

# UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

## RESEARCH ETHICS IN ARCHAEOLOGY: CONSERVATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND STEWARDSHIP

### ARCHAEOLOGY 467A / PHILOSOPHY 401B FALL 2009

*Instructor:* Alison Wylie  
*Seminar meetings:* M/W 6:00-8:30, Denny 205

*Office Hours:* Tuesdays 2:00-3:30, Savery M396  
*or by appointment:* aw26@uw.edu

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Archaeological practice raises a number of challenging ethics issues. With the majority of practicing archaeologists now employed in private industry (contract archaeology) or the public sector (culture resource management), archaeologists find themselves caught between the goals and standards of their profession and the demands of diverse employers, oversight agencies, and stakeholders. Further conflicts arise between research goals and the commitments entailed by a conservation ethic: these are especially sharply drawn in debate about the professional use of looted or commercially traded material. But most urgent and most transformative are the issues of accountability raised by descendant communities, especially Indigenous and First Nations communities who regard archaeological sites and artifacts as part of their cultural heritage and often see little value in archaeological research. An ethic of stewardship has been proposed in response to these issues; one central aim of this course is to critically assess the implications of stewardship ideals for archaeological practice.

To establish a framework for addressing this broad range of issues, we begin with readings that situate the development of archaeological ethics principles and codes of conduct—and especially the ethic of stewardship adopted by the Society for American Archaeology in 1996—in the context of broader debate about research integrity and accountability in science and the professions. To see how principles of archaeological ethics play out in practice we turn to case-based analyses of specific issues that are an immediate concern for archaeologists working at home and abroad: archaeological responses to looting and commercial trade in antiquities; the implications of a conservation ethic for archaeological practice; the conflicts archaeologists negotiate in connection with the demands of professional practice; and, most importantly, issues of accountability to descendant communities and to communities affected by archaeological research.

#### Learning Goals

- to develop a conceptual framework for identifying and characterizing ethics issues in archaeology;
- to foster skills of critical analysis of ethics issues that arise in practice;
- to articulate the practical implications of an ethic of stewardship for archaeology;
- to build a case-based understanding of strategies for respectfully and constructively working with diverse stakeholders in archaeological contexts.

#### Resources

The following texts are available in the bookstore:

- Collwell-Chanthaphonh and T. J. Ferguson (eds.), *Collaboration in Archaeological Practice: Engaging Descendant Communities*, AltaMira Press, 2008.
- Lynott, Mark J., and Alison Wylie (eds.), *Ethics in American Archaeology*. 2nd revised edition, *SAA Special Report Series*, Society for American Archaeology, 2000.
- Zimmerman, Larry J., Karen D. Vitelli, and Julie Hollowell-Zimmer (eds.), *Ethical Issues in Archaeology*, AltaMira Press, 2003.

*Recommended:* Scarre, Chris, and Geoffrey Scarre (eds.), *The Ethics of Archaeology: Philosophical Perspectives on Archaeological Practice*, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Additional assigned readings are available in a password protected course webfolder for the URL and access, please contact the instructor.

## REQUIREMENTS

### ***Seminar participation and presentations***

#### *Participation:*

Active participation in seminar discussion is essential and will require close critical reading and analysis of the assigned texts.

#### *Case-based class presentations:*

In the initial "Research Ethics" section of the course, all students will be asked to search out discussions of, and report back to class on, key ethics concepts that arise in the assigned readings, examples of ethics principles and codes adopted by a range of research fields other than archaeology, and by a cross-section of archaeological societies and interest groups.

In the "Focal Issues" section of the course, teams of students will develop and present an analysis of a case each week that illustrates the ethics issues addressed in the readings assigned for that week. These presentations can take the form of a debate, with members of the team representing different interests in and responses to the issue in question, or a problem-posing and problem-solving format. In any case, the purpose of these presentations is to generate active discussion.

