Lab Methods: Ceramic Analysis
Anthropology 418
Spring 2019

Prof. Vincas Steponaitis (vin@unc.edu)
Office: Alumni 108
Hours: Tu, Th 2-3, and by appointment (email or call 962-7748)

Course Description: This course focuses on ancient ceramic technologies and how they can be reconstructed archaeologically. Methods related to the study of ceramic technology are stressed. Students who take this course will learn how traditional potters made their wares, and how archaeologists recognize which techniques were used from the traces left on the finished products. Students will also learn the basic archaeological methods of describing vessel shapes, reconstructing vessel functions, and determining the chemical composition of ceramic materials. The course is intended for serious students of archaeology (undergraduate or graduate) and anyone interested in ancient ceramic technologies. There are no prerequisites.

Course Structure: There will be two meetings per week. In general, each topic will be covered with one or more lectures, followed by a lab designed to give you some practical experience. Sessions will be informal, hopefully with lots of verbal give-and-take. You will also select an independent project, on which you will present an oral report and write a paper. The schedule may change and readings may be updated as the semester proceeds.

Course Requirements: In addition to the assigned readings, requirements include periodic lab assignments (30%); a project prospectus, progress report, and oral report (10%); a term paper based on your independent project (30%); and a final exam (30%). Class participation is essential. It will be taken into account by reducing your grade 10% for each unexcused absence. If you must miss class, please discuss it with me in advance if possible. If this is not possible, then please contact me as soon as possible afterwards. In general, illness or unavoidable family obligations (like weddings) are the only valid reasons for an absence. Unless there are similar extenuating circumstances, missed labs must be made up within a week. There will also be at least three field trips scheduled on Saturdays.

Course Web Site: The syllabus, lab exercises, and other relevant information will be posted on the course web site at <http://rla.unc.edu/courses/Anth418/>.

Honor Code: Students are expected to adhere to UNC's Honor Code <http://honor.unc.edu/>. Note that it is perfectly OK to collaborate on lab assignments, so long as the write-up is your own work.

Textbook:

Course Schedule (subject to change with notice):
1/10 Introduction
1/15-2/19 Ceramic production: principles and reconstruction [project prospectus due 2/19]
2/21-3/7 Vessel function: analysis of shape and use-wear
   [Spring break]
3/19-3/21 Chemical and mineral characterization, part 1 [project progress report due 3/21]
3/26-3/28 Project time [open]
4/2-4/4 Chemical and mineral characterization, part 2
4/9 Organization of production
4/11 Project time [open]
4/16-4/25 Student projects: oral reports
4/30 Final exam (4 pm)
5/3 Paper due (4 pm)
Readings

1/10-2/19  CERAMIC PRODUCTION: PRINCIPLES AND RECONSTRUCTION


2/21-3/7  VESSEL FUNCTION: ANALYSIS OF SHAPE AND USE-WEAR


3/19-4/4 CHEMICAL AND MINERAL CHARACTERIZATION


[Also read articles with links posted on the course web site with Lab Exercises.]


4/9 ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS


