

Expos 20, Spring Semester 2015
T, R 12-1 pm/ 1-2 pm Memorial Hall 303

Who Owns the Past? Contested Archaeology and the Politics of Identity

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<http://isites.harvard.edu/k107130>

Archaeologists are more and more frequently called into legal disputes and the courts of public opinion. But why and how are archaeologists, who have been stereotyped as hirsute, leather bullwhip-carrying men and women with steely-grim eyes and a notable fear of snakes, ready and able to be trusted with the difficult issue of the curation of the past? In this course we will ask questions and think critically over a number of these contested areas. In our first unit, we will consider the rights and problems revolving around the passage of NAGPRA (The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) and in particular its relation to the Peabody Museum. What are some of the issues at stake, and what are the different positions that are taken by Native American tribes, archaeologists and museums? Having debated some of these points, we will move in the second unit into problematizing archaeology. How have archaeologists thought about, and through, the process of collecting data and then its interpretation? Has there been a development of archaeological methods, or does its current practice continue to be fraught with interpretive problems? To help us frame this question we will begin with one of the “Raiders of the Lost Ark” films and through a close reading of the film, ask about its handling of setting and theme. Finally, we will turn in our third unit to the use of archaeology in legitimizing the past and present. We will discuss the nature of a “biblical” archaeology as positioned between the two poles of Israeli and Palestinian national narratives. We will then move on to consider the tendentious nature of archaeology’s legitimizing discourse in Nazi Germany’s use of archaeology along with additional case studies. Is there something inherent to archaeological interpretation that makes it pliant to misuse?

An equally important goal of the course is to develop your ability to write clear, engaging, and coherent analytical essays of the sort you will be asked to produce frequently at Harvard. With this in mind the class is structured to give you the opportunity to work in a sustained and systematic way on improving your writing. During the semester you will write three essays, each of which tackles different aspects of archaeology and which is designed to highlight different writing skills. The thematic units and their associated writing assignments are described below.

Essay I: The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (position paper, 4-6 pages)

We will have discussed, and debated, various perspectives related to NAGPRA—the positions of Native tribes, the scientific community and the public. In your response papers, you will have 1. Discussed different uses of history, 2. Outlined a position in a debate. Now for your first paper, we ask that you write a position paper based on these first two exercises. In doing so, you will need to provide a clear thesis, supporting evidence and a strong argument. In addition, you will also make effective use of counter-argument in your paper.

Focal Writing Skills: Learn to develop an arguable thesis and use counterargument; integrating sources

Essay II: Orientalism and “Raiders of the Lost Ark” (test a theory, 5-7 pages)

For the second paper, you will think through the past and current practice of archaeology. To do this we will test a theory of Orientalism developed by Edward Said through the use of the film “Raiders of the Lost Ark.” With the help of several shorter response papers you will first define Orientalism within the paper and then ask how this idea is, or is not, reflected in the film.

Focal Writing Skills: Ability to develop a comparative model and critique a theory.

Essay III: Research Essay

For the final paper, you will be expected to build on the earlier assignments to write a research paper of 8-10 pages where you examine an issue of the contested past not previously discussed in the class. You will use 5-10 additional sources (the annotated compilation of which could be the pre-writing assignment) and lay out a problem with the various issues at stake, before offering a well-reasoned assessment or argument based on our prior discussions. Paper topics, to be developed in consultation with me, may include: the use of totalitarian archaeology in Nazi Germany, the issue of looting in Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein, and the question of the relationship between archaeology and nationalism (students would choose a specific country or site, for instance of Egypt, Turkey, Greece, Peru, China, etc.).

Focal Writing Skills: Research; handling of multiple sources and different kinds of evidence; structure

Course Readings

• *Course Reader:* The course readings will be posted in PDF form on the course website, here:

<http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k107130&tabgroupid=icb.tabgroup190302>

- *Other resources:*
- Models essays from *Exposé*
<http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~expose/>
- *Harvard University Guide to Using Sources* website, here:
<http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu>

How the Course Works

The main goal for the course is for you to produce an original, compelling, and analytically sound essay for each of the three units of the course. Such essays are not written on the fly; they take time, continual re-working, and critical reflection. The writing requirements outlined below are designed to provide you with the techniques for constructing good essays.

Class time will be split between grappling with the course readings and in-class work directed at improving some aspect of your writing. You should come to class with the relevant readings completed and ready to participate actively in discussion.

Note that we will have a “no laptops” policy in our class. You will be expected instead to have readings printed out or have written notes prepared from which to speak.

