INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY
ARCLG217

ARCHAEOLOGIES OF MODERN CONFLICT

15 Credits
Term 1, 2016-17
Wednesday 9-11am
Room 410, Institute of Archaeology

Assignment deadline
Friday 10 February 2017

Turnitin ID: 3226899
Turnitin password: IoA1617

Course Coordinator:
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CONTENT WARNING

At times during this course we will be discussing historical events that may be disturbing, even traumatizing, to some students. If you ever feel the need to step outside during one of these discussions, either for a short time or for the rest of the class, you may always do so without penalty. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please make arrangements to get notes from another student or see me individually.

If you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to this material, either with the class or with me afterwards, I welcome such discussion as an appropriate part of the course.

And the Daily Mail can stick it.
INTRODUCTION

This handbook contains basic information about the content and administration of this course. If you have queries about the objectives, structure, content, assessment or organisation of the course, please consult the Course Co-ordinator. Further important information, relating to all courses at the Institute of Archaeology, is to be found at http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/handbook/common/ and in the general MA/MSc handbook. It is your responsibility to read and act on it. It includes information about originality, submission and grading of coursework; disabilities; attendance and feedback.

OVERVIEW

This course will introduce students to archaeological, anthropological and museological approaches to violent conflict in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The principal focus will be on contested representations and memories of modern conflict, and the impact and value of archaeological research in conflict and post-conflict environments. The course will focus on theoretical and methodological approaches, while drawing on a wide range of relevant materials and case studies from around the world.

TEACHING METHODS

The course is taught by lectures and discussions. The sessions take place in room 410 between 9 and 11am on Wednesdays. The first half of each session will be a lecture on a theme within conflict archaeology. The second half will be a seminar discussion. There will be 1, 2 or 3 set texts per session, and these will form the basis of the seminar. It is a requirement of the class that students read at least one of the set texts beforehand in order to take part in the discussion, although other readings will also be recommended.

All readings are available from UCL library. All compulsory discussion texts and the majority of key readings are from journals available online through UCL library’s eJournal catalogue. I have also provided links for two downloadable edited collections of papers on conflict archaeology – see resources section below. If you have any difficulty in obtaining necessary readings please let me know. Similarly, if you would like additional readings for any particular topic, particularly possible subjects for coursework, I will be happy to advise you.

I will schedule a trip to the Imperial War Museum during the second half of the term. This is not compulsory, but students have found it useful for thinking about assignment topics.
SUMMARY TIMETABLE 2016-17

1. 5 Oct  Introduction to the archaeology of modern conflict and walking tour
2. 12 Oct  Problems and prospects in the archaeology of modern conflict
3. 19 Oct  Battlefield archaeology in the age of the global battlefield
4. 26 Oct  Protest, strikes and civil unrest
5. 2 Nov  Home fronts and the civilian experiences of conflict

9 Nov  READING WEEK – NO TEACHING

6. 16 Nov  War memorials and sites of memory
7. 23 Nov  Bodies in conflict
8. 30 Nov  Contested objects – the material culture of conflict
9. 7 Dec  Dark heritage, contested pasts and hot interpretation
10. 14 Dec  Course summary and discussion

USEFUL KEY TEXTS

- Journal of Conflict Archaeology – available online through UCL Library

These two edited collections of papers on modern conflict archaeology are available as free downloads. Get them, use them. They are also on the course’s Moodle site.


TEACHING

All classes will be taught by the course coordinator, Gabriel Moshenska

WORKLOAD

There will be 10 hours of lectures and 10 hours of seminars for this course. Students will be expected to undertake around 80 hours of reading for the course, plus 50 hours preparing for
and producing the assessed work. This adds up to a total workload of some 150 hours for the course.

**PREREQUISITES**

There are no prerequisites for the course, but it assumes a basic understanding of twentieth century world history.

**COURSE AIMS**

This course aims to introduce students to the innovative approaches to the study of recent conflicts that have been pioneered in archaeology and anthropology in recent years. The combination of theoretical and practical approaches will provide a good grounding in the subject for students interested in historical archaeology, conflict heritage, and the material and social aspects of commemoration.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the course, the student should have:

- Critical appreciation of the material and social aspects of violent conflict in the modern world, and the factors and forces that effect them.
- Appreciation of the social dynamics of conflict commemoration, including notions of agency, hegemony and resistance in these processes.
- Appreciation of the unique theoretical and methodological elements of archaeological research on modern industrialized warfare.
- Ability to carry out research on post-conflict environments, recognizing the impact of this work and its relationship to existing power relations.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

On successful completion of the course students should be able to demonstrate:

- Critical reflection and evaluation of texts, objects, sites and exhibitions.
- Observation and interpretation skills.
- Discussion, oral presentation and argumentation skills.
The coursework (detailed below) can include elements of original research. As such, it allows the students to demonstrate:

- Independent research use of libraries, collections and other research resources.
- Application of acquired knowledge and skills.
- Reasoned and Critical Assessment of Sources
- Demonstration of the ability to Manage and Integrate Different Tasks.

