

ARCH 1900: The Archaeology of College Hill

Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World—Fall 2015

Website: <http://blogs.brown.edu/archaeology250>
Meeting: Monday 3-5:20pm (excavation), Tuesday 12-1pm (section)
Location: Moses Brown School—excavation
Carriage House at 137 Waterman St.—lab
RI Hall 109—section

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The celebrations for Brown's 250th anniversary have highlighted the long and storied history of the university. As we imagine the campus of the past, however, we must also think of our Providence surroundings. How might College Hill have looked at 250 years ago? 150 years ago? And what questions can we ask of the changing landscape? How was land used, who lived here, and what might their relationship have been to Brown? What material traces of the past might still be present, right under our feet, as we go about our daily lives?

The Archaeology of College Hill addresses these questions directly, through excavations conducted by Brown students at sites in and around Brown's campus. In past years, fieldwork has been completed at the First Baptist Church, the John Brown House, Hope College, and the Quiet Green. This year, we will move our excavations to a new campus and begin work with our neighbors at the Moses Brown School. We will pose our own research questions, conduct archival research, and excavate an on-campus site, all to lay out a plan for a new, three-year project at the Moses Brown School.

The goals of this course are twofold: to introduce students to the basics of archaeological field methods, and to explore the history and archaeology of our surroundings on- and off-campus through active research and fieldwork. Each Monday, students will learn the basic components of field archaeology through hands-on survey and excavation at Moses Brown, and the laboratory processing of the resulting archaeological finds. On Tuesdays, discussion sections will focus on various fieldwork or research techniques and their application to historical New England contexts. The course will culminate in a final project that is designed by the students and instructor after preliminary work has begun on our new excavation. Upon completion of this course, students will have a solid foundation for participation in archaeological field projects in the U.S. and abroad.

Because of the hands-on nature of our work, class enrollment has been capped—preference will go to undergraduate concentrators in the Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World or the Department of Anthropology.

Learning Goals

- Hands-on training in field techniques, including site survey, excavation, stratigraphic recording, artifact analysis and processing, and conservation

- Experience with historical and archival research, using collections at the Rhode Island Historical Society and within the city of Providence
- Greater knowledge of the history of the Moses Brown campus and its Providence surroundings
- Basic skills for research dissemination, museum display, and public outreach

Grade Breakdown

Writing Assignment I—Buildings@Brown	15%
Writing Assignment II—Object Biography	15%
Writing Assignment III—Dormitory Ethnography	20%
Final Project	25%
Weekly excavation diaries, blog	10%
Participation and attendance	15%

Course Activities

Writing Assignment I—Providence Buildings (1250 words, due 5pm, Oct. 9th): We are all familiar with Brown’s campus in 2015, but how has the physical environment changed over time? Students will select a building or other physical feature, either on the Moses Brown Campus or in the surrounding area, and through archival research will trace the development of this building over time. The paper should include both a brief overview of the historical background and physical characteristics of the structure, and a discussion tracing the changes to the building or its surroundings since its original construction. Papers should include at least **THREE** clearly labelled archival photographs, plans, or maps. Students are required to visit *either* the RI Historical Society or the City Archives.

Writing Assignment II—Object Biography (1500 words, due 5pm, Oct. 30th): How can we talk about objects to convey their many meanings in the past? Students will choose a single object of some relevance to the history of either Brown University or the Moses Brown School. Building on the examples provided in the weekly readings, students will produce an object biography for the selected artifact. The paper should include at least **ONE** image of the object itself, provide a description of its physical characteristics and current location, and address any shifts in the object’s meaning in different periods or different contexts.

Writing Assignment III—Dormitory Ethnography (1500 words, due 5pm, Nov. 27th): What does our physical environment say about us as individuals, and how do we shape our physical environment? After reading Daniel Miller’s (1988) discussion of council housing in Britain, visit at least **THREE** rooms in the same dormitory at Brown University to investigate how Brown students appropriate institutional spaces to express identity. Describe each of the rooms in detail—what is the same about all three? How have they been changed by their current occupants? Would any of these changes survive in the archaeological record? The paper should conclude with a discussion of how elements such as gender, ethnicity, or other factors may be expressed within an otherwise ‘neutral’ setting.

Final Project: To be decided by the class in conjunction with the specifics of excavation at Moses Brown. This will likely involve a research project involving archival materials and/or our own archaeological materials.

Weekly Excavation Diaries: Archaeology is a destructive process, and we will be removing a part of Moses Brown's past as we excavate. The documentary record of fieldwork is therefore essential. Each student is required to keep their own personal field notebook during and after our class meetings. These notebooks should be a narrative of what has happened, what has been found, and any other relevant information (weather, problems and concerns, hypotheses and thoughts, etc.). Notebooks should also include drawings or sketches of trench plans, sections, and/or artifacts. These will be handed in at regular intervals for evaluation. In addition, each student will be required to post **ONE** entry from the excavation notebook to the class blog to share the excavation's progress with the Brown community.

