Interpreting Pottery
ARCL 0100

Masters module: 15 credits

Mondays 10.00 am - 12.00 noon + 1 hour practical
Room B13

Course Coordinator: Dr. Bill Sillar
b.sillar@ucl.ac.uk
Room B16 Tel: 020 7679 1538 (internal 21538)
Office hours: 4.15 – 5.15 pm Tuesdays

With
Isobel Thompson isobel.thompson@ucl.ac.uk

This handbook and online reading list are available through the IoA website and UCL Moodle:

Timetable: see final page

**Deadlines**
- Proposals **19th November** (returned 4th December)
- Essay **9th January 2020** (returned 3rd February)
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: Bill Sillar.

Further important information, relating to all courses at the Institute of Archaeology, is to be found at [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/administration/students](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/administration/students) and in the general MA/MSc handbook. It is your responsibility to read and act on this information which includes details about submission and grading of coursework; disabilities; communication; attendance; and feedback, etc.

AIMS

This course will introduce students to a wide range of techniques used in pottery studies, a consideration of the research questions that ceramic research can be used to address, and a concern for the appropriate reporting of ceramic research. More specifically the course aims:

1. To introduce students to the technology of pottery making from clay selection to firing with reference to archaeological and ethnographic examples as well as student practicals.
2. To question the practice and purpose of diverse approaches to pottery processing, classification and analysis.
3. To explore the ways in which archaeological evidence of pottery production, trade and use can be studied and interpreted.
4. To critically examine the development of pottery studies in archaeology.

OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will, among other things:

1. Be familiar with the physical processes of pottery production and be able to give careful consideration to the social context within which it takes place.
2. Have an overview of recent archaeological approaches to the collection, analysis and interpretation of ceramics.
3. Be able to evaluate the relevance and applicability of various methods of ceramic analysis used the in archaeological units, museums and similar institutions in relation to wider archaeological research questions

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1. The ability to read and listen to a range of different approaches to a topic and to write a reasoned argument as to why they favour one or more of these.
2. Begun to develop the observational skills needed to identify the form, surface and fabric of pottery and critically consider what this may mean in relation to the production or life history of the pot.
3. The ability to observe, or read about, analytical procedures and critically reflect on how these procedures and their presentation affects the interpretation of data.
COURSE OUTLINE
This is a half unit option for M.A., and M.Sc. students. It is intended to provide a general foundation and introduction to pottery studies. The course picks up on many of the themes introduced in the core course of the Artefact Studies MA and Technology MSc., but, by focusing on pottery we will be able to explore the applicability of these themes in the practical analysis and interpretation of a specific class of artefacts.

The course consists of lectures and seminar/practicals. The practical sessions will effectively be seminars that incorporate both the handling of materials and a discussion on the problems, and purpose of pottery analysis. There will be a particular focus on dealing with pottery assemblages and the diverse ways in which pottery can be classified. This will include a brief introduction to more detailed scientific methods of analysis (e.g. petrography and elemental analysis) but these can be explored further in the 2nd term course ‘Archaeological Ceramics’ G 114.

This course will introduce students to the wide range of ways that archaeological pottery has been studied with a strong emphasises on understanding techniques used in pottery making and practical approaches to the study of pottery assemblages from excavations. The course starts with a consideration of the properties of clay in order to discuss how potters choose specific techniques to collect and process clays, to mix a clay paste that alters or enhances the physical properties of ‘natural’ clay, and for the forming and firing of their ceramics. The potters’ choice of raw materials and techniques will be considered in relation to both the physical properties of the materials and the influence of the wider technological, economic, social and ideological setting of specific cultural situations. We shall then be able to look at archaeological pottery with a view to identifying the forming techniques that were used in the past; this will be based on examining the surface of the finished artefacts and fabric analysis. Ethnographic and experimental work will be used throughout the course to illustrate some of the problems and potential of ceramic analysis. We shall discuss traditional (cultural-historical) approaches to pottery analysis, which were primarily based on the study of the morphology, decoration and distribution of the pottery. This will be compared to more recent material science approaches to the analysis of archaeological ceramics that have also been used to yield information on ceramic technology, the provenance of the pottery and dating. We will review a number of themes that are commonly addressed through artefact analysis (such as: Technology, Organisation of Production, Typologies, Trade and Exchange, Consumption, and Style). The course aims to help students consider the relationship between artefacts and the people who used them, as well as how to relate artefact analysis to other aspects of archaeological research.

