Anthropology 344
Oregon Archaeology

Doing Archaeology

What is Archaeology?
- Study of past cultures through time and through a study of the traces of human activity, i.e. through those things left behind or altered by people, and their patterning
- Archaeology is like cultural anthropology but it must rely on the imperfect record of human activity to infer aspects of past cultures

The Archaeological Record
- Consists of all things that preserve and that pertain to the past history of humans

The Archaeological Record Consists of:
- **Artifacts**: the basic unit of archaeological analysis – it is a portable object made, modified, or used by humans. An artifact must retain and show evidence of having been made or used
  - Simple artifacts (single part)
  - Complex artifacts (having multiple parts)

Chipped Stone Tools

Ground Stone Tools

Bone Tools

Fire-Altered Rock

Historic Artifacts

The Archaeological Record Consists of:
- **Ecofacts**: unmodified biological remains resulting from human activity
  - Plant remains (seeds, pollens, botanicals) – food refuse
  - Animal remains – food refuse
  - Charcoal – heating, cooking activities
  - Care must be taken to ensure that ecofacts are the result of human activity

Food Refuse - Shell

Food Refuse – Bone Remains
Food Refuse – Bone Remains

Food Refuse – Bone Remains

Botanicals

Charcoal

The Archaeological Record Consists of:

- **Human Remains**: the physical remains of an individual (skeleton, hair, mummified remains, lost deciduous teeth)

The Archaeological Record Consists of:

- **Features**: are discrete occurrences that represent an event and that cannot be removed without destroying their overall integrity and relationships (structures, hearths, posts, underground ovens, burials, etc.)

The Archaeological Record Consists of:

- **Midden**: culturally modified soil comprised of discarded material remains from the people living at a site, they are soils that are discolored and are chemically altered by the materials within them.

The Archaeological Record Consists of:

- **Geofacts**: objects shaped by nature that look like they were modified by people

The Archaeological Record Consists of:

- **Other**: things that do not easily fit into the other categories including manuports – materials brought to a location for the purpose of modification but were not modified (their cultural nature is inferred from the fact that they do not occur in the area naturally)

Sites and Isolates

- **Sites**: any geographic place where there is evidence of past human activity, sites must have geographic boundaries and may have internal discrete areas called loci
- **Isolates**: single artifacts or a very small number of artifacts that are not necessarily geographically associated with a site

### 33 Context and Provenience

- **Context**: the relationship of an object to other objects
- **Provenience**: an object's exact location in three-dimensional space

### 34 Historical Approaches to Archaeology

- **Cultural-Historical**: focuses on the development of culture histories through the classification and temporal ordering of artifacts and sites
- "New" or **Processual**: focus on culture as a process or system, artifacts and sites used to test models of cultural adaptation
- **Post-Processual**: addition of cognitive and symbolic aspects to the interpretation and explanation of culture

### 35 Research Archaeology vs. Cultural Resource Management

- **Research Archaeology**: archaeology done only or primarily for research purposes
- **Cultural Resource Management (CRM or Salvage Archaeology)**: archaeology done in response to construction projects that will impact archaeological sites; arose from the development of cultural resource laws

### 36 Why Do Archaeology?

- **Cultural Resource Laws**
  - **Federal Laws**
    - Antiquities Act (1906)
    - Historic Sites Act (1935)
    - Reservoir Salvage Act (1960)
    - National Historic Preservation Act (1966)
    - National Environmental Protection Act (1969)
    - Executive Order 11593 (1971)
    - Archaeological and Historical Preservation Act (1974)
    - Section 106 (1974)
    - Archaeological Resources Protection Act (1979)
    - NAGPRA (1990)
  - **Oregon State Laws**
    - ORS 390.358
    - ORS 97

### 37 Steps in Doing Archaeology

### 38 I. Archaeological Survey

- **Survey or Inventory (Phase I)**: process of finding/identifying archaeological sites and providing a preliminary assessment of a site

  - Survey techniques can include pedestrian survey, remote sensing, aerial photos and other aerial methods, exploratory probing
II. Archaeological Testing

- **Testing (Phase II):** small scale excavations conducted in order to determine the nature, extent, content, age, structure, and research potential of a site

  - Usually involves the excavation of small sized units – augers, 50 x 50 cm probes, 1 x 1 meter units

III. Archaeological Excavation

- **Excavation/Mitigation/Data Recovery (Phase III):** large scale excavations designed to recover information useful to answer specific questions generated in a research design

IV. Analyses

- Cataloging
- Catagorizing/Classifying
- Aging Methods
  - Radiocarbon Dating
  - Obsidian Hydration Dating
  - Stratigraphic Method
- Artifact Analyses
  - Lithic Analyses
  - Floral Analyses
  - Faunal Analyses
  - Human Remains Analyses
  - Feature Analyses

V. Interpretation
VI. Reporting