FIELD TO CURATION: ARCHAEOLOGICAL CURATION FROM START TO FINISH AT SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY AND WITH THE ILLINOIS STATE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Course ID: ARCH 300S
May 23–July 1, 2022

Academic Credits: 8 Semester Credit Units (Equivalent to 12 Quarter Units)
School of Record: Connecticut College

FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTOR:
Dr. Tamira K. Brennan, Section Head of Curation, Illinois State Archaeological Survey and Research (tbrennnan@illinois.edu)

CO-DIRECTOR:
Dr. Jennifer Bengtson, Associate Professor, History and Anthropology, Southeast Missouri State University (jbengtson@semo.edu)
INTRODUCTION

This field school offers intensive hands-on training in skills useful for a career in curation, museums, collections, archives, and field archaeology. You can expect to walk away from this course capable of identifying the various types of artifacts found in precontact North America, have a good working knowledge of the culture-history of the Midwestern US, understand the challenges of modern curation and how those relate to field work, be proficient in the basic methods employed in managing collections, gain familiarity with relational database use, and become versed in the legislation governing archaeological collections in the US, including the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. Some of these tasks involve a measure of detective work to solve the many unpredictable issues that arise when working with older collections. You will also gain an introduction to excavation methods that will serve as a primer for more comprehensive field excavation experiences and provide the necessary background for understanding how collections are generated. As a bonus, you’ll probably even get a tan!

The 2022 season is held at a late Mississippian period (AD 1200-1450) village in southeast Missouri, and at the Archaeology Laboratory of Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO), just minutes from the site. SEMO holds a legacy collection of archaeological material from our study site, as well as materials from modern excavations. Recent geophysical survey of this village revealed a much more extensive and complex site than previously assumed, and students will help explore this discovery through targeted excavations and lab sessions that will process our finds. The field, lab, and curation components together provide a rare opportunity to gain a holistic perspective on archaeological collections in a single field school, covering everything from the front-end process of curation to its final steps.

Several field trips, guest lectures from experts in the field, and group discussions enhance this experience. Field trips slated for 2022 include visits to the Mississippian period UNESCO World Heritage site of Cahokia, French Colonial sites along the Mississippi River, and the repositories of several regional museums and research centers.

ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS

Credit Units: Attending students will be awarded 8 semester credit units (equivalent to 12 quarter credit units) through our academic partner, Connecticut College. Connecticut College is a private, highly ranked liberal arts institution with a deep commitment to undergraduate education. Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school (see grading assessment and matrix). This field school provides a minimum of 360 hours of experiential education. Students are encouraged to discuss the transferability of credit units with faculty and registrars at their home institution prior to attending this field school.

Transcripts: An official copy of transcripts will be mailed to the permanent address listed by students on their online application. One more transcript may be sent to the student home institution at no cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the National Student Clearinghouse: http://bit.ly/2hvurkl.
COURSE OBJECTIVES

This project seeks to achieve two of the major goals of SEMO’s History and Anthropology Department and the Curation Section of the Illinois State Archaeological Survey (ISAS):

1) To prepare SEMO’s archaeological collections for long-term care at ISAS following federal curation standards, thereby addressing a small portion of the field of archaeology’s “curation crisis”

2) To serve as an exemplary source of education in curation

It additionally contributes to the active research of the Director and co-Director:

3) Exploring how the decline of the largest earthen mound center in North America, Cahokia, affected the late precontact sociopolitical landscape of southern Illinois and southeast Missouri, particularly as it relates to widespread population dispersal from the region ca AD 1450

The curation crisis is a reality that many institutions and archaeologists must tackle, and one that prohibits access to and use of the very items that we as archaeologists hope to preserve and study. Most archaeologist will encounter this crisis in some form or another during their careers. Many will unknowingly contribute to it. This course addresses this crisis by encouraging students to become advocates for curation through traditional learning (lectures and readings), hands-on learning (collections work), and archaeological excavation, which is often the genesis of the crisis.

