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Anthropology 220: Field Archaeology

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Archeological Field Methods ANT 220
Parkland College, Summer 2017
In-Class lab Meetings: June 21st, June 28th, July 5th, and July 12th 5-8pm
In-Field Meetings: July 17th-July 28th M,T,W,Th 8am-4pm and F 10am-1pm
<https://cobra.parkland.edu>

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| Instructor: Erin P Riggs Email: eriggs@parkland.edu Office: Parkland Campus, D 186 Office Hours: Wednesdays 3-5 online via email or on campus |
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Course Description

Anthropology 220, Field Archaeology, is designed to introduce students to the diverse methods archaeologists use to collect and interpret material evidence. There are layered remnants of past human activity all around us. Allerton Park in Monticello, Illinois, where we will be working this summer, is a perfect example. Here, in an island of forest, a cluster of prehistoric mounds stands in an excellent state of preservation. The fate of these mounds and our ability to study them today is entangled with what happened in this space since the time of their creation. When Robert Allerton turned this space into a private, luxury estate, in the 1890s, much of the area south of the Sangamon River was spared the disturbance of agricultural activity. In this class, students will develop skills in conducting archaeological research through considering these two colocated pasts. Methods covered will include excavation, material analysis, mapping, archival research, oral history analysis, and preservation work. For the first four weeks of this six-week summer course, students will complete lab activities in weekly three-hour sessions on the Parkland campus and will develop individual projects through additional work at home. This portion of the class will be led by a historical archaeologist and will revolve around case studies related to historic period Allerton Park. During the final two weeks of the course, we will shift our focus to prehistory. Students will help the Illinois State Archaeological Survey (ISAS) to excavate and preserve a cluster of mounds at Allerton Park (conditions permitting). Students should note that the dig site at Allerton is ~1 mile hike from the drop off location. A certain degree of physical fitness is required.

Objectives

Students who take this course will:

- develop a basic understanding of the methods archaeologists use to find, sample, and collect data pertaining to materials and contexts
- gain first hand experience in excavating, shovel testing, handling archaeological materials, and completing paperwork in the field
- build skills in working with a team, following instructions, undertaking physical work, and executing tasks with care and precision
- understand the basic time periods used to discuss the past in Illinois and how archaeologists organize material types into groups pertaining to each period
- workshop skills in preparing one type of archaeological data for presentation (each student will complete a project that hones their skills in working with a particular data type of their choosing)

Grade Components

This is a course focused primarily on participation, not assessment. It will consist of four lab sessions and two weeks of assisting full time with an excavation at Allerton Park. In addition, you are expected to complete assigned lab-prep readings and take notes on a reading guide sheet before attending the lab sessions. You will also complete a final project to be presented during our last class meeting at Allerton. For further information, see below.

| Requirement | Description | Percentage of Grade |
|---------------|---|---------------------|
| Attendance | 5% for each lab session (x4 = 20%), 3% for each field day (x10 = 30%) | 50% |
| Participation | Includes being prepared for lab sessions, engaging in discussions, turning in any worksheets used during in-class lab sessions, listening and following instructions in the field | 25% |
| Final Project | Includes meeting with or contacting the instructor to discuss ideas, problems, and progress once a week (10%) and preparing and presenting your final project (15%) | 25% |

Attendance: Because this class is aimed to provide you with hands-on experience, attendance is of utmost importance. You are required to attend every lab meeting and field work day except in the case of a documented emergency. For the first four weeks of the course, we will meet in room D151. During some lab sessions, we will walk out to a field adjacent to the T building, but we will always meet in D151 first. For the two final weeks of the course, we will meet at Allerton Park. I will let you know which parking lot to use at Allerton. Let me know as soon as you can if you will need help in arranging transportation for yourself.

Participation: Except for the final project, there are no graded assignments or exams in this course. All other requirements will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. Receiving credit requires that you participate in every activity and put in sufficient effort. This means that you always prepare for lab meetings, complete readings when they are assigned, and bring the required notes and/or tools with you to every session.

Final Project: In this class, you will learn introductory skills employed by professional archaeologists. You will choose one skill to focus on in detail through an individual project. I will help you in selecting a project and developing your ideas. All projects will relate to material aspects of historic-period Allerton Park. Some potential project ideas are outlined below. If you have other ideas, feel free to discuss them with me. You are required to update me on your progress at least **once a week**. The meeting can take place during office hours, before or after lab meetings, via email, or even via Skype (if you schedule a time). On Friday during the last week of the course, you will present your final project to the class in a mock-conference setting in one of Allerton's meeting rooms.

