1. OVERVIEW

1A. Course Overview
This course is designed to introduce Amazonian archaeology to 2nd and 3rd year undergraduate students. It is assumed that students will have had very limited or no prior knowledge of the archaeological data available from the world’s largest tropical rainforest and at best a passing acquaintance with South American archaeology. The principal aim of the course is thus to provide an overview of the principal research questions and datasets that shape archaeological understandings of pre-Columbian Amazonia.

1B. Methods of Assessment
This course is assessed by means of two, each of 2375-2625 words; each contribute 50% to the final grade for the course. PLEASE see Section 6 for additional important information (p.iv).

1C. Teaching Methods
The course consists of 20 one-hour lectures supported by PowerPoints. Before attending the lectures, students should read the recommended readings for each session (a total of approximately 80 hours of reading). The reading list is current to January 2015 but small modifications will most likely be introduced as the course proceeds. In addition, 2 two-hour tutorials will take place. At tutorials, essential course topics already presented in the lectures will be reviewed and/or expanded. Thus students should also read the recommended readings assigned for tutorials (a total of approximately 4 hours) before each meeting. The lecture series will conclude with a review lecture in which students will be asked to discuss specific topics that round-up knowledge acquired during the course. Lectures are delivered by José R. Oliver, Manuel Arroyo-Kalin and Philip Riris (see syllabus’ session topics, to find out who will deliver the lecture).

NOTE: Please be aware that José R. Oliver is hard of hearing and uses hearing aids.
1D. Student Workload
The total workload is about 188 hours (the equivalent of a 1/2 Unit). There will be 20 hours of lectures and 4 hours of tutorials. Students are expected to undertake about 84 hours of reading plus 84 hours producing assessed essay work.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2A. Course Aims and Objectives
The principal aim of the course is to provide an overview of the principal research questions and datasets that shape archaeological understandings of pre-Columbian Amazonia. The course focuses on assessing the merits of contrasting theoretical perspectives against actual evidence. While the evidence examined is primarily archaeological, it will become evident that it is tightly linked to theories and hypotheses as well as data that emerge from anthropology (ethnology), ethnohistory, human/cultural ecology, ecology and geography. Almost all key issues revolve around four major questions: (1) Who were the ancestors of present-day indigenous peoples of Amazonia? (2) When and what kinds of adaptation were developed by ancient Amazonians, and to what extent these modified/shaped the landscape of the region? (3) When, how and why societies became (or not) sedentary and dependent on agriculture? (4) How 'complex' is complexity among ancient Amazonians?

The principal aims are:

- To introduce students to the key arguments regarding the historical development of ancient societies in Amazonia.
- To familiarize students with the strengths/weaknesses of historical, evolutionary and historical ecological models for Amazonia that can be of value when compared to ancient societies of other moist tropical regions of the world. To sensitize students on major issues of rainforest sustainability, conservation, management and protection of native life-ways.
- To teach students to criticize and evaluate interpretations of archaeological data.
- To provide students with experience in critical assessment of the archaeological evidence.
- To provide students with experience in using essential principles of interpretation that can be applied in their own research (e.g. BA dissertations).

2B. Learning Outcomes
Students will become familiar with the key literature and source materials for each topic of discussion. At the end of this course, the successful student should be able to recognize and understand what are the principal questions and problems that archaeologists have wrestled with in Amazonian archaeology and, via essay writing, critically evaluate how effectively archaeologists have addressed and dealt with the issues at hand. Students should also be able to evaluate and discuss whether the explanations provided by archaeologists fit the data or not, and recognize the character and nature of the evidence (e.g., material culture: artefacts, ecofacts, pottery styles, palaeoecological observations, anthropogenic landscape transformations).

3. COURSEWORK

3A. Coursework Assessment
Work will be assessed by means of two essays on topics covered during the Term (each one 50% of grade). The first essay is due on 16 November, 2016 and the second on 16 December, 2016. The length of each essay should range between 2,375 and 2,625 words or an average of 2500 words (bibliography excluded). Penalties will only be imposed if you exceed 2,625 words. (There is no penalty for using fewer words than 2,375: the lower figure is simply for your guidance to indicate the sort of length that is expected.) The following are not included in the word-count: title page, contents pages,
lists of figure and tables, abstract, preface, acknowledgements, bibliography, lists of references, captions and contents of tables and figures, appendices. Students are not allowed to re-write or re-submit essays in order to improve their marks. Students are encouraged to submit well ahead of the deadline an outline (but not a draft) of each essay for comments/suggestions. Students are strongly encouraged to consult and/or inform the course coordinator of their selection of each essay question before engaging in literature research and writing.

3B. Penalties
- For work that exceeds the specified maximum length by less than 10% the mark will be reduced by five percentage marks, but the penalised mark will not be reduced below the pass mark, assuming the work merited a Pass.
- For work that exceeds the specified maximum length by 10% or more the mark will be reduced by ten percentage marks, but the penalized mark will not be reduced below the pass mark, assuming the work merited a Pass.

3C. Course Work Submission and Turnitin
All coursework must normally be submitted both as hard copy and electronically. For the hard copy should staple the appropriate colour-coded IoA coversheet (available in the IoA library and outside room 411a) to the front of each piece of work and submit it to the red box at the Reception Desk. All coursework should be uploaded to Turnitin by midnight on the day of the deadline. This will date-stamp your work. It is essential to upload all parts of your work as this is sometimes the version that will be marked. Your Turnitin ID and Password for this course are:

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Turnitin ID: 3228754; Password: IoA1617
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3D. Instructions for Electronic (Turnitin) Submission:
Note that Turnitin uses the term ‘class’ for what we normally call a ‘course’.
1. Ensure that your essay or other item of coursework has been saved as a Word doc., docx. or PDF document, and that you have the Class ID for the course (3228754) and enrolment password (this is IoA1617 for all courses this session - note that this is capital letter I, lower case letter o, upper case A, followed by the current academic year)
3. Click on ‘Create account’
4. Select your category as ‘Student’
5. Create an account using your UCL email address. Note that you will be asked to specify a new password for your account - do not use your UCL password or the enrolment password, but invent one of your own (Turnitin will permanently associate this with your account, so you will not have to change it every 6 months, unlike your UCL password). In addition, you will be asked for a “Class ID” and a “Class enrolment password” (see point 1 above).
6. Once you have created an account you can just log in at [http://www.turnitinuk.com/en_gb/login](http://www.turnitinuk.com/en_gb/login) and enroll for your other classes without going through the new user process again. Simply click on ‘Enroll in a class’. Make sure you have all the relevant “class IDs” at hand.
7. Click on the course to which you wish to submit your work.
8. Click on the correct assignment (e.g. Essay 1).
9. Double-check that you are in the correct course and assignment and then click ‘Submit’
10. Attach document as a “Single file upload”
11. Enter your name (the examiner will not be able to see this)
12. Fill in the “Submission title” field with the right details: **It is essential that the first word in the title is your examination candidate number** (e.g. YGBR8- Debating Tiwanaku Collapse),
13. Click “Upload”. When the upload is finished, you will be able to see a text-only version of your submission.
14. Click on “Submit”
If you have problems, please email the IoA Turnitin Advisers on ioa-turnitin@ucl.ac.uk, explaining the nature of the problem and the exact course and assignment involved. One of the Turnitin Advisers will normally respond within 24 hours, Monday-Friday during term. Please be sure to email the Turnitin Advisers if technical problems prevent you from uploading work in time to meet a submission deadline - even if you do not obtain an immediate response from one of the Advisers they will be able to notify the relevant Course Coordinator that you had attempted to submit the work before the deadline.

4. SCHEDULE AND SYLLABUS

Lectures will be held 9:00-11:00 AM on Wednesday, in Room 612. The time, date and place of the Tutorial sessions will be established after agreement is reached between students and the course-coordinator.

*The Session’s Topic Outline and the Detailed Syllabus of the course start on page vi below.*

5. READING MATERIALS, LIBRARIES AND ON LINE RESOURCES.

Many readings (plus course handout/syllabus) are available in PDF format in Moodle https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk. Some of the books (Teaching Collection) are located at the Issue Desk of the Institute's Library. For the most part, the reading materials are accessible via UCL EXPLORE (SFX button). If you encounter any difficulties in obtaining the reading materials, please feel free to contact the course coordinator. An extended bibliography is found from page 25 onward (in the syllabus). Another UCL Library which contain the required/recommended hard-copy readings listed in the course syllabus is the DMS 'Watson' Science Library, primarily in the 'Anthropology', 'History', and 'Geography' sections.