(20% of the final grade)

### ***Written assignments***

#### *Reading Responses:*

A short response to one of the assigned readings (1-2 paragraphs, maximum 1-page) will be required three times during the quarter. All students are required to write one reading response in the first section of the course, and choose two "Focal Issues" on which to write responses in later weeks (a rotation will be set up in the second week of classes). These responses should be posted on the course website the evening before the first class in the week assigned and everyone in the class should be sure to read posted responses before the class meeting.

(20% of the final grade)

#### *Short papers:*

The major requirement of this class is a series of **three short (3-5 page)** papers, each equally weighted. These will include one that presents a careful exegesis and assessment of one of the issues or positions presented in the framework literature assigned in the first section of the course, and two that develop a case-based analysis in two of the topic areas discussed in the "Focal Issues" section of the course. In the case of these latter two papers it will be crucial to choose a concrete example (or set of examples) in terms of which the implications for various affected parties can be clearly articulated. These papers will be due on the following schedule:

- 1<sup>st</sup> paper on foundational issues in "research ethics/professional ethics": due **October 26**
- 2<sup>nd</sup> paper on either conservation issues or commercial trade: due **November 23**;
- 3<sup>rd</sup> paper on cultural heritage issues and accountability to descendant communities: on at the end of the last week of classes, **December 14**.

(60% of the final grade)

### ***General guidelines***

- Essays must be submitted electronically by 5:00 pm on the date they are due. Details on essay structure and format, and directions for submission, will be circulated in class.
- Late assignments will be accepted only in cases of medical emergency or personal/family crisis.
- Incompletes will be granted in accordance with UW policy: you are eligible for an incomplete in cases of medical emergency or personal/family crisis; you must request an incomplete two weeks before the end of the quarter; and you must have completed all assignments that have come due up to that point. (See the UW Student Guide/Grading online.)
- Plagiarism, understood as a matter of representing someone else's work as your own, is unacceptable. Be sure to give credit explicitly not only to sources you quote directly but also to those that influence your thinking. (See the UW Graduate School Style Manual and the UW Student Conduct Code).

## SYLLABUS

### I. Research Ethics/Professional Ethics

**September 30:** Introduction

**October 5/7:** Archaeological Ethics in Formation

- Zimmerman, Vitelli, Hollowell-Zimmer (eds.), *Ethical Issues in Archaeology*: Lynott, "The Development of Ethics in Archaeology"; Davis, "Creating and Implementing a Code and Standards."
- Lynott and Wylie (eds.), *Ethics in American Archaeology*, Part I: McGimsey, Jelks, Johnson.
- Guthe, "The Basic Needs of American Archaeology." *Science* 90, no. 2345 (1939): 528-30.
- Champe, et. al, "Four Statements for Archaeology." *American Antiquity* 27(1961): 137-139.
- Johnson, "Professional Responsibilities and the American Indian," *American Antiquity* (1973) 38.2: 129-130.
- Wylie, "Science, Conservation, and Stewardship: Evolving Codes of Conduct in Archaeology." *Science and Engineering Ethics* 5.3 (1999): 319-36.

**October [12]/14:** Ethical Theory and Applied Ethics

[October 12: Columbus Day]

Everyone read the first two assigned readings (Resnik; Wylie), and choose one of the following reports.

- Zimmerman, Vitelli, Hollowell-Zimmer (eds.), *Ethical Issues in Archaeology*: Wylie, "On Ethics."
- Resnik, *The Ethics of Science* (Routledge, 1998): "Ethical Theory and Applications"; "Science as Profession."
- Chalk, Frankel, and Chafer, *Professional Ethics Activities in the Scientific and Engineering Societies*, AAAS (1980): Introduction (1-10), "Through the Maze of Data" (50-55), "Conclusions and Recommendations" (99-106), Ladd's workshop paper (154-160).
- AAAS Report (2000), *The Role and Activities of Scientific Societies in Promoting Research Integrity* (Washington D.C., AAAS and US Office of Research Integrity).
- Evers, *Codes of Conduct: Standards for Ethics in Research*, European Commissions, Director General for Research, Brussels 2003.

