

## HTS 1090 Syllabus

This is Archaeology HTS 1090, Section A, CRN 94222, 3 Credits

Fall 2026

### Instructor Information

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**Instructor:** TBD

**Email:** TBD

### General Course Information

#### Course Description

*It's in the news, movies, and video games... but what is archaeology? In this class, we'll explore all dimensions of the archaeological process, from discovering new sites, to identifying artifacts, to collaborating with public audiences to tell complex stories about the past. We'll discuss why laws are passed, wars are fought, and black markets emerge around archaeology. We'll practice working with archaeological data, and will see how archaeology, by studying the material remains that humans leave behind, provides insight into human behaviors and relationships that are unique among social sciences. By the end of this course, you will gain an understanding of how archaeologists employ a range of technologies and interdisciplinary methods to understand the past, and how archaeology can contribute to contemporary communities' priorities and well-being. We will discover some unexpected contexts where archaeology has made an impact, or could be applied innovatively, including in your own life.*

#### Course Learning Outcomes

1. To learn to define archaeology and to explain what it adds to our knowledge of how past human societies have developed, persisted, and changed over time.
2. To be able to offer examples of how archaeological approaches provide new perspectives on problems, questions, and challenges related to the well-being of living communities.
3. To be able to explain how established and emerging technologies and interdisciplinary methods drive archaeology forward.
4. To expand your understanding of why the past matters to people in the present, including yourself, and the ethical responsibilities that come with researching and interpreting the past.

#### Required Course Materials

Renfrew, Colin, Paul Bahn, and Elizabeth DeMarrais, 2024. *Archaeology: Theories, Methods, and Practice*. Ninth Edition. W. W. Norton & Company Limited. ISBN 978-0-500-84999-6

## **Grading Policy:**

Graded course components, as well as your overall grade in the course, will be assigned a letter grade according to the following scale: A 90.0-100% B 80.0-89.9% C 70.0-70.9% D 60.0-69.9% F < 59.9%

## **Description of Graded Components**

The course is structured to help you explore why archaeology is important, and how real archaeological methods and data are used to answer questions about the past and present. The assignments in this course are scaffolded into the following categories, and your overall grade in this course will be determined according to the weights listed below:

### **1. this is archaeology... from the heart 35%**

Archaeologists today are committed to doing work that matters to the questions and needs of living people today. You will identify a person in your life—a close friend or family member—who you'd like to interview about their relationship to the past. Using skills we'll learn in class, you will record a conversation with this person aiming to understand what they find important about the past, and why. Throughout the semester, you will revisit this conversation and ultimately imagine a research question rooted in this loved one's interests in the past. You will then identify what sources of archaeological evidence would be necessary to answer this question, and what methods or technologies would unearth the data required. Ultimately, you will build an imagined dream team of real-world archaeologists who could together approach this question. The course will culminate with in-class presentations of all of our archaeologies from the heart.

Interview with Transcript & Summary 15%

From Interview to Research Question 5%

From Question to Methods 5%

From Methods to Teams 5%

In-class Presentation 5%

### **2. this is archaeology... from the evidence 25%**

Each week, the class will receive an archaeological puzzle related to that week's theme. This puzzle will ask you to decode archaeological evidence and reach an interpretation about the archaeological data that you are exploring. We will discuss these puzzles in class, and work toward an understanding together. You will receive a grade for completing this puzzle each week, and at the end of the semester you will be asked to revise your answers to the puzzle based on all you have learned in the course, and write a short

reflection on how your understanding of archaeological data has changed over the semester.

Weekly puzzle completion 10%

Puzzle packet revision and reflection 15%

### **3. this is archaeology... in the world 15%**

We are lucky at Georgia Tech to be surrounded by so many museums, archaeological sites, and exciting archaeological programming. You will receive a list of events or locations that you are invited to visit throughout the semester. For this assignment, you will complete a short summary and critique of how archaeology is represented, and how this presentation compares to what we have learned about archaeology and heritage practice in our course, using a rubric we will develop collaboratively as a class in week 12.

Site visit summary and critique 15%

### **4. community contributions 25%**

There are many ways to make positive contributions to the classroom environment. Most importantly, this means demonstrating compassion and care for others in our class. It also means sparking and participating in conversations on readings online, attending class on time and consistently, coming prepared, listening actively, respecting the classroom, speaking up in discussion, and taking intellectual risks. You might make community contributions by sharing connections between course material and your other classes or interests, asking questions regularly (since others may also benefit from the answers), and checking in to support classmates who need help or who are absent. Your contribution to the community should also include getting things wrong, at least occasionally. Yes, this is a requirement.

Community contributions 25%

## Course Policies

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### **Attendance and/or Participation**

In this class, we will be working together, in person, to solve archaeological puzzles, sort through archaeological data, and discuss the complexities of what the past means to different communities in the present. Whatever your personal goals are for this class, being present (in every sense of the word) is how you will get the most out of this class. You will learn the most, grow the most, and get to know one another by coming to class every day, on time and prepared. This is also essential to making contributions to the classroom community, a requirement for which you will ultimately receive a grade.

There will be times, though, when an emergency arises, or where attending class may not be the best decision for your own health or for the health of our class community. If that is the case, please let me know as soon as you can so I can plan accordingly. If frequent absence becomes a pattern, we will need to have a conversation about expectations, accountability, and assessment.

### **Late work**

Because this course is composed of small-scale, scaffolded assignments, it is important to stay on track and turn in work on time. It also impacts my ability to give you feedback on time for the next phase of each assignment if I receive your work late. However, you may decide that taking extra time on an assignment will enable you to turn in significantly better quality work. In this class, late work will receive a 5% penalty for each 24-hour period that it is late.

### **Academic Integrity**

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review [Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the student [Code of Conduct](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

### **Technology**

Evidence on student learning demonstrates that students learn best when they take notes on paper. For that reason, I encourage you to take notes on paper. When we are not doing anything that requires the use of a computer, laptops should be shut so that we can fully engage with one another. Cell phones should always be silenced and put away for the entirety of our class meetings.

## **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

## **Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement**

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

## **Campus Resources for Students**

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### **Undergraduate Student Academic Success Resources:**

*A list of resources for undergraduate students' academic success and information about advising can be found at [Success at Tech](#).*

- Academic Support: Academic Success and Advising (a unit in the Office of Undergraduate Education & Student Success) provides free support for your courses. Students can attend scheduled supplemental review (PLUS) sessions, stop by Drop-In Tutoring, or schedule a one-on-one appointment through Knack. To explore what options work best for you, please visit us online at [success.gatech.edu/tutoring](https://success.gatech.edu/tutoring), email us at [tutoring@gatech.edu](mailto:tutoring@gatech.edu), or come see us at Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons, Suite 283.

### **Student Well-Being:**

At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A [comprehensive list](#) of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being ([student-resource-guide \(gatech.edu\)](#))