Writing and Revising

- *Response Papers:* Before you compose an initial draft of each essay, you’ll complete one or more response papers that focus on particular writing skills that are important for the relevant essay type. At times, you will also be asked to produce a paragraph summarizing an article we have read each week, followed by a well-composed paragraph of response once or twice per unit. In your response paragraph, you should evaluate the reading that we did: What were its highlights? Strengths? What were its weaknesses? How persuasive did you find the article? Check the unit assignment packet for specific instructions and due dates, etc.
- *Drafts:* You will submit a draft of each of the three essays. On each draft you’ll receive detailed comments from the instructor (in writing and in conferences).
- *Draft Cover Letters:* Every time you hand in a draft, you’ll include a cover letter in which you provide guidance to your reader about the aspects of the essay you are struggling with in addition to whatever other comments or questions you might have. I’ll give you more specific instructions about writing draft cover letters over the course of the semester.
- *Draft Workshops:* Immediately after each draft is due we’ll have an in-class draft workshop in which we work through two student papers (chosen by the instructor) and offer the writers constructive criticisms and suggestions for improvement. I will email you the essays I have chosen before each workshop. You will be expected to provide

written comments (in the form of a letter) on each draft that we workshop together. I'll hand out more guidelines on draft workshops later in the semester.

- *Conferences:* After I've carefully read your draft, we'll meet for a 20-30 minute conference in which we'll work together on strategies for revising the essay. You should also plan on taking notes during the conference. Missed conferences may not be rescheduled.

- *Essay Revisions:* You should expect to extensively revise each of your drafts before submitting it for a grade. I will provide written comments on essay revisions. Essay revisions must be submitted over email (not as hard copies), and I will provide my feedback with both marginal and end comments.

Other Policies

- *Grading:* I will grade only the revisions (that is, the last version) of your essays, not the drafts or response papers (although I may suggest, as an aid to interpreting my evaluations, what sort of grade a draft *would* receive if I were to grade it). Course grades will be determined as follows:

Revision of Essay 1	25%
Revision of Essay 2	30%
Revision of Essay 3	35%
Class participation and response papers	10%

Grading will become more stringent as the semester progresses since I expect you will develop as a thinker and writer. If you feel that a grade merits further consideration, you have the option of requesting a re-grade from Karen Heath, the Senior Preceptor. Be advised that her assessment of the paper, whatever the mark, will then stand as the final grade for the paper.

- *Harvard College Writing Program Policy on Attendance*

Because Expos has a shorter semester and fewer class hours than other courses, and because instruction in Expos proceeds by sequential writing activities, your consistent attendance is essential. *If you are absent without medical excuse more than twice, you are eligible to be officially excluded from the course and given a failing grade.* On the occasion of your second unexcused absence, you will receive a letter warning you of your situation. This letter will also be sent to your Resident Dean, so the College can give you whatever supervision and support you need to complete the course.

Apart from religious holidays, only medical absences can be excused. In the case of a medical problem, you should contact your preceptor before the class to explain, but in any event within 24 hours: otherwise you will be required to provide a note from UHS or another medical official, or your Resident Dean. *Absences because of special events such as athletic meets, debates, conferences, and concerts are not excusable absences.* If such an event is very important to you, you may decide to take one of your two allowable unexcused absences; but again, you are expected to contact your preceptor beforehand if

you will miss a class, or at least within 24 hours. If you wish to attend an event that will put you over the two-absence limit, you should contact your Resident Dean and you must directly petition the Expository Writing Senior Preceptor, who will grant such petitions only in extraordinary circumstances and only when your work in the class has been exemplary.

- *Deadlines:* We are on a very tight schedule, so it is imperative that you submit work on time. I will only accept late work if the student contacts me to request an extension *in advance* of the deadline and has a compelling reason. Otherwise late work will receive a significant grade penalty. For your papers, which constitute the bulk of the grades in the class

- *Harvard College Writing Program Policy on Completion of Work:*

Because your Expos course is a planned sequence of writing, you must write all of the assigned essays to pass the course, and you must write them within the schedule of the course—not in the last few days of the semester after you have fallen behind. You will receive a letter reminding you of these requirements, therefore, if you fail to submit at least a substantial draft of an essay by the final due date in that essay unit. The letter will also specify the new date by which you must submit the late work, and be copied to your Resident Dean. *If you fail to submit at least a substantial draft of the essay by this new date, and you have not documented a medical problem, you are eligible to be officially excluded from the course and given a failing grade.*

- *Collaboration Among Students:* The following kinds of collaboration are permitted in this course: developing or refining ideas in conversation with other students, and through peer review of written work (including feedback from Writing Center tutors). If you would like to acknowledge the impact someone had on your essay, it is customary to do this in a footnote at the beginning of the paper. As stated in the Student Handbook, “You do not need to acknowledge discussion with others of general approaches to the assignment or assistance with proofreading.” However, all work submitted for this course must be your own: in other words, writing response papers, drafts, or revisions with other students is expressly forbidden

- *Academic Honesty:* All work submitted for this course must be your own work. Any outside sources you use must be cited properly. Any student submitting plagiarized work is eligible to fail the course and will be referred to the college’s Administrative Board for further disciplinary action, including expulsion from the university. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, consult the relevant sections of *Harvard Guide to Using Sources* and/or speak with the instructor.