Potential Projects:

- *Building Floor Plan:* Create a building floor plan map of the Allerton mansion, Evergreen Lodge and/or Gatehouse. Consider spatial organization and positions of entrances and exits. What were the likely priorities for this space (maintaining privacy, impressing guests, etc.)? Perhaps compare this floor plan to other palatial homes built during the same period. Does anything stand out as unique?
- *Plan View of the Site:* Create a plan view (aerial view) map of the Allerton Property. Include building footprints, garden areas, works of art, roads, and other major features. If possible, reference historic maps and include information about the location of features that no longer exist. Use this to infer something about either the goals of the landscape design, or the extent of change through time.
- *Typology of Artistic Styles:* Robert and John Allerton prided themselves on their knowledge of Art History. They studied and collected artwork as they traveled (particularly throughout Europe). Create a typology of all of the art works and architectural elements present on the Allerton property. Aspects you could consider include: style (using art history terminology), place of manufacture, iconography, time of manufacture, or place of stylistic origin. Using this typology, make an inference about the Allertons' artistic preferences.
- *Pottery Profiles and Identification:* Using historic photographs, ID tableware used by Robert and John Allerton. Consider the price and popularity of these items by referencing sources such as the Sears and Roebuck catalogue or papers written by other archaeologists. Were these items unique or especially expensive? Finally, create pottery profile images of similar pieces. (This will require that I find comparable pieces for you to handle in-person. Be sure to begin this project early!)
- *Heat Map or Timeline:* The Allertons purchased art for themselves (to display in their homes and gardens) and art to donate (to give to museums and institutions throughout Illinois). Were there patterns to this investment (through space or time)? Create either a heat map or a timeline to explore this question.

General College Syllabus and Disabilities Statement:

I expect academic honesty and civility, as defined by **Parkland's General College Syllabus**, at all times and throughout the course. This addendum also lists useful information on Parkland's student support services. You can find this document on Cobra, or at the following link:

https://cobra.parkland.edu/shared/shared_content_files/General_College_Syllabus.html

If you believe you have a **disability**, for which you may need an academic accommodation (e.g., an alternate testing environment or the use of an assistive technology), please contact James Albrecht (Room: U-265, phone: 217-353-2588, email: jalbrecht@parkland.edu)

Withdrawal information

Parkland requires instructors to withdraw students on the following dates:

Monday June 2nd: Census Day Roster – If you have not attended, you will be withdrawn with a W grade.

Thursday, July 20th: Withdraw Deadline – Last day to ***withdraw yourself*** and get a W grade. This must be done *in person* with Parkland Admissions. If you stop attending class and do not officially withdraw by the deadline, you will receive an F grade for the course.

Grading Scale

This grading scale followed by Parkland will be used in this course:

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|--------------|---|
| 90–100 | A |
| 80–89 | B |
| 70—79 | C |
| 60—69 | D |
| 59 and below | F |

Required Materials

I will post all required materials (readings, videos, audio clips, web links, etc.) on the Cobra website within weekly folders. There is no required text for this course.

In the field, required tools will be provided. However, you will need to come prepared with field appropriate clothing and shoes, gloves, sunscreen, bug spray, and a water bottle.

You can reach me by email (my information is on the cover page of this syllabus) with any questions on the course requirements or readings. Feel free to contact me anytime to discuss your interests, voice your opinion, or ask about class requirements.

Course Schedule

WEEK 1: HISTORIC TIMELINES AND MATERIALS IN ILLINOIS

Lab Prep: Go through: The Reading Guide under the Week One folder in the Content section of Cobra. Read this guide before you begin looking through the lab prep content for the week. Take notes directly on the guide sheet and bring the sheet with you to our first lab meeting.

Read excerpts from: *Discover Illinois Archaeology* and *Robert Allerton: The Private Man & The Public Gifts* (posted in the Week One folder)

Listen to: John Allerton Oral History Interview (posted in the Week One folder)

In-Class: First, we will discuss the course goals, the schedule, and logistics. Then I will give a brief introduction to categories of archaeological data. We will then create a timeline of Illinois history as a group based on the lab prep readings. We will organize an assortment of artifacts into a chronology of material types that roughly corresponds to this historic timeline. Also, we will discuss the final project and possible topics. You should have an informed opinion about what projects could be of interest after reading the excerpts from *Robert Allerton: The Private Man & The Public Gifts* and listening to the John Allerton interview. Our projects will focus on this history.