Major tasks students will undertake to achieve the above objectives include:

Organizing a large collection of precontact artifacts to make it accessible for research, outreach, consultation, and education. This includes learning how to properly identify, sort, label, bag, and inventory these materials, which derive from the county where the field school is taking place. As a part of this goal, you will evaluate the utility of specific material classes to professional institutions and their potential value to other stakeholders (descendant communities, local communities, landowners, etc.) and pull any NAGPRA items for later consultation with Tribes and Tribal Nations.

Completing the accessioning process for a large legacy collection from this same site so that it may be transferred to long-term care. This includes physically going through legacy (pre-1980s) collections to complete an inventory, perform rehabilitation where necessary, pull potential NAGPRA items, and cross-index the materials with their associated documentation, photographs, maps, and other materials by entering these data collected into a relational database.

Learn the history and consider the future of curation in versatile settings. This includes a significant amount of reading (see course syllabus) with accompanying lectures and discussions on how the curation crisis came to be, what has/is being done to remedy it (specifically by the federal government through legislation), why it remains difficult to resolve, and how it can be prevented. It includes field trips to several curatorial settings to expose you to the various environments in which archaeological collections end up, the different databases they may use to index them, and the challenges particular to each setting. The bulk of this objective will be met during our first, virtual week, where you will be asked to complete daily readings, watch a recorded lecture, and then meet in the evening for discussion.

Excavate at the site from which the collections above derive. Several weeks of excavation work serve to introduce students to the basic concepts of field archaeology and associated lab work, a knowledge of which is essential to interpreting archaeological collections in a curatorial setting. This work also facilitates discussion of the late precontact era from Cahokia to the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers and how the field site plays into answering lingering questions about the large-scale effects of Cahokia’s decline.
LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students will:

1. Be proficient in basic artifact class identification for the Midwestern U.S.
2. Gain a general knowledge of the unanswered questions surrounding the research region and how our work in this field school might help to resolve those.
3. Acquire a working knowledge of one or more database programs for curation.
4. Know the federal curation and records management standards for archaeological collections.
5. Know the difference between museum curation and archaeological project curation.
6. Understand the importance of accessibility, accountability, and organization in curation.
7. Be aware of the legal and ethical concerns of working with human remains and burial-affiliated objects.
8. Recognize the relationship between archaeological practices in the field and post-field curation issues.
9. Understand the hazards to archaeological collections and how to mitigate or prevent them.

ASSESSMENT

Excavation and Collections work:

The bulk of the coursework, and of your grade, involves hands-on work during excavation and with collections. Students are expected to be present and conscientious of their tasks at hands during all class hours except in the case of illness or emergency.

Bi-weekly progress reports:

Students will keep a notebook including brief (1-5 paragraphs), but detailed descriptions of the tasks completed, problems encountered, and resolutions made while working with the collections. Time logs will be kept for each task within this notebook. Notes should be taken throughout each work session as applicable. The notebook will be collected kept by ISAS at the end of the semester.

Readings:

Relevant readings on curation, conservation, preservation laws, ethics, artifact identification, and excavation will be assigned for virtual week, and on a much lesser basis, throughout the course of the class. Students should be prepared to actively discuss these in class and apply what they have learned.

Exam:

There will be one open-note/open book at-home exam at the end of virtual week to verify that the students have retained or are able to locate relevant knowledge from the readings and one in-class exam on materials identification to assure that skills are being obtained through hands-on work.

Written assignments:

There will be one written assignment due the week after the course ends in the form of a comprehensive curation report on your activities for the duration of the field school.

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<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
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<td>Bi-weekly Notebook</td>
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PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for participation in this field school. The field school is designed to offer hands-on, experiential learning, allowing students to learn the basics of archaeological collection management and curation on site.

DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Our primary concern is with education. Traveling and conducting field research involve risk. Students interested in participating in IFR programs must weigh whether the potential risk is worth the value of education provided. While risk is inherent in everything we do, we do not take risk lightly. The IFR engages in intensive review of each field school location and programming prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it still complies with all our standards and policies, including those pertaining to student safety.