Participation and Attendance: Fieldwork is a collaborative, hands-on process and it is extremely important to be present, be prepared, and to participate actively every week. Regular attendance and participation are mandatory, and will be strictly enforced—any unexcused absences will result in an attendance grade of 0. Excused absences are acceptable when accompanied by a note from a doctor, coach, or other appropriate authority.

N.B. Students are also required to attend at least 3 hours of excavation during family weekend, Saturday, October 17th.

Preparing for Archaeological Fieldwork

Our excavations will be a fun activity for everyone involved—a primary goal for the course is for students to develop a strong sense of teamwork. However, there are also a few basic principles of archaeological fieldwork that need to be understood in order for the course and our collaborative archaeological research to be successful:

- Students must be dressed appropriately in order to participate in fieldwork. **Close-toed shoes** are required for all outdoor fieldwork. Wear clothes that you don't mind getting dirty. As is often the case in archaeology, we have limited time and **we will work in all weather conditions**, rain or shine. Be prepared with appropriate rain gear, sunscreen, hats, water bottles, etc.
- Archaeological fieldwork is physically demanding and can involve heavy lifting, shoveling, and prolonged periods of working outdoors in squatted or bent postures. **Please notify the instructor of any injuries or existing physical limitations** on the first day of class so that we can make accommodations for your meaningful involvement in the fieldwork without risk of further injury.
- We will be excavating trenches to depths of up to 1 meter. Be aware of the location of the trenches to prevent injury. Never lean or sit on the edge of a trench, or sit on the ground inside a trench. The former jeopardizes the integrity of our data, and the latter just encourages bad excavation habits and techniques!
- Archaeological fieldwork and lab work demands careful attention to detail, and, above all, patience. We are never in a rush to excavate soil or materials from the ground before they are properly documented *in situ*. Students must follow the excavation instructions given by the instructor and teaching assistant. Always take the initiative to ask questions or to clarify instructions, even if something seems rudimentary—**it is much better to ask a question than to make a basic mistake. There is no such thing as a stupid question.**
- Keep track and take care of equipment at all times. Be sure to pick up after yourself and to stow equipment in the storage location after the day's work is completed. Everyone must

contribute equally to cleaning up the site after each day of fieldwork before anyone can depart—archaeological fieldwork is first and foremost a group effort, and no one is done until everyone is done.

- Finally, the Archaeology of College Hill is representing Brown University to the Moses Brown community and to a broader public. Please treat one another with respect and take the time to speak courteously with visitors and observers. Foul language, inappropriate behavior, and tampering with the excavation areas unaccompanied by the instructor or teaching assistant will not be tolerated. Bear in mind that students of all ages, from elementary through high school, may be present as we excavate.

Texts and Materials

- Deetz, James. 1996. *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life, Revised Edition*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Renfrew, Colin, and Paul Bahn. 2010. *Archaeology Essentials: Theory, Methods, Practice*. London: Thames and Hudson
- Roskams, Steve. 2001. *Excavation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Small, bound notebook for site diaries (Moleskin or similar)
- Marshalltown 4" pointing trowel (\$13 on Amazon)

Useful References and Resources

- Encyclopedia Brunoniana: http://www.brown.edu/Administration/News_Bureau/Databases/Encyclopedia/
- Brown's 250th Anniversary website: <http://brown.edu/about/brown250/>
- Rhode Island Historical Society Library: <http://www.rihs.org/library/collections/>
- Providence City Archives: <http://www.providenceri.com/archives>
- John Hay Library: <http://library.brown.edu/about/hay/>
- Society for Historical Archaeology: <http://www.sha.org>

Weekly Schedule

All readings must be completed **BEFORE** section each week, and students should come to section prepared to discuss readings and fieldwork progress.

Week 1—An introduction to archaeology

September 14 – Course introduction, field survey

September 15 – Introduction to archaeology

Section Readings:

Renfrew and Bahn 2010, Introduction and Chapter 1 (8-35)

Mrozowski, Stephen A., Grace H. Ziesing, and Mary C. Beaudry. 1996. *Living on the Boot:*

Historical Archaeology at the Boot Mills Boardinghouses, Lowell, Massachusetts.
Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. Chapter 2: Historical archaeology in
context (13-37)

Week 2 – An introduction to field methods

September 21 – Excavation

September 22 – Techniques of archaeological survey and excavation

Section Readings:

Kelsey, Rayner W. 1919. *Centennial History of Moses Brown School*. Providence: Moses Brown School. Pp. 29-57; 113-132.

Renfrew and Bahn 2010, Chapters 2-3 (36-103)

Roskams 2001, Chapter 2 (30-39)

Week 3 – Research and the documentary record

September 28 – Excavation

September 29 – Visit to RI Historical Society—meet at 121 Hope St.

