



# WATER, EARTH AND THE CHANGING CAHOKIA COMMUNITY CAHOKIA MOUNDS STATE HISTORIC SITE

*Course ID: ARCH XL 159*

*June 4-July 8, 2017*

## FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTORS:

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*(Photo by Rob Rohe)*

## INTRODUCTION

Cahokia Mounds, dating to the 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century CE and located near modern day St. Louis, Mo, is the largest Native American city north of Mexico. It held a population of at least 20,000 people who subsisted by hunting deer and other small animals and relied heavily on large-scale farming of corn. Much like modern day New York City, Cahokia consisted of three burrows—or precincts—St. Louis, East St. Louis and Downtown Cahokia. People migrated from as far north as Wisconsin and as far east as at least Indiana to live at Cahokia. Cahokia consisted of multiple planned neighborhoods, planned central plazas, at least 120 earthen mounds, and associated causeways. With no evidence of conscripted laborers, Cahokia was built by a community of people brought together under a new way of life based in a religion that emphasized the importance of the Earth Mother, the cosmos, and agriculture.

This new research project at Downtown Cahokia focuses on the role of water and moving earth in the creation and organization of social space. Our project targets a residential area between two aboriginally constructed water features – Borrow Pits 9 and 10. We will be continuing to excavate three features, an early residential house, a new Borrow Pit, and a special-use building that likely dates to the later part of Cahokia's occupation. In addition, we will conduct a limited survey of the Rattlesnake Area in preparation for the following field season. The overall project goal is to obtain a better understanding of the importance of water and earth moving to residential and religious life during Cahokia's formative years and its decline.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objective of this field school is to enable students to better understand how archaeology is practiced in the field, to explore the diverse lifestyles of people in the past and to gain basic understanding of people's changing relationships to the landscape. To achieve these objectives, this course has two primary goals: (1) to provide students a practical working knowledge of **archaeological field methods**, including survey, excavation, laboratory analysis, and conservation; and (2) to introduce students to the **intellectual challenges presented by archaeological research**, including research design, the interpretation of data, and the continual readjustment of hypotheses and field strategies with regard to information recovered in the field.

The course will take place at Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site in Collinsville, Illinois. The site is located a short drive from St. Louis, Mo. Students will spend the majority of their time conducting excavation at the site of Cahokia. Student will participate in the following research activities:

**Excavations:** Students will participate in guided excavations at the multi-component residential area (CABB Tract) at Cahokia.

**Recordation:** Students will fully document excavation techniques and observations on excavation forms, map finds, and record stratigraphy.

**Laboratory:** Scheduled lab tasks will include washing, sorting, drawing, and cataloging of finds.

The course begins on Sunday, June 4 and will meet every weekday until July 8. A combination of lectures, readings, and fieldwork during the first two days of the project will provide the cultural and archaeological background to the fieldwork, and additional lectures by project specialists will occur periodically throughout the remainder of the field season. Each Wednesday evening we will have a weekly discussion of required readings (see below).

### ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS

**Credit Units:** Attending students will be awarded 12 quarter credit units (equivalent to 8 semester units) through our academic partner, UCLA Extension. UCLA is a top ranked research university and its archaeology program is ranked amongst the best in the country. All IFR field schools instructors and curricula are approved both by the corresponding academic department and the Academic Senate at UCLA. This field school provides a minimum of 192 direct instructional hours.

**Transcripts:** Transcripts are available through UCLA UnEX and instructions for ordering transcripts may be found at <http://bit.ly/2bD0Z3E>. Grades will be posted and transcript available usually within six weeks after the end of this field school. All IFR field schools are designated XL classes – courses that are equivalent to undergraduate courses offered by the UCLA regular session. All XL courses are transferable for unit and subject credit toward the Bachelor's Degree at all campuses of the UC and CSU systems. Classes numbered 100 to 199 are considered upper division (junior/senior). For more information, go to <http://bit.ly/2bjAqmy>.

**UCLA students:** Students can take classes through UCLA Extension to complete requirements. However certain considerations must be taken into account. For more information, go to <http://bit.ly/2bJWeHK>.

**Credit Units Transfer:** Most universities accept UCLA credit units – there are very few exceptions. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss the transferability of the credit units with school officials BEFORE attending the field school.

## PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for participation in this field school. This is hands-on, experiential learning and students will study on-site how to conduct archaeological research. Archaeology involves physical work and exposure to the elements and thus, requires a measure of acceptance that this will not be the typical university learning environment. You will get sweaty, tired and have to work in the outdoors. Students are required to come equipped with sufficient excitement and adequate understanding that the archaeological endeavor requires real, hard work – in the sun, on your feet, and with your trowel.

