# Methodology of Archaeological Research

## Prof. Giorgio Baratti; Prof. Federica Matteoni

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

Divided into two modules (module 1 with Prof. Federica Matteoni and module 2 with Prof. Giorgio Baratti), the course aims to convey the basic knowledge of contemporary archaeology, seeking to offer students a general overview of the procedures and innovative tools used in the collection and analysis of archaeological data and their application in the reconstruction of ancient contexts, cultures and thought.

By the end of the course, students will have learned: the main aspects of the methods and tools of archaeological research; to understand the basic problems relating to the interpretation of archaeological contexts and current tools used to reconstruct, through archaeology, life in antiquity; about aspects of archaeological discovery, the practice of excavation, the stratigraphic approach, the systematic and computer-based processing of data; the main research guidelines in the interpretation of the development of ancient societies through the relationship between archaeology, antiquity studies, historical and social research, and the ‘exact’ sciences; about some important ideas on developing a critical approach around the relationship between archaeology, the meaning of the ancient world, use of the historical paradigms of the ancient world, and modern and contemporary societies.

***COURSE CONTENT***

Module 1 *(Prof. Federica Matteoni)*

The first part of the course will be general in nature, with the aim of introducing students to the profession of archaeologist, the role of archaeology in contemporary society and in the field of humanities and its relationship with the historical and anthropological sciences.

During lectures, there will be a brief introduction to the main stages in the recent history of archaeology, including the aims and objectives of modern and contemporary archaeological research. The course will explain the essential aspects of archaeological excavation; the processes by which deposits form, and introduce the method of stratigraphic surveying, with the main procedures for documenting and processing excavation data; recovering and studying finds (processing and classification); the main dating systems; underwater excavation; urban and preventive archaeology with a preliminary introduction to professional and protection concerns. There will be a particular focus on the drafting of the archaeological documentation traditionally produced during stratigraphic excavation on site: examples of data processing will be presented, with exercises on stratigraphic sequences found in ongoing excavations by the lecturer.

Module 2 *(Prof. Giorgio Baratti)*

The first part of Module 2 provides a detailed analysis, through the description of national and international archaeological contexts, of the nature of the archaeological evidence from prehistory to late antiquity, along with an examination of the main aspects related to the conservation characteristics in the various contexts.

The second part will therefore introduce survey methodologies and tools for detecting: the dynamics of the formation of ancient landscapes in archaeology (archaeological reconnaissance, georeferencing and data management systems, remote sensing, geophysical surveys and more); the evolution of the palaeoenvironment; and the nature of soils and palaeoclimates. It will also provide a preliminary overview of the application of the main advanced digital media for field archaeology and the processing and management of acquired data.

Specific issues will then be addressed on the interpretation of archaeological data in light of recent acquisitions and multidisciplinary contributions: anthropological and social aspects of funerary archaeology, the reconstruction of the social structures of ancient communities, the archaeology of productive contexts (illustrated using archaeological traces of the technological structures and of the production of the artefacts), and the main instances of experimental archaeology and ethnoarchaeology.

***READING LIST***

For module 1

C. Renfrew, P. Bahn, *L’essenziale di archeologia Teoria, metodi, pratiche*, Zanichelli 2009. (agg. 2016)

D. Manacorda, *Prima lezione di archeologia*, Laterza, 2004.

For any further information for the excavation (optional)

E.C Harris, *Principi di stratigrafia archeologica*, Carocci 1983 (reprint 2013)

For module 2

Massimo Vidale, Archeologia. Teorie, metodi, strumenti, Carocci 2022

S.Pallecchi, Archeologia delle tracce, Carocci 2008.

Plus the PDFs, lecture slides and other text and video materials available to download from Blackboard.

This is a provisional reading list and will not necessarily correspond to the reading list for exam preparation. Further information - and possible changes - will be shared during the course.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures with the support of visual aids and images related to the topics covered; video clips to support learning about new excavation surveys and recent developments in surveying techniques in the field of archaeology designed to detect, represent and interpret archaeological data. There will also be laboratory sessions during which students can study material examples from ancient cultures directly.

Moreover, conditions permitting and upon agreement with the academic board and the *Soprintendenza*, there will be an educational visit to a preventive archaeology excavation site, where students will be able to witness professional archaeology in action. Provided students are interested and conditions permitting, there may also be educational visits to exhibitions or temporary installations relevant to the course topics.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will be assessed by means of an oral exam designed to verify their knowledge of course content and the methodological procedures illustrated in lectures and further clarified in the texts on the reading list. The assessment criteria are as follows: the ability to critically frame the development of archaeology as a discipline, and familiarity with the main techniques, tools and procedures of archaeological research, with reference to the themes discussed in lectures and in the texts on the course reading list. During the examination, students may be presented with images relating to contexts in question, for use as references.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

*Prerequisites*

As this is a first-year course on a three-year degree, it has no special prerequisites. However, students should discuss their prior learning with the lecturer at the beginning of lectures in order to identify any suitable additional reading.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.