Ethnographic Pottery Firing: Raqchi, Peru
TEACHING METHODS AND READING MATERIAL
Teaching for the course is through formal lectures, seminars, artefact handling sessions, and laboratory visits. The course consists of ten two-hour sessions. These usually start with a one hour lecture introducing a research theme and will either be followed by a practical that aims to introduce students to the techniques of pottery making and archaeological analysis, or a further lecture and seminar session taking a research topic to greater depth and discussing the essential reading for that week. These varied formats are combined in order to provide you with a broad introduction to appropriate literature; the opportunity to engage actively in debating these issues yourself, the chance to handle clay and see the effects of different techniques and to compare this to the evidence from archaeological pottery. Seminars have weekly recommended readings, which students are expected to have read ahead of the class, so that they are be able to follow and actively contribute to discussion.

PREREQUISITES
There are no prerequisites for this course. This course is good foundation for taking the 2nd term, ‘Archaeological Ceramics’ (ARCL0046) course taught by Patrick Quinn, which focuses on applications of materials analysis, particularly ceramic petrography.

WORKLOAD: TEACHING HOURS AND ASSESSMENT
The course consists of 20 class hours of lectures and seminars, with a further 10 hours of practicals. Students are expected to undertake approximately 5 hours private reading each week to prepare themselves prior to class and explore themes in greater depth after class (50 hours), as well as a further 70 or so hours of reading and practical work to prepare an essay outline and final 3500 word essay. This adds up to a total workload of some 150 hours for the course.

METHODS OF ASSESSMENT
This course is assessed by means of a total of around 4,000 words of coursework, divided into an essay proposal of around 500 words, and a final essay of roughly 3500 words (NO MORE than 3675 words). Essays that are longer than 3675 words will not have followed the assessment criterion and will be penalised accordingly (relevant illustrations and the bibliography are not included as part of the word limit). The topics and deadlines for the assessments are specified below. If students are unclear about the nature of an assignment, they should contact the Course Co-ordinator.

HEALTH AND SAFETY
The Institute has a Health and Safety policy and code of practice which provides guidance on laboratory work, etc. This is revised annually and the new edition can be found on the Institute’s Intranet. All work undertaken in the Institute is governed by these guidelines and students have a duty to be aware of them and to adhere to them at all times. This is particularly important in the context of the laboratory work and fieldtrips which may be undertaken as part of this course.

TEACHING SCHEDULE
Lectures will be held 10:00-12:00 a.m. on Mondays, in room B13. On days when smaller group practical classes are organised the class will be split into groups and practicals will run from 11.00-12.00, 12.00 -1.00 and 1.00 to 2.00 p.m. either in Room B13 or in the outside workspace in the basement.
Josiah Wedgwood’s trials made during his 4 year bid to produce a ceramic copy of the (5-25 AD) Roman glass vessel known as the ‘Portland Vase’ (successful vase exhibited in 1790 AD).

Online Resources
The full UCL Institute of Archaeology coursework guidelines are given here:
http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/administration/students/handbook
The full text of this handbook is also available through Moodle including online reading lists

Attendance
A register will be taken at each class. If you are unable to attend a class, please notify the lecturer by email. Departments are required to report each student’s attendance to UCL Registry at frequent intervals throughout each term. Students are required to attend at least 70% of classes for each course and will fail the course if they do not achieve 70% attendance.

Information for intercollegiate and interdepartmental students
Students enrolled in Departments outside the Institute should obtain the Institute’s coursework guidelines from Judy Medrington (j.medrington@ucl.ac.uk), which will also be available on Moodle.

Coursework submission procedures
• All coursework must be submitted both as hard copy and electronically unless instructed otherwise.
• You 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 at the reception desk of the IoA.
• 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.
• Instructions are given below.
- Please note that the procedure has changed for 2019-20, and work is now submitted to Turnitin via Moodle.

1. Ensure that your essay or other item of coursework has been saved as a Word doc., docx. or PDF document. Please include the module code and your candidate number on every page as a header.

2. Go into the Moodle page for the module to which you wish to submit your work.

3. Click on the correct assignment (e.g. Essay 1).

4. 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 Essay 1). Note that this changes each year.

5. Click “Upload”.

6. Click on “Submit”

7. You should receive a receipt – please save this.

8. 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 module 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.

Word count for your final essay: 3,500 words

Your essay should be around 3,500 words long. With a maximum of 3,675 words

The following should not be 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.

Penalties will only be imposed if you exceed the word limit. (There is NO penalty for using fewer words, as long as you provide a full answer to the question.)

You must indicate word length (minus exclusions) on the cover sheet. Exceeding the maximum word-length expressed for the essay will be penalized in accordance with UCL penalties for over-length work (above).

The penalties for overlength work will be as follows:

- 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 penalised mark will not be reduced below the pass mark, assuming the work merited a Pass.

READING LISTS

Part of this handbook includes an outline of each session in the course, and identifies one or more essential readings and a few supplementary references relevant to each session. The essential readings which should be consulted in advance of each session, which students will be expected to have done, to be able fully to follow and actively to contribute to discussion. Information is provided as to where in the UCL library system individual readings are available; their location and Teaching Collection (TC) number, and status (whether out on loan) can also be accessed on the eUCLid computer catalogue system. Copies of individual articles and chapters identified as essential reading are in the Teaching Collection in the Institute Library and where possible essential readings to keep up with the topics covered in the course have been made available on line.

INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY COURSEWORK PROCEDURES

General policies and procedures concerning courses and coursework, including submission procedures, assessment criteria, and general resources, are available in your Degree Handbook and on the following
website: http://wiki.ucl.ac.uk/display/archadmin. 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.
GENERAL READING (Books, Collected Papers and Review Articles).

Arnold D. and J. Bourriau (eds.) 1993 An Introduction to Ancient Egyptian Pottery Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Sondeschrift 17, Abteilung Kairo, Philipp von Zabern, Germany.


Rye O. S. 1981 Pottery Technology; principles and reconstructions. Manuals on Archaeology no. 4 Washington D.C.


Publications of the European Meeting on Ancient Ceramics

Some Useful Web sites:

Prehistoric Ceramic Research Group: www.prehistoricpottery.org

Study Group for Roman Pottery: www.romanpotterystudy.org/welcome-new-website

Medieval Pottery Research Group: http://www.medievalpottery.org.uk/

Roman Pottery Research and Atlas: http://potsherid.net/
Introduction to the course, the ‘pottery cycle’ and the interpretation of archaeological assemblages

Introduction to the ‘pottery cycle’ from raw materials to the firing and use of the vessel. The ‘pottery cycle’ is an organising principle for much of this course.

Practical: Researching a Pottery Assemblage

Dealing with archaeological assemblages, a consideration of the difficulties of recording and analysing excavated pottery assemblages and how this may influence the questions that are addressed and how the pottery is interpreted.

The Pottery Cycle


Rye O. S. 1981 Pottery Technology; principles and reconstructions. Manuals on Archaeology no. 4 Washington D.C.


History of Pottery Studies:


Further Reading:

Abbink A. A. 1999 Make it and break it: the cycles of pottery. A study of the technology, form, function and use of pottery from the settlements at Uitgeest-Groot Dorregeest and Schagen-Muggenburg Faculty of Archaeology, Leiden University

Atkin, J. 2004 Handmade Pottery Techniques Revealed New York: Barron’s


Gibson A. 2002 Prehistoric Pottery in Britain and Ireland Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus

Gibson A. and A. Woods 1990 Prehistoric Pottery for the Archaeologist Leicester University Press, Leicester


Miller D. 1985 Artefacts as categories: A study of ceramic variability in central India. Cambridge University Press.

Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group 1995 The study of later prehistoric pottery: general policies and guidelines for analysis and publication. PCRG Occasional Papers 1 and 2.

Read D. 2007 Artefact Classification: a conceptual and methodological approach Left Coast Press


Woodward A. and J. D. Hill (eds.) 2002 Prehistoric Britain: the ceramic basis Oxford: Oxbow
Further Reading in relation to the pottery used in the practical


Coles, J. And S. Minnit 1995 Industrious and Fairly Civilized: the Glastonbury Lake Village Somerset Levels Project and Somerset County Council Museums Service, Somerset

Cunliffe B. 2005 Iron Age communities in Britain: an account of England, Scotland and Wales from the seventh century BC until the Roman conquest London: Routledge


Gibson A. 2002 Prehistoric Pottery in Britain and Ireland Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus

Moore, T., 2007 Perceiving Communities: Exchange, Landscape and Social Networks in the Later Iron Age of Western Britain Oxford Journal of Archaeology 26(1): 79-102


Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group 1995 The study of later prehistoric pottery: general policies and guidelines for analysis and publication. PCRG Occasional Papers 1 and 2.

Woodward A. and J. D. Hill (eds.) 2002 Prehistoric Britain: the ceramic basis Oxford : Oxbow

Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group: [http://www.prehistoric-ceramics.org.uk](http://www.prehistoric-ceramics.org.uk)

Pottery from Meare Lake Village
2 Preparing the paste: selection and preparation of clay & temper

The strength and appearance of a completed pot and the behaviour of the clay paste during production is dependent on the raw materials selected by the potter and the way that they are processed. In this lecture/semian seminar we will discuss the geological origins and physical properties of clay and inclusions, the various methods that potters use to prepare and mix these materials, and how this alters the quality and behaviour of the clay paste. In order to explain this we will need to discuss the clay/water system (i.e. how the properties of clays are dependent both on their crystal structure and the amount of water between the clay crystals) and how the potter works with these natural phenomena.

Practical: handling clays and tempering materials

During the practical students will prepare a range of different pottery pastes using a variety of clays and tempering materials so that they can feel how this alters the behaviour of the mixture.

Essential Reading:

Further Reading:
Sanacreu D. A. 2015 Materiality, Techniques and Society in Pottery Production: The Technological Study of Archaeological Ceramics through Paste Analysis De Gruyter (available free as a Kindle Edition)
Smith A. L. 2000 Processing clay for pottery in Northern Cameroon: social and technical requirements Archaeometry 42(1): 21-42
Velde, B 1992 Introduction to clay minerals : chemistry, origins, uses and environmental significance London, Chapman & Hall
Woodward A. 2002 Inclusions, Impressions and Interpretations In A. Woodward and J. D. Hill (eds.) Prehistoric Britain: the ceramic basis Oxford : Oxbow 106-118
3 Pottery Forming Techniques: ethnographic and archaeological examples

There are a wide range of potential pottery production methods (e.g. pinching, coiling, hammer and anvil, moulding, or throwing). During this lecture we will explore a number of these methods, what tools they require, and the implications for the organisation of production, and what evidence we can use to interpret the use of these methods. We will again highlight the relationship between the clay paste prepared by the potter and the choice of forming techniques.

Practical: techniques used in making and decorating pots

During the practical students will continue with the clay pastes that they prepared the week before to see how suitable they are for different forming and decorating techniques.

Essential Reading:
van der Leeuw S. (ed.) 1993 Giving the potter a choice: conceptual aspects of pottery techniques in P. Lemonnier (ed.) Technological Choices: transformation in material culture since the Neolithic London: Routledge 238-288

Further Reading:
Pottery Firing Methods and Pottery Fabrics

We will discuss some of the factors that influence the choice of firing technique, the degree to which these can be recognised using archaeological evidence and their effect on the fabric of the pottery.

**Practical: identifying pottery fabrics – experimental brickets**

We will examine you fired pottery brickets to see how they have been affected by the firing process and how the choice of different clays and tempering materials affected the appearance and properties of the fired pottery fabric.

**Essential Reading:**


**Further Reading:**


Sillar B. 2000 ‘Dung by Preference: The choice of fuel as an example of how Andean pottery production is embedded within wider technical, social and economic practices.’ *Archaeometry* 43-60.

Swan V. G. 1984 *The Pottery Kilns of Roman Britain* Royal Commission on Historical Monuments Supplementary Series No 5.


