

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL THEORY

Fall 2022



ANTH 453 / 553

TUESDAYS 6 - 8:40 PM DuSable 206



# Welcome!

## Dear Students,

As we embark on a new semester in an ongoing pandemic, I want to emphasize my commitment to fostering a space where all feel welcome and safe (and hopefully, **happy**). In these uncertain times, the typical stress associated with the university experience can be exponentially worse. If you ever need anything (or just a friendly ear), please do not hesitate to reach out. **I am here for you.**

INSTRUCTOR

**Prof. Dana Bardolph**  
(she/her/hers)  
dbardolph@niu.edu

Office Hours: Tues/Thurs  
12:15 - 1 PM in SB 271

or by appointment  
in person or virtual

## Be well and go huskies!

*Dana Bardolph*



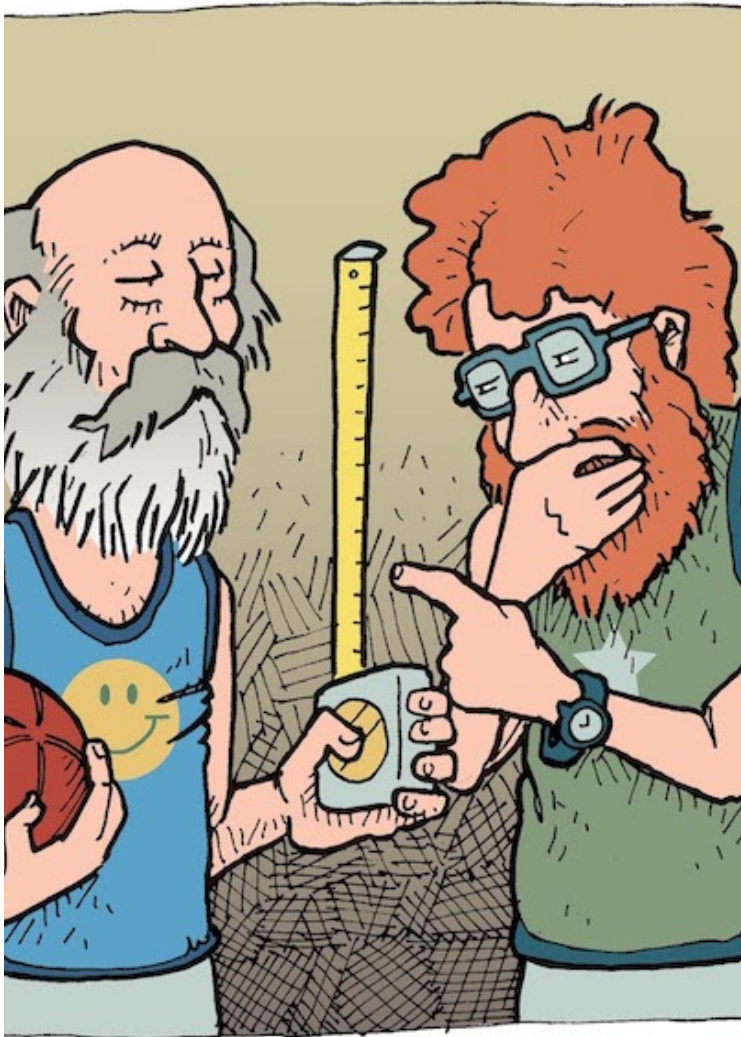
ANTH 453/554 |  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL THEORY

01

## Course Description

All archaeology, regardless of how it is conducted, interpreted, or explained, engages with theory at some level because all research is based on a set of premises, assumptions, and ontologies. Theory shapes the ways we think about the past, including the questions we choose to ask and the data we seek out to answer those questions. The aim of this seminar is to introduce students to the generation, evaluation, and application of theory in archaeology. We will explore the history of archaeological thought as well as some of the current theoretical paradigms guiding archaeological inquiry. By the end of the class, students will possess the knowledge required to help formulate their own ideas regarding social, ecological, and evolutionary theory in archaeology, and to apply those theoretical concepts to their own subfields in anthropology.

