Field Studies in Archaeology: Rimrock Draw Rockshelter (35HA3855) ANTH 408/508 Syllabus

June 22 – July 31, 2015
University of Oregon Department of Anthropology & Museum of Natural and Cultural History, and Burns District Bureau of Land Management
Class meets Monday-Friday 7:45AM – 4:30 PM

Instructor: Patrick O’Grady
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Credits: 8

Course Description:
Fieldwork in Archaeology is an introduction to archaeological field techniques during which you will become acquainted with site discovery procedures, field mapping, and techniques of excavation. Students will learn how to establish a site grid, place excavation units, and conduct systematic excavations. Students will also learn techniques for recording observations and identifying and collecting specimens. Mike Rondeau, our noted Paleoindian lithic analyst, will conduct a two-day workshop for all students during the first week. In the laboratory (as time permits), students will learn techniques for processing, analyzing, and curating materials collected from the field and reducing laboratory and field notes into narratives.

The Field Project:
The field project represents a collaborative effort between the Bureau of Land Management: Burns District, the University of Oregon Department of Anthropology, and the UO Museum of Natural and Cultural History. The primary focus involves archaeological investigation of the Rimrock Draw Rockshelter (RDR). RDR is producing Western Stemmed points (ca 7,000 - 12,000 BP) and artifacts associated with fluted point technology (ca. 12,000 – 13,000 BP). The site is located on the northwest periphery of Harney Basin near the community of Riley. The course will incorporate all phases of archaeological field investigation, including pedestrian survey (Phase 1), test excavation (Phase 2), and data recovery (Phase 3). Mapping with laser transit, site recording with GPS, and subsurface explorations with ground-penetrating radar may also take place. Upon completion of this course (and Bachelor’s degree requirements), students will be competitive for Forest Service and BLM employment at the GS 5-7 level (or prepared for an advanced stage of academic endeavor). Students may be hired by the BLM for emergency field surveys as the term ends and the range fire season begins. The Rimrock Draw archaeological project is on-going (i.e., conducted in separate phases over five years). Your involvement in this “Fieldwork in Archaeology” course contributes tremendously to our progress toward understanding the site. We return this year to excavate in areas known to have high concentrations of artifacts that are consistent with Paleoindian occupations. We obtained this information over the last four years from multiple surveys, excavation, preliminary mapping operations, and consultation with recognized authorities on similar sites.
Course Logistics:
The class will meet at 7:45 AM Monday-Friday and work will continue through 4:30 PM. Breaks will occur for note-keeping at 10AM and 2 PM, with ½ hour for lunch at 12. We will be camped near the site. Fieldwork will occur during a six week-long session. There will be two days scheduled for artifact cataloguing and a couple of field trips here and there (please refer to the course schedule for these events). Keep in mind that the course schedule is somewhat tentative and will depend on weather conditions and general field progress.

- Work will cease on Fridays at 4 PM
- Students are welcome to stay in camp during weekends
- At least one van will be traveling to Eugene Friday afternoon and back to camp Sunday evening.

Grading/Expectations:
This course is designed to provide students with a “hands-on” introduction to archaeological fieldwork through participation in the Rimrock Draw Rockshelter archaeological excavation. Fieldwork and laboratory analysis will be conducted in a collaborative manner. All tasks will involve cooperation with one another and a commitment to the project itself. Final grades will be assessed from the following criteria:
1. Steady progress through the course of the class
2. Field notes and observations recorded in a field notebook (each student will receive a notebook, which will be collected at the end of the term to be curated along with the artifacts from the project).
3. Active participation in all activities

Things you should know:
- Time is precious – every second counts in a field project and 8 hour days will be standard operating procedure
- Weather conditions can vary dramatically. Expect hot and be prepared for cold, too.
- Sunblock and multiple water containers are a must and please bring sturdy shoes/boots.
- The day to day schedule will vary and you will be rotating from the rockshelter for work at other locations.
- Trowel excavations will occur at RDR, but shovels may be employed in certain kinds of test excavations. Be prepared for strenuous physical activity that includes hiking, digging, and lifting.
- Refer to the U of O field school website for camping, personal gear, and field tool suggestions
- Your tuition covers the class, food, and transportation, so don’t feel like you have to bring your own food or drive your own car. It would be better if you didn’t store food in your tent because it attracts critters.
- You will divide into cooking crews for evening meals, with each crew responsible for one meal each week. Each crew will prepare a weekly supply list and groceries will be purchased at the Safeway in Burns.
- RDR is an important site and people are curious about our findings. There will be a steady stream of researchers, visitors, and volunteers to the site throughout the term.
- Illegal drugs, alcohol, and firearms are not permitted in camp.

Readings:
The two required texts offer an excellent review of topics related to the early peopling of the Great Basin and the archaeology of Oregon. Although you are not required to purchase the Waters volume, I highly recommend it to students interested in pursuing an education in the field of archaeology. All three are pertinent to our effort this summer.

Required:
1) Aikens, C. Melvin, Thomas J. Connolly, and Dennis L. Jenkins; 2012 Oregon Archaeology. Oregon State University Press

Suggested: