AR1008 Using Archaeological Evidence

Academic Year: 2009-2010
Semester: 2
Time and location: Mondays, 10.00 - 11.00am
                       ATT SB 2.07
First meeting: Monday, 25\textsuperscript{th} January 2010
Module co-ordinator: Ruth Young
e-mail: rly3@le.ac.uk
Room: 122
Office hours: Tuesday 9.00am – 10.00am

Your individual appointments (e.g. tutorials, seminars):


document prepared by: Ruth Young 18th December 2009
AR1008  Using Archaeological Evidence

Weighting:  10 credits
Coordinator:  Ruth Young
Other tutors:  Alasdair Brooks, Terry Hopkinson, Sarah Tarlow, Jeremy Taylor, Richard Thomas

Module outline:  This module provides students with a wide-ranging overview of the nature and potential of the various kinds of evidence available to archaeologists in developing interpretations of the past.

Aims:  The course will introduce students to:
  • the range and nature of archaeological evidence
  • selected themes in the archaeological study of the past (e.g. settlement, subsistence)
  • skills required for independent learning

Intended learning outcomes:  By the end of the course students will:
  • demonstrate an outline knowledge of the nature and potential of archaeological remains (coursework)
  • demonstrate basic library research skills (tested by coursework)
  • be able to comprehend, and comment critically upon, archaeological literature including excavation reports (coursework)

Method(s) of teaching:  Eight broad-ranging lectures are taught by a variety of staff within the School.

Method of assessment:  The module is assessed through a single piece of coursework comprising a detailed critique of a published excavation report (2000 words in length)
Teaching schedule

AR1008 – USING ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Artefacts and People

Week 14 25th January  Identifying artefacts: what are artefacts and how (and why) do they survive? (AB)
Week 15 1st February  Form and function: classification and typology revisited (AB)
Week 16 8th February  Technology and Manufacture (JT)
Week 17 15th February Trade and Exchange (JT)
Week 18 22nd February Reading Settlements through artefactual material (JT)
Week 19 1st March  READING WEEK
Week 20 8th March  Grave matters: looking at bones and bodies (ST)
Week 21 15th March  Archaeologies of diet and subsistence (RT)

Archaeology in the Present

Week 22 22nd March  Interpreting the past: theory and archaeology (TH)
Assignment and deadline

You are required to submit a critique of a published excavation report. This should not exceed 2000 words in length and the deadline is **Monday 22nd March** (by 4.30pm at the latest). Here are some guidelines for undertaking this piece of assessed work:

1. **Selection**

Using your library skills select a published excavation report that satisfies the following criteria:

- It has been published since 1970
- It is at least 60 pages in length
- It contains information about both stratigraphy and artefacts (i.e. it contains chapters or extended sections discussing aspects such as ‘The Excavation’, ‘The Pottery’, ‘Metalwork’, etc.)
- It represents a final, not an interim (i.e. work-in-progress) report
- It is fully illustrated with plans and photographs

Your choice may have been published either as a monograph or as a substantial article in a journal. (A majority of excavation reports appears as articles in journals.) You may find what you are looking for by browsing through archaeological journals (e.g. *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, *Medieval Archaeology*, *Britannia*), or by using a bibliographic search tool (library staff may be able to offer advice on these).

**PLEASE NOTE:** Your choice of excavation report **must be approved by the lecturer who runs your tutorial group before you embark upon your critique.**

2. **Evaluation**

Consider the overall structure of the report, and its contents. How effective is the introduction and how clearly does it state its aims? Observe the inclusion of specialist texts (e.g. ceramics, environmental data), and consider how these are integrated into the report. Study the illustrations and tables. Do these add to or duplicate material provided in written form? How well produced are they – clear or confusing? Consider the limitations of the data recovered, and the validity of the conclusions drawn.

3. **Presentation**

Think carefully about your presentation; it is important that your report is well organised and appropriately referenced. If referring to sections of the report, you should put the relevant page numbers down – e.g. ‘The Pottery’ (pp.35-65).

4. **Structure**

The following is a suggested structure for your critique, but you are free to try out other formats if you think they are more appropriate.

- Briefly describe the site and the reason for its excavation
- Consider the planning and history of the excavation itself
- Write a short summary of the stratigraphic and artefactual evidence
- Consider any parts of the report you found particularly interesting, or difficult to understand. Perhaps choose one main finds report and analyse how that is set out and explained to the reader
• Make an evaluation of the strengths and limitations of the excavation itself, as it appears from the published report
• You might insert a photocopy or scanned image of useful images from the report – e.g. a site plan, or images of finds (but only put these in if they help explain things in your essay)

Reading list

Artefacts and Material Culture


Trade & Exchange


**Reading Settlements through artefactual material**


**Grave matters: looking at bones and bodies**


**Archaeologies of diet and subsistence**


**Archaeological Theory**

NB. *Archaeological theory is implicit in everything you read for the course, and is explicitly discussed in the basic texts such as Renfrew and Bahn (Chapter 12), and Gamble (Archaeology the Basics).*

**Key Texts:**


Also of value:
