ANTH 3574.1
Public Archaeology

Location: MS228 (and elsewhere)
Time: W8:30-11:15
Professor: Jonathan Fowler
Office: MS226
Office Hours: TTH 11:15-12
1-3:15
or by appointment
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Summary

Public Archaeology is a broad subject embracing all manner of engagement with archaeology beyond the professional community. Because archaeological ethics hold that all people have a stake in the past, it follows that public archaeology’s constituency is very large. Outside of universities, how do people learn about archaeology? Do they even care? Should they? How do governments, professionals, teachers, writers, and journalists interact with the discipline of archaeology, and what should students of archaeology know about these interactions?

This course offers an introductory survey of public archaeology. It takes a broad approach to a broad subject, reviewing the landscape of archaeological engagement beyond the ivory tower.

Objectives

Students will learn

1. to define public archaeology and understand how its many manifestations can help (and perhaps hinder?) the aims of professional archaeology;

2. about how people working in other disciplines, such as curatorial services, education, and journalism, interact with archaeology and why; and

3. to engage in a practical manner with several of the different groups for whom archaeology is important by examining museum exhibits, critiquing media stories, and creating vehicles for archaeological outreach based on our research.
Assessment

Your grade is based on seven assignments, the last of which is a major project:

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Your Work Described:

Dissecting Sabloff sounds messy, but it is not (it is a metaphorical dissection). This first assignment asks you to engage with a well-known lecture by American Archaeologist Jeremy Sabloff. Read the text of his speech and answer the following:

1. In a sentence (though it can be a large one), what is Sabloff’s thesis?
2. Compare Sabloff’s arguments to those of Schadla-Hall. What common ground do these authors share, and where – if at all – might their opinions diverge?
3. Sabloff’s address to the AAA was given many years ago. Do you think archaeologists have followed his advice? Back up your assessment with evidence.
4. If Sabloff were to give this talk today, how do you think he might change it?

Due Wed. Sept. 12.

The Exhibit Assessment involves visiting the archaeology exhibit at the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History (1747 Summer St.) to see how the Province of Nova Scotia presents its archaeological heritage to the world. This is the main venue for archaeological interpretation in the province. Your questions, due Wed. Sept. 26:

1. What are the main themes of this exhibit? On what basis can you say so?
2. How representative is this exhibit of the broad scope of Nova Scotia’s past? Are there any noteworthy patterns in representation (e.g. ethnic groups, geography, time period)?
3. How does this exhibit connect – if at all – to the ideas raised by Nick Merriman in ‘The Crisis in Representation in Archaeological Museums’ (reading [4])?
4. Any other observations or thoughts relevant to our inquiry?
The Critique of Good Archaeological Writing should be enjoyable. Since we’ve all suffered through plenty of bad archaeological writing, let’s dispense with that and focus on the positive. Find an example of good archaeological writing from an academic journal, book, magazine, or other source. The only catch is that the writer should be either a professional archaeologist (academic or CRM), student of archaeology or a related discipline, or a professional writer of archaeology. If it is a book, you don’t have to read the entire book for this assignment, though it may help if you happened to have read it previously.

1. Photocopy (or print off) 1-2 pages of your writing sample and annotate it by hand to indicate what you particularly like and why. Use marginal notes, underlining, arrows, etc.

2. On a separate piece of paper, write a brief summary of why you would select this piece of writing as “good”. Try to account for content-based (i.e. perhaps intellectual/academic) factors as well as stylistics factors. The ideal selection should be “good” in both senses. In writing your assessment (e. 1 page), you should draw upon the reading by Fagan and perhaps Orwell. Where you do so, please reference it appropriately.

Bring a hard copy of the whole assignment to class and we will compare notes. Due Wed. Oct. 10.

The Media Archaeology Investigation asks you to choose a news story from the recent past (let’s stick to 2018), about a professional archaeological discovery or development and make a copy of at least one version of the story from a newspaper, news organization website (not a blog), or from the radio. Using that copy as a baseline, engage in a little fact-checking and answer the following questions:

1. Consult professional archaeological literature (scholarly journals primarily, but perhaps also books written by archaeologists) to see how the story as framed by the journalists compares to the story as framed by the archaeologists. What is the main focus of significance in the news piece and does it receive the same emphasis in the more scholarly/professional medium? Does the media story give the subject proper context and balance? Is anything significant missing from the story?

2. Try to contact the archaeologist(s) involved by phone or email. Tell them you are doing a project for this class and you’d like to get their reaction to how their work was covered in this specific news story (perhaps email it to them as an attachment or send them a link).

   a) Did the journalist convey the main focus of the archaeology story accurately?
   b) Were names and other details represented accurately? more…
c) How did the media contact you or did you contact them?
d) How was the information transmitted from the archaeologist(s) to the journalist(s) and over what period of time?

Keep notes of your telephone interview and/or print off a copy of your email exchange and include this with your submission.

