AR3008  The Archaeology of Improvement: Britain 1750-1850

Academic Year: 2009-2010
Semester: 1
Time and location: Mondays 1-3: Ken Edwards 214
First meeting: 
Module coordinator: Sarah Tarlow
E-mail: sat12@le.ac.uk
Room: Archaeology and Ancient History 111
Office hours: Tuesday 10-12; Wednesday 10-12
Your individual appointments (e.g. tutorials, seminars): 


document prepared by: Sarah Tarlow, Jan 2010
AR3008  **The Archaeology of Improvement: Britain 1750-1850**

**Weighting:** 20 credits  
**Coordinator:** Sarah Tarlow  
**Other tutors:**

**Aims:**  
To develop critical frameworks for the interpretation of later historical archaeology in Britain  
To examine the significance of the ideology of 'Improvement' in a range of historical contexts  
To work together to recognise the political and theoretical implications of different types of research questions and emphases

**Intended learning outcomes:**  
At the end of this module, typical students should be able to:  
1. Summarise the main cultural processes underway in the period 1750-1850 and describe some of the changes to landscapes, buildings and materials associated with them  
2. Demonstrate their own research skills by the identification of areas for possible future research in this developing field, and the completion of a research proposal  
3. Critically evaluate historical and archaeological debates regarding the social and political implications of different ways of representing this period

**Method(s) of teaching:**  
Each two hour session will comprise some orientation around the subject area by the course tutor, plus discussion of set reading. Students are expected to participate fully in reading and discussion
### Teaching schedule

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Theme</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25/1/10</td>
<td>Introduction. Different ways of understanding the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1/2/10</td>
<td>Agricultural Improvement: Soil and stock</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>8/2/10</td>
<td>Agricultural Improvement: Enclosure and the rural population</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>15/2/10</td>
<td>Institutions: workhouses, prisons and Mechanics’ Institutes</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>22/2/10</td>
<td>Improving the city</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>1/3/10</td>
<td>Reading week - no seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8/3/10</td>
<td>Improving the people</td>
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<td>15/3/10</td>
<td>Improving things and places</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>22/3/10</td>
<td>Student presentations I</td>
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<td>10/5/10</td>
<td>Student presentations II plus Review: Whose Improvement?</td>
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Assignments and deadlines

10-minute presentation on the archaeology of a particular place or type of material which relates in some way to the theme of the course. Students will be expected to make clear in their presentations how their choice of subject relates to the themes of the course.

Related to this presentation students must prepare

Research Design: Students must identify a research question, research material and outline a methodology for the investigation of their particular question. Your submission should be on the AHRC grants form, and you should follow the instructions there, EXCEPT that your research design can be longer than the word length specified. Up to 2000 words may be permitted. As a guide, you should include most of the following sections, but you might need to adapt and retile them to suit your proposal:

Background: what is the general area of research you propose to carry out? What previous work has been done, and what gap in our knowledge or understanding do you propose to fill?

Research question: Formulate one or more specific research questions. Why is it worth addressing them?

Methodology and Material of study: How are you going to carry out the study? What material will you use (an assemblage of artefacts; a field survey; a group of buildings; a landscape area; an archaeological site or whatever)? What information will you assemble, how will you organise it and interpret it?

Outcomes: Are you going to publish the results? How? What audience(s) do you want to address and how will you reach them? What will you do with your material/data?

Schedule: How long will the various bits of research take? How will it be timetabled? (this is important for things like working out when and for how long you will need to employ staff)

Costings: You don’t need to provide actual prices here, but should list the expense headings of your research as if you were applying for a grant: you should include staff time (how many people (don’t forget yourself) and for how long? In what capacity? Do you need to bring in specialists? Costs of having tests or lab. analysis carried out); equipment and consumables; travel and expenses; costs of publication or other dissemination; anything else.

Overall significance of the research: Make a case for why your research should receive funding and permission given that it will be under fierce competition.

You will be given more details of the presentation during the course.

AND (for all students)

2-hour exam
Your presentation should last about 10 minutes and should be about your proposed research - imagine the rest of the group is a hard-boiled grant panel whom you are trying to impress and enthuse. Use visual aids and handouts as appropriate.

The written assignment will count for 40% of your mark and the exam for 60%. Failure to make an adequate presentation will incur a penalty of 15% on your assignment mark.

Research designs should be submitted by 4.30p.m. on 8th March 2009.
Reading list

Note
This is a fairly new course, in part based around a book I've recently finished - so that will be the main textbook. The literature on all subjects we will be considering is interdisciplinary, and potentially huge. You are invited and requested to explore sources for yourselves, and will find it useful to consult books on history (especially social and economic history), art history, historical geography, local studies and even fiction and poetry of the time to get a sense of 'Improvement.' You will also find much useful material in journals; in particular, spend time leafing through some of the local history/ archaeology journals shelved in the local history section of the library; see also publications like the Journal of Historical Geography, Landscape, Journal of Economic History, Journal of Urban History and Rural History among others for unmined gems.

You will be given a few pieces of compulsory reading, but to do well in the exam you will be expected to demonstrate familiarity with sources beyond these texts and the examples mentioned by the Course Tutor.

The main course book is

Also, Newman et al is a good general archaeology book; Porter would give you a sense of the intellectual climate at the time; Girouard is about towns, but has good context (and pretty pictures); Williamson's book on rural England is excellent. All of these are pretty easy reading.

General historical and theoretical background

Johnson, M. 1996. An archaeology of capitalism. Oxford: Blackwell (mainly about the preceding early modern period, but a good background to the changes we are examining and a guide to interpretive approaches)


**The idea of Improvement**


Neither of these Leone texts has anything on Improvement or Britain, but will give you an idea of what is currently fashionable in the archaeology of this time period in the US!


**Agriculture: soils and stock**


**Agriculture: enclosure and rural life**


Hindle, P. 1998. ‘Roads that ramble and roads that run’ *British Archaeology* 31: 6-7


For these first two (obviously closely related) topics, a sense of period can be found by looking at any of the 'General Views' of English county agriculture published in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, or the Scottish 'Statistical Accounts' of the early nineteenth century, now available online at http://stat-acc-scot.edina.ac.uk/stat-acc-scot/stat-acc-scot.asp

Institutions


Individual histories of many institutions are held by the university library: try typing 'workhouse' or whatever into the subject search. A fantastic website is the Rossbret Institutions one at http://www.institutions.org.uk/index.html - tons of information, and pictures!

Towns


Cox, N. and C. Walsh 2000. ‘Their shops are Dens, the buyer is their Prey’: shop design and sale techniques. In N. Cox, *The complete tradesman: a study of retailing. 1550-1820*. Aldershot: Ashgate: 76-115


People

Things and places
Rees, A. 1819. *The cyclopaedia; or universal dictionary of arts, sciences and literature*. 39 volumes.

Review