ANTHROPOLOGY 451 ETHNOARCHAEOLOGY

Fall 2009 University of Oregon

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Class Meetings: MW 8:30-9:50, 204 Condon

This class focuses on relationships between archaeology and ethnography in an attempt to determine how ethnographic observations and context can be used to understand the past more fully and how archaeologists can effectively study material culture behavior in a living context. The key to this kind of study is for archaeologists to make direct observations of cultural behavior as it is reflected in the things and refuse that people actually create at present. The archaeologist's view of material culture aids in formulating behavioral structures or contexts for its use; the archaeologist's perspective on time aids in clarifying the concept of the "ethnographic present." Basic questions include how anthropologists propose to study culture change, how functional explanations of social structure and cultural practice are developed, and relationships between human cultures and their embedded technologies. Selected archaeologically and ethnographically known peoples from South Africa, Australia, North America, the Pacific, and other world areas will be examined to provide details of ethnoarchaeological study of both hunter-gatherer and food producing subsistence. Of specific interest are three currently debated issues: mobility questions for hunter-gatherers, ceramic ethnoarchaeology, and landscape archaeology.


Other Text Material (selected readings or supplemental material):
New journal, 2009: *Journal of Ethnoarchaeology* (online)
Jarvenpa, Robert, and Hetty Jo Brumbach (eds). 2006 *Circumpolar Lives and Livelihood: A Comparative Ethnoarchaeology of Gender and Subsistence*


Some Key Supplemental Papers and Volumes:


Cameron, Catherine, and Steve Tomka (eds) 1993 *Abandonment of settlements and regions*: ethnoarchaeological and archaeological approaches. Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press.


Steen, Eveline J. van der, and Benjamin A. Saidel. 2007 On the Fringe of Society: Archaeological and Ethnoarchaeological Perspectives on Pastoral and
Agricultural Societies. BAR S1657.


**Participation:** Class participants are expected to engage in the class discussions; this provides an opportunity to examine fundamental issues in archaeological and anthropological theory and their specific applications to ethnoarchaeology. Appropriate methodology and concepts can then be used for studying regional issues. A research paper and written assignments for the class are required.

**Grading:** Assessing performance necessary for assigning grades is based on 1) participation in seminar discussions (approximately 15%); 2) two exams (including the final; 40%), quizzes and homework (20%); and 3) a reading and research project developed in consultation with the instructor. This will result in a term paper (25%). There are also occasional shorter written assignments. I keep a cumulative total of points scored on various graded assignments and exams for determining final letter grades; the standard distribution I use is as follows. I do not have a set percentage of letter grade values that I assign for any class.

Grading system (%):

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P in P/NP system is a C or higher

Note that it is contrary to University policy to give final exams earlier than officially scheduled.
### WEEK:

#### CLASS TOPICS:

[Note: EIA = *Ethnoarchaeology in Action*, the course text; R = E-reserve or Blackboard; A = assigned reading, MM = Chilton, ed. vol, on reserve]

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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| 27 Sept-03 Oct | Introduction: The concept of Ethnoarchaeology; historical development, definitions and practice | **28 Mon**
   - no class  

**30 Wed**
   - Class Overview; Ethnoarchaeology Definitions and Early Examples  
   - EIA Chpt. 1, Ethnoarchaeology ..., pp. 1-15  
   - B Greaves, Michael The Ethnoarchaeology of Hunting and Collecting: Pumé Foragers of Venezuela. Expedition 49(1):18-27. [Review this; I will also discuss in class]

| 04 - 10 Oct | Ethnoarchaeology in Theory: a new kind of ethnography/ethnology?; the role of analogy | **05 Mon**
   - Analogy and Materials Analysis  
   - B London, G. Ethnoarchaeology and Interpretation. Near Eastern Archaeology, 2000. [Review this; I will also discuss in class]  
   - B Stocks, D. Testing Ancient Egyptian Stone working Methods.. 2000. [Review this; I will also discuss in class]  

**07 Wed**
   - Methodology  

| 11-17 Oct | Ethnoarchaeology in Practice: Field Work and Ethics | **12 Mon**
   - Field Studies  
   - EIA Chpt. 3, Fieldwork and Ethics; pp. 63-90  
   - B Yellen, J. 1977 *Archaeological Approaches to the Present*, review the volume; read pp xi-xiii; 1-12; 85-108.  

