

META-ARCHAEOLOGY: PHILOSOPHY and ARCHAEOLOGY
ARCHAEOLOGY 574 / PHILOSOPHY 574
Fall 2011
SEMINAR REQUIREMENTS

Seminar participation and presentations

Participation: Active, informed participation in seminar discussion is an essential part of the course.

Seminar presentation: In one class meeting each week members of the seminar (as individuals or in small groups) will be responsible for initiating seminar discussion. Plan on a short, analytic (rather than descriptive) presentation on a selection of the assigned readings in which you identify focal issues for discussion. This is an opportunity to raise questions about puzzling terms of art and about the context of debate to which authors are responding; to identify cross-cutting themes or interconnections between authors' positions; and to consider their implications, both theoretical and for archaeological practice.

- Presentation schedule will be set up in the second week of classes.
- 20% of the final grade

Written assignments

Reading Responses: Every second week that the seminar meets you are expected to post a short reading response to the assigned readings on the seminar GoPost. Identify a concept or line of argument that strikes you as especially interesting or in need of explication, either as developed in one reading or as a point of comparison between a couple of the readings. As with the seminar presentations, treat these reading responses as an opportunity to raise questions you would like to see discussed in the seminar.

- GoPost: <https://catalyst.uw.edu/gopost/board/aw26/24070/>
- Posts are due by **5:00 pm Monday** of the week when the reading on which you post will be discussed.
- 15% of the final grade

Term paper: Your major assignment for this seminar is a **12-15 page** term paper (3000-3750 words). For this paper, identify an example of evidential reasoning in archaeology that you take to exemplify norms of best practice, or that throws these norms into relief by violating them: abject failures or near misses that illustrate pitfalls archaeologists should strive to avoid. Develop a systematic analysis of what's right (or what's wrong) in the case you consider, and use it as a basis for illustrating, assessing, and/or reframing the models of evidential reasoning represented in the assigned readings. The goals here are to identify norms of evidential reasoning that are, or that you feel should be, operative in archaeological practice; to develop a rationale for them drawing on the philosophical, theoretical literature we will be discussing through the quarter; and to use your case, reciprocally, to assess the models of evidential reasoning presented in this literature.

- Work in stages! Identify the example you plan to work with early in the quarter, and use it as an anchor for assessing the theoretical literature through the quarter, as well as for grounding the analysis of your term paper.
- Workshop Weeks: Use the two scheduled workshop weeks (October 18/20 and November 16/17) to do intensive work on the case you've chosen and to discuss your progress, emerging plans and problems, in a writing circle of seminar participants. Here is a timetable for term paper development:
 - Identify a topic by mid-October and draft a 2-3 page description of your case and your rationale for choosing it (to include an annotated bibliography):
Post online (GoPost) by **October 19**; meet for writing circle discussion on **October 20**.
 - Develop a 2-3 page analysis of the norms of best practice and/or pitfalls to avoid that are exemplified by your case, with a preliminary assessment of how these relate to the models of evidential reasoning presented in the assigned readings:
Post online (GoPost) by **November 17**; meet for writing circle discussion on **November 18**.
 - Finalize your paper for submission (through the seminar DropBox) on **Monday, December 12**.
Dropbox: <https://catalyst.uw.edu/collectit/dropbox/aw26/17851>
- 65% of the final grade

ESSAY WRITING GUIDELINES

In the term paper you will be writing this quarter your central objective is to develop a philosophical analysis of a concrete example of evidential reasoning in archaeology. Include enough detail about the case to inform your analysis but do not make your paper primarily a description of this case. Your paper as a whole should be a carefully crafted argument for a thesis of your own: about the norms of evidential reasoning that do or should inform archaeological practice; why you endorse these norms; and whether these norms and/or the rationale you give for them is adequately captured by the philosophical accounts of evidential reasoning we discuss through the quarter.

Style vs Content. Write clear, simple, direct sentences in the active voice. Be as specific as you can about the claims you are making and the reasons you consider them plausible (or not). Make sure that every word and clause serves a purpose and says precisely what you mean. When you lapse into run-on sentences or rely on vague phrasing and colloquialisms, the problem may not be just stylistic. Awkward writing often indicates that you are unclear about the point you are making, or that it does not fit well into the flow of your argument; you may need to do some more thinking on the matter.

Writing Strategies. Work in stages. Begin with notes on the case you will consider. Focus on what researchers' say explicitly about their methodological commitments and what they count as evidence, as well as on what they actually do; are these consistent with one another? What are the implicit principles at work, if these are not explicit? Then review assigned philosophical and theoretical readings for points of connection (or conflict) with the norms you disembed from your case; focus on the rationale these authors give (or presuppose) for their accounts of evidential reasoning. And while you work through your case and potentially relevant readings, build a set of notes that serve as scaffolding for defining your own thesis: what do you find compelling and what do you find problematic about the position(s) or argument(s) or practice(s) you are considering, and why? Develop a draft of your analysis anchored in a clear statement of your central thesis; refine the draft through at least one round of revision; and be sure to proofread your final draft. Here are some more specific suggestions.

- Work with an outline that sets out the argument of your paper as a whole and the order in which you will present its constituent parts.
- Make the focus of your paper clear in the introduction; state your central thesis in a sentence or two, and ensure that every part of your paper is relevant to this central thesis.
- Quote sparingly, but be sure to credit any author on whose work you rely.
- Any standard bibliographic and in-text citation style is acceptable so long as you use it consistently.
- Be sure to proofread carefully, and focus not only on grammar, spelling, and punctuation, but also on word choice and overall coherence.

Consult early and often! It helps to talk through your ideas as they are developing. I'm happy to talk with you at any stage in the process, when you're first identifying a focal issue and considering possible examples, as well as when you have a more developed outline. But in addition, make use of the writing circle meetings of seminar participants convened in the workshop weeks to discuss the cases you're considering and your initial analyses of them. Consider meeting informally through the quarter as your projects develop; explaining your thesis to someone who isn't immersed in the details of the readings and issues you're writing on can be enormously helpful in clarifying your thesis.

COURSE POLICIES

For details of course policies please see the attached Departmental Information sheet.

- 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.