

# MA Archaeology – Module Summaries

The programme is made up of both compulsory (80 credits) and optional modules (100 credits). You need to take a total of 180 credits. Our current modules are:

## Compulsory Modules:

### **Theoretical Approaches in Archaeology**

Module Convenor: Prof. Duncan Garrow

Focusses on different approaches to archaeological theory, their strengths and weaknesses, and how they are relevant to the interpretation of archaeological evidence. As well as presenting and discussing these approaches, we examine the kinds of inferences about human behaviour in the past that archaeologists make based on this material evidence. These inferences extend from basic productive activities to social organisation and practices, larger scale social and political structures and symbolism, cognition and ideology.

**Assessment:** Essay

### **Preparing for Independent Research**

Module Convenor: Dr Ceri Falys

This module prepares you for a sustained period of independent research required for completion of your dissertation. Sessions cover research ethics, dissertation critiques and marking criteria, statistical approaches, and conference presentations. The module also covers life beyond a degree, including applying for a PhD. The module ends with a Dissertation Conference where you will present your Research Proposal. This module will provide you with the skills required to carry out a successful independent research project and written dissertation

**Assessment:** Research Proposal, Oral Presentation

### **Dissertation**

Module Convenor: Dr Ceri Falys

You will develop key academic research skills and advanced critical evaluation and understanding of current research problems, and method and theory, and in designing, planning and implementing a major independent research project, through writing a dissertation of 20,000 words.

**Assessment:** Dissertation

## Our most popular optional modules include:

### **Viking Interactions in the West**

Module Convenor: Dr Gabor Thomas

This module covers the period of Viking cultural expansion across north-west Europe between the late eighth and eleventh centuries. You will evaluate the particular character and quality of the archaeological evidence available for the period against the background provided by historical and Saga sources. The module will be structured around the geography of Viking colonisation in the West commencing with the Scandinavian background and progressing to Britain, Ireland, Iceland, Greenland and North America. A special concern of the module is the contribution archaeology is making to an understanding of ethnic identity and cultural interaction during the Viking Age. Major nested themes include religion and burial, the silver economy, towns, rural settlement, craft and industry and art and artefacts.

**Assessment:** Essay, Oral Presentation

### **Contemporary Issues and Debates in Heritage and Cultural Property**

Module Convenor: Dr Alanna Cant

This module focuses on the concepts, institutions, politics, and legal claims of heritage and cultural property in the contemporary world. You will develop a detailed understanding of the historical development of these concepts and the national and global institutions, such as English Heritage and UNESCO, through which they are promoted. You will develop a critical understanding of the political, economic, social and environmental issues and debates surrounding heritage and cultural property, both in class and through independent research. You will also develop a comprehensive understanding of how heritage has become an important global industry premised on economies of tourism and heritage site conservation. By looking at different cases of heritage and cultural property, you will investigate such questions as: What is the relationship between heritage, identity and the nation-state? What happens when culture becomes a resource? Can the concept of cultural property afford the protections that indigenous and minority groups seek? What are the consequences of natural and human made threats to heritage sites? Course materials will primarily be academic texts and documentary films about specific cases from all over the world. The module will be delivered through a series of lectures, seminar sessions, and documentary films, with a strong emphasis on independent research.

**Assessment:** Literature Critique, Oral Presentation

### **Hunter-Gatherers in Transition**

Module Convenor: Prof. Steve Mithen

This module concerns the process of behavioural and cultural transition in modern human hunter-gatherers drawing on both archaeology and anthropology. Hunting and gathering was the only human life-style from the emergence of Homo two million years ago and modern humans at 100,000 years ago up until the emergence of farming economies around 10,000 years ago. It was, however, a constantly changing and geographically diverse lifestyle, as individuals and communities adapted to changing environments and innovated new technology, social relations and ideas. To explore the process of change, this module will explore three case studies of hunter-gatherers from the archaeological record: Upper Palaeolithic hunter-gatherers from Europe who made the cave paintings; Mesolithic hunter-gatherers from Britain; and early Neolithic hunter-gatherers from southern Jordan who began experimenting with the cultivation of plants and sedentary lifestyles. It will also explore the impact of state societies and globalisation on hunter-gatherers who survived into the 18th century and beyond.

**Assessment:** Essay, Oral Presentation

### **From Village to Metropolis: Understanding the Urban Phenomenon of Ancient Rome**

Module Convenor: Dr Andy Souter

This module will provide intensive study of the archaeology of ancient Rome and her immediate environs including Ostia and Portus. It examines the topography, development and function of the ancient city and analyses selected buildings and monuments in terms of their structural history and architectural characteristics whilst exploring their wider significance within the urban landscape. You will gain a comprehensive understanding of the history, topography and archaeology of ancient Rome whilst exploring the infrastructure, building techniques and visual culture of the city. By the end of this module you will have a thorough understanding of the key phases of Rome's development and architectural innovations including the evolution of a diverse range of building types, their construction methods and materials.

**Assessment:** Essay, Oral Presentation

### **Interpreting Neolithic and Bronze Age Britain**

Module Convenor: Prof. Duncan Garrow

This module will introduce you to, and develop your understanding of, the archaeology of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Britain. It will focus on how we interpret the archaeological record of this period, looking at how theoretical ideas have developed especially over the past twenty years. The module is taught through a combination of introductory lectures, directed reading-based discussion seminars, and a field trip to Wessex. This module will enable you to develop their knowledge of the archaeology of the Neolithic and Bronze Age in Britain; to develop a critical understanding of many of the key theoretical ideas which have

arisen within archaeology in recent decades; and to assess the impact of those ideas on our interpretations of archaeological sites.

**Assessment:** Essay

### **Themes and Approaches in the Study of Mesopotamia**

Module Convenor: Prof. Roger Matthews

In this module we examine themes, issues and approaches in the archaeology of Iraq (Mesopotamia), with focus on the early urban societies of the region, ca. 4000-1500 BC. This module provides you with a systematic understanding and critical awareness of current knowledge and issues in studies of changes in Mesopotamian during this period. It also provides a comprehensive understanding of the theoretical and methodological approaches to study of early urban settlement and society in this region.

**Assessment:** Article Critique, Essay, Oral Presentation

### **Applications of Micromorphological Analysis**

Module Convenor: Dr Wendy Matthews

Description: Provides in-depth practical knowledge and critical understanding of the application of micromorphological techniques to the study of landscapes and settlements. Themes include: human-environment inter-relations; plant taphonomy and use; early agriculture; material culture, architecture and the built environment; and site formation processes, post-depositional alterations and management.

**Assessment:** Essay, Specialist Report, Laboratory Test

### **Research and Enterprise Placement**

Module Convenor: Dr Rob Batchelor

Helps students apply their academic training within a research and/or enterprise environment. Research placements will provide the opportunity of working with a member of staff on a current project based in the UK or internationally. Enterprise positions would allow students to work with a developer-funded archaeological unit/specialist, consultancy or government organisation to gain experience of professional commercial archaeology.

**Assessment:** Grant Application/Tender Document, Oral Presentation

### **Archaeological Graphics**

Module Convenor: Sarah Lucas

Provides an overview of the role of graphic communication in archaeology, and practical experience in Adobe software and the technical issues involved in producing different types of illustration. Themes include: the layout of display material and the preparation of illustrations for academic publication.

**Assessment:** Practical Skills Assessment, Illustration Project

*Modules subject to change*