

Guidelines for Senior Project, Archaeological Studies

Curricular Committee on Archaeology
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I. Rationale

The Archaeological Studies Major is comprised of courses drawn from each of the three divisions, but students largely are permitted to develop their own pathway through the major. Only one course is specifically required, the Introduction to Archaeology (ANTH 103). Students then take four courses selected from a menu plate of offerings in Anthropology, Art, Classics and Religion, and three courses in Natural Science and Math. In the latter category, the catalog description suggests courses, but does not require them. A fieldwork component is required, but this does not necessitate Oberlin coursework, and can be undertaken in a variety of areas.

The Archaeological Studies Major, then, is a flexible major that allows students to pursue a program of their own design. As a field of study or a discipline, archaeology crosses multiple cultural barriers and encompasses a wide range of techniques, all geared toward the study of past societies through material remains. As students may have approached the major through a variety of paths, the senior project offers an opportunity to draw together an individual student's curricular components, and to apply the techniques that they have learned to a data set.

II. The Senior Project

The Senior Project is a one-semester, or one-semester and Winter Term independent study that investigates a body of archaeological data. Archaeology majors are strongly encouraged to utilize the Winter Term before or following the Senior Project as part of the experience, to either outline the research goals of the project or finalize and revise the completed project.

The Senior Project can be undertaken as an independent course under the direction of a faculty member (ACHS 300) or as a research project on material culture within a course with an archaeological focus. Research projects may potentially encompass, but are not limited to, the following areas (examples are given after each area):

- (1) analysis and investigation of individual archaeological artifacts, multiple archaeological objects, or corpora of archaeological artifacts
Students may study an object in the museum, or selection of pottery or stone tools from an archaeological site. Students may choose to write a research paper on a particular type or Greek statuary, or on ritual practices.

- (2) Testing and analysis of archaeological methods or techniques
Students may attempt to use a particular technique, such as specialized photography or LIDAR, and test the results against traditional methods of inquiry
- (3) Investigation of archaeological data derived from fieldwork, including both excavation and survey
Students may investigate an archaeological context from an on-going excavation, or attempt to situate material in its temporal or geographical framework
- (4) A museum exhibition, either real or virtual, that incorporates archaeological material
Students may choose to mount an exhibition of archaeological material from a local collection, researching each object and contextualizing it archaeologically
- (5) Application of digital technologies to archaeological data
Students may use GIS (Geographic Information Systems) or other technology, such as relational databases to study, interpret and classify archaeological material
- (6) A project related to cultural heritage preservation.
Students may study a body of material that raises cultural preservation issues, such as the destruction of ruins in war-torn countries or the repatriation of cultural property and produce an assessment or white paper related to this material with reference to legal issue
- (7) A project related to an internship or museum study undertaken during Winter Term or the Summer
Students who have undertaken an internship during a different term may continue work on material derived from the internship, but this work should still involve analysis and interpretation of archaeological data

- a. Faculty Supervision

Individual Senior Projects should be supervised by a current member of the Archaeological Studies Program Committee. Senior projects undertaken within a class should be supervised by the instructor for the course, if the instructor is a member of the ACHS committee. When the course is not taught by an ACHS member, an ACHS should supervise the project in consultation with the primary instructor of the course.

Students should meet with their supervisors on a regular basis in order to lay out the plan of work and consult concerning the progress towards completion.

- b. Substitution of Honors Project for Senior Project

Admission to the Honors Program in Archaeology will substitute for the Senior Project.

III. Presentation of Data and Interpretation

a. Oral Presentation

The results of the senior research experience will be presented publicly to the members of the Curricular Committee on Archaeology and interested members of the Oberlin College community. The presentation will ideally include a question and answer period, but the oral presentation is not intended as a formal defense. The length of the presentation can vary, but generally, the presentation will be greater than 10 minutes, but less than 30. Following the oral presentation, the members of the Curricular Committee on Archaeology will have an opportunity to ask questions related to the research questions, the methodology or the results of the project. Ideally, students will also present their work as part of Oberlin College's Senior Research Day.

b. Final Written Product

The final product of the Senior Project will be a written report, thesis or other formal document, due at the end of the exam period for the semester in which the project was undertaken. The written product will ideally present a compelling interpretation of the material culture or archaeological data selected as the focus of the project. The written product should be between 15 and 40 pages including figures, diagrams, plans, and/or other data.

Research projects that are more technical or data driven will necessarily include more data that was derived through the project and a shorter narrative. The narrative should include goals/aims, methods, and analysis of results.

Projects that include extensive secondary research (i.e. an analysis of the Parthenon), should provide a larger bibliography, and will be more interpretive. Students undertaking an exhibition that incorporates archaeological material should produce an exhibition catalog.

The precise format of the Senior Project will depend upon the nature of the archaeological material, and will be determined in consultation with the project advisor.

c. Evaluation of Senior Projects

The Senior Project will be evaluated by at least two members of the Curricular Committee on Archaeological Studies, and a letter grade will be assigned. This evaluation will consist of (1) the assessment of the project supervisor with regard to work and effort undertaken during the course of the semester [40 % of total];

(2) evaluation of committee members who attended the oral presentation [20 % of total]; (3) evaluation of written thesis by at least two members of the Curricular Committee [40 % of total].

IV. Timeline for Senior Projects

Senior Projects should adhere to the following timeline:

Second to last month of the semester prior to the project's initiation (April or Nov)	Submission of Proposal and Preliminary Annotated Bibliography
Last month of semester prior to project's initiation	Approval of proposal by CCA
End of Spring / Fall Break	Submission of Rough Draft of final product to advisor
Late April or Early May	Public Presentation
End of Exam Period	Submission of Final Written Product