Course Description
This class will study Indigenous peoples’ histories in eastern North America, drawing on research in archaeology and Native American Studies. As such, this course doubles as a) an area survey of deep Native American histories and b) a thematic inquiry into the politics of the past, with particular attention to how contemporary Indigenous perspectives can enhance and problematize archaeological research. Course questions include: Whose perspectives are placed in the center of inquiry and whose are marginalized? How can Indigenous, feminist, queer, and two-spirit perspectives help deepen scholarly understandings of the past? How can Indigenous peoples’ oral traditions, ways of knowing, and relationships with ancestral places inform archaeological inquiry? Students will gain a more robust understanding of the historical depth and diversity of Indigenous cultures and lifeways in eastern North America while developing critical frameworks for thinking through multiple, at times competing historical perspectives.
Course goals
By the end of the course, students will be able to:

• Describe the diversity and depth of Native American histories in eastern North America;
• Articulate the significance of ancestral places and remains to contemporary Native American peoples;
• Discuss key issues and questions in the archaeology of Eastern North America;
• Explain Indigenous critiques of archaeology and responses that attempt to ‘decolonize’ archaeology;
• Problematize the social construction of the past in the present;
• Interpret durable traces of the past in ways that imagine a “peopled” past;
• Identify how multiple lines of evidence and ways of knowing can contribute to more complex understandings of the past, particularly with attention to the use of oral traditions in archaeology;
• Discuss how creative and humanities-based approaches, from comics to theater studies, can enhance archaeological inquiry and communication;

Credit Hours
Success in this 4 credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.)

Grading
Students will be graded on participation in class discussions and written assignments.

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**A:** The student consistently makes creative contributions to discussion and moves the conversation forward in significant ways. The student draws connections course materials and extends key concepts by applying them to novel situations. Engages with both the instructor and fellow students.

**B:** The student consistently contributes to class discussion and demonstrates a solid understanding of course materials. The student thinks through the readings, other students’ comments, and one’s own points well. Engages with both the instructor and fellow students.

**C:** The student sometimes participates in class discussion and understands the basic facts of the readings, but perhaps not the big picture.

**D:** The student only infrequently participates in class discussion or makes statements that are unrelated or do not advance the project of the course. Only has a partial understanding of the materials.
The student does not consistently come to class, does not participate in or disrupts class discussion, or misses the point of course materials.

Written Assignments
All written alignments must be proofread, double-spaced, 12-point font, with 1-inch margins and numerated pages. I will hand out prompts for essay assignments at least two weeks before the deadline so that you can manage your time appropriately to meet the deadline. The midterm will be distributed one week before the deadline.

During the course, consider what topic you might chose for the final paper. Although it is acceptable for topics to change after this point, you should have a topic selected by the midterm deadline so that you can begin conducting the necessary research.

Short Paper on the Earliest Americans
There are two options for this assignment:

1. Choose an artifact or category of artifacts from the course readings. Describe the object, drawing on the text. How can this class of objects help us understand ancient peoples’ lives, for example in terms of subsistence, social dynamics, or migrations?
2. Find a Native American origin tradition and relate it to the insights course readings. Does this oral tradition help ask different kinds of questions about what life may have been like for past peoples?

3-5 pages, double-spaced. The challenge of this paper is to go beyond the objects themselves and imagine past people.

Midterm
The midterm will be a take-home format consisting of long answer and short essay questions.

Final Paper
The final paper will require independent research and analysis. There are two options for this assignment:

1. Complete a paper analyzing/interpreting the archaeological record of a site of your own choosing. Your paper should draw on previous research on the site in order to make an argument about or interpretation of the site based on archaeological data. Like the short papers, the challenge here is to go beyond objects and “get at” people.
2. Alternatively, instead of beginning with a site, you may choose to start from a Native American oral tradition or set of oral traditions. Relate this oral tradition relate to the archaeological record. This should go beyond asking if the oral tradition is supported or contradicted by the archaeological record. Review Echo-Hawk’s essay from the beginning of the semester.

Papers will be 10-15 pages, double spaced. They may also take the form of an academic poster (see http://s3.amazonaws.com/rdcms-aaa/files/production/public/FileDownloads/pdfs/meetings/upload/How-to-CreatAnthropology-Posters.pdf for guidelines).
Alternative Creative Option
In lieu of a traditional written paper, students may opt to undertake a creative project that addresses the core concerns of the final. For example, such a project could consist of a comic, zine, or painting. Students must first obtain permission from the professor before opting for the creative option.

Late Assignments
Late assignments will be docked one letter grade per day they are late.