6. IoA -COURSE HANDBOOK PRÉCIS (2016-17)

This section provides a short précis of policies and procedures relating to courses. It is not a substitute for the full documentation, with which all students should become familiar. For full information on Institute policies and procedures, see the following website: https://wiki.ucl.ac.uk/display/archadmin
For UCL policies and procedures, see the Academic Regulations and the UCL Academic Manual: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/academic-regulations; https://www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/

**GENERAL MATTERS**

**ATTENDANCE**: A minimum attendance of 70% is required. A register will be taken at each class. If you are unable to attend a class, please notify the lecturer by email.

**DYSLEXIA**: If you have dyslexia or any other disability, please discuss with your lecturers whether there is any way in which they can help you. Students with dyslexia should indicate it on each coursework cover sheet.

**COURSEWORK**

**LATE SUBMISSION**: Late submission will be penalized in accordance with current UCL regulations, unless formal permission for late submission has been granted. **Please note that these regulations have changed for the 2016-17 session.**

The UCL penalties are as follows:

- The marks for coursework received up to two working days after the published date and time will incur a 10 percentage point deduction in marks (but no lower than the pass mark).
- The marks for coursework received more than two working days and up to five working days after the published date and time will receive no more than the pass mark (40% for UG modules, 50% for PGT modules).
- Work submitted more than five working days after the published date and time, but before the second week of the third term will receive a mark of zero but will be considered complete.
GRANTING OF EXTENSIONS
Please note that there are strict UCL-wide regulations with regard to the granting of extensions for coursework. You are reminded that Course Coordinators are not permitted to grant extensions. All requests for extensions must be submitted on an 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: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/academic-manual/c4/extenuating-circumstances/

RETURN OF COURSEWORK AND RESUBMISSION
You should receive your marked coursework within one month of the submission deadline. If you do not receive your work within this period, or a written explanation, notify the Academic Administrator. When your marked essay is returned to you, return it to the Course Co-ordinator within two weeks. You must retain a copy of all coursework submitted.

CITING OF SOURCES and AVOIDING PLAGIARISM
Coursework must be expressed in your own words, citing the exact source (author, date and page number; website address if applicable) of any ideas, information, diagrams, etc., that are taken from the work of others. This applies to all media (books, articles, websites, images, figures, etc.). Any direct quotations from the work of others must be indicated as such by being placed between quotation marks. Plagiarism is a very serious irregularity, which can carry heavy penalties. It is your responsibility to abide by requirements for presentation, referencing and avoidance of plagiarism. Make sure you understand definitions of plagiarism and the procedures and penalties as detailed in UCL regulations: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/current-students/guidelines/plagiarism

MOODLE RESOURCE
MOODLE: Please ensure you are signed up to the course on Moodle. For help with Moodle, please contact Tina Paphitis, Room 411a (t.paphitis@ucl.ac.uk).

INFORMATION FOR INTERCOLLEGIATE AND INTERDEPARTMENTAL STUDENTS
Students enrolled in Departments outside the Institute should obtain the Institute’s coursework guidelines from Tina Paphitis (email t.paphitis@ucl.ac.uk), which will also be available on the IoA website.

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ARCL.3059 Ancient Societies of Amazonia
Synopsis of Course Content 2016-17 (Wednesdays, Rm. 602, 9-11 AM)

Week I. 5 October (Dr. José Oliver)
Session 1. Introduction to the course
Session 2. The Landscape of Amazonia Part 1

Week II. 12 October (Dr. José Oliver)
Session 3. The Landscape of Amazonia Part 2
Session 4. Indigenous human geography of Amazonia in historical perspective

Week III. 19 October (Dr. Manuel Arroyo-Kalin)
Session 5. History of Amazonian Archaeology-I: Counterfeit Paradise or Throbbing Heart?
Session 6. History of Amazonian Archaeology-II: the Landscape Twist

Week IV. 26 October (Dr. Manuel Arroyo-Kalin)
Session 7. Shaping subsistence Landscapes in pre-Columbian Amazonia
Session 8. Reconstructing the Paleo-landscape of Amazonia

Week V. 02 November (Dr. Phil Riris)
Session 9. Colonizing Amazonia: foragers, early ceramists and plant management
Session 10. The “Formative” in Amazonia

