

Archaeology and the Study of Religion  
RS 116C/216C  
Spring Quarter 2011

Prof. Christine M. Thomas

Office: HSSB 3067 • E-mail: [thomas@religion.ucsb.edu](mailto:thomas@religion.ucsb.edu) • Phone: 4004  
website: [www.religion.ucsb.edu/faculty/thomas/classes/RS116C.html](http://www.religion.ucsb.edu/faculty/thomas/classes/RS116C.html)

## BOOKS

Required:

Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, *Archaeology Essentials: Theories, Methods and Practice, Abridged Edition* (2007).

Brian Fagan, *From Black Land to Fifth Sun: The Science of Sacred Sites* (1998).

Ian Hodder, *Archaeological Theory Today* (2001).

John Moreland, *Archaeology and Text* (2001).

Other materials are posted on the course website:

[www.religion.ucsb.edu/faculty/thomas/classes/RS116C.html](http://www.religion.ucsb.edu/faculty/thomas/classes/RS116C.html)

## CLASS OBJECTIVES

This class applies to the “methodological approaches” requirement in the Religious Studies Major, as well as to the requirement for the course in methodology for the Ph.D. in Religious Studies. It is designed for someone who either has some prior coursework in the study of religion and wishes to learn about how archaeology helps us understand this, or for someone with coursework in archaeology, anthropology, history, classics, or art history, who wishes to learn about the study of religion.

This class will examine the production of archaeological data and their use in reconstructions of past human religious experience, both in historic and prehistoric times, and in the Old and New Worlds. The course will focus on method and theory, from the practical aspects of fieldwork to current theories guiding interpretation of archaeological results. Special attention will be devoted to the relationship between archaeological evidence and historical texts, and the manner in which texts often still determine not only historical reconstructions, but the type of information we draw from archaeology.

## SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Readings should be completed BEFORE the lecture.

W= website, in SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS.

### I. The Hows and Whys of Archaeological Research

28 March: Introduction: The archaeological revolution and the study of religion

30 March: The history of archaeology

📖 Renfrew and Bahn, chapters 1 and 2; W: EUSEBIUS

4 April: A day in the field

📖 Renfrew and Bahn, chapters 3 and 4

6 April: Sacred texts and archaeology: Schliemann and Troy

📖 W: WOOD

11 April: Finding Troy and assessing archaeological data

📖 W: EASTON

## II. No Texts: Prehistoric Archaeology and Cognitive Archaeology

- 13 April: Structuralism: Religion in the material world  
 📖 Renfrew and Bahn, chapter 9; W: RENFREW, "THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF RELIGION"; Hodder, chapter 5
- 18 April: Cognitive archaeology; introduction to the Minoans  
 📖 Fagan, chapters 1 and 10; Hodder, chapter 4; W: MITHEN; RENFREW, "MIND AND MATTER."
- 20 April: Minoan myth and human sacrifice  
 📖 W: SAKELLARAKIS; Hodder, chapters 6 and 7
- 25 April: Identifying religious sites: The shrine at Phylakopi  
 📖 Fagan, chapter 11; W: RENFREW, "FRAMEWORK"
- 27 April: Gender 1: Minoan religion and the mother goddess  
 📖 Fagan, chapter 4

## 2 May: In-Class Midterm

## III. Texts: The New Archaeology and Historical Archaeology

- 4 May: Archaeology as social and economic history: The Revelation of John  
 📖 Moreland, chapter 1; Renfrew and Bahn, chapter 5; W: REVELATION; FRIESEN
- 9 May: Artifact against text: When the text does not help  
 📖 W: TAYLOR; WIGGINS; COOGAN; Moreland, chapters 2-3
- 11 May: How central is the text?: Sacred texts in the new world  
 📖 Fagan, chapters 13 and 14; Moreland, chapter 4

## IV. "Post-processual" Archaeology: New Paradigms

- 16 May: Post-Processual Archaeology, Post-Structuralism; Aztec Domination  
 📖 W: BRUMFIEL; Hodder, chapter 10
- 18 May: Gender: Identifying synagogues and their leaders  
 📖 W: BROOTEN; MATASSA; KRAEMER, "MEANING"
- 23 May: The problem of religious identity: Jewish tuna and Christian fish  
 📖 W: KRAEMER, "TUNA"; KRAABEL; DENZEY; Hodder, chapter 8
- 25 May: Archaeology and interpretation: What past, whose past?  
 📖 Renfrew and Bahn, chapters 11, 12

## 30 May: No Class: Memorial Day Holiday

1 June: Course review

9 June: Final Exam, noon-3 pm

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

If you are a student with a disability, and would like to discuss special academic accommodations, please contact me during my office hours, by phone or e-mail, or before or after class.

1. **Participation (10%).** Time will be devoted each week to class discussion. Minimal preparation represented by either asking or answering questions of value to the entire class in comprehending the course content will be recorded and evaluated. As preparation for class participation, students should formulate a question or two while reading the assignments.
2. **A midterm exam (40%).** Two short essay questions and definition of terms. A study guide will be circulated on Monday, 25 April. The exam will take place on **Monday, 2 May, during the usual class period.**
3. **A final exam (50%).** One long essay question and two short essay questions. A study guide will be circulated on 25 May. The exam will take place on **Thursday, 9 June, at noon in the normal lecture room.**

## MAKEUP POLICY, LATE ASSIGNMENTS, INCOMPLETES

In the interest of fairness to the majority of students who complete their work adequately and on time, despite the numerous hindrances that all of us face in our daily lives, the instructors of this class wish to make the conditions under which work is produced and evaluated as equal as possible for everyone in the class.

Consequently, there will be **no makeup exams** for the mid-term and final examinations. Students needing to miss class on those days will need to acquire advance approval from the professor in order to miss the exam without losing credit. Students who are ill during the exam will similarly need a doctor's note. In each case, students will be given alternate writing assignments to earn the lost credit.

**Incompletes are generally not granted** for this class, because the instructor is not contracted to work over the summer and hence cannot evaluate late work. In the case of ongoing illness or catastrophic family situations, the best course of action is to withdraw from the class and retake it later.

## POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

The Student Code of Conduct clearly sets out a standard of academic honesty and responsibility by which a student's work must be his or her own work. The faculty in Religious Studies believes that plagiarism is one of the most serious infractions of student conduct and of the intellectual environment of the university. All faculty members have agreed that we will pursue disciplinary actions in all cases of plagiarism and that we will ask the Dean of Students and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies not only to suspend the offending student from the university but also prohibit the student from taking any further courses in Religious Studies.