**14 Wed**
   - Field Studies and Ethics of Ethnographic Study  
4. **18 - 24 Oct**  
**The Archaeological Context**

- **19 Mon**  
  EIA Chpter. 4. Human Residues ...; pp. 91-115  

- **21 Wed**  
  Australian Case Studies: films and discussion

5. **25 – 31 Oct**  
**Fauna and Subsistence Issues**

- **26 Mon**  
  EIA Chpter. 5, Fauna and Subsistence; pp. 116-137

- **28 Wed**  
  Subsistence  
  Catch-up and Review

6. **01 – 07 Nov**  
**Hunter-Gatherers and Subsistence Transformation**

- **02 Mon**  
  --- Midterm Exam

- **04 Wed**  
  Transitions to Food Production  
  EIA Chpter. 6. Studying Artifacts.; 116-137  
  B Griffin, n.d. "The Ethnoarchaeology of Agta Incipient Cultivation." mss plus slides  

7. **08-14 Nov**  
**Ethnoarchaeological Study of Style**

- **09 Mon**  
  EIA Chpter. 7, Style and Marking of Boundaries; pp. 168-224  

- **11 Wed**  
  Ceramics and Style  
  B Arnold, P. 1999 Typology, Selection and Ceramic Production, in MM, pp. 103-117  

8. **15-21 Nov**  
**Village Ethnoarchaeology: built form and spatial/distributional perspectives**

- **16 Mon**  
  EIA Chpter. 8, Settlement Systems and Patterns; pp. 255-302  
18 Wed
  Site Structures and Activities
  EIA Chpt. 9, Site Structure, pp. 255-283; Chpt 10, pp. 284-302.

9.  22-28 Nov  Craft Production and Specialization
  23 Mon
  Specialist Craft Production
  EIA Chpt. 11, Specialist Craft Production; pp. 303-359; Chpt. 12, Trade...; pp.
  360-377
  B Schmidt, Peter, and S. Terry Childs. 1995 Ancient African Iron
  - Horne, L. 1994. Itinerant brasscasters of eastern India. In Living traditions:
    studies in the ethnoarchaeology of South Asia , B. Allchin (ed.), pp. 265-80.
  - Stark, M. 1999 Social Dimensions of Technical Choice among the
    Kalinga, in MM, pp. 24-43.
  25 Wed
  Chpt. 13, Mortuary ...; pp. 378-408
  Chpt. 14, Conclusions: Ethnoarchaeology in Context; pp. 409-421

27 Fri Review class for final week. Time tba.

10.  29 Nov- 05 Dec  Ethnoarchaeology; Synthesis and Conclusions
  30 Mon Mortuary Evidence - no class/tba
  02 Wed Concluding Thoughts on Ethnoarchaeology – no class/tba

Final Exam: Mon, Dec 7 at 10:15

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The relationships between archaeology and ethnography have long been recognized as critical for anthropological approaches to the study of human behavior and the past. In a concerted effort to determine how ethnographic data and context can be used to understand the past more fully, archaeologists, especially since the 1950s, have examined numerous issues related to this relationship and have systematically studied a variety of ethnographic or "living" contexts. With this in mind, several volumes on general anthropology have been written specifically by and for archaeologists (e.g., Orme, Hodder) and one text-like volume has been produced recently (David and Kramer 2001). Increasingly, archaeologists have considered how they can most effectively study material culture behavior in a living context as a means to improve interpretation of the archaeological record.

The concept of ethnoarchaeology, which developed formally in the 1960s (under several names), is embedded in changes in archaeology and anthropology taking place during that time. It should be noted that the idea of using observable cultural behavior to help explain archaeological phenomena is a much older practice. Initially, "ethnoarchaeology" was defined in a number of different ways and studies so labeled were carried out in diverse ways. As a result, confusion about ethnoarchaeology, when compared to such recognized approaches as historical archaeology, ethnohistory, the use of ethnographic analogy, and archaeological ethnography, has been a topic of discussion since the term was first used. A survey published in 1977 indicated that ethnoarchaeology represented for North American archaeologists the "third most important current methodological and theoretical research frontier in archaeology" (Schiffer 1977). Still, for some, the question persists, what is ethnoarchaeology? Two pertinent aspects of this are: What is its relation to archaeology or anthropology in general and to differing levels of theory? What is the current status of ethnoarchaeology as a special area of investigation?

