FALL 2024

Material World in Archaeological Science

ANTH 2221/5221, CLST 3302, ARTH 0221, NELC 2960/6920

By focusing on the scientific analysis of inorganic archaeological materials, this course explores processes of creation in the past. This course is team-taught, focusing on the analysis of stone, ceramics and metals. Each module combines lectures and assignments, giving students applied experience with archaeological materials. The course covers quantitative and qualitative research methods and introduces students to several analytical techniques such as thin-section petrography, metallography, x-radiography, elemental composition, and experimental tests. Ultimately, the course examines how the transformation of materials into objects provides key information about past human behaviors and the socio- economic contexts of production, distribution, exchange and use.

Course time blocks: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:15-11:45 AM, in MUSE 190.

Class Structure

The course will be taught in-person at the Center for the Analysis of Archaeological Materials/Penn Museum.

- In-person classes and lab activities
  - In-person classes and lab activities will be offered Tuesday and Thursdays 10:15- 11:45 AM.
  - For each weekly theme, students will have access to required readings (PDFs) uploaded on the course Canvas site.
  - Class lectures will alternate with lab activities.

The case study for F2024 is the archaeology of Nubia (southern Egypt and northern Sudan), including material from Karanog, a Meroitic site excavated by the Penn Museum.

Outline of Assignments & Assessments

- The course is structured into three 4-week modules.
- Each module (stone, ceramics and metals) will have graded assignments (labs) and one (1) exam.
- Undergraduate assessment: Assignments (36%), Exams (60%), Participation (4%)
- Graduate assessment: Assignments (36%), Exams (30%), Research project/paper (30%), Participation (4%).

For questions, please reach out to mboileau@upenn.edu, vworkman@upenn.edu or deboraho@sas.upenn.edu