**METHOD OF ASSESSMENT**

Project Paper (3800-4200 words). Weighting 100%.

Acceptable word-count range: 3800 to 4200. Word-counts exceeding this will incur a penalty detailed below. Penalties will only be imposed if you exceed the upper figure in the range. There is no penalty for using fewer words than the lower figure in the range: the lower figure is simply for your guidance to indicate the sort of length that is expected.

The Project Paper is a lengthy piece of original work on a particular topic featuring elements of independent research (original research may include a wide range of activities: library research, site planning, translations, practical study of assemblages etc.).

If students are unclear about the nature of an assignment, they should discuss this with the Course Co-ordinator. Students are not permitted to re-write and re-submit essays in order to try to improve their marks. However, students may be permitted, in advance of the deadline for a given assignment, to submit for comment a brief outline of the assignment. The topic for your Project Paper should be agreed with the course coordinator by the start of reading week. I am happy to help create project ideas based on your own interests, or to suggest topics.

**The deadline for submission is Friday 10th February 2017**
COURSE SCHEDULE AND SYLLABUS

5 October. 1. Introduction to the archaeology of modern conflict

This first session introduces students to this slightly unusual course, providing an overview of the key ideas and concepts in the archaeology of the modern world in general, and of modern conflict in particular. We will leave the building for a walking tour of conflict heritage sites within a few hundred metres of the Institute, entitled Bombsites of Bloomsbury. These range from First and Second World War bombsites, war memorials and sites of absence, to sites of terrorist attacks and the birthplace of the atomic bomb.

Recommended readings


Buchli, V. and Lucas, G. (eds.). *Archaeologies of the contemporary past*. London: Routledge. INST ARCH AH BUC (read bits that look good to you, not whole thing)


12 October. 2. Problems and prospects in the archaeology of modern conflict

The archaeology of modern conflict is a relatively young, dynamic and developing discipline. In this session we explore some of the strengths of a young discipline – including openness and opportunities for researchers – and some of the weaknesses – for example the practical and legal hindrances to work in many contexts. These are examined in the course of a brief historical overview of the development of modern conflict archaeology, emphasising the global nature of the discipline. Following this we will explore some of the more distinctive and challenging ethical problems and questions raised by studying the remains of the recent, violent past, including issues of human remains in conflict.

Seminar texts


Recommended readings


González-Ruibal, A. 2008 Time to Destroy: An Archaeology of Supermodernity Current Anthropology 49(2):247-279. UCL Periodicals

While the archaeology of modern conflict is a relatively new field, the archaeology of warfare – battlefield archaeology – is not. In this session we examine traditional battlefield archaeology as a foundation for modern conflict archaeology, looking at the key similarities and differences. With the emergence of new military technologies the concept of the battlefield expanded to include entire countries, the seas and the sky. We examine some battlefields that never were, including the massive anti-invasion infrastructure erected around Britain during the Second World War. Despite the technological advances many modern conflicts still take place on traditional fields of battle, and we examine some of the links between, for example, the Western Front 1914-18 and medieval battles and battlefields. The spatial dispersal of modern conflict has implications for heritage too, as demonstrated in the
emerging concept of ‘orphan heritage’ – sites and artefacts distant from, or inaccessible to, those to whom they are of most significance.

Seminar texts


Recommended readings


Foot, W. 2007. The battlefields that nearly were: defended England 1940. Stroud: History Press. INST ARCH DAA 299 FOO


Lowry, B. (ed.) 1996. 20th century defences in Britain: an introductory guide. York: CBA. INST ARCH DAA 100 BRO


26 October. 4. Protest, strikes and civil unrest

Conflict is not restricted to traditional models of inter-state warfare or asymmetrical, guerrilla warfare. This course aims to encompass conflict archaeology in the broadest sense, including traces of state and non-state violence, oppression, class conflict and protest. In this session we will explore the validity of taking conflict archaeology beyond the battlefield, and examining its porous boundaries. Case studies will include archaeologies of anti-war protest and pacifism, excavations of strike camps, and sites of imprisonment or internment. In addition we will consider the heritage of terrorist attacks on civilians, including the problems of memorialisation and representation. The aim of this session is to challenge preconceived ideas about conflict archaeology and heritage, opening up new ways of looking at the material world.

Seminar texts


Recommended readings

2 November. 5. Home fronts and the civilian experiences of conflict

Amongst the most appalling developments in the last century of conflict is the growing proportion of civilian, non-combatant victims of violence. This session examines the experience of conflict for civilians both in and away from the combat zones. The development of 'total war', including the use of bomber aircraft and Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, means that war no longer has neat front lines of attack and defence: entire countries are potential battlegrounds. The civilian experience of war can be examined archaeologically through the study of Home Fronts: sites include bombed houses, air raid shelters and other Civil Defence infrastructure. We will examine these as international phenomena, drawing common threads from First World War London to Civil War Barcelona, 1970s Vietnam and contemporary Iraq. Similarly, the archaeology of childhood and children's lives in war demonstrate many common features across time and space, as demonstrated in their uses and responses to material culture such as bomb and shell fragments, which children have collected and traded in the conflict zones of the world for over a century.

Seminar texts


Recommended readings

conflict heritage. London: English Heritage, 35-43. (available on Moodle page and as download)


16 November. 6. War memorials and sites of memory

War memorials are amongst the most tangible traces of past conflict. In this session we explore the history and concept of the war memorial, looking beyond the ‘inscribed slab’ model to more challenging ideas of memorialisation and commemoration. This is founded on a strong understanding of memory, and the session includes discussions of conflict memory, contested memory and the concept of ‘sites of memory’, drawing on a range of case studies.
Following this we will consider the concept of ‘counter-monuments’, the genre of problematic, counter-intuitive war memorials erected in Germany and Austria since the 1980s. Finally we will examine attempts to memorialise current, ongoing conflict and the history of memorials for unpopular wars.

Seminar texts


Recommended readings


23 November. 7. Bodies in conflict

One of the defining characteristics of modern industrialised warfare is its impact on the human body. In this session we examine how mechanised warfare, the rise of high explosives, and the power of authoritarian regimes has transformed the human body in conflict. While avoiding unnecessarily gory details we will consider the annihilation of the body in shelling and bombing, from the First World War onwards. These new and destructive forms of conflict were associated with changes to the practices and concepts casualty recovery and war graves, which we will explore with particular attention to the different approaches taken by UK and US armed forces in the last thirty years. Another form of disappearance is the kidnapping and murder of civilians by police, army and paramilitaries – a common feature of fascist regimes in Central and Southern America in the 1970s and 80s. The criminal investigation of these events led directly to the development of forensic archaeological techniques for the recovery and identification of the ‘disappeared’. In two case studies we will consider the
political and social ramifications of exhuming the bodies of murdered civilians from the Spanish Civil War; and the problems caused by deceptive casualty recovery figures to contemporary aviation archaeologists.

Seminar texts


Recommended readings

Brown, M. 2007. The fallen, the front and the finding: archaeology, human remains and the Great War. *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 22(2) INST ARCH Periodicals


30 November. 8. Contested objects – the material culture of conflict

The discipline of modern conflict archaeology has many of its roots in material culture studies, not least in Nicholas Saunders’ work on ‘trench art’ – the artworks created by soldiers using recycled war material such as shell cases. In this session we explore modern conflict from a material culture perspective, beginning by looking at archaeological assemblages found on bodies during excavations of First World War battlefields. These combined standardised military equipment such as uniforms with more personal objects such as combs, wallets and souvenirs. By examining these assemblages archaeologists have been able to trace the identity of numerous individuals, as well as examine how the agency of individual soldiers can be seen in their modifications and unorthodox uses of their equipment. In the second part of the session we will examine the idea of ‘memory objects’ such as souvenirs and other artefacts, and the connections between material culture, memory and the bodily senses.

Seminar texts


Recommended readings


7 December. 9. Dark heritage, contested pasts and hot interpretation

The session focuses on issues of contestation, commemoration, ethics and emotion in the archaeology of modern conflict. This includes concepts such as ‘dark heritage’, ‘negative heritage’ and ‘hot interpretation’. We will also focus on the use of sites and objects as focal points for public debates around the presentation of the past, for example in debates around the display of the atomic bomber ‘Enola Gay’ in the Smithsonian museum. The main discussion will focus on the controversy that remains surrounding the Allies’ bombing campaign against Nazi Germany in 1943-5; the history, historiography and contested commemoration of these events. This includes assessment of the proposed Bomber Command memorial, the destruction and restoration of the Frauenkirche in Dresden, and the distinctive contribution that archaeology can make to these ongoing debates.
Seminar texts


Recommended readings


**14 December. 10. Seminar discussion**

The final session reviews some of the general themes developed during the course, and is deliberately unstructured to allow discussion of the main ideas and debates that have emerged. The seminar discussion format will also allow students to develop and test ideas for the assignment.

**INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY COURSEWORK PROCEDURES**

General policies and procedures concerning courses and coursework, including submission procedures, assessment criteria, and general resources, are available on the IoA website. It is essential that you read and comply with these. Note that some of the policies and procedures will be different depending on your status (e.g. undergraduate, postgraduate taught, affiliate, graduate diploma, intercollegiate, interdepartmental). If in doubt, please consult your course co-ordinator.

**GRANTING OF EXTENSIONS**

Note that there are strict UCL-wide regulations with regard to the granting of extensions for coursework. Note that Course Coordinators are not permitted to grant extensions. All requests for extensions must be submitted on the appropriate UCL form, together with supporting documentation, via Judy Medrington's office and will then be referred on for consideration. Please be aware that the grounds that are acceptable are limited. Those with long-term difficulties should contact UCL Student Disability Services to make special arrangements. Please see the IoA website for further information. Additional information is given here [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/academic-manual/c4/extenuating-circumstances/](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/academic-manual/c4/extenuating-circumstances/)