#### **DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY**

Archaeological field work involves physical work in the outdoors. You should be aware that conditions in the field are different than those you experience in your home, dorms or college town. This program operates in a hot and humid environment in southern Illinois. During the day, temperatures fluctuate between 70-100<sup>0</sup>F. Humidity is relatively high and mosquitoes and/or flies may be close to the excavation area. You are required to wear sunscreen in order to protect yourself from sunburn. A hat is highly recommended. Additionally, students must drink plenty of water in these conditions to prevent dehydration, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke.

If you have any medical concerns, please consult with your doctor. For all other concerns, please consult with the project director – as appropriate.

#### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

On successful completion of the field school, students will be able to:

- Understand the different elements of an archaeological field project and the relationships between these elements
- Apply standard excavation methods to archaeological contexts
- Use standard recording techniques to document excavation results
- Undertake preliminary processing of archaeological artifacts and ecofacts
- Undertake preliminary analysis of archaeological artifacts and ecofacts

#### **GRADING MATRIX**

**50%:** Attend and participate each scheduled day, including lecture and field and laboratory work

**30%:** Keep a readings notebook that will be submitted and evaluated at the end of each week

**10%:** Lead discussion of readings (provide classmates with two questions and summarize weekly readings) once during the field season

**10%:** Participate in daily reports of research activities to the group

#### **TRAVEL & MEETING POINT**

Project staff members will meet students arriving by air into the St. Louis Lambert Airport (STL) at the St. Louis MetroLink Fairview Heights station on June 4 by 4 pm. If you are driving please arrive at the apartment on June 4 by 4 pm. Students are encouraged to drive if local to the region. Project directors and/or staff will not provide access to a vehicle for weekends.

If you missed your connection or your flight is delayed, please call, text or email project director immediately. A local emergency cell phone number will be provided to all enrolled students.

#### **VISA REQUIREMENTS**

Visas and passports are not needed for this field school experience unless you are not a citizen of the United States. If you are coming from another country please check your home country's requirements for travel as well as United State regulations.

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

Students will live in comfortable, but modest, field housing in the Shiloh (IL) area at a local apartment complex. Each unfurnished apartment will be shared by up to five people and will have two bedrooms, one kitchen, and one bathroom. Students will be required to bring their own blow up twin-size mattress or cot, bedding (or sleeping bag), and towel(s). The site of Cahokia is located in Collinsville, Illinois a 30-minute drive from the field lodging.

All meals will be communal events and will provide plenty of nutritious but basic food. The daily diet will consist of protein, vegetable, and grains. Specialized diets (vegan, kosher, etc.) are difficult to maintain in a large group setting. Vegetarians, however, are more easily accommodated. Likewise, dietary allergies will be accommodated.

**EQUIPMENT LIST:**

**Required Supplies:**

Item	Notes
1 tool box	cheap plastic is good
1 pointed Marshalltown trowel	<u>must</u> be “Marshalltown” brand & 4.5 inch is best
1 steel file (a.k.a. bastard file)	
2 clear plastic <u>metric</u> rulers (30 cm long)	
1 Rhino <u>metric</u> folder ruler (a.k.a. carpenter’s ruler)	<a href="http://www.forestry-suppliers.com">www.forestry-suppliers.com</a> , item 71112
2 small metric tape measures	3 to 5 meters or metric reel tapes
1 roll of thin nylon string (not cotton)	florescent colors are great
1 line level	
1 cheap plumb bob	don’t get the expensive brass kind
2 metal tent spikes with green plastic tops	available at Wal-Mart
Several pencils (wooden or mechanical)	
1 pencil sharpener	if you use wooden pencils
2 “Sharpie” finepoint markers	<u>must</u> be real Sharpies, only black ink, <u>no ultra-fine point</u>
2 bamboo chopsticks	you <u>do not</u> need an entire pack
1 personal first aid kit (bandaids, antiseptic)	
1 water jug	you need a one-gallon insulated container

**Other personal items to bring:**

Item	Notes
Sleeping bag for camping	
Twin size blow-up mattress or cot	for apartment
Pillow, sheets, towel	
Sunscreen	of suitable SPF
Lunch container, ice packs	
Comfortable work clothes	
Canvas sneakers	might also want some hiking shoes
Sunglasses	
Camping gear	we take one mandatory camping trip
Plate, fork, spoon, cup, bowl	
Foldable camp chair	for use around hotel and campsite
flashlight	

**Optional Supplies**—If you want to be a hit with your supervisors and friends:

Item	Notes
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Drawing compass (the kind used to draw circles) one that has extensions is best  
 Comfortable but sturdy cloth or leather work gloves for screening  
 Brimmed hat or baseball cap, bandana  
 Rain jacket  
 Ice chest for your private food and drink stores (refrigerator space is limited)

**REQUIRED CAMPING TRIP**

As part of the field school, students will be required to attend a weekend-long camping trip at Johnson’s Shut-Ins State Park, Missouri. This trip will include a driving tour (with periodic stops) of the French Colonial history of southern Illinois as well as a trip to the Common Field Site in Missouri, a late Mississippian burned and palisaded village. The weekend camping trip will also include a trip to Elephant Rocks State Park, a Missouri granite outcrop. Students will need to bring with them a sleeping bag and tent. Food will be provided.

