Field Studies in Archaeology: Sheep Mountain Clovis Site (35HA3667) ANTH 408/508 Syllabus

June 20 – July 29, 2011
University of Oregon Department of Anthropology & Museum of Natural and Cultural History, and Burns District Bureau of Land Management
Class meets Monday-Friday 7:45AM – 4:30 PM

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Course Description:
Fieldwork in Archaeology is an introduction to archaeological field techniques during which you will become acquainted with site discovery procedures, field mapping, and techniques of excavation. Students will learn how to establish a grid, place excavation units, and conduct systematic excavations. Students will also learn techniques for recording observations and identifying and collecting specimens. Mike Rondeau, a noted lithic analyst, will conduct a two-day workshop for all students during the first week. In the laboratory (as time permits), students will learn techniques for processing, analyzing, and curating materials collected from the field, and reducing laboratory and field notes into narratives.

The Field Project:
The field project represents a collaborative effort between the Bureau of Land Management: Burns District, the University of Oregon Department of Anthropology, and the UO Museum of Natural and Cultural History. The primary focus involves archaeological investigation of the Sheep Mountain Clovis site (SMC). SMC is a site with a known Clovis-age component located on the northwest periphery of Harney Basin near the community of Wagontire. The course will incorporate all phases of archaeological field investigation such as pedestrian survey (Phase 1), test excavation (Phase 2), and elements of data recovery (Phase 3). Mapping with laser transit, site recording with GPS, and subsurface explorations with ground-penetrating radar will also take place. Upon completion of this course (and Bachelors degree requirements), students will be competitive for Forest Service and BLM employment at the GS 5-7 level (or prepared for an advanced stage of academic endeavor).

The Sheep Mountain archaeological project is on-going (i.e., conducted in separate phases over five years), and this “Fieldwork in Archaeology” course is a major step in our progress toward understanding the site. We return this year to excavate in areas known to have high concentrations of artifacts that are consistent with fluted and stemmed point occupations. We obtained this information over the last three years from multiple surveys, excavation, extensive mapping operations, and consultation with recognized authorities on Clovis-era sites.
Course Logistics:
The class will meet at 7:45 AM Monday-Friday and work will continue through 4:30 PM. Breaks will occur for note-keeping at 10AM and 2 PM, with ½ hour for lunch at 12. We will be camped near the site. Fieldwork will occur during six week-long sessions. There will be two days scheduled for artifact cataloguing and a couple of field trips here and there (please refer to the course schedule for these events). Keep in mind that the course schedule is somewhat tentative and will depend on weather conditions and general field progress.

- Work will cease on Fridays at 4 PM
- We will be shut down on Tuesday, July 5, for 4th of July weekend
- Students are welcome to stay in camp during weekends
- At least one van will be traveling to Eugene Friday afternoon and back to camp Sunday evening.

Grading/Expectations:
This course is designed to provide students with a “hands-on” introduction to archaeological fieldwork through participation in the Sheep Mountain archaeological excavation. Fieldwork and laboratory analysis will be conducted in a collaborative manner. Tasks will involve cooperation with one another and a commitment to the project itself. Final grades will be assessed from the following criteria:
1. Progress through the course of the class
2. Field notes and observations recorded in a field notebook (each student will receive a notebook, which will be collected at the end of the term and be curated in the state museum along with the artifacts from the project).
3. Active participation in all activities

Things you should know:
- Time is precious – every second counts in a field project and 8 hour days will be standard operating procedure
- Weather conditions can vary dramatically. Expect hot but be prepared for cold, too.
- Sunblock and multiple water containers are a must and please bring sturdy shoes/boots.
- The day to day schedule will vary and you will be rotating from the site for work at other locations.
- Trowel excavations will occur at SMC, but shovels may be employed in certain kinds of test excavations. Be prepared for strenuous physical activity that includes hiking, digging, and lifting
- Refer to the U of O field school website for camping, personal gear, and field tool suggestions
- Your tuition covers the class, food, and transportation, so don’t feel like you have to bring your own food or drive your own car. It would be better if you didn’t store food in your tent because it attracts critters.
- You will divide into cooking crews for evening meals, with each crew responsible for one meal each week. Each crew will prepare a weekly supply list and groceries will be purchased at the Safeway in Burns.
- SMC is an important site and people are curious about our findings. There will be a steady stream of researchers, visitors, and volunteers to the site throughout the term.
- Illegal drugs, alcohol, and firearms are not permitted in camp.

Readings:
The required text offers an excellent synthesis of topics related to the early peopling of the Americas. Although you are not required to purchase the suggested readings, I highly recommend them to students interested in pursuing education and/or work in the field of Oregon archaeology. All four are pertinent to our effort this summer.

Required:
Meltzer, David J. First Peoples in a New World: Colonizing Ice Age America
University of California Press, Berkeley

Suggested:
- Archaeology of Oregon
  1993 Aikens, Melvin C.
  U.S. Department of Interior
  Bureau of Land Management (Out of print)
  - The Archaeology of the Eastern Nevada
    2009 Beck, Charlotte, and George T. Jones
    University of Utah Anthropological Papers
    No. 126, Salt Lake City.
- Archaeological Laboratory Methods: An Introduction
  2006 Sutton, Mark Q. and Brooke S. Arkush

Fluted points recovered from SMC.