation in online discussions; (2) class participation; (3) a short study of a "colonial object" (will be addressed in a separate handout); (4) an in-class midterm exam; and (5) a 10–12 page research paper and research presentation (will be addressed in a separate handout).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online discussion</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object study</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm (in-class)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ONLINE DISCUSSION allows you the opportunity to reflect on and respond to our course readings prior to each class. This is a chance to explore the issues inherent in studying colonialism, to challenge an author’s claims outlined in the reading, to relate an author’s approach to material you’ve encountered elsewhere, or to otherwise discuss the course material. Each week I will post discussion questions, multi-media, and other materials on Piazza, a class discussion website. You will have the opportunity to respond to the materials, and to each other. Your discussions should incorporate major concepts from the course readings and our in-class conversations. Online discussion is worth five percent of your final grade, but your responses will not be evaluated based on content; if you respond to the class readings for *nine weeks* (out of eleven) you will receive full credit.
You can find the Piazza discussion forum at the following address: https://piazza.com/brandeis/spring2014/anth68b/home

PARTICIPATION consists of attending class on time and contributing to in-class conversations.

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

I find that students using laptop computers in class is distracting to me and other students, in part because the temptation to take “just a second” to check email or web updates is hard to resist. If you feel that your learning will be hampered by not having access to your laptop for note-taking or other legitimate purposes, please speak to me. Otherwise, keep your laptop turned off and stowed away during class.

Plagiarism Policy

You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University’s policies on academic integrity (see http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai). Faculty may refer any suspected instances of alleged dishonesty to the Office of Student Development and Conduct. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions including but not limited to, failing grades being issued, educational programs, and other consequences.

1940 photograph of the Dutch colonial administrator of the South Moluccas
Schedule of Course Meetings

Unit 1 (Jan 14/16): **Introduction to Archaeology and Colonialism**

*Definitions of colonialism, archaeological approaches to the study of colonialism*

- Given, *Archaeology of the colonized*, chpts. 1–2
- Gosden, *Archaeology and colonialism*, chpts. 1–2
- Stein, *Archaeology of colonial encounters*, chpt. 1

Unit 2 (Jan 21/23): **Categories of Colonialism**

*Varieties of colonialism, developing typologies of colonialism*

- Gosden, *Archaeology and colonialism*, chpt.3 (skim chpts. 4–7)
- Stein, *Archaeology of colonial encounters*, chpt. 11 (Rogers)

Unit 3 (Jan 28/30): **Beyond Acculturation**

*The culture contact debate*


Unit 4 (Feb 4/6): **Archaeology of the Colonized**

*Exploring the perspective of the "underdog" in the colonial equation*

- Given, *Archaeology of the colonized*, chpts. 3–6
Unit 5 (Feb 11/13/25): **Cross-Cultural Comparisons I**  
*Colonialism in antiquity; theorizing the archaeology of comparative colonialism*

Stein, *Archaeology of colonial encounters*, chpts. 5 (Stein), and 10 (Alcock)

*Object study due (Tuesday, February 25)*

Unit 6 (Feb 27/Mar 4): **Cross-Cultural Comparisons II**  
*Colonialism in North America, Mesoamerica, South America, and Africa*

Stein, *Archaeology of colonial encounters*, chpts. 3 (Gasco) and 8 (Schreiber)

Unit 7 (Mar 6): **Midterm**
Unit 8 (Mar 11/13/18): **Objects, Materiality, and Colonialism: Space, Architecture, and Town Planning**


**Proposal due for research paper (Tuesday, March 11)**

Unit 9 (Mar 20): **Objects, Materiality, and Colonialism: Goods and Trade**

The not-so-subtle charms of capitalism


Unit 10 (Mar 25/27): **Objects, Materiality, and Colonialism: Clothing as "Social Skins"**

Constructing bodies, images, and identities in colonial contexts


Unit 11 (Apr 1/3): Archaeology and the Post-Colony
The impact of colonialism on the colonizers; post-colonial effects; former colonies

Given, Archaeology of the colonized, chpt. 9


Unit 12 (Apr 8/10): Archaeology’s Colonialist Past
Archaeological practice, imperialism, and communities


Unit 13 (Apr 24/29): **Presentation of research papers**