



UNIVERSITY OF
OREGON



University of Oregon Northern Great Basin Prehistory Project
Introduction to Museum Collections and Laboratory Methods
Summer 2017 Syllabus

Instructor: Katelyn McDonough
Texas A&M University
PhD Student
kmcdonou@tamu.edu

Dates: August 7th - 18th
Time: M – F, 8 am – 4 pm
Location: Great Basin Laboratory
1511 Moss St. Eugene, OR

Course Description

This two week accelerated course was developed to provide students with experience and background knowledge in cataloging, cultural resource care, and basic lab analysis procedures. The primary focus of this course will be to ensure that the archaeological materials excavated during the 2017 field season, and all associated documentation, has been accounted for and properly prepared for accessioning into the state repository. Students will actively participate in this process while learning about the legal and ethical frameworks of excavation and curation. Throughout this course students will have the opportunity to observe and interact with an array of macro- and microscopic archaeological materials, including lithic, faunal, macrobotanical, and palynological remains. Students will gain hands on experience in several laboratory skills and analysis methods, including artifact labeling, mass debitage analysis, and botanical floatation. Potential avenues of research and employment within the field of archeology will be covered. Students will also construct and receive feedback on their own academic resumes. Please consult the course agenda for information on the various field trips and guest lectures planned for this course.

Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Have a basic understanding of how archaeological work is conducted in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations
- Be aware of the legal and ethical responsibilities of archaeologists
- Be able to proficiently catalog and label artifacts
- Be able to explain the preservation issues and curation techniques associated with a variety of material types
- Have experience in mass debitage analysis and botanical floatation methods
- Produce a curriculum vitae (CV) that can be used for job or graduate school applications

Required Texts

National Park Service Museum Handbook

Available for free online from the NPS website

<https://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/handbook.html>

Recommended Texts

King, Thomas F.

2008 *Cultural Resource Laws & Practice: an Introductory Guide*. (3rd ed.)
Altamira, Walnut Creek, CA.

Sullivan, Lynne P., and S. Terry Childs

2003 *Curating archaeological collections: from the field to the repository*. Vol. 6.
Rowman Altamira.

Course Agenda

Each day we will meet at the Great Basin Laboratory at 8 am and work on cataloging the field school materials for the first half of the day. After lunch, we will have a short lecture, discussion, and sometimes a field trip, workshop, or guest lecture.

Week 1: Cataloging, Curation, and Museum Protocols

Monday: Archaeological curation in the United States; Legal and ethical considerations

- Before diving in to cataloging, artifact processing, or curation preparation, it is important to understand the ethical and legal structure behind this work.
- Introduction to the legal framework of CRM and museum standards
- Review and discussion of SAA, SHA, and AAA ethical statements
- NHPA and regulations (particularly 36 CFR 800 and 36 CFR 79)
- **Assignment:** NPS Handbook Appendix: Code of Ethics for Curators, Archivists, and Conservators

Tuesday: Lab orientation; introduction to cataloging and curation

- Familiarize yourself with the Great Basin Laboratory
- Introduction to cultural resource care
- Unpack and organize artifacts, begin cataloging process
- Curriculum Vitae vs. Resume
- **Assignment:** Begin constructing your CV

Wednesday: Managing curated collections: preservation and long-term storage

- Continue cataloging
- What is the 'curation crisis'?
- Treatment of collected materials and associated records
- Care and considerations for different material types, particularly perishables
- **Assignment:** NPS Handbook Chapter 4

Thursday: Documentation, Digitization, and Data Management

- Discover the beauty of duplication, duplication, duplication...
- Archive maintenance
- Issues with data storage and management
- Begin digitizing the field school records

Friday: Managing museum collections, accessioning process, research opportunities

- Field Trip to the collection department of Oregon State Museum of Anthropology (OSMA).
- Tour of vault and curation facility.
- Guest lecture by Pamela Endzweig, Director of Anthropological Collections at OSMA, and Elizabeth Kallenbach, Anthropological Collections Manager
- **DUE:** Draft of CV

Week 2: Lab Methods and Professional Development

Monday: *Cataloging, Discussion of Career Paths in Archaeology*

- Continue with cataloging
- CVs will be returned and discussed
- Discussion of career options in anthropology
- Applying for archaeology jobs and graduate school

Tuesday: *Lithic artifacts*

- Learn how to conduct mass debitage analysis using the Connley Caves material
- Artifact labeling workshop

Wednesday: *Macrobotanicals and plant microfossils*

- Macrobotanical floatation workshop
- Discussion of macro- and micro-fossil plant remains in the archaeological record
- Examine pollen under light microscope
- Guest lecture by Dr. Jaime Dexter-Kennedy or Dr. Margaret Helzer

Thursday: *Faunal remains*

- Introduction to faunal analysis. What can be learn from bones?
- Discussion on bone taphonomy
- Field trip to Dr. Patrick O'Grady's Zooarchaeology Lab

Friday: *Final discussion*

- Complete projects and tie up loose ends
- Make sure that cataloging and digitization is complete
- Go forth and use your spiffy new CV to apply for archaeology positions!