I am providing these instructions now to facilitate an early start on this assignment. You may have to pursue your people to get answers, and so I recommend you start soon. Successful connection with a busy archaeologist may involve several phone calls, creativity, and persistence. This is not to be left to the last minute, as half the value for this assignment depends on your interviewing somebody. **Due Wed. Oct. 24.**

The **Archaeology Writing Workshop** calls on you to write a short composition of your own describing an archaeological site or object. Your piece should introduce the reader to your site or object in a compelling and evocative manner. We will be sharing work and offering editorial feedback in class, so be sure to bring a c. 1-page **hard copy** of your writing sample to class on **Wed. Nov. 7.** Following the feedback session, I will invite you to write another page describing the process, what you learned from it, and how – if at all – this exercise might alter your approach to writing. Please hand in this additional page, together with your original (even if marked-up) submission, as well as a final version (if you wish to make changes) on **Wed. Nov. 28.**

The **Project** is a substantial piece of work that will unfold largely behind the scenes over the course of the term. This year we will create a product for archaeological outreach based on the historical archaeology of The Old Burying Ground in Halifax. See the separate instruction sheet for this assignment. We’ll devote some class time to it through the fall, with informal presentations of the results taking place on our last day, **Wed. Nov. 28.**
General Notes Regarding Assessment

1. I will be focusing on the quality of your written work. A fluent style that is free of typographical errors is one of the prerequisites for an A grade, so I strongly encourage you to take the time you need to complete your submissions to a high standard. I will also be looking for evidence of your reasoning skills. Evaluate the information you encounter before accepting it, and be sure to support your own ideas with logical argument and valid evidence. Consider how your most significant concepts are defined. Are they vague? Ambiguous?

2. For referencing, we will use the Chicago author-date system, outlined here: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html In-text citations will look like this (Fowler 2018, 12). As further examples, the books and articles in the reading list in this course outline (below) follow this style.

3. Although the assessment system used in this course places a premium on critical literacy, and considers writing mechanics and style to be important components of your work, I recognize that individual students have different learning styles and educational needs. Saint Mary’s University has historically taken an inclusive approach to teaching and learning, and I encourage students with significant learning differences and/or disabilities to consult with staff at the Fred Smithers Centre of Support for Students with Disabilities so that we may make the appropriate modifications: http://www.smu.ca/campus-life/services-for-students-with-disabilities.html


5. Late assignments will be penalized at 10% per day unless, in special circumstances, we come to a prior arrangement.
**Tentative Class Schedule**  
Subject to change on account of weather

**Wed. Sept. 5**  **Introduction to the Course & Project Discussion**  
*What is Public Archaeology and what are we doing here?*

- **Location:** We start in the archaeology lab and we go for a walk
- **Readings:** You can read this later:
  

**Wed. Sept. 12**  **The Rationale for Public Archaeology and the Beginning of Fieldwork**  
*Measuring tapes in a cemetery and a little experiment with the citizens of Halifax*

- **Assignment #1 DUE (12%)**
- **Location:** Old Burying Ground
- **Reading:**
  
  

**Wed. Sept. 19**  **Archaeology and the State**  
*On the Instrumentality of the Past*

- **Assignment #2 will be completed during this visit and is due next class**
- **Location:** Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer St.
- **Readings:**
  
  

**Wed. Sept. 26**  **Archaeology and the Media I: Journalism**  
*Exploring the ecosystem of news production*

- **Assignment #2 DUE (12%)**
- **Location:** Archaeology Lab
- **Readings:**
  
Wed. Oct. 3  **Archaeology and the Military?**  
*A Field Day at Royal Artillery Park*

**Location:** RA Park

**Readings:**
[9] Documentary film: *The Rape of Europa*

Wed. Oct. 10  **Archaeology as Literature I**  
*What constitutes good archaeological writing?*

**ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE (12%)**

**Location:** Archaeology Lab

**Readings:**

Wed. Oct. 17  **Public Archaeology in the Public Gardens**  
*Geophysics in our own Victorian garden*

**Location:** Halifax Public Gardens

**Readings:**

Wed. Oct. 24  **Archaeology and the Media II: Seminar on Media Archaeology Investigations**  
*In which we reveal our findings*

**ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE (12%)**

**Location:** Archaeology Lab

Wed. Oct. 31  **GPR & Mapping in the Cemetery**  
*On Halloween no less*

**Location:** Old Burying Ground
Wed. Nov. 7  Archaeology as Literature II: Seminar  
*Let’s see what we can do*
We work on ASSIGNMENT #5 in class today, but it is not due until our last class.

**Location:**  Archaeology Lab

**Reading:**  
[16] Orwell, George 1946 “Why I Write” (you’ll find it online)

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**Wed. Nov. 14**  FALL BREAK – NO CLASS

**Wed. Nov. 21**  PROJECT WORK – NO CLASS

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**Wed. Nov. 28**  Lessons Learned? The Project Seminar
ASSIGNMENT #5 DUE (12%)
PROJECT PRESENTATIONS DUE TODAY;
FINAL SUBMISSIONS DUE FRI. DEC. 7

**Location:**  Archaeology Lab

**Readings:**  
[17] Meaning Making as the Endgame of Interpretation  
[link](www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1ESBGw0uyE)