Local Sites Group Presentation
Working in small groups, students will present on a specific archaeological site or historical phenomenon in the region. To prepare, you should conduct research into the scholarly literature on that site. If possible, it would also be ideal to visit the site (and discuss your visit with the class). How is the site interpreted and represented to the public? You should also research what Native American nations (there may be more than one) claim descendancy from the site or area. If you find information about oral traditions that relate to the site or region, or about descendant peoples’ ongoing relationships with that site, make a note and speak about it in your presentation.

Presentations should be 30-40 minutes in length. I will assign the groups and provide a list of sites you may choose from.

Participation
We will work through course materials through lecture and class discussion, during which we will review, interpret, extend, draw connections between, and critique the readings. As such, students must come to class having completed the readings and be prepared to discuss them. Please print out articles and essays so that you may reference them in class. Departing from a “banking” model of education in which knowledge is “deposited” in students’ brains and “withdrawn” in tests—primary teaching students to regurgitate information—the goal of these discussions will be to practice the tools of critical thinking and analysis.

Absences
Life happens and so students have 2 “free passes” to miss class. After that, all unexcused absences will result in the student’s final grade being lowered by one letter: i.e., a student who would otherwise get an A would get a B, a student who would get a B would get a C, and so on.

Email Policy
I will respond to reasonable email inquiries within a reasonable timeframe: Usually within 24 hours. I expect your emails to be courteous and professional: It is good etiquette to include a salutation and signature and to make the subject line relevant to the content. Proofread all emails before sending. Although grammar and email etiquette standards are ultimately a means of reproducing social hierarchies, I promise that having these skills will make your life easier.

Changes to the syllabus, accommodations for snow days, and other logistical issues for the course will be communicated over email.
Students with Disabilities
Brandeis seeks to welcome and include all students. If you are a student who needs accommodations as outlined in an accommodations letter, please talk with me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as you can. I want to support you.

In order to provide test accommodations, I need the letter more than 48 hours in advance. I want to provide your accommodations, but cannot do so retroactively. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Support (SAS) at 781.736.3470 or access@brandeis.edu.

Academic Integrity
You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at LTS - Library guides.

Required Texts

  a. A discount code for this book is available on LATTE

Schedule of Readings

Week 1: The Politics of the Past
Jan.14
  - No readings

Jan 16
Week 2: Archaeology in Historical Context
Jan. 21
2. Anderson and Sassaman, *Recent Developments in Southeastern Archaeology*, Chapter 1

Jan. 23
5. WAC Code of Ethics. [https://worldarch.org/code-of-ethics/](https://worldarch.org/code-of-ethics/)

Week 3: Paleoamerican: First Peoples
Jan 28
1. Anderson and Sassaman, *Recent Developments in Southeastern Archaeology*, Chapter 2

Jan 30
Week 4: Archaic: Early Mounds

Feb 4
1. Anderson and Sassaman, *Recent Developments in Southeastern Archaeology*, Chapter 3

Feb 6

Week 5: Woodland: Interregional Connectivity

Feb 11
1. Anderson and Sassaman, *Recent Developments in Southeastern Archaeology*, Chapter 4

Feb 13

Week 6: Break

Week 7: Mississippian: Social Organization and Ritual Economy

Feb 25
1. Anderson and Sassaman, *Recent Developments in Southeastern Archaeology*, Chapter 5

Feb 27


**Paper 1 due Feb 25**

**Week 8: Mississippian: Maize Cultivation**

Mar 3


March 5

3. **TBA**

**Week 9: Mississippian: Ritual Economy**

Mar 10


3. **In class:** *Hero, Hawk, and Open Hand.*
Mar 12


**Week 10: An Archaeology of the Soul**

Mar 17
1. Hall, *An Archaeology of the Soul*, pg. 1-85 (The reading will be broken up into groups).

Mar 19
2. Hall, *An Archaeology of the Soul*, pg. 86-173 (The reading will be broken up into groups).

**Week 11: Mississippian, Collapse?**

Mar 24


**Midterm + Mid-Semester Feedback Due March 24**

Mar 26


**Week 12: Colonial Kinships and Separations**

Mar 31

2. Gould et al. *Historical Archaeology and Indigenous Collaboration*, ch. 1


Apr 2
Week 13: Collaborative Historical Archaeology in New England
Apr 7

Week 14: Break

Week 15: Collaborative Historical Archaeology in New England
Apr 21

Apr 23

Week 16: Futures
April. 28
3. Optional: Bloch, Leigh J. “Animate Earth, Settler Ruins: Mound Landscapes and Decolonial Futures in the Native South.”

Final Paper Due May 10