**October 19:** Stewardship Principles in Question

[October 21: Walker Ames visitor, Helen Longino]

- Lynott and Wylie (eds.), *Ethics in American Archaeology*: Part II "The Principles Proposed"; your selection of commentaries from Part III (we will read many of these later in the quarter).
- Atalay, et. al, "Open Letter to Members of the SAA" and "SAA Principles and Discussion Questions": available in the course readings webfolder and online: <http://archaeology-ce.info/>
- Groarke and Warrick, "Stewardship Gone Astray? Ethics and the SAA," in Scarre and Scarre (eds.), *The Ethics of Archaeology*, Cambridge University Press, 2006: 163-177.
- Archaeological Codes of Conduct: review a selection of codes adopted by the AIA, SHA, RPA, IFA, WAC, and the statements on ethics published by at least one regional society or aligned discipline and profession (e.g., AAA, AHA, ASA). See "Appendix: Websites for Professional Codes" in Zimmerman, Vitelli, Hollowell-Zimmer (eds.), *Ethical Issues in Archaeology*; also the resources listed on the "Archaeology, Collaboration, Ethics" website: <http://archaeology-ce.info/>

**First short essay due: October 26.**

## II. Focal Issues:

### **October 26/28:** Destruction of the Record: Conservation Issues

- Zimmerman, Vitelli, Hollowell-Zimmer (eds.), *Ethical Issues in Archaeology*: Brodie and Gill, "Looting, An International Perspective"; Hollowell-Zimmer, "Ethics and 'Low-end Looting'."
- Lipe, "A Conservation Model for American Archaeology," *The Kiva* 39 (1974): 213-245.
- Lynott and Wylie (eds.), *Ethics in American Archaeology*: Lipe, "In Defense of Digging: Archaeological Preservation as a Means, Not an End." (Reprinted from *CRM Magazine* 19.7 (1996): 23-27.)

**Background:** Hollowell, "Moral Arguments on Subsistence Digging," in Scarre and Scarre (eds.), *The Ethics of Archaeology*, Cambridge University Press, 2006: 69-93.

### **November 2/4:** Looting, Dealing, Collecting

Everyone read the first two assigned readings, and select one of the following three case studies.

- Zimmerman, Vitelli, Hollowell-Zimmer (eds.), *Ethical Issues in Archaeology*: Bass, "The Ethics of Shipwreck Archaeology"; Labelle, "Coffee Cans and Fulsom Points: Why We Cannot Continue to Ignore the Artifact Collectors."
- Preston, "Woody's Dream," *New Yorker* November 15, 1999: 80-87.

#### *Underwater archaeology: The Whydah Controversy*

- Elia, "The Ethics of Collaboration: Archaeologists and the *Whydah* Project," *Historical Archaeology* 26.4 (1992): 105-117.
- Lynott and Wylie (eds.), *Ethics in American Archaeology*: Hamilton, "A Cautionary Perspective."
- Ruppe, Keith, Lenihan, Murphy, Reiss, "Ethics in Nautical Archaeology," in *Archaeology in Solution: 17th Annual Conference on Underwater Archaeology*, edited by Foster and Smith, 1986, pp. 134-136.
- Hamilton, "The *Whydah* Project and Archaeological Ethics: A Non-issue," paper presented at the SHA annual meetings, 1991.

#### *"Lords of Sipan"*

- Alexander, "Archaeology and Looting Make a Volatile Mix." *Science* 250(1990): 1074-1075.
- Donnan, "Archaeology and Looting: Preserving the Record." *Science* (1991) 251:498.
- Dempsey, "Protecting the Past: An Interview with Walter Alva." *Hemispheres* (1995): 19-24.
- see also Kirkpatrick, *Lords of Sipan: A Tale of Pre-Inca Tombs, Archaeology, and Crime* (Morrow, 1992).

#### *Cycladic figurines*

- Elia, "A Seductive and Troubling Work." *Archaeology* 46 (1993): 64-69.
- Renfrew, "Collectors are the Real Looters." *Archaeology* 46 (1993): 16-17.
- Gill and Chippindale, "Material and Intellectual Consequences of Esteem for Cycladic Figures." *American Journal of Archaeology* 97.4(1993): 601-660.