**CAHOKIA CONFERENCE**

Since our project is taking place at Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, we will be participating in the annual Mississippian Conference, location to be announced. This will provide students with the opportunity to present our preliminary findings to other archaeologist in the region as well as interested community members at the end of the field season. More details to come once the field season is underway.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**\*Course Schedule subject to change due to weather conditions (e.g. excessive heat, rain)**

**Week 1 (June 4-June 9):**

Sunday	4:00 pm: Students will be picked up from the MetroLink Shiloh Station 4:30 pm: Students and staff assemble in the PI’s living room 4:30-4:45 pm: Preliminary introductions 5-6:00 pm: Set up apartments 6:00 pm: Group dinner
Monday	7:00 am: meet van 7:30 am: leave from apartments (we will leave promptly by the time listed every day, if you are not in the vehicle at that time you will be left and miss a day in the field; this will affect your grade) 8 am: tour of Cahokia (grounds and Interpretive Center) 11 am: Lecture on project goals and research at Interpretive Center 1 pm: lunch 3 pm: free time at museum 5 pm: arrive back at apartments, dinner to follow
Tuesday	6:30 am: meet van 6:45 am: leave from apartments 7:15 am: arrive at Cahokia 7:30 am: begin fieldwork 11 am: lunch 2 pm: 15 min. break 3:30 pm: pack up 4 pm: leave for apartments 4:30 pm: unload equipment, complete paperwork

6 pm: dinner  
**7 pm: Lecture “What was Cahokia?”**  
Readings: Cobb 2003; Pauketat et. al 2015

Wednesday Daily Schedule same as Tuesday  
**No evening lecture**

Thursday Daily Schedule  
**7 pm: Lecture “Landscapes and Neighborhoods”**  
Readings: Demel and Hall 1998 (Mississippian Towns and Sacred Spaces); Dalan et. al 2003 (Chapter 3)

Friday Daily Schedule

Saturday Free

Sunday: Free

**Week 2-4 (June 12-June 30):**

**Daily schedule for the three weeks of fieldwork Monday through Friday:**

6:00-6:45am	Breakfast
6:45-7:15am	Transfer to Cahokia
7:15am-3:30pm	Research activities at the site (snack and lunch break at the site)
3:30-4:00pm	Return back to housing
4:00-5:30pm	Daily debriefing, Lab work & paper work (if needed)
6:00-7:00pm	Dinner
7:00-8:00pm	(occasionally) invited lectures by project specialists and guests

**\*\*Wednesdays we discuss weekly readings\*\***

**Wednesdays we will have readings discussion/lecture (see below for required readings) at 7 p.m.**

**Thursdays you will have the option of joining the PI’s at The Stagger Inn. If joining us at Stagger you will pay for your own meals. Additionally, food will be provided at the apartments if you choose not to attend.**

**Required Camping Trip June 24-26 (date subject to change)**

Camping at [Johnson’s Shut In’s State Park Missouri](#)

Day trips to [Elephant Rocks State Park Missouri](#), a driving tour (with periodic stops) of southern Illinois French Colonial sites, and a tour and lecture at Common Field (a late Mississippian burned village).

**Week 5 (July 1-8):**

Mon (July 3) Continued regular research schedule

Tuesday (July 4) Fourth of July Holliday

Wed- Friday (July 5-7) Backfilling and lab cleaning

Saturday (July 8) Return home

**READINGS**

Each week you are required to complete the readings as listed below. Each week two students will be designated as the discussion leaders. Discussion leaders will provide fellow classmates with two discussion questions (due the Tuesday before) and lead the conversation surrounding the readings. All readings will be made available to students through the class Moodle site. Additionally, you are required to keep a notebook with short summaries (200 words or less), comments, and questions about each reading (due Friday by 5 pm). These will be collected and reviewed by the PI's.

Week 1: What is Cahokia?

Readings: Cobb 2003; Pauketat et. al 2015; Demel and Hall 1998

Week 2: Water, landscape, Native American origin story

Readings: Baires 2015; Two Native American Myths (PDF) (An Iroquois Legend, A Cherokee Legend); Kitt Chappell 2002

Week 3: Building Cahokia, literally and spiritually

Readings: Baltus and Baires 2012; Alt et. al 2010; Pauketat and Emerson 1991; Crown et. al 2012; Howe and Wilson 2015

Week 4: Cahokian "Collapse", Cahokia in Context

Readings: Munoz et al. 2015; Baires et. al 2015; Emerson and Hargrave 2000; Anderson 2012

Week 5: Re-Cap and Closing Discussion

No Readings for this week

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