We passed hieroglyphic scrolls, gold jewelry, sarcophagi, statues of pharaohs, and huge chunks of limestone. Why would someone display a rock? Aren’t there enough of those in the world?

- Rick Riordan, The Red Pyramid

The purpose of this course is to provide you with a basic introduction to the analysis of archaeological artifacts. We will explore methods of artifact recovery, organization, and study. In addition to examining artifacts in the laboratory, we will consider the ethical issues associated with studying the remains of past societies. We will also survey the ways that archaeologists interpret human behavior from material culture.

Course Expectations

The primary requirement of the course is participation: doing the reading, coming to class, and participating in discussion. We will spend a considerable amount of time in the archaeology lab, examining artifacts and talking about how and what we can learn from them. Throughout the semester, you will reflect critically on the course readings and generate thoughtful questions about the material. These questions are not graded, but are required, and will help you fully engage in discussion. You will also 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 set of excavated artifacts from the Department of Anthropology's archives or an assemblage of material culture from the local area (e.g., the Massachusetts Historical Commission, Copp’s Hill Burying Ground). In this paper, you will describe the context from which the assemblage originated, analyze the artifacts using methods learned in class, and offer interpretations. I expect that you will meet with me to discuss your plans for this project prior to March 10. 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:*


*Recommended:*


**Course Grading**

Course grades will be determined by six main components; (1) participation in online discussion based on the readings; (2) class participation; (3) laboratory assignments completed each week in class; (4) an in-class midterm exam; (5) a 6–8 page research paper and research presentation (will be addressed in a separate handout); and (6) a take-home final exam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online discussion</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laboratory assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm exam (in-class)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam (take-home)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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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 ten 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/spring2015/anth60b/home](https://piazza.com/brandeis/spring2015/anth60b/home)
PARTICIPATION consists of attending class on time, contributing to in-class discussion, and working with your group to complete lab assignments. As this is a seminar based around in-class laboratory instruction and group work, missing class without prior consent will negatively affect your course grade.

LABORATORY ASSIGNMENTS will be distributed and completed each week in class in small groups. Lab assignments are designed to provide you with hands-on experience in analyzing archaeological materials.

Final grade / percentage equivalences are the following: A = 94–100%; A- = 90–93%; B+ = 87–89%; B = 84–86%; B- = 80–83%; C+ = 77–79%; C = 74–76%; C- = 70–73%; D = 60–69%; F = <60%.

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](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.
Schedule of Course Meetings

Unit 1 (Jan. 13/15):  **Introduction: The Nature of Archaeological Data**

Unit 2 (Jan. 20/22):  **Flaked Stone Analysis**

*Flintknapping demonstration*

Ewen, *Artifacts*, chpts. 1-3, pgs. 46–50

Unit 3 (Jan. 29/Feb. 3):  **Ground Stone Artifacts**

Ewen, *Artifacts*, pgs. 50–52

*Maya obsidian "eccentric," or chipped stone artifact made in an elaborate form, likely for ritual and/or status purposes*
Unit 4 (Feb. 5/10):  **Pre-Columbian Ceramics**

Ewen, *Artifacts*, chpts. 4-7, pgs. 52–57

Unit 5 (Feb. 12/24):  **Historical Ceramics**

Ewen, *Artifacts*, chpt. 9, pgs. 52–57 (review)

*Matching set of transfer-printed ceramic vessels, c.1842-1867*

Unit 6 (Feb. 26/Mar. 3):  **Glass Artifacts**

Ewen, *Artifacts*, pgs. 61–64
Unit 7 (Mar. 5):  **Midterm**

Unit 8 (Mar. 10/12):  **Metal Artifacts**

Ewen, *Artifacts*, pgs. 57–61

**March 10—Proposal due for research paper**

Unit 9 (Mar. 17/19):  **Faunal Remains and Ecofacts**

Ewen, *Artifacts*, chpts. 10-12, pgs. 64–66

*Ecofacts recovered from flotation sampling*


Unit 10 (Mar. 24/26): **Theory and Interpreting Artifacts**


Unit 11 (Mar. 31/Apr. 2): **Heritage, Ethics, and Archaeological Artifacts**


Unit 11.5 (Apr. 14): **Research day in the archaeology lab**

Unit 12 (Apr. 16/21/23): **Presentation of research papers**