5 Organisation of production and craft specialisation

The organisation of pottery production, particularly the degree of craft specialisation, has been used by several researchers as a method of assessing the social and economic organisation of past societies. In this seminar we will discuss how the evidence for pottery making (e.g. the location, spatial organisation, scale and intensity of production) can be interpreted from archaeological evidence.

Practical: recognition of pottery technology on ethnographic and ancient pots

This practical will take a selection of ethnographic pottery to discuss how we can identify pottery production techniques from the form and surface appearance of ancient pots.

Essential Reading:

Crown P. L. 2007 Life histories of pots and potters: situating the individual in archaeology American Antiquity 72(4) 677-690


Harry K. G. 2005 Ceramic specialization and agricultural marginality: Do ethnographic models explain the development of specialized pottery production in the prehistoric American Southwest? American Antiquity 70(2): 295-319

Further Reading:


Arnold, D. E., 2008 Social change and the evolution of ceramic production and distribution in a Maya community Boulder: University Press of Colorado


Fowler K. 2016 Ethnography The Oxford Handbook of Archaeological Ceramic Analysis Edited by Alice Hunt Print Publication Date: DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199681532.013.26


Frankel, D. and J. M. Webb 2014 A potter’s workshop from Middle Bronze Age Cyprus: new light on production, scale and variability Antiquity 88(340): 425-440


Jordan P., and M. Zvelebil 2010 Ceramics before Farming: the Origins and Dispersal of Pottery among Hunter-Gatherers of Northern Eurasia from 16 000 BP Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press


McGovern P.E. (Ed.) 1989 *Cross-craft and cross-cultural interactions in ceramics* Westerville, OH: American Ceramic Society


Phillips, David A. Jr. 2006 Comment on Harry's Discussion of Ceramic Specialization and Agricultural Marginality in the Prehistoric U.S. Southwest *American Antiquity* 71(2): 397-398


Rautman M. 1998 Handmade Pottery and Social Change: the view from Late Roman Cyprus *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 11(1): 81-104


Shimada I. ed 2007 *Craft production in complex societies: multicraft and producer perspectives* Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press


Sillar B. and G. Ramón Joffré 2016 ‘Using the present to interpret the past: The role of ethnographic studies in Andean Archaeology’ *World Archaeology* 48(5): 656-673

Pots are frequently traded, exchanged or transported away from their production sites. This is important evidence from which we can interpret some aspects of socio-economic relationships in the past, ideally, this requires the identification of the source of the raw materials (i.e. relating the pottery fabric to the geological origin of the raw materials) or production sites (e.g. locating the kilns and piles of wasters at the production centre). We can also prepare distribution patterns by recording the location and quantity of specific pottery forms, styles or fabric types, but, the interpretation of these distribution patterns should include a careful consideration of how this evidence was collected and what has affected the intensity and reporting of previous archaeological work used in the study.

**Practical:** Further examples of pottery technology & discussion of potential essay topics

**Essential Reading:**

**Further Reading:**
Morris E. L. and A. Woodward 2003 Ceramic Petrology and Prehistoric Pottery in the UK *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 69 279-303
Wilson L. and Pollard A. M. 2001 The Provenance hypothesis in D. R. Brothwell and A. M. Pollard (eds.) *Handbook of Archaeological Sciences* Chichester: Wiley and Sons Ltd. 508-517
Pottery Consumption: use, breakage and disposal

This session will consider the function of pottery and how we can analyse pottery use from the vessels themselves (e.g. size, form, surface appearance, residue analysis) and wider archaeological evidence (e.g. the context in which the vessels were recovered, iconographic evidence). We will discuss the importance of studying pottery breakage and disposal patterns as an aid to interpreting the use of space around the site, in relation to understanding the function and value of the pottery within consumption sites, and to help understand taphonomic processes on site.

**Practical:** Pottery Assemblage: disposal habits, taphonomic processes and dealing with fragmentation.

**Essential Reading:**
Goulder J. 2010 Administrators' bread: an experiment-based re-assessment of the functional and cultural role of the Uruk bevel-rim bowl *Antiquity* 84(324): 351-362

**Further Reading:**
Berg I. 2004 The meaning of standardisation: conical cups in the late Bronze Age Aegean *Antiquity* 78(299): 74


Tite M. S., V. Kilikoglou and G. Vekinis 2001 Review Article: Strength, toughness and thermal shock resistance of ancient ceramics, and their influence on technological choice. Archaeometry 43(3) 301-324. – see also the discussion of this article in Archaeometry 45: 163-183.