This field school includes some risk due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic because the setting for half of the field school is an indoor facility. To ensure that students can work safely together, students will be assigned their own workspace and equipment and will be socially distanced from one another whenever possible. Masks will be worn indoors, meals will be taken outdoors when possible, and daily cleaning protocol will be established. Students will be expected to mask and socially distance as appropriate on their free time to ensure the health and safety of the group.

The field school is in a city of ~40,000 residents in Missouri, USA where modern amenities and medical facilities are easily accessible. Hazards that may be encountered while working with collections include insects, mice, mold, and dirt, while a few low-risk chemicals (such as acetone and rubbing alcohol) will be used. Archaeological fieldwork is very physical, and half of the field school will take place outside, in an agricultural field with no shade. Missouri is very hot and/or humid in the summer and outdoor workdays may last up to 8 continuous hours. Venomous snakes and biting insects, including ticks that carry blood-borne illnesses, are native to the region.

The IFR does not provide trip or travel cancellation insurance. We encourage students to explore such insurance on their own as it may be purchased at affordable prices. Insuremytrip.com or Travelguard.com are possible sites where field school participants may explore travel cancellation insurance quotes and policies. If you do purchase such insurance, make sure the policy covers the cost of both airfare and tuition.

We do our best to follow a schedule of activities, methods training, and programming as outlined in this syllabus. However, this schedule can be easily disrupted by any number of unforeseen circumstances, including revised decisions by local permitting agencies, political unrest, and changes in the weather. While this schedule represents the best of the director(s) intentions, we - students and staff alike - need to be adaptable and tolerant of necessary alterations. This adaptability is an intrinsic part of all field research.

If you have any medical concerns, please consult with your doctor. For all other concerns, please consult with the project director.
TRAVEL, ROOM & BOARD, & SAFETY LOGISTICS

Disclaimer for 2022 Season: The logistics outlined below for this IFR field school were written according to the most current and accurate information available to IFR. We recognize that the best practices for preventing the transmission of the coronavirus may change in the coming months. The IFR will be revisiting program-specific plans periodically throughout the enrollment period and will update program details according to new developments, such as the presence and availability of a vaccine, new travel protocols, and updated local policies.

An IFR field school is designed to provide positive, constructive experiences for communities, students, and researchers. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the following protocols have been developed based on the assumption that any participant in an IFR field school may be an asymptomatic carrier of SARS COVID-19. Our goal, with these protocols, is to reduce the possibility for COVID-19 transmission among participants, staff, and local community members. IFR depends on the complete and sustained commitment of all students to stay healthy and to help others stay healthy. On enrollment, students commit to comply with all aspects of the IFR COVID-19 avoidance policy as well as any/all policies specific to their respective IFR field school.

PRIOR TO TRAVEL

We ask that all students participating in IFR programs be fully vaccinated prior to travel. Students must arrange a test for current infection for COVID-19 through a RT-PCR test for themselves in their home location within 72 hours prior to the start of the program and upload proof of a negative result to their IFR application portal.

After demonstrating they tested negative, students must take all precautions possible to ensure they remain COVID-19 free prior to and during travel to the field school. Students should plan to travel in the safest manner that they are able (e.g., avoid flights with long layovers and multiple connections). In addition, we require the following from all students: use of a face mask during travel to, from, and on airlines, ferries, trains, buses, and the like; regular washing of hands; and, in so far as possible, maintain social distancing of 6 feet / 2 meters in airports and other spaces.

We realize that in some instances, there are limited travel options and budgets are a real consideration, so we ask that you do your best. Please provide travel itineraries to the PI a week prior to departure.

TRAVEL & MEETING POINT

Due to ongoing uncertainties regarding the travel regulations related to COVID-19, IFR will assess the local conditions closer to the travel date (5-6 weeks prior to the program beginning) and will make Go/No Go decisions then. We urge you to participate in the mandatory orientation meeting when we will discuss the latest travel information and regulations. We also suggest you consider postponing the purchase of your airline ticket until after the program orientation.

Students have several options for meeting in Cape Girardeau. If traveling via air, they may choose to fly into St. Louis (a 2-hour drive from Cape Girardeau) and await pickup by staff.

Alternately, students may be dropped off or drive a personal vehicle to Cape Girardeau, meeting at the second location and time listed below. Note: Students who bring a personal vehicle to field school are
responsible for fees associated with parking (if any) and are expected to ride in field school vehicles to
and from the dig site and for all excursions that take place during class time.

**Rendezvous points and times:**

1) **St. Louis Lambert International Airport**  
Meeting date: Tuesday, May 31, 2022  
Meeting point: Arrivals  
Meeting time: 2 PM

2) **SEMO campus, address TBD**  
Meeting date: Tuesday, May 31, 2022  
Meeting point: TBD  
Meeting time: 4 PM

If you miss your connection or your flight is delayed, please call, text, or email Dr. Brennan immediately.  
A local emergency cell phone number will be provided to all enrolled students. *If you will arrive more than 1 hour past the airport pickup time due to a delay, plan on booking a shuttle to get to Cape Girardeau. There are no direct flights, trains, or buses between STL and CGI.*

STL shuttle: 314-450-6453 (~$130 and a 3-hour drive)

**VISA REQUIREMENTS**

This is a domestic program and there are no visa requirements for US citizens. Citizens of other countries are asked to check the embassy website page at their home country for specific visa requirements.

**LOCAL PROTOCOLS, REGULATIONS, & EXPECTATIONS**

Students will be required to take a COVID-19 test at the sign of any COVID-19-like symptoms.  
COVID-19 symptomatic students will be asked to isolate until they have verification that the symptoms are not COVID-related. In the interim, students will be given work appropriate during isolation.

Students are to adhere to all masking, safe social distancing, and sanitization protocols as required by the IFR and recommended by the CDC. Failure to adhere to IFR safety protocols may result in expulsion from the field school.

**FACE MASKS / FACE COVERINGS**

All students, faculty, and staff are expected to wear face masks when in indoor spaces shared with others. Wearing face masks, combined with vaccination, are among the most effective ways of minimizing the spread of the coronavirus.

The objective of wearing a mask is to capture potentially infectious droplets from the wearer. Therefore:

- Masks or respirators that are equipped with an "exhalation valve" are not permitted, unless covered by another mask.
- Neck fleeces (gaiter masks) are considered the least effective form of face masks and are not permitted. (The material found in gaiters tend to break down larger droplets into smaller particles that are more easily carried away in the air.)
• Folded bandanas and knitted masks are ineffective and are not permitted.
• Masks must be worn so as to cover both the mouth and nose. If your mask becomes loose, it can be tightened by twisting the ear loops.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students will be housed in SEMO dormitories or shared apartments on or near campus in double rooms with another IFR field school student. Non-IFR students will also be present in the dorm building and may share common areas, such as bathrooms and kitchen facilities, with IFR students. Students are responsible for cleaning their shared bathrooms and providing their own bedding and linens. A public laundromat is nearby; students are responsible for the costs of washing and drying their clothes.

Kitchen facilities are available on site and are shared with the rest of the dormitory, as are other common areas. All surfaces should be cleaned with disinfectant prior to and after preparing food. A 15-meal a week dining plan will be provided by the project, to be used for breakfast and dinner on workdays, and for weekend meals. We will not return to the dorms for lunch on workdays, so students should plan on packing their lunches for the field at their own expense. Weekly transportation to the grocery store will be provided to pick up lunch foods. Many local restaurants offer carry-out meal options within walking distance of the housing.

COVID-19 protocol surrounding living and eating will be issued prior to field school as pertinent to the situation at the time of field school. These protocols may include pods, masking, social distancing, and restrictions on indoor activities with people outside of the field school pod.

Parking for personal vehicles will be at the expense of the students if fees are to be charged.

EQUIPMENT LIST

Mandatory Equipment:

Please be sure to acquire only the brand, color and sizes indicated below!