This course will consist of seminar-style discussions, in-class writing exercises, and an on-campus museum collections visit.



PROCESSUALISTS INVOLVED IN  
A NASTY TACKLE

“

*What is theory?*



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## *Student Learning Outcomes*

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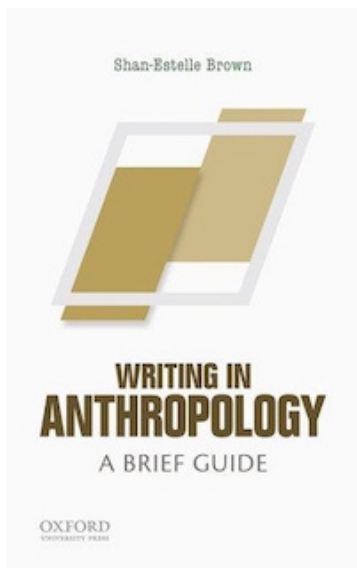
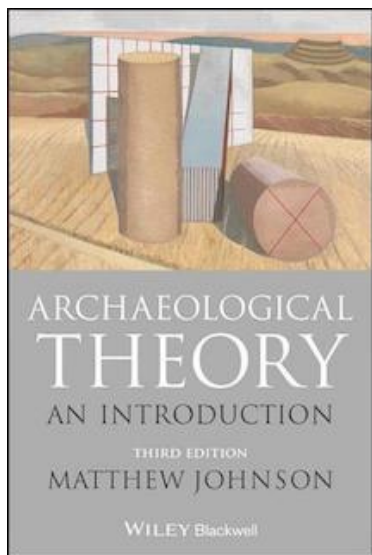
The Department of Anthropology strives to provide students with a well-rounded education about the human experience. This course will help you:

**Develop the critical thinking skills** necessary to be able to explain the theories and methods involved in the study of the human past and to generate, analyze, and synthesize evidence through the process of scientific inquiry.

**Assess and evaluate the impacts of archaeological practice and praxis** in the context of the discipline of archaeology by discussing the relevancy of archaeology to contemporary human issues and politics

**Gain confidence in your research, writing, and public speaking skills** by learning how to develop an effective argument, participating in discussion leading with your peers, working on presentations, and workshopping your ideas with classmates during group work sessions.

## REQUIRED TEXTS



We also will be reading a variety of **articles, book chapters, blog posts, and other media, including poetry.**

Additional readings will be posted as web links or PDFs to the course Blackboard site in weekly content folders.

## GRADE COMPONENTS

### Learning Contract: 3 pts

Contracts allow students to provide information about their backgrounds and learning styles, as well as to reflect on their motivations, study habits, and expectations for the course.

### Seminar Participation: 30 pts

Class discussions provide an opportunity for you to showcase that you have read and thought about the readings, and to practice public speaking in a small group!

### Discussion Leading: 5 pts

Discussion Leaders will submit discussion questions in advance for each week and help facilitate our seminar in a critical dialogue about each theme.

### Discussion Question Responses: 15 pts

Written responses prompt everyone to do the thinking necessary before class so they will care about what others have to say and stay engaged, even if you are not the person being called upon!

### Writing Assignments: 45 pts

Various opportunities to engage the material in critical and creative ways!

### Course Reflection: 2 pts

A way to look back on your learning contract and assess how motivations and understandings have changed.

**YOU ARE EXPECTED TO COME TO CLASS HAVING READ ALL THE ASSIGNED READINGS AND BE READY TO DISCUSS!**

## GRADING SCALE

>93: A                      87-89: B+

90-92: A                    83-86: B

80- 82: B-

77-79: C+                 60-69: D

70-76: C

<59: F

# Course Policies and Classroom Conduct



## *Classroom Etiquette*

In this course, you will have a chance to engage with your fellow classmates. Much of this course focuses on classroom discussion, group work, presentations, and debate. Please be respectful of your fellow classmates' opinions.

Keep an open mind and above all, **maintain mutual respect** with your peers. If you find yourself speaking a lot, ask yourself, is this a point already made? Am I taking space from other people who would like to speak?

## *Seminar Participation*

Seminar participation is a substantial portion of your grade. **You may miss one class meeting without penalty.** Exceptions include illness or family emergencies. If you experience COVID-19 symptoms, self-quarantine immediately even if you are vaccinated, and notify the university by completing the [COVID-19 screening checklist](#) and follow instructed guidelines.

**If you know you will be absent in advance or expect to miss more than one class period,** please email me to let me know so that we can make a plan for how to make up missed work.

# Policies, continued

## *Missed Coursework*

You are expected to submit **assignments on time**. Exemptions are granted for family emergencies or illness and any pre-approved arrangements. If you experience any difficulties with completing assignments, please let me know. You do **not** need to provide details!

## *Email Policy*

**For short questions, feel free to email me.** Please put ANTH 443 or ANTH 553 in the subject line and allow 24 hours for me to respond before following up with another email. **If have an in-depth question or would like input on writing or reading strategies, please see me in office hours.**

## *Laptop Policy*

During discussion, **laptops and tablets may be used to take notes and to reference readings and materials.** Please refrain from using your laptop for other non-class related activities.



"I see jury selection has begun."

## *Accessibility Statement*

**All students should have equal access to educational opportunities at Northern Illinois University.** If you have a disability-related need, please contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) as soon as possible. In addition, please contact me privately as soon as possible so we can discuss your accommodations. Please note that you will not be required to disclose your disability, only your requested accommodations.

**In general, please refrain from using your cell phone during class unless granted permission or requested for in-class activities such as polling apps.**

# Policies, continued

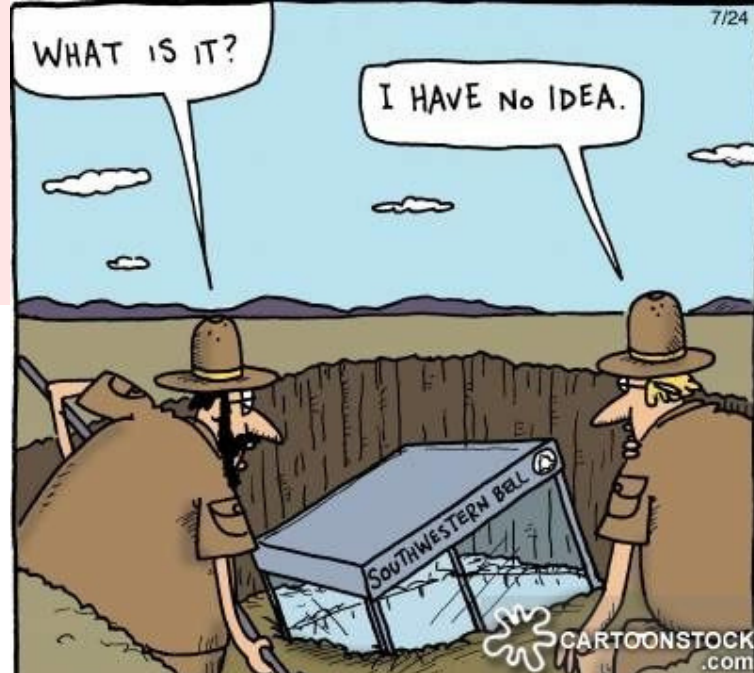
## *Written Assignments*

Written assignments will be typed in size 12, Times New Roman font, double-spaced on pages with 1" margins. Sources will be cited in text and included in a **bibliography formatted according to the Society for American Archaeology style conventions.**

## *Academic Integrity*

**It is expected that students attending NIU understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and are willing to bear individual responsibility for their work.**

We will discuss what academic honesty and plagiarism mean in an academic environment. We will cover how to properly cite others' work as well as the specific academic conventions within the field of archaeology.



- Any work submitted should be your own and prepared for this course and not another,
- All assignments must use proper attribution, meaning that you have identified the original source of work that you quote or paraphrase in your assignments.
- Do not collaborate or work with other students on assignments or projects unless you have been given permission or instruction to do so.
- If you are unclear about expectations, please ask!

Students who engage in academic dishonesty may receive a grade of F for the course and are subject to suspension or dismissal from the university. Please familiarize yourself with the full policy on [Academic Misconduct](#) at NIU.



## *Inclement Weather Information*

In the event that NIU declares an official campus closure due to inclement weather, class will not be held. Official campus closures will be posted on the [NIU Home Page](#), NIU's official [Facebook page](#), and the university's [Twitter feed](#). You can also call the Toll-Free Weather Status Hotline at 753-OPEN (6736) or 888-464-8673.

Any schedule adjustments as a result of campus closures will be emailed and/or posted to Blackboard. During winter months, please use caution and personal judgment in your travels to and from campus, regardless of whether campus is officially closed. If you need to miss class due to winter weather travel constraints, please email me to let me know,

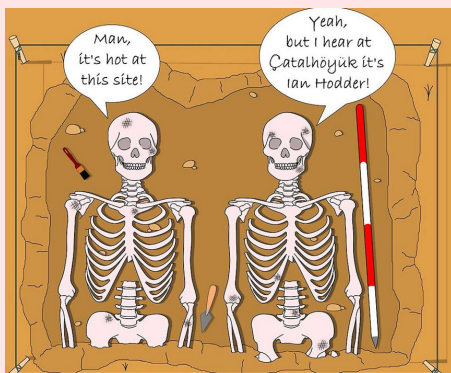
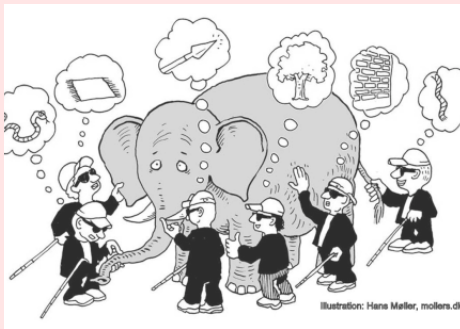
NIU is also offering a **\$35 per night** short-stay option in the Holmes Student Center Hotel to students who would like to stay overnight due to inclement weather or for academic purposes. Visit [go.niu.edu/HSCshortstay](http://go.niu.edu/HSCshortstay) to learn more or to request a short stay.

## *COVID-19 Protocols*

All employees, students and guests, regardless of vaccination status, are required to **wear a mask** indoors while on campus. Any student or employee who is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or who has been exposed to COVID-19 can test on campus at the Student Health Center using the free SHIELD Illinois saliva-based PCR test. Schedule an appointment online by choosing the "NIU 'Sick Only' Student Health Center" location in the [SHIELD testing portal](#). Please do not go to the SHIELD testing site in the Holmes Student Center if you are symptomatic.

For more information about COVID-19 policies and recommendations, see the [Protect the Pack](#) website.

# Weekly Schedule



## Welcome and What is Theory?

01

Welcome to Archaeological Theory! We will go over the outline of the course and course policies. What is theory, and how is it different from literature review?

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## Questioning Objectivity

02

Can science, including archaeology, ever be truly 'objective?' How do structural barriers including racism, sexism, and other oppressions impact the ways we think about the past?

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## Culture History to the (not-so) New Archaeology

03

Gordon Willey and Philip Phillips stated in 1958 that "American archaeology is anthropology or is it nothing." How did archaeologists shift from culture history approaches to answer questions about humans and human societies?

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## The Post-Processual Critique

04

Post-processualists emerge on the scene in the 1980s and 1990s. How do their interpretive approaches and emphasis on multivocality differ from the processual focus on the scientific method?