Copy of enamel jug made and decorated by Shipibo-Conibo Potter, Ucayali River, Peru
8 Pottery Decoration, Stylistic Analysis and explaining change

Practical: A consideration of how to style in ceramics

Essential Reading – please read at least two of the following:
Hegmon M. and S. Kulow 2005 Painting as agency, style as structure: innovations in Mimbres pottery designs from southwest New Mexico Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory 12(4) 313-334

Further Reading:
Conkey M. & C. Hastorf 1990 The uses of style in archaeology Cambridge C.U.P.
de La Fuente G. A. 2011 Urns, Bowls and Ollas: Pottery-making practices and technical identity in the Southern Andes during the Late Period (ca. AD 900- AD 1450) Catamarca, North-western Argentine region, Argentina Latin American Antiquity 22(2) pp.224-252
DeBoer W. R. 1990 Interaction, imitation and communication as expressed in style: the Ucayali experience in: M. Conkey and C. Hastorf (eds.) The Uses of Style in Archaeology Cambridge University Press pp.82-104.
Krause R. A. 2016 A Universal Theory of Pottery Production: Irving Rouse, Attributes, Modes, and Ethnography The University of Alabama Press


Shanks M. 1992 Style and the design of a perfume jar from an archaic Greek city state *Journal of European Archaeology* 1:77-106.


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Fig 2. (from Sinclair and Baker 1988)
9  Dealing with Assemblages: the excavation, identification, quantification and reporting of archaeological assemblages

The study of archaeological pottery starts at the point of excavation when important decisions are made about the material recovered, contextual information recorded and initial cleaning and sorting of the pottery. Archaeological pottery is usually sorted through a series of stages, initially separating it from other excavated materials, then sorting the pottery into different groups or categories. At what stage is it necessary to consider the research questions that the pottery is being used to address and how the pottery assemblages will be related to previous work in the area? In this seminar we will consider how archaeological pottery is treated from the moment of excavation to its presentation in the finds report and how this affects the types of data that are available for interpretation, including a consideration of the use of illustrations, tables, graphs and other ways of summarising and presenting data.

**Practical:** Discussion of how to quantify and record pottery assemblages

**Essential Reading:**


Allison, P. M., 1997 Why do excavation reports have findings’ catalogues? In: *Not so much a pot, more a way of life: current approaches to artefact analysis in archaeology* C. G. Cumberpatch and P. W. Blinkhorn 77-84 Monograph 83 Oxford: Oxbow

**Further Reading:**


Gibson A. and A. Woods 1990 *Prehistoric Pottery for the Archaeologist* Leicester University Press, Leicester


Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group 1995 *The study of later prehistoric pottery: general policies and guidelines for analysis and publication.* PCRG Occasional Papers 1 and 2.


Symonds R. P. & S. Wade 1999 *Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-86* Colchester: Colchester Archaeological Trust


FOR FINAL CLASS:

Either *Give a short (5 minute) presentation on some aspect of pottery analysis and research (this could be in relation to your essay topic)*

Or: *Pick a pottery report describing an assemblage of pottery from a period or region that interests you and prepare a critique to discuss during the last class of term. In reviewing your finds report consider the criterion of the 2016: A standard for pottery studies in archaeology and some of the issues below.*

Questions to consider when reviewing ceramics reports

*Choose a site report or a detailed report of an assemblage of pottery from a period and/or a region of the world that you are interested in and review the role that the ceramic report has in relation to both this particular site and the study of contemporary ceramics from the area.*

What are the intentions of the report? Does the author explain these clearly? (e.g. what research questions were they addressing? Are these mainly related to the production, distribution and use of the pottery, or to the dating, function and cultural affiliation of the site?)

How easy is it to identify which ceramics came from which archaeological contexts? Can you relate the ceramics to other finds or other environmental data from the same context?