### **November 9:** Cultural Property / Cultural Appropriation

[November 11 class is canceled]

- Zimmerman, Vitelli, Hollowell-Zimmer (eds.), *Ethical Issues in Archaeology*: Bergman and Doershuk "Cultural Resource Management"; Trimble and Marino, "Archaeological Curation."
- Warren, "A Philosophical Perspective on the Ethics and Resolution of Cultural Property Issues," in *The Ethics of Collecting Cultural Property*, edited by Messenger, University of New Mexico Press, 1999, pp. 1-25.
- Brown, *Who Owns Native Culture*, Harvard University Press, 2003: "Negotiating Mutual Respect" and "Finding Justice in the Global Commons."

**Background:** Nicholas and Wylie, "Archaeological Finds: Legacies of Appropriation," in *The Ethics of Cultural Appropriation*, edited by Young and Brunk, Wiley-Blackwell 2009, pp. 11-54.

**Second short essay due: November 23.**

**November 23/25:** Cultural Heritage: Descendant Communities' Perspectives

Everyone read the first assigned reading (Atalay), and select one of the following articles.

- Atalay, *Decolonizing Archaeology*, special issue of *The American Indian Quarterly* 30 (2006): editor's introduction and selection of contributions.
- Riding In, "Decolonizing NAGPRA," in *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook*, edited by Wilson and Yellow Bird, SAR Press 2005.
- Echo-Hawk, "Forging a New History for Native America," in Swidler, Dongoske, Anyon, Downer, *Native Americans and Archaeologists*, AltaMira Press, 1997: 88-102.
- Blakey, "Return to the African Burying Ground: Interview with Michael L. Blakey" (2003): <http://www.archaeology.org/online/interviews/blakey/>
- Abu El-Haj, "Translating Truths: Nationalism, the Practice of Archaeology, and the Remaking of Past and Present in Contemporary Jerusalem," *American Ethnologist* 25.2 (1998): 166-88.

**November 30 / December 2:** Archaeological Responses

Everyone read the assigned chapters from *Ethical Issues in Archaeology*, and select one of the following debate pieces.

- Zimmerman, Vitelli, Hollowell-Zimmer (eds.), *Ethical Issues in Archaeology*: "Archaeological Ethics and American Indians" (Watkins) and "Descendant Communities" (Singleton and Orser).
- Zimmerman, "Archaeology, Reburial, and the Tactics of a Discipline's Self-Delusion." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 16.2(1992): 37-56.
- McGhee, "Aboriginalism and the Problems of Indigenous Archaeology," *American Antiquity* 73.4 (2008): 579-597. Response by Colwell-Chanthaphonh, Ferguson, Lippert, McGuire, Nicholas, Watkins, Zimmerman, "Untangling the Strawman: Inclusions, Rights, Ethics, and the Promise of Indigenous Archaeology," 2009 manuscript.
- Clark, "NAGPRA and the Demon Haunted World" (1996), responses (1997); Clark, "NAGPRA, The Conflict Between Science and Religion" and Watkins, "Native Americans, Western Science, and NAGPRA" (1998), *Society for American Archaeology Bulletin* 14.5, 15.2, 16.5.

**December 7/9:** Collaborative Practice

- Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson (eds.), *Collaboration in Archaeological Practice*: Introduction; Dorothy Lippert, "Not the End, Not the Middle, But the Beginning"; Leigh Kuwanwisiwma, "Collaboration Means Equality, Respect, and reciprocity"; Nicholas, Welch, Yellowhorn, "Collaborative Encounters."

**Background:** Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson, "Trust and Archaeological Practice" in *Ethics of Archaeology*, edited by Scarre and Scarre, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 115-130.

----- "Virtue Ethics and the Practice of History: Native Americans and Archaeologists Along the San Pedro Valley of Arizona." *Journal of Social Archaeology* 4, no. 1 (2004): 5-27.

**Final short essay due: December 14.**