## Agency in Archaeology

05

Theories of agency recognize that human beings make choices, hold intentions, and take action. How can archaeologists move beyond looking at broad structural or environmental change and consider the individual?

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## Place, Space, and Landscape

06

Landscape archeology addresses the complex ways that people have consciously and unconsciously shaped the land around them. How did past peoples view and modify their environments for various purposes?

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## Feminist and Queer Archaeologies

07

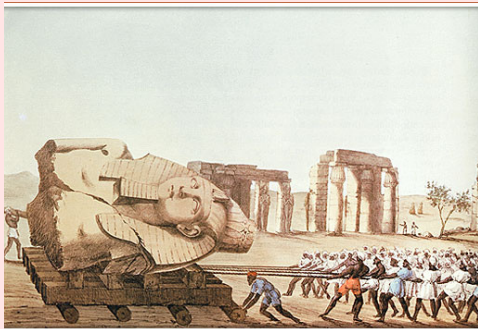
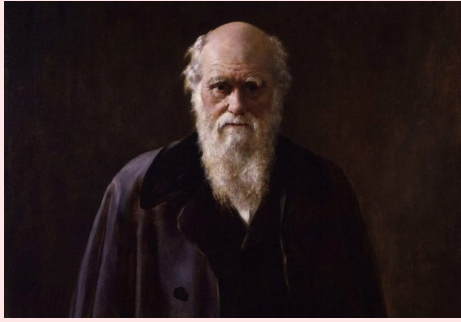
How has the feminist critique impacted theoretical discourse in archaeology? How can Queer theory challenge normative, and especially heteronormative, views of the past?

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08

## Practice and Memory

Theories of practice and social memory challenge archaeologists to reconceptualize their understandings of causality and change in the ancient past. What roles do material culture play in these dynamics?



## Evolutionary Archaeology

09

What are the primary causal forces in evolutionary and Neo-Darwinian approaches? What similarities or differences do these approaches have within Processual frameworks?

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## Historical and Political Ecologies

10

Exploring both ecological and political-economic histories sheds light on the long-term effects of social and environmental changes. How can understanding past ecological changes help advance contemporary conservation science and policy?

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## (Post)colonialism, Nationalism, and the Power of the Past

11

How can theories that address the complex processes of colonialism and nationalism on culture and society help us understand the colonial experience in its entirety, with respect to both the colonizers and the colonized?

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## Decolonizing Archaeology

12

How can we engage concretely with the long shadow of colonialism and the long-standing problem of systemic racism in our discipline and examine our own practice through personal and disciplinary activism, teaching, and research?



## Disciplinary Matters

*13*

How does archaeology, like many other fields, suffer from equity and safety issues that stem from its historical development and culture of practice? What can be done about it?

[Content advisory: we will be reading and discussing harassment and discrimination in archaeology, including accounts of sexual assault]

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## Happy Thanksgiving!

Take a break, eat some turkey or veggie stuffing on Thursday, and/or catch up on assignments this week!

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*15*

## Where Do We Go from Here? Archaeology's Future

With concerns about the relationship between capitalism and the academy, neoliberal transformations to higher education, and sustainability, what should the future hold for archaeology?

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## Course Wrap Up

What other important theoretical issues in archaeology should we consider? Have your interests and stakes in archaeology changed since the onset of the course? Will this course ever end?



# Readings

## WEEK 1 - Welcome and What is Theory?

- Johnson Ch. 1
- Grad School Survival Guide: How to Read (PDF)  
(NOTE: not just for grad students! Undergrads in ANTH 453 should read this piece too)

## WEEK 2 - Questioning Objectivity

- Wylie 1997, “Good Science, Bad Science, or Science as Usual? Feminist Critiques of Science”
- Harris 2004, “Indigenous Worldviews and Ways of Knowing as Theoretical and Methodological Foundations for Archaeological Research”
- Echo-Hawk and Zimmerman 2006, “Beyond Racism: Some Opinions about Racism and American Archaeology”
- White and Draycott 2020, “Why the Whiteness of Archaeology is a Problem”
- Moses 2016, “Is the Term ‘People of Color’ Acceptable in This Day and Age?”
- Weeber 2020, “Why Capitalizing ‘Black’ Matters”

## WEEK 3 - Culture History to the (not-so) New Archaeology

- Johnson Ch. 2, 3, 4, 5
- Binford 1967, “Smudge Pits and Hide Smoking: The Use of Analogy in Archaeological Reasoning”
- Binford 1980, “Willow Smoke and Dogs’ Tails: Hunter-Gatherer Settlement Systems Archaeological Site Formation”
- Brown Ch. 1

## WEEK 4 - The Post-Processual Critique

- Johnson Ch. 6, 7
- Hodder 1991, “Interpretive Archaeology and Its Role”
- Parker Pearson 1982, “Mortuary Practices, Society, and Ideology: An Ethnoarchaeological Study”
- Gero 1991, “Who Experienced What in Prehistory? A Narrative Explanation from Queyash, Peru”
- Brumfiel 1992, “Breaking and Entering the Ecosystem”
- Poem, “Archaeology Camp”
- Brown Ch. 2



# Readings, continued

## WEEK 5 - Agency in Archaeology

- Johnson Ch. 8
- Dobres and Robb 2000, “Agency in Archaeology: Paradigm or Platitude?”
- Gosden 2005, “What do Objects Want?”
- Nakamura 2005 “Mastering Matters: Magical Sense and Apotropaic Figurine Worlds of Neo-Assyria”
- Whitridge 2004 “Whales, Harpoons, and Other Actors: Actor-Network Theory and Hunter Gatherer Archaeology”
- Brown Ch. 4

## WEEK 6 - Place, Space, and Landscape

- Turnbull 2002, “Performance and Narrative, Bodies and Movement in the Construction of Places and Objects, Spaces and Knowledges”
- Ashmore 2004, “Social Archaeologies of Landscape”
- Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2006, “Memory Pieces and Footprints: Multivocality and the Meanings of Ancient Times and Ancestral Places among the Zuni and Hopi”
- Álvarez Larrain and McCall 2019, “Participatory Mapping and Participatory GIS for Historical and Archaeological Landscape Studies: A Critical Review”
- Bruchac 2005, “Earthshapers and Placemakers: Algonkian Indian Stories and the Landscape”
- Poem, “Mother Earth”

## WEEK 7 - Feminist and Queer Archaeologies

- Johnson Chapter 9
- Blackmore 2011, “How to Queer the Past Without Sex: Queer Theory, Feminisms, and the Archaeology of Identity”
- Sterling 2015, “Black Feminist Theory in Prehistory”
- Alberti 2006, “Archaeology, Men, and Masculinities”
- Moen 2019, “Gender and Archaeology: Where Are We Now?”
- Brown Ch. 5



# Readings, continued

## WEEK 8 - Practice and Memory

- Lightfoot et al. 1998, “Daily Practice and Material Culture in Pluralistic Social Settings: an archaeological study of culture change and resistance from Fort Ross, California”
- Silliman 2009, “Change and Continuity, Practice and Memory: Native American Persistence in Colonial New England”
- Atalay and Hastorf 2006, “Food, Meals, and Daily Activities: Food Habitus at Neolithic Çatalhöyük”
- Naum 2012, “Ambiguous Pots: Everyday Practice, Migration and Materiality: The Case of Medieval Baltic Ware on the Island of Bornholm (Denmark)”
- Gavua 2015, “Material Expressions of Religious Identity in Ghana”