Is there any description of how the ceramics were excavated, cleaned and catalogued? Does the author describe the methods of analysis used?

How are the ceramics described? (e.g. fabric descriptions, illustrations, quantification of data).

How is the pottery quantified? (e.g. by fabric, form, type or date, is this in relation to each context, or broad periods.

What features of the ceramic are highlighted in the illustrations (e.g. do the drawings, photographs, tables etc. emphasise fabric, form, surface treatment, decoration, or manufacturing technique?) What percentage of the pottery is illustrated? Are these illustrations described as ‘typical’ or ‘exceptional’ pieces?

How is this ceramic report related to previous work on contemporary pottery? (e.g. by reference to previous reports and pottery typologies or previous research questions.)

How easy would you find it to compare the illustrations and descriptions in this report to an assemblage of pottery from another archaeological site?

Does the report explain where this ceramic assemblage is now? (In case you want to go back and do your own analysis?)

How is this ceramic analysis used in the rest of the site report? Does it contribute to the research agenda for the site as a whole?
10 Interpreting Pottery: Overview and Student Presentations

In this session we will re-visit issues that have emerged during the course with students either bringing examples of pottery reports that they have looked at, examples of pottery they have started to analyse, or examples that they are using in their essays to discuss research issues and strengths and limitations of previous work.

International Pottery Research Conference !!
10.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.
11.30 a.m. refreshments

Each student should prepare a 5 minute presentation which briefly introduces the pottery assemblage, report or examples which they have selected and then discuss how their review of this relates to one or more of the issues raised by the course. This may be any aspect of the production technology, iconography, distribution, use, disposal, excavation, curation, publishing or archiving of the pottery. Students should use their own observation of the vessel or previous excavation reports to address these issues, or suggest further analysis that could be undertaken. Alternatively students may present the case study/question they have selected for their coursework assessment.

APPENDIX A: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES 2019-20 (PLEASE READ CAREFULLY)
This appendix 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 IoA Student Administration section of Moodle:
https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/module/view
For UCL policies and procedures, see the Academic Regulations and the UCL Academic Manual:
http://www.ucl.ac.uk/srs/academic-regulations ; http://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 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/

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

RESOURCES
MOODLE: Please ensure you are signed up to the course on Moodle. For help with Moodle, please contact Charlotte Frearson (c.frearson@ucl.ac.uk)

If students are unclear about the nature of an assignment, they should discuss this with the Course Coordinator.

Students are not permitted to re-write and re-submit essays in order to try to improve their marks. The nature of the assignments and possible approaches to the will be discussed in class, in advance of the submission deadline. The Course Co-ordinator is willing to discuss a brief outline of the student’s approach to the assignment, provided this is planned suitably in advance of the submission date.

Health and safety
The Institute has a Health and Safety policy and code of practice which provides guidance on laboratory work, etc. This is revised annually and the new edition will be issued in due course. All work undertaken in the Institute is governed by these guidelines and students have a duty to be aware of them and to adhere to them at all times. This is particularly important in the context of the laboratory/field/placement work which will be undertaken as part of this course.
ASSESSMENT

The course is examined by means of a 3500 word Essay, and an Essay Plan. The prior submission of your essay plan allows the course-coordinator to give you feedback and direction, and supports you in developing research skills that will be applicable when it comes to your dissertation.

1) Essay Plan: Select one of the essay questions and prepare an essay plan consisting of:
   a) 500 words discussion of how you will address the question, what case studies you will use and what are the main points you want to make,
   b) a one page essay outline with section headings (and if necessary short explanation of what you will cover in each section)
   c) a preliminary bibliography (this could be arranged in sections identifying general literature, case studies, and analytical techniques).

2) The Essay – a 3500 word essay on your selected topic. (If this exceeds 3675 words there will be penalties applied – see above)

You will be given feedback on your essay plan to support the development and presentation of your final essay. You should attach your original essay plan with the course-coordinators comment to the back of your final essay submission. However, only the mark given to the final essay will go forward to the exam board so that you have the opportunity to benefit from and respond to the feedback on the essay plan.

NOTE: Your essay will be assessed on the quality of the research, the breadth of reading, the depth of analysis and its completeness. You should seek to demonstrate a good knowledge of relevant literature and a critical consideration of the methodological and philosophical issues you have chosen to discuss. Where a practical project has been undertaken, take care to describe the purpose of the research, the methods used, the results of your analysis, the conclusions you have reached and, where appropriate, discuss any wider implications arising from your study or further analysis that you feel should be undertaken. Even if you focus on a regional case study, or a specific assemblage of pottery, make sure you locate your study in relation to more general and theoretical literature. All written work should have a clear structure and be concisely and unambiguously expressed in good English. Illustrations (such as drawings, photographs, tables and charts) should be used where appropriate and frequently provide essential examples and present data succinctly, but their relevance must be explained at an appropriate point in the text. The topics chosen for each item of coursework should not overlap significantly with the topics of other items of coursework on this or other courses.

The basic readings for these essays will be found in relation to the appropriate lecture or practical class and the supplementary reading list provides further references organised around the similar themes to the lectures and essay topics. If you have any problems identifying or locating appropriate reading material please ask Bill Sillar for guidance.
Essay Topics

1. Archaeologists often use pottery fabrics to classify ancient ceramics. Critically discuss examples of this approach to consider its practical advantages and disadvantage as well as what research questions it does, or does not, address.

2. To what extent can the degree of standardisation in pottery production be measured, compared or interpreted?

3. Models for the organisation of pottery production have frequently been drawn from ethnographic examples. To what extent can these be applied to the interpretation of archaeological evidence?

4. Discuss different methods used to determine the source(s) of pottery and map its distribution. How would you begin to interpret which factors influenced this distribution pattern?

5. How successfully has the function of ancient pottery been studied?

6. How can archaeologists identify factors that influenced changes in pottery form and/or decoration over time?

7. Select either a single pot or a small group of related pots and prepare an illustrated Chaîne Opératoire that explains its/their production. Show which stages can be identified from material evidence on the artefact and discuss which stages would require confirmation through further analysis or more contextual information. What might be the advantages and disadvantages of adopting this as an approach for analysing archaeological pottery? (Please consult with the course coordinator if you wish to access material in the Institute of Archaeology collections.)

8. To what extend is it possible and desirable to apply consistent standards to the planning, excavation, recording and reporting of pottery assemblages.

You are welcome to write an essay on a different topic, but you must discuss and agree this with the course co-ordinator in advance.

Figure 15.4 Different styles of tinajas (water carrying jars) in highland Guatemala and different ways of carrying them: a, northwest highlands; b, eastern highlands; c, southeast coast; d, north-central highlands. After Reina and Hill 1978, map 10.
TIMETABLE
Interpreting Pottery
Mondays  10.00 am - 12.00 noon + 1 hour practical
Room B13

30th Sept.  Course Outline: The pottery cycle (raw materials, forming, firing and use) and the interpretation of archaeological assemblages.
Practical: Sorting an assemblage of Iron Age pottery sherds from Meare Lake Village.

7th October  Preparing the paste: selection and preparation of clay and temper, the clay/water system.
Practical: working with different clays and tempering materials

14th October  Pottery forming techniques: ethnographic and archaeological examples.
Practical: techniques used in making and decorating pots.

21st October  Pottery firing methods and pottery fabrics
Practical: examination your fired brickets and analysis of pottery fabrics.

28th October  Organisation of production: craft specialisation and standardisation
Practical: looking for signs of pottery technology on ethnographic and ancient pots.

Reading Week (4th to 8th November)

11th Nov.  Made for Export? Identifying sources and interpreting distribution patterns
Practical: Archaeological examples of pottery technology

18th Nov.  Pottery Consumption: use, breakage and disposal.
Practical: Pottery form, function and dealing with fragmentation.

19th November - Deadline for Essay Proposals (returned 4th December)

25th Nov.  Pottery decoration, stylistic analysis and explaining change
Practical: Ceramic decoration and style

2nd December. Dealing with Assemblages: the excavation, identification and quantification of archaeological assemblages
Practical: Discussion of how to quantify and record pottery assemblages

9th December  Course Overview: Student presentations and discussion session

9th January 2020 – Deadline for Essay (marked by 3rd February)