STUDY WEEK: 7-11 NOVEMBER
ESSAY NO. 1 DUE 16 NOVEMBER

Week VI. 16 November
Session 11. From villages to complex polities in Amazonia (Dr. Phil Riris)
Session 12. Regions in Focus 1: Marajó, the Guianas and Tapajós (Dr. Phil Riris)

Week VII. 23 November (Dr. Manuel Arroyo-Kalin)
Session 13. Regions in Focus 2: The Central Amazon and Lower Madeira
Session 14. Regions in Focus 3: Western Amazonia (Peru, Ecuador, Colombia)

Week VIII. 30 November (Dr. José Oliver)
Session 15. Regions in Focus 4: The Upper Madeira, Acre (Brazil) & Llanos de Moxos (Bolivia)
Session 16. Regions in Focus 5: Southern Amazonia: The Upper Xingú

Week IX. 07 December
Session 17. Rock Art in Amazonia: Technology, Style and Symbolism (Dr. Phil Riris)
Session 18. Life and death in Amazonia (Dr. Manuel Arroyo-Kalin)

Week X. 14 December (Dr. José Oliver)
Session 19. Course Overview 1: Revisiting Language and Archaeology in Amazonia
Sessions 20. Course Overview 2: Revisiting Social Complexity in Amazonia

ESSAY NO. 2 DUE 16 DECEMBER [LAST DAY OF TERM 1]
GENERAL REFERENCE SOURCES

This is the most recent comprehensive textbook of South American Archaeology to date. It includes an extensive coverage of the lowlands, including Amazonia. The book is organized by topics rather than by chronology or culture areas.


This is an excellent reference with both syntheses and topical chapters on Amazonian archaeology.

This is an invaluable volume focusing on the diversity of ceramic complexes and traditions of Amazonia. Although the text is in Portuguese, its many illustrations complement the ceramic materials presented in class. It also includes detailed maps, chronology and other details. Each contribution has an abstract in English. Our library does not yet have a copy. If you wish to consult it, contact the course coordinator.

This is a classic reference and still the essential "indexed" source where you can obtain the basic details for a wide range of of South American aborigines. Topics cover ethnology, ethnohistory, archaeology and linguistics. The archaeology, however, is outdated, but it is interesting from the historical perspective of the discipline.

Reading Assignments
Most journal articles can be downloaded from internet via UCL EXPLORE (SFX). Ask librarian or course coordinator if you have never used this service. A Dropbox with hard-to-find references will be shared with students. These are NOT for distribution and only for persona/private use for copyright reason. If in doubt, follow the same rules for downloading from UCL electronic journals (e.g., JSTOR) or ask me. Required reading materials are preceded by two symbols, as follows:
- Required Readings
- Recommended/Additional Reading (for essay research and further study).
Week I. 05 October (J.R. Oliver)

Session 1. Introduction to the course

This session presents the general aims and objectives of the course and offers a skeleton outline of how the course is structured. Coursework requirements – including tutorials, reading materials, essay deadlines, and modes of assessment – will be explained.

Session 2. The Landscape of Amazonia -Part 1

The Amazonian biome extends over a vast region that comprises different contexts for human inhabitation. Appraising the evidence for past human inhabitation in Amazonia and assessing some of the claims advanced by specific theoretical models, demands understanding the many particularities of this variegated landscape. The session will focus on the characteristics of the 'natural' environment of Amazonia. In order to explore the major habitats of the humid tropical lowlands, we will examine aspects of the geology and geomorphology of the Amazon basin, with special attention to the formation of its river systems (hydrology) and the characteristics of the soils of the region. We will also examine the variability observed in the basin’s potential vegetation, which among others types includes rainforest and savannah formations. Lastly, we will conduct a broad overview of the plants, fauna, and other resources that constitute sources of subsistence, raw material, medicines, etc. in the tropical lowlands. The contents of this lecture provide an essential backdrop to discussions of past social formations and historical ecology. They are also key to make sense of the evidence presented in subsequent lectures on landscape history, inhabitation, and transformation.

Required Readings

GENERAL REFERENCES FOR AMAZONIAN. RAINFOREST AND MAJOR LANDSCAPES

Recommended Readings

Week II. 12 October (J.R. Oliver)

Session 3. The Landscape of Amazonia -Part 2

Conclusion of lecture on the landscape of Amazonia (begun in Session 2).