Section Readings:

Seasholes, Nancy S. 1988. "On the Use of Historical Maps." In *Documentary Archaeology in the New World*, edited by Mary Beaudry, 92–118. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilkie, Laurie A. 2006. "Documentary Archaeology." In *The Cambridge Companion to Historical Archaeology*, edited by Dan Hicks and Mary Beaudry, 13–33. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 4 – Excavation and the stratigraphic record

October 5 – Excavation

October 6 – Basics of site recording, stratigraphy, and excavation

Section Readings:

Roskams 2001, Chapter 6 (110-118), Chapters 9-10 (153-183), selections of Chapter 11 (184-192, 208-216), Chapter 12 (217-238)

*****Written Assignment 1 (Providence Buildings) due 5pm, Friday, October 9th*****

Week 5 – Objects and the material record

October 12 – No Excavation—Fall Weekend

October 13 – Putting the material record in context

Section Readings:

Cochran, Matthew D., and Mary C. Beaudry. 2006. "Material Culture Studies and Historical Archaeology." In *The Cambridge Companion to Historical Archaeology*, edited by Dan Hicks and Mary Beaudry, 191–204. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Deetz 1996, Chapters 1-2 (1-67)

Week 6 – Chronology and dating

October 19 – Excavation

October 20 – Principles of chronology and archaeological dating

Section Readings:

Deetz 1996, Chapters 3-4 (68-124)

Renfrew and Bahn 2010, Chapter 4 (104-139)

Roskams 2001, Chapter 13 (239-266)

Week 7 – Interpreting objects

October 26 – Excavation

October 27 – Thinking with objects and object biographies

Section Readings:

Gosden, Chris, and Yvonne Marshall. 1999. "The Cultural Biography of Objects." *World Archaeology* 31 (2): 169–178.

Hodder, Ian. 1999. *The Archaeological Process: An Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers. Chapter 4: Interpreting material culture (66-79)

Kopytoff, Igor. 1986. "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process." In *The Social Life of Things*, edited by Arjun Appadurai, 64–91. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

*****Written Assignment 2 (Object Biography) due 5pm, Friday, October 30th*****

FAMILY WEEKEND – Excavation October 25, 10am – 4pm

Week 8 – Interpreting sites

November 2 – Laboratory work (finds processing)

November 3 – From material assemblages to buildings and settlements

Section Readings:

Deetz 1996, Chapters 5-6 (125-186)

Hodder, Ian. 1999. *The Archaeological Process: An Introduction*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers. Chapter 3: How do archaeologists reason? (30-65)

O’Keefe, Tadhg, and Rebecca Yamin. 2006. “Urban Historical Archaeology.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Historical Archaeology*, edited by Dan Hicks and Mary Beaudry, 87–103. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 9 – Re-peopling the past

November 9 – Laboratory work (finds processing)

November 10 – Identity and the built environment

Section Readings:

Deetz 1996, Chapters 7-9 (187-260)

King, Julia A. 2006. “Household Archaeology, Identities, and Biographies.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Historical Archaeology*, edited by Dan Hicks and Mary Beaudry, 293–313. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Miller, Daniel. 1988. “Appropriating the State on the Council Estate.” *Man* 23 (2): 353–372.

Week 10 – An introduction to lab methods

November 16 – Laboratory work (conservation)

November 17 – Methods for archaeological finds processing

Section Readings:

Knappett, Carl, Lambros Malafouris, and Peter Tomkins. 2010. “Ceramics (As Containers).” In *the Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, edited by Mary Beaudry and Dan Hicks, 588–612. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Joukowsky, Martha. 1980. *A Complete Manual of Field Archaeology*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall. Chapter 12 (276-297)

Orton, Clive, and Michael Hughes. 2013. *Pottery in Archaeology, Second Edition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2 (24-40), Chapter 4 (46-70)

*****Written Assignment 3 (Dormitory Ethnography) due 5pm, Friday, November 20*****

Week 11 – Materials analysis and conservation

November 23 – Laboratory work (analysis, documentation, and photography)

November 24 – Tools for conservation, ceramic recording and analysis

Section Readings:

Barker, David, and Teresita Majewski. 2006. "Ceramic Studies in Historical Archaeology." In *The Cambridge Companion to Historical Archaeology*, edited by Dan Hicks and Mary Beaudry, 205–234. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lubar, Steven, and Peter Liebhold. 1999. "What Do We Keep." *Invention & Technology*: 28–38.

Orton, Clive, and Michael Hughes. 2013. *Pottery in Archaeology, Second Edition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 5-7 (71-103)

Watkinson, David. 2001. "Maximizing the Life Span of Archaeological Objects." In *Handbook of Archaeological Sciences*, edited by Don R. Brothwell and A. Mark Pollard, 649–660. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Ltd.

Week 12 – (Re)Presenting archaeology

November 30 – Laboratory work

December 1 – Museum archaeology and online dissemination

Section Readings:

Copeland, Tim. 2004. "Presenting Archaeology to the Public: Constructing Insights on-Site." In *Public Archaeology*, edited by Nick Merriman, 132–144. London: Routledge.

Merriman, Nick. 2004. "Involving the Public in Museum Archaeology." In *Public Archaeology*, edited by Nick Merriman, 85–108. London: Routledge.

Morgan, Colleen, and Stuart Eve. 2012. "DIY and Digital Archaeology: What Are You Doing to Participate?" *World Archaeology* 44 (4): 521–537.

Renfrew and Bahn Chapter 11: Whose Past? pp. 286-305

Week 13

December 7 – Presentation of final projects