Project: You must choose a focus for your final project this week. Additionally, you must meet or talk with your instructor via email to develop your plan for completing this project.

WEEK 2: FINDING SITES AND RECORDING CONTEXT

Lab Prep: Go through: The Reading Guide in the Week Two folder in the Content section of Cobra. Read this guide before you begin looking through the lab prep content for the week. Take notes on the guide sheet and bring the sheet with you to the lab meeting.

Read: Sampling Strategy Summary Website, the Recording Sites Guide, and the Illinois SHPO Guidelines (all posted in the Week Two folder)

Watch: The *Geophysics in Archaeology* and *LiDAR* videos (posted in the Week Two folder)

Look Over: The geophys images from the Allerton Park mound site (posted in the Week Two folder)

In-Class: Before an archaeologist breaks ground, they need to know how to locate sites and how to record information about the location and the landscape. We will focus on this aspect of archaeological work by discussing sampling strategies, survey techniques, and sketch maps. You will learn to pace 10 meters using the average length of your gait. We will also practice pedestrian survey (walking transects while flagging surface finds). Finally, we will workshop creating site plan sketches to scale. We will be outside for most of the day today. Dress accordingly.

Project: You must complete the preliminary research necessary to begin your project this week. You need to again touch base with me to discuss your plan and whether or not you have access to all the necessary resources.

WEEK 3: BREAKING GROUND

Lab Prep: Go through: The Reading Guide under the Week Three folder in the Content section of Cobra. Read this guide before you begin looking through the lab prep content for the week. Take notes on the guide sheet and bring the sheet with you to the lab meeting.

Read: *Tools of the Trade* and *Plan Drawing* (both in the Week Three folder)

Watch: *The Setting up a 1x1m unit, Removing Sod, Excavation Process, Shovel Testing, Using a Hand Auger, Soil Profiling, and Soil Texture Analysis* videos (all videos are less than five minutes long and are located in the Week Three folder)

In-Class: We will discuss shovel testing, marking out units, documentation throughout the process of excavation, and collecting artifacts in the field. We will then practice pacing out distance between test units. We will also conduct a number of mock shovel tests and practice our soil analysis and profile drawing skills. Finally, we will practice plotting out 1 m square units.

Project: You must have the first version of a draft project prepared.

WEEK 4: PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

Lab Prep: Go through: The Reading Guide under the Week Four folder in the Content section of Cobra. Read this guide before you begin looking through the lab prep content for the week. Take notes on the guide sheet and bring the sheet with you to the lab meeting.

Read: Excerpt from *Archaeological Laboratory Methods: An Introduction and Historic Ceramics Basics*, the Illinois State Museum Projectile Point webpage, and Baker's *A Theory of a Flake* website (in the Week Four folder)

Watch: *The Lithic Terms, Lithic Use Wear, Historic Bottle Analysis, Washing and Labeling Artifacts, and Packaging Artifacts* videos (all videos are less than five minutes long and are located in the Week Five folder)

In-Class: First we will discuss artifact processing and inventory. You will then practice washing, labeling, and inventory skills with a mock collection.

Project: You must have a revised draft of your project prepared. Your project must be completed by the following Friday.

Excavation begins next week. Note: I will continue to post readings pertaining to past archaeological work at Allerton and other prehistoric archaeology in the area on Cobra in the weekly folders. For the remainder of the course, these readings are optional.

WEEK 5: EXCAVATION WEEK ONE

Mon-Thur: Meet every day at Allerton Park (exact location TBA) at 9 am. Come equipped with your dig kit (provided by Parkland), bug spray, sunscreen, gloves, and appropriate shoes and clothing. Prepare to work until 4 pm.

Friday: Class will be held in a meeting room at Allerton (room name TBA). Come prepared to discuss your project which will be presented the following week.

WEEK 6: EXCAVATION WEEK TWO

Mon-Thur: Meet every day at Allerton Park (exact location TBA) at 9 am. Come equipped with your dig kit (provided by Parkland), bug spray, sunscreen, gloves, and appropriate shoes and clothing. Prepare to work until 4 pm.

Friday: Class will be held in a meeting room at Allerton (room name TBA). Come prepared with Keynote/Powerpoint slides to present your final project. Presentations will be followed with light snacks and a celebration of our work completed over the summer term.

This syllabus is subject to change during the semester based on our progress and may be modified by the instructor. You will be notified of any changes both on Cobra and via email.