## WEEK 9 - Evolutionary Archaeology

- Johnson Chapter 10, 11
- Broughton and O’Connell 1999, “On Evolutionary Ecology, Selectionist Archaeology, and Behavioral Archaeology”
- McGuire and Hildebrandt 2005, “Re-Thinking Great Basin Foragers: Prestige Hunting and Costly Signaling during the Middle Archaic Period”
- Coddling and Jones 2007, “Man the Showoff? Or the Ascendance of a Just-so-Story: A Comment on Recent Applications of Costly Signaling Theory in American Archaeology”
- Brown Ch. 6

## WEEK 10 - Historical and Political Ecologies

- Logan 2016, ““Why Can't People Feed Themselves?": Archaeology as Alternative Archive of Food Security in Banda, Ghana.”
- Erickson 2008, “Amazonia: The Historical Ecology of a Domesticated Landscape”
- Deur 2002, “Rethinking Precolonial Plant Cultivation on the Northwest Coast”
- Fisher 2020, “Archaeology for Sustainable Agriculture”
- Reed and Ryan 2019, “Lessons from the Past and the Future of Food”





# Readings, continued

## WEEK 11 - (Post)colonialism, Nationalism, and the Power of the Past

- Johnson Ch. 12
- Arnold 1990, “The Past as Propaganda: Totalitarian Archaeology in Nazi Germany”
- Lane 2011, “Possibilities for a Postcolonial Archaeology in sub-Saharan Africa: Indigenous and Usable Pasts”
- Gonzalez-Ruibal et al. 2008, “Time to Destroy: An Archaeology of Supermodernity”
- Meskell 2020, “Imperialism, Internationalism, and Archaeology in the Un/Making of the Middle East”
- Apaydin and Hassett 2019, “Should I Stay or Should I Go? Ideals and Realities of Archaeology in the Conflict Regions

## WEEK 12 - Decolonizing Archaeology

- Johnson Ch. 13
- Two Bears 2016, “What Better Way to Give Back to Your People”
- Jackson and Smith 2005, “Living and Learning on Aboriginal Lands: Decolonizing Archaeology in Practice”
- Franklin et al. 2020, “The Future is Now: Archaeology and the Eradication of Anti-Blackness”
- Poem, “Keepers of the Indigenous Past”

## WEEK 13 - Disciplinary Matters

**[Content advisory: we will be reading and discussing harassment and discrimination in archaeology, including accounts of sexual assault]**

- Bardolph 2014, “A Critical Evaluation of Recent Gendered Publishing Trends in American Archaeology”
- Goldstein et al. 2018, “Why Do Fewer Women than Men Apply for Grants after their PhDs?”
- Meyers et al. 2018, “The Context and Consequences of Sexual Harassment in Southeastern Archaeology”
- Leighton 2020, “Myths of Meritocracy, Friendship, and Fun Work: Class and Gender in North American Academic Communities”
- Heath-Stout and Hannigan 2020, “Affording Archaeology: How Field School Costs Promote Exclusivity”



# Readings, continued

## WEEK 13 - Disciplinary Matters (Continued)

- Lynn et al. 2018, “Family and the Field: Expectations of a Field-Based Research Career Affect Researcher Family Planning Decisions”
- Brown Ch. 7

## WEEK 14 - Happy Thanksgiving! (No class)

## WEEK 15 - Heritage Abroad

- Johnson Ch. 14
- Pikirayi 2019, “Sustainability and an Archaeology of the Future”
- Rivera-Collazo, Isabel C. (2021) “Climate Change and Archaeological Sites: A Case Study for Partnering Cultural Heritage and Climate Action” (PDF)
- Harrison and Breithoff 2017, “Archaeologies of the Contemporary World”
- Hauser et al. 2018, “Archaeology as Bearing Witness”
- Wurst 2019, “Should Archaeology Have a Future?”

## WEEK 16 - Course Wrap Up

- No readings!
- IN CLASS ACTIVITY: Presentations and end-of-semester Potluck

*Have a great semester!*



THE ONLY THING LEFT  
IN HISTORY IS THE  
CONTENT OF RADICAL  
THEORY