Required Readings

**Session 4. Indigenous Human Geography of Amazonia in Historical Perspective**

Questions arising from the comparison study of archaeological evidence, ethnographic observations, ethnohistorical and linguistic records are routine in Americanist archaeology. Ethnographic evidence provides examples of lifeways that are specific to particular regions and which putatively show some historical continuity with pre-Columbian practices. Ethnohistorical records provide archaeological questions about indigenous societies in the first centuries of European colonization. Historical linguistic data raise archaeological questions about the geographic and demic spread and interactions among different linguistic groups and their material cultures. Archaeology can critically scrutinize ethnohistorical records and also help to provide a historical dimension to ethnographic observations. These considerations are particularly important in the Amazon basin, which is home to an impressive array of diverse indigenous cultures. Amidst this great diversity, however, there exists striking similarities among groups from far-apart regions. The geographical distribution of cultural traits has long puzzled Amazonian scholars to the point that some of the most important models of pre-Columbian Amazonia are based on specific readings of this evidence. In this session, we will examine broad strokes ethnographic and linguistic knowledge about indigenous peoples of Amazonia, highlighting continuities and discontinuities with the ethnohistorical record. The contrast between ethnographic and ethnohistorical sources makes questions about pre-Columbian social complexity into a cherished subject in Amazonian studies. However, to what extent do we understand social complexity of present-day indigenous societies of Amazonia? In this lecture we will examine some of the key ethnographic studies that highlight social organization among present-day Amazonian societies. The overview will also provide an opportunity to highlight ethnographically-recorded settlement styles and subsistence practices.

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**

Week III. 19 October (M. Arroyo-Kalin)
Session 5. History of Amazonian Archaeology-I: Counterfeit Paradise or Throbbing Heart?

Many questions in Amazonian archaeology originate from the history of research in the region. Starting in the 1950s, two contrasting positions emerged to account for the then-known archaeological evidence. On the one hand is the so-called Standard Model, which finds its roots in inferences set out by Julian Steward in the Handbook of South American Indians. Pioneers of modern archaeological methods in the region, Betty Meggers and Clifford Evans, originally set out to test a number of Steward’s hypotheses through archaeological fieldwork in different regions of the tropical lowlands, and subsequently built on these results, as well as other evidence, to develop an account of the pre-Columbian history of Amazonia. At the core of this model is a dismissal of early ethnohistorical accounts and an understanding of the environment as a limiting factor for population growth and the development of social complexity. An alternative and almost diametrically-opposed account was provided by another pioneer of modern Amazonian archaeology, Donald Lathrap. Lathrap and his PhD students, as well as anthropologist Robert Carneiro and geographer William Denevan, taking into account early ethnohistorical accounts, strongly argued for the opportunities of the Amazonian environment for population growth, and felt that more complex societies had existed in the past. It can be claimed that the opposing views were superseded by new evidence in the 1980s; however, not without reason scholars continue to revisit the fundamental questions debated between Meggers and Lathrap to this day.

Required Readings:
Archaeology, 23(2), 39–51.

**Recommended Readings:**

**Session 6. History of Amazonian Archaeology II: The Landscape Twist**

New archaeological evidence plays and has played a fundamental role in debunking some of the long-held assumptions entrenched by the polarizing accounts of Amazonian pre-Columbian history championed by Betty Meggers and Donald Lathrap. However, far more radically, it is the work of anthropologists, ecologists and geographers that have cast serious doubts on the understandings of the environment that underpin these positions. Much of this research has shaped what is now known as the approach of Historical Ecology, a perspective that has argued that Amazonian environments are not in any sense ‘pristine’ but instead have histories that are deeply intertwined with past social trajectories. In this session we will examine some of the key understandings advanced by this research and highlight how they cast doubt or confirm the assumptions and/or insights of pioneer Amazonian archaeologists.

**Required Readings:**

**Recommended Readings**

**Week IV. 26 October (Arroyo-Kalin)**

**Session 7. Shaping subsistence landscapes in pre-Columbian Amazonia**

Discussion about modes of subsistence in Amazonia has played a central role in arguments about pre-Columbian societies. In this session we will examine the variability of subsistence practices in Amazonia as evidenced by deliberate landscape modification and palaeoecological and archaeobotanical evidence.

