

ANTH 362/562: Archaeological Field Techniques
Rice University
Spring 2009
2-5pm Wednesdays
Sewall 103, Archaeology Laboratory

Professor: Jeffrey Fleisher
Email: jfleisher@rice.edu

Office: 582 Sewell Hall
Office Hours: 12-2pm Wednesdays
Office Phone: 713.348.3482

Course Description

The goal of this course is to familiarize you with the major aspects of archaeological excavation, from planning to actual excavation and retrieval of material, followed by processing and recording of the artifacts, their study and interpretation, and production of a final report.

The field site will be in the Fourth Ward of Houston, on and adjacent to the Rutherford B. H. Yates Museum, 1319 Andrews and 1314 Andrews Streets (see map below). We are fortunate to have the opportunity to excavate in the historic district of Freedman's Town, which is the only remaining, post-Civil War, National Historic District of previously enslaved peoples in the United States. When it was designated in 1984 it had 530 National Register structures; today, less than 30 remain. Houston's Freedman's Town is believed to be the last African American "Freedman's Town" community in the United States that continues to be occupied, at least in part, by descendents of the original emancipated founders.

The Yates Museum owns five properties and uses one as a museum (<http://www.museumsusa.org/museums/info/1168018>, <http://www.yatesmuseum.org>). We will be working in collaboration with the Yates Museum Community Archaeology Project and the Community Archaeology Research Institute (CARI), (<http://www.publicarchaeology.org/yates/mission.html>). Dr. Carol McDavid and Mr. Robert Marcom, who run CARI and have had a long-term relationship with the Yates Museum, will be helping to coordinate the field work. This project has an important community mission to understand the impact of the African Diaspora on different communities and to use archaeology to build bridges among their descendents. Since descendents of some of the founding owners in Freedman's Town are still living there, there will be opportunities to collect oral histories that will help the interpretation of the excavated materials.

Excavation will take place on four consecutive weekends in late January and February. Processing and analysis will follow in March. Final report-writing will occupy much of April.

Required Texts:

Drewett, Peter. 1999. *Field Archaeology: An Introduction*. Routledge.

Readings on Historical and Community-based Archaeology (Owlspace)

Sutton, Mark and Brooke Arkush. *Archaeological Laboratory Methods: An Introduction*. Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company. (copy available in the Archaeology Laboratory)

Course Policies and Requirements:

Grading:

Grades will be calculated based on the percentages below:

Excavation:	40%
Field notebooks	10%
Report Chapter Outline/Draft	10%
Artifact processing and lab-work (attendance required):	10%
Final report chapter or project	30%

Excavation Requirements:

Four excavation weekends in late January and February have been scheduled. Saturday has two work shifts, morning (8:00-12:00) and afternoon (1:00-5:00); Sunday has one (12:00-4:00). For full excavation credit, you are required to be on-site for TEN work shifts out of the twelve; THREE of these must be morning shifts. You are expected to be on-time and ready to work for each shift. You must indicate which shifts you will be working by class time preceding the excavation weekend on the sign-up sheet on the lab door. Each of the shifts is worth four points in calculating your final grade. The full four points are given for timeliness, attentiveness to assigned tasks including digging, screening, carrying buckets, filling in forms, recording artifacts, and other individual responsibilities that you may be assigned.

You will need a drop-forged, Marshalltown pointing trowel and a field notebook. Both can be purchased from me for \$20 (or purchased separately). In the field notebook, you are expected to keep an account of how your time was spent on-site and what observations you made while digging, as well as your account of what is going on in your unit shift-by-shift. There is an aphorism in archaeology that it is impossible to record too much information during excavation. Having a record of multiple sets of observations gives us a better shot at not overlooking some important detail, and it keeps the larger picture of unit developments firmly in hand. Field notebooks will be collected at the end of excavation Sundays and graded—1 point per shift (neatness counts!), for a total of 10 points.

For those taking Anth 562:

You will be assigned additional responsibilities such as excavation forms, equipment inventory and transport, lab and artifact processing scheduling and oversight. And you will rotate as site supervisors, alternating with digging, as needed. You will be required to do an independent project that involves one of the following: community outreach, public presentation of research, or further research on archaeological materials from Yates. These will be decided during the first weeks of the semester.

What to bring to the site:

While excavating, wear layered clothes that you don't mind getting dirty. Wear closed-toe shoes. You may also want lightweight work gloves. Bring your trowel and notebook, plus your own pen (ballpoint only) and a pencil. Bring lunch and a snack for breaks.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

If you have a documented disability that will impact your work in this class, please contact me to discuss your needs. Additionally, you will need to register with the Disability Support Services Office in the Ley Student Center.

Date	Location	Topic, Materials Due
7-Jan Wed	Sewall 103	Introduction to the course (Fleisher)
14-Jan Wed	Sewall 103	Introduction to archaeological field methods, historical archaeology; African-American archaeology vs. African Diaspora archaeology (Fleisher)
21-Jan Wed	Sewall 103	Introduction to the history and archaeology of Freedman's Town, African-American archaeology in Houston and the Yates Museum site (Guest lecturers, Dr. Carol McDavid and Mr. Robert Marcom)
28-Jan Wed	in front of Sewall Hall	Class visit to the Yates Museum excavation site with a tour of Freedman's Town sites, tour with Dr. McDavid and Mr. Marcom
31-Jan Sat.	Yates	Saturday EXCAVATION, 8:00-12:00, 1:00-5:00pm
1-Feb Sun.	Yates	Sunday EXCAVATION, 12:00-4:00pm
4-Feb		No class
7-Feb Sat.	Yates	Saturday EXCAVATION, 8:00-12:00, 1:00-5:00pm
8-Feb Sun.	Yates	Sunday EXCAVATION, 12:00-4:00pm
11-Feb		No class
14-Feb Sat.	Yates	Saturday EXCAVATION, 8:00-12:00, 1:00-5:00pm
15-Feb Sun.	Yates	Sunday EXCAVATION, 12:00-4:00pm
18-Feb		No class
21-Feb Sat.	Yates	Saturday EXCAVATION, 8:00-12:00, 1:00-5:00pm
22-Feb Sun.	Yates	Sunday EXCAVATION, 12:00-4:00pm
25-Feb Wed.	Sewall 103	Lab: Artifact processing/Sign up for Final Report projects
4-Mar		Spring Break
11-Mar Wed.	Sewall 103	Lab work/Artifact analysis
18-Mar Wed.	Sewall 103	Lab work/Artifact analysis
25-Mar Wed.	Sewall 582	Draft chapter outline due, with planned charts, tables, illustrations sketched in
1-Apr Wed.	Sewall 103	Oral presentations: 10 minute presentation on each chapter (must have completed draft versions of all charts, tables, illustrations)
6-Apr Mon.	Sewall 582	Chapter drafts due by 5pm
8-Apr		No class
10-Apr Fri.	Sewall 582	Marked up drafts returned for revisions
15-Apr		No class
17-Apr Fri.	Sewall 582	Revised, final chapters due by 5pm