ANTH-P 200 20508 Introduction to Archaeology
Susan Alt
LEC TuTh 11:15 a.m.-12:05 p.m.
DIS Tu 1:25-2:15 p.m.

This course is an introduction to the methods and theories of archaeology. Archaeology is the study of human societies based on material remains left behind by people. We will explore the kinds of questions that archaeologists ask about past human societies, and the different ways that archaeologists use archaeological data to interpret social organization, subsistence, environment, architecture, trade, economic systems, interpersonal relations and political life. You will learn about the goals of archaeology as a subfield of anthropology, the development of archaeology as a scientific discipline and the wide range of methods archaeologists use to collect and analyze material remains.

Throughout the semester, we will draw on examples of archaeological research from across the globe, discuss major transitions in world history and evaluate how archaeologists reached those conclusions. Examples include the transition from hunting and gathering to sedentary lifestyles, the development of cities and complex societies, and interpretations of everyday life, identity, burial customs, and community membership. We will also discuss contemporary issues including museums, site preservation, looting, and use of the archaeological past in nation building and ethnic politics. Students should come away from this class with a solid background in how archaeologists do their work, what kinds of things we have learned and can learn about ancient human societies, and how archaeological research is relevant in our modern lives.

Students will be evaluated based on attendance, participation in discussion sections, section assignments and exams.

Instead of working on simulated lab assignments, Honors students will participate in an ongoing analysis of an actual archaeological site, the Emerald Mound center. You will learn the basic methodologies of archaeology while contributing to our understanding of a complex ceremonial pilgrimage site from the ancient Midwest.