**Required Reading**

**Recommended Reading**
Session 8. Reconstructing the paleo-landscape of Amazonia

Historical Ecology argues that the Amazonian biome is strongly imprinted by the effects of human inhabitation. To fully assess this claim, however, it is necessary to understand how Amazonia has changed over time, i.e., to consider the landscape history of Amazonia. Are specific phenomena claimed as anthropic by Historical Ecology really the result of climate change? Or of landscape evolution? In this session we will examine how the dynamic landscape of Amazonia has changed over a time scale that is pertinent to examine human inhabitation of the region. In parallel to archaeology, the history of palaeoecological interpretations has also been marked by contrasting positions. On the one hand, some researchers have argued that the Amazon rainforest contracted significantly during the last ice age and beyond, producing large tracts of open vegetation that only more recently become recolonized with rainforest vegetation. On the other hand, some researchers argue that, despite climate change, no clear evidence exists that the Amazon rainforest ever contracted markedly. Global climate change also affected the region in other ways: because the landscape is extremely low with respect to sea-level, global sea-level should have had an important effect on the physiognomy of much of the region. In this session, we will discuss the main arguments and review some of the key evidence used to reconstruct the changing physiognomy of the Amazon basin in the past, with a specific focus on the characteristics of the region over the last 12,000 years, i.e., the crucial time frame for human colonization.

Required Reading


Recommended Reading


**Week V. 02 November (P. Riris)**

**Session 9. Colonizing Amazonia: Foragers, Ceramists, and Plant ‘managers’**

Models advocated by Betty Meggers and Donald Lathrap were developed as a way to account for the distribution and characteristics of ceramic remains. Whilst these models never explicitly denied the possibility that Amazonia had been peopled by hunter-gatherers before the appearance of ceramists (a possibility already implied in Julian Steward’s account of the history of the region), archaeological evidence was lacking to understand the antiquity of human colonization of the region. This did not prevent informed speculation, indeed theorization, of what the peopling and early phases of settlement in the region ought to have looked like. Singular among these contributions was Donald Lathrap’s (1977) essay, in which he argued the tropical lowlands had been the hearth of a veritable Neolithic revolution in the Americas. Actual archaeological evidence would be forthcoming in the 1980s and, as it was produced, it offered many intriguing surprises. It became evident that Amazonia had been colonized surprisingly early, towards the terminal Pleistocene and early Holocene. It also became evident that domesticated plants were already in use by the 8th millennium BP, a matter which raised questions about both local domestications and the crop biogeography of the Americas. Lastly it became clear that Amazonia could boast to the oldest findings of archaeological pottery in the Americas, and pottery – it can be argued – is often made by people with sedentary lifeways. Was Lathrap ultimately right?

**Required Reading**

Recommended Reading


**Session 10. The Formative in Amazonia**

In the archaeology of the Americas, the period known as the Formative is synonymous with an historical process in which groups specialized in hunting, fishing and gathering began to increasingly depend on foodstuffs which were available or were storable during a substantial portion of the annual cycle. As the conventional account goes, this dependence was accompanied by a progressive decrease in residential mobility, which, over time, led to the adoption of more sedentary lifestyles. Amazonia sits uncomfortably within this American account of the Neolithic Revolution: on the one hand plant cultivation evidence is much older than late Holocene ceramic sites; on the other, debate is on-going about the extent to which the latter indicate permanent occupations. One way to examine the matter is to examine the Amazonian Formative in broader perspective, i.e. ascertaining the presence of early interaction spheres reaching beyond the Amazon basin and problematizing the extent to which they provide evidence of population expansion and/or exchange. In this session we will review some of the key aspects of the Amazonian Formative, examining geographical origins, the most important ceramic traditions, and evidence for anthropogenic landscape transformations.

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Readings**


STUDY WEEK: 7-11 NOVEMBER

ESSAY NO. 1 DUE 16 NOVEMBER
Evidence for persistent settlement and population growth in Amazonia becomes much more ubiquitous during the final millennia of the Holocene. It goes in hand with a remarkable array of modifications of the landscape itself, for instance the building of mounds, the digging of ditches, the formation of anthropogenic soils, and the development of networks of paths and roads. When examined in broad comparative perspective and at different geographic scales, important variability is evident in the placement and internal layout of settlements in the region. The study of this material evidence is essential to answer some of the stubborn but important questions that Betty Meggers has legated to Amazonian archaeology. In addition, an appraisal of the actual magnitude of former areas of inhabitation is a self-evident requirement to evaluate whether polities actually existed in the Amazon basin before European colonization. In this session we will review the variability and characteristics of archaeological evidence of permanent settlement in Amazonia.