- Dig kit:
  - Marshalltown brand 4” or 4.5” pointing trowel
  - 12” Ruler
  - 1 measuring tape (5 m min) with metric
  - 2 tent stakes (metal kind with green top) or chaining pins
  - 1 level line
  - 1 clipboard
  - Bag, backpack, or small toolbox for the above

If acquiring the dig kit presents a financial difficulty, please contact Dr. Brennan. Some equipment is available for loan.

- Sunscreen, hat, sturdy closed-toed shoes, one pair of work gloves, water jug (1/2 gallon MINIMUM)
- Pencil case to include the following:
  - 2 black fine point Sharpie brand permanent markers
  - 2 black ultra-fine point Sharpie brand permanent markers
  - 2 black gel pens (any brand)
  - 4 #2 mechanical pencils
Optional Equipment (for local recreation):
Swimwear
Water shoes
Sunglasses
Beach towel
Camping/hiking gear

COURSE MOBILE TECHNOLOGY POLICY
Use of cell phones in class/while working on collections is strictly prohibited. Please turn off your cell phone or have it away from your person during class. Situational exceptions such as family emergencies are allowed if cleared with the instructor first. Use of other forms of technology (laptops, iPads, etc.) are permitted if for class purposes.

COURSE SCHEDULE
All IFR field schools begin with a safety orientation. This orientation will cover proper behavior at the field area, proper clothing, local cultural sensitivities and sensitibilities, potential fauna and flora hazards, review IFR harassment and discrimination policies and review of the Student Code of Conduct, as well as protocol related to COVID-19.

This course has a hybrid, virtual/in-person schedule to reduce the overall cost of field school for students. Students should plan on spending up to 6 hours a day total on activities (readings, asynchronous lectures, real-time discussions via Zoom) associated with the virtual week. All discussions take place at 6 PM CST and may take up to 2 hours’ time.
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<td>22</td>
<td>VIRTUAL WEEK</td>
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<td>Ethics, Crisis, Field Prep</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Curation Basics, Precontact History, Stakeholders &amp; Comm.</td>
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<td>Mandatory live Zoom lectures are at 6 PM CST Monday – Friday of this week.</td>
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<td>Curation Basics, Precontact History, Stakeholders &amp; Comm.</td>
<td>Manage, Collect, Database, Digital Curation, Research Site</td>
<td>Assoc Records, Collect for Research, Early Historic Archaeology</td>
<td>Front and Curation, Material Classification, Legislation and NAGPRA</td>
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**VIRTUAL WEEK**

**ARRIVE**

Meet at 2 PM in STL or 4 PM in Cape Girardeau
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<td><strong>Readings for the week</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Readings for the week</strong></td>
<td>Childs et al. 2010</td>
<td>Kersel 2021</td>
<td>Richards et al. 2010</td>
<td>optional Bondoni and Taft 2019</td>
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<td><strong>Curation Work &amp; Wrap Up</strong></td>
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<td>July 1</td>
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<td><strong>Assignments:</strong></td>
<td>Lab/Curation Log</td>
<td>Curation Report Outlines</td>
<td>Lab/Curation Log</td>
<td>Curation Report Draft</td>
<td>Course Evaluations</td>
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<td><strong>Final Report Due Thurs, July 7 by 5PM CST to <a href="mailto:tbrennan@illinois.edu">tbrennan@illinois.edu</a></strong></td>
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REQUIRED READINGS

PDF files of all mandatory readings will be provided to enrolled students via a shared Dropbox folder.


https://www.nps.gov/history/archeology/collections/mgt_pr.htm


**OPTIONAL READINGS**

25 United States Code Chapter 32: Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation

36 Code of Federal Regulation Part 79: Curation of Federally Owned and Administered Archeological Collections

43 Code of Federal Regulations Part 10: Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Regulations


Milanich, Jerald T. (2005) Homeless Collections: What Happens to Artifacts when they have no Place to Go? *Archaeology* 57-64

Morse, Dan and Phyllis Morse (1998) *Archaeology of the Central Mississippi Valley,* pages 237-284; 301. Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa

National Park Service. Archaeology Program:
Managing Archaeological Collections. CH7:Repositories
https://www.nps.gov/history/archeology/collections/mgt_pr.htm