Key Areas of Study

Most ethnoarchaeological studies during the last three decades have concerned questions related to 1) hunter-gatherer mobility, subsistence, and social organization; 2) village life and its archaeological correlates; and 3) technological systems of various sorts, for example, lithics and ceramics and their social and ecological contexts, and 4) discard behavior. Hunter-gatherer studies have been important because more than 99% of the past is characterized by humans as hunters and because some hunter-gatherers have continued to carry out this subsistence pattern up until the present day. The formulation of the so-called "ring model" to characterize camp layouts was one result of this early research. Observations that reinforced ideas about the complexity of camp activity areas and their archaeological traces also represent a significant result. Village life continues for some observers to represent a settlement pattern conformable to that
expected for archaeologically-known food producers in many parts of the world over the last several thousand years. Architectural and other feature layout and ceramic sociology studies have been central to such ethnoarchaeological studies. For both kinds of subsistence patterns, information about the sources of variability in the archaeological record has been developed. Some of the basic ideas of "contextual" archaeology have been developed out of successful ethnoarchaeological observation.

Ethnographically-based hypotheses that might be tested with archaeological data are typically derived as a result of ethnoarchaeological observations or synthesis. In this regard, it has been pointed out that a limitation of ethnographic data is that they do not explain archaeologically derived patterns. This places special demands on archaeologists to develop explanations that are based ultimately on the archaeological data specifically rather than on interpretations based on analogy. In large part because of this, ethnoarchaeology in recent years has been elevated by some to the level of a subdiscipline of archaeology; others have viewed it as being at the core of archaeology itself. While field studies that are specifically called ethnoarchaeology are perhaps less common now than in the 1970s and 80s, archaeologists still debate the significance of observation of living cultures for archaeological interpretation.

Current Status and Future

There continues to be a high level of consensus that the archaeologist's view of material culture aids in formulating behavioral structures or contexts for its use, and that the archaeologist's perspective on time aids in evaluating the concept of the "ethnographic present." Connections between the past and present continue to intrigue those with an interest in culture change. Also, within the last decade attention to broader kinds of settlement questions as subsumed under the label "landscape," has increased. While this term is used in a variety of ways with regard to archaeological or ethnographic data, the perspective offers an important link between existing people's perception of cultural significance and that of the archaeologist as resource manager.

Several key issues regarding the status and practice of ethnoarchaeology should be addressed. These are critical to its future development, even though little publication has been done recently on these topics:

1) Critiques of theoretical/epistemological frameworks that underlie ethnoarchaeological studies;
2) Assessments of the utility of different types of ethnoarchaeological research for archaeological interpretation, e.g., for settlement system studies or for site formation processes;
3) Comprehensive summaries of ethnoarchaeological research in particular topics--except for ceramic studies and African metallurgy--in different geographical regions;
4) Issues of accountability and responsibility (including advocacy) to the communities that the ethnoarchaeologist studies.
In sum, ethnoarchaeology can be traced to archaeologists' interests in using ethnographic models or analogs for interpreting the past; the development of this kind of research has reflected their interests in offering more systematic or scientific interpretations of past cultural behavior. Beyond analogy, ethnographic or living context offers opportunities to create archaeologically-relevant models of human social interaction. While the definition of ethnoarchaeology and its status as a subfield within the broader discipline continue to pose questions, the perspective offered by ethnoarchaeology continues to be significant for many aspects of archaeological interpretation in specific and for anthropology in general.
Supplemental Sources/Reading, Anth 551, Ethnoarchaeology, Fall 2009

Week 1

Week 2

Week 3 (About Hunter-Gatherers)
Binford, Lewis 1991 "When the going gets tough, the tough get going: Nunamiut local groups, camping patterns and economic organization. In *Ethnoarchaeological Approaches to Mobil Campsites*, ed. Gamble and Boismier, pp. 25-138
Week 4

Week 5 (About transition to Food Production)

Week 6
Kent, Susan 1987 "Understanding the Use of Space: An Ethnoarchaeological Approach" In Method and Theory for Activity Area Research, ed. S. Kent, pp. 1-60.

Week 7 (Ceramic Ethnoarchaeology)

Week 8
Stanislawski, M. 1978 If Pots were Mortal. In Explorations in Ethnoarchaeology. ed. R. Gould, Chpt. 8, pp. 201-227.
Week 9

Week 10

Web Sites:
http://w3.arizona.edu/~anthro/dangtalan/kalinga.htm
http://anthrosite.com/Blog/?tag=ethnoarcheology
http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~ndavid/index.html
http://home1.qte.net/ericjw1/ethnoarcheology.html
http://www.picturesofrecord.com/ethnoarchaeology%20ethnology.htm
http://users.auth.gr/~efstrati/
http://www.albany.edu/anthro/fac/jary/jary7.htm
http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~banning/Ziglab/zigethno.htm
http://www.anthro.ucsd.edu/~tlevy/Archaeology_in_the_Levant/Ethnoarchaeology_India.html
http://www.vijayanagara.org/HTML/Ethno_Arch.html

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