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:

The next lecture sessions will be devoted to the examination of the specific characteristics of the archaeological record in different regions of the Amazon basin. It is knowledge of this archaeological evidence that provides the ability to evaluate the arguments presented in many of the theoretical models that have been reviewed up to this point in this course. Students will become aware that data often do not fit the models as nicely as model proponents would have us believe. Understanding this evidence is fundamental to avoid uncritical repetition of theoretical formulations and to appraise what we still need to learn in order to advance the field of Amazonian archaeology.

Week VI (Cont.) 16 November (Arroyo-Kalin)

**Session 12. Regions in Focus 1: Marajó and the Guianas & Tapajós (P. Riris)**

Starting in the 19th Century and into the first couple of decades of the 20th, the ‘barroque’ Tapajós pottery, the Marajoara elaborate burial urns, polychrome pottery and tesos (a.k.a tells or platform mounds), caught world-wide attention. Marajó Island and adjacent area of the Lower Amazon witnessed the first stratigraphically controlled excavations and systematic surveys in 1948-49 (Meggers and Evans), 1957). Around WW-II the first tentative steps were undertaken by archaeologists in British Guiana. Since then, our understanding of the pre-Columbian history Marajó, Amapá, the three Guyanas (also spelled Guianas, Guayanas) and Santarem has dramatically increased. In this session we will look into the cumulative archaeological evidence of this region and its relevance for the wider Amazonian past history.

**Marajó Readings**

An interesting monograph that would be a useful reading from the particular perspective of landscape archaeology for Guiana & Lower Amazon is: "Island in the Rainforest: Landscape Management in Pre-Columbian Amazonia" by Stéphen Rostain (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2013).

Guianas Readings


Tapajós Readings

Week VII. 23 November (M. Arroyo-Kalin)
Session 13. Regions in Focus 3: Central Amazon and NW Amazonia (M Arroyo-Kalin)

Central Amazonia witnessed its first systematic surveys and archaeological test excavations (including first radiocarbon dates) in the early 1960s with the pioneering work of Peter Paul Hilbert (1968). Central Amazonia figures prominently in Lathrap’s “cardiac” model as the hearth of demic expansion and outward radiation. As we have seen from previous lectures, this view was contested by Meggers and associates (including Hilbert). This session will look in more detail at the archaeological evidence that has accumulated since the early years of the 1990s until present. Given this evidence, how do Meggers-Lathrap divergent theories stand at present? What can we now infer/hypothesize about sociocultural and material complexity, of the scale of complexity and its antiquity? How the latter may (or not) compare with the historic/current ethnic communities?

Central/Middle Amazon Readings

Northwest Amazonia Readings
Session 14. Regions in Focus: Western Amazonia (Peru, Ecuador & Colombia)

At the other end of the Amazon, in the Middle Ucayali, was first systematically and intensively excavated by D.W. Larhrap (mid-1950s; resulting in his 1962 PhD), whilst Meggers and Evans were about to and had just published (1957) their ‘Mouth of the Amazon’ monograph. That these first systematic (modern) excavations were, by chance (and logistical convenience), precisely located at the two far ends of the Amazon had serendipitously given shape to the Meggers-Lathrap dichotomous theories of origin and complexity. Until the 1990s Central Amazonia was (to use computer jargon) a “black-box”, with archaeologists making educated guesses (if not speculating) about its centrality (or not) and its role in the unfolding of greater Amazonia’s pre-Columbian history. This lecture focuses on what is the evidence at hand today and what does it inform on our understanding of this pre-Columbian Amazonian history.

Week VIII. 30 November (JR Oliver)

Session 15. Regions in Focus 4: The Upper Madeira, Acre (Brazil) and the Llanos de Moxos (Bolivia).

At the turn of the 20th Century, Nördenskiöld was the first to conduct excavations in the region of Moxos and to both first call attention to the artificial mound constructions by pre-Hispanic peoples and to correlate them with culturally sophisticated and advanced Arawakan groups, an idea that stimulated Lathrap’s “cardiac” model. It was not until the 1960s that the Llanos de Moxos that large scale raised fields were spotted by Bill Denevan in the seasonally flooded savannas of Moxos; it was even later, in this century, that the massive deforestation of the State of Acre provided a clear view (by airplane and then due to availability of Google Earth) of numerous large scale ditch and mound constructions dotting the landscape, once hidden by dense tropical forest. This session focuses on the cumulative and particularly recent archaeological evidence found in these nearby regions (and extending into Upper Madeira) and of its implications for a better understanding of the wider Amazonian region.

  doi:10.4081/antiqua.2012.e1
  doi:10.1177/0959683612437872

Session 16. Regions in Focus 5: South Amazonia: The Upper Xingú

The archaeology of southernmost and easternmost region of focus, the Upper Xingú, is also a key for it serves as an illuminating point of comparison and of contrast with the Acre and Moxos regions just reviewed: it is witness to large scale ring-ditch around circular villages, intricate inter-village dirt road systems, and a persistence of village structure that is still observed today. But, it is the contrasts between pre-colonial past and the present indigenous (‘Xinguanos’) occupations that is most revealing. Currently, the Xinguano aborigines, share very similar, if not the same material culture, and are members of different linguistic families (Arawakan, Carib, Tupian) while, at the same time, many techno-stylistic ceramic elements (and subsistence economy) can be traced back into pre-colonial times. While modern Xinguano have preserved many elements of material culture, particularly village/houses spatial organization and structural layout/form, evidence from the pre-European contact period, shows a marked difference in settlement size and scale.

Week IX.  07 December
Session 17.  Rock art in Amazonia: Technology, style and symbolism (P. Riris)

Rock art in Amazonia and the circum-Amazonian area has been ascribed various roles and significance at different points in time by the archaeological discipline and its antecedents. Perhaps by virtue of its often striking appearance and frequent co-occurrence in zones of intensive archaeological activity, links have long been sought between engraved art (petroglyphs), painted art (pictographs), and various components of the archaeological record (language families, ceramic traditions, ethnohistorical accounts). This session charts an overview of these efforts through a critical review of some of the key sites and regions that host rock art in Amazonia, as well as neighbouring areas.

- Riris, P. & R. Corteletti. 2015. A New Record of Pre-Columbian Engravings in Urubici (SC), Brazil using Polynomial Texture Mapping. *Internet Archaeology* 38. [http://dx.doi.org/10.11141/ia.38.7](http://dx.doi.org/10.11141/ia.38.7)
**Session 18. Life and Death in Amazonia (M. Arroyo-Kalin)**

Having examined the archaeological record of Amazonia in some geographical detail, in this session we will focus on a specific dimension of it: burials and mortuary assemblages. Burial urns are, after all, one of the most ubiquitous types of remains in Amazonia (though it is clearly not the case that they are unearthed at every excavation). The questions that burials pose are fascinating and take us one more step towards understanding how past Amazonian societies perceived the body, life and the cosmos. For this session we will adopt a discussion format in which the different required readings are critically examined.

**Required Readings**


**Week X. 14 December (JR Oliver)**

**Session 19. Revisiting Language and Archaeology in Amazonia**

It can be argued that Donald Lathrap privileged history as a way to understand the distribution of Amazonian languages and the astounding mosaic of cultures that the region embodies. With the benefit of a more detailed, current understanding of the archaeological record, what are the relations that can be posited between material evidence and Amazonia language. In this session we will adopt a discussion format (based on the required readings) to critically examine the state of matter.

Session 20. Revisiting Social Complexity in Amazonia

A weak point in Meggers’ Counterfeit Paradise model is the assumption that all Amazonian societies can be described as small-scale forager horticulturists with only semi-sedentary lifestyles (i.e., the “classic Tropical Forest Culture type). As we have reviewed in the earlier part of the course, the ethnohistorical evidence strongly suggests that at least some societies were sedentary, populous and organized through various forms of hierarchical authority. Some archaeological evidence supports this reconstruction but it would seem that much more evidence is required to draw final conclusions. Maybe, maybe not. We conclude the course by way of a discussion (based on the required readings) format to critically examine the state of matter as we understand at present.


Essay 2 is DUE on 16 December [end of term 1]


Amazoniana-Limnologia et Oecologia Regionalis Systemae Fluminis Amazonas, 16(3-4), 606–607


