

Scientific Inquiry: Society and Culture
Anthropology 1006
PARANORMAL ARCHAEOLOGY
Winter 2018

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appointment.

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Course Objectives

This course fulfills the Common Curriculum’s “Scientific Inquiry: Society and Culture” requirement by investigating the virtues and limitations of the scientific method and other ways of knowing for understanding human society and culture. To accomplish this goal, it uses selected mysteries and puzzles from the human past that have intrigued professional scientists and the general public alike. We will explore a variety of topics having anthropological relevance—Atlantis, Bigfoot, Extraterrestrial visitation, Pre-Columbian “Lost Tribes”, and other phenomena—in an effort to sort out hard facts, pure fantasies, and genuine mysteries. The course examines where the more outrageous explanations of archaeological phenomena come from, and investigates why such explanations are of continuing popularity in modern society.

Upon completion of this course students will

- Be able to distinguish scientific and non-scientific approaches to understanding human society and culture;
- Be able to identify the social and cultural forces that influence how and why scientists and citizens come to believe certain things about human history, and the broader social consequences of those beliefs;
- Be able to describe a little bit of the variation in cultural lifeways that characterized human groups in the different times and places considered.

Course Requirements

- (1) Class attendance and participation (10%).
- (2) Performance on periodic, unannounced in-class writing assignments (20%).
- (3) In-class presentation of your research topic and preliminary findings (30%).
- (4) Final Research Paper (40%).

There is no midterm or final exam.

Required Readings

There are numerous required readings for this course. These readings are available on the course Portfolio site: <http://portfolio.du.edu/paranarch>. You are expected to have the readings read and fully digested for the days they are due to be discussed. I reserve the right to delete or add readings depending on circumstances.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction

Jan 5 Introduction and Rationale for the Course; Overview of Topics and Issues.

WEEK 2: Science and Archaeology

Jan 9 Science and Knowing.
▪ Shermer, M. 1997. I Am Therefore I Think. In *Why People Believe Weird Things*. Freeman.

Deadline for submitting three research topics, in order of preference!

Jan 12 The Nature of Archaeology.

READING:

- Wilk, R. 1985. The Ancient Maya and the Political Present. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 41:307-326.

Assignment of Research Topics.

WEEK 3: Nationalism and the Past

Jan 16 Archaeology and National Socialism

READING

- Arnold, B. 1992 The Past as Propaganda. *Archaeology*, July/August.

Jan 19 Archaeology and *National Geographic*.

READING:

- Gero, J. and D. Root 1990. Public Presentations and Private Concerns: Archaeology in the Pages of National Geographic. In *The Politics of the Past*, edited by P. Gathercole and D. Lowenthal. Unwin-Hyman, London.

WEEK 4: Sunken Continents

Jan 23 Plato and the Atlantis "Myth"

READING:

- Hope, M. 1991. Plato's Atlantis. In *Atlantis: Myth or Reality?* Viking, New York.

ASSIGNMENT FOR JAN 26: View National Geographic *Finding Atlantis* film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cholyaPiMjo>

Jan 26 Locating Atlantis.

READING:

- Pfeiffer, T. 2004 Santorini and the Legend of Atlantis.
<http://www.decadevolcano.net/santorini/atlantis.htm>
- Kuhne, R. 2004 A Location for Atlantis? *Antiquity* 78:300.

WEEK 5: Cryptozoology

- Jan 30 Does a Big-footed, Human-like Animal Roam the Earth?
READING:
- Napier, J. 1972. Bigfoot in America. In *Bigfoot: The Yeti and Sasquatch in Myth and Reality*. Berkley Publishing, London.
 - Krantz, G. 1993. What is It? In *Big Footprints: A Scientific Inquiry into the Reality of Sasquatch*. Johnson Books, Boulder.
- Feb 2 **Guest Seminar: Carissa Kepner (DU Graduate Student in Anthropology) and Local Bigfoot Research**

WEEK 6: Extraterrestrial Biological Entities and Cultural Evolution

- Feb 6 Extraterrestrials and the Evolution of Culture on Earth.
READING:
- Von Daniken, E. 1968. The Improbable World of the Unexplained. In *Chariots of the Gods*. Putnam's Sons, New York.
 - Sitchin, Z. 1992 UFOs, Pyramids, and the Twelfth Planet. In *The Anunnaki Chronicles*, edited by J. Sitchin. Bear & Company, Toronto.
- Feb 9 Is There Intelligent Life Elsewhere in the Universe?
READING:
- Mayr, E. 1985. The Probability of Extraterrestrial Intelligent Life. In *Extraterrestrials: Science and Alien Intelligence*, edited by E. Regis, pp. 279-285. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
 - Shostak, S. and A. Wolfendale 2000. Is There Other Intelligent Life in the Universe? *Prospect*, June.

WEEK 7: Lost Tribes

- Feb 13 Lost Tribes
READING:
- Stengel, M. 2000. The Diffusionists Have Landed. *Atlantic Monthly*, January.
 - Hancock, G. 2000 Mysterious Strangers: New Findings about the First Americans. At grahamhancock.com.
- Feb 16 Frameworks for Understanding Paranormal Belief.
READING:
- Goode, E. 2000. Why Paranormalism? In *Paranormal Beliefs: An Introduction*. Waveland Press, Prospect Heights, IL.
 - Sagan, C. 1998. Wonder and Skepticism. In *Encounters With the Paranormal: Science, Knowledge, and Belief*, edited by K. Frazier, pp. 15-24. Prometheus Books, Amherst, NY.

WEEK 8: STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Feb 20 **NO CLASS**

Feb 23 Student Presentations 1

WEEK 9: STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Feb 27 Student Presentations 2

Mar 2 Student Presentations 3

WEEK 10: Fact and Fiction in Cult Archaeology

Mar 6 Student Presentations 4

Mar 9 Deconstructing Student Presentations: Common Themes in Research on Paranormal Archaeology; Engaging with Paranormal Archaeology.

READING:

- Holtorf, C. 2005. Beyond Crusades: How (Not) to Engage with Alternative Archaeologies. *World Archaeology* 37:544-551.

WEEK 11

Mar 13 **Individual Tutorials for Research Paper Help**

Mar 16 **Final Paper Due**