

Alcamo Archaeological Project, Italy

Course ID: ARCH 365AE

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DIRECTORS:

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INTRODUCTION

The Alcamo Archaeological Project is a research-driven investigation of past human occupation and land use in the territory of Alcamo, Sicily. Focusing on Monte Bonifato, this archaeological survey project provides students with practical archaeological field and laboratory skills in a research environment. It engages students through hands-on experiential learning methods, permitting them to explore ancient Sicilian culture archaeologically while also exposing them to modern Italian culture. Previous archaeological research atop Monte Bonifato has identified evidence of human occupation from the Late Bronze Age to the Late Medieval periods (c. 1300 BCE to 1400 CE). This project is a systematic archaeological survey of Monte Bonifato and two other hilltops, focusing on the Iron Age and Medieval settlements.

The goals of the systematic archaeological survey are:

- to delineate the extent of the archaeological sites atop Monte Bonifato, Monte Ferricini, and Calatubo;
- to understand how past populations utilized these landscapes differently during the Iron Age and Medieval periods; and
- to understand fortification strategies employed during the Iron Age and Medieval periods at these sites.

Determining where the settlements were concentrated on each mountain, and the extent of their fortifications, will help contextualize these population centers in the local and regional socio-political environment. The results of the systematic archaeological survey will contribute to our understanding of Iron Age and Medieval land use, settlement, and defensive strategies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This field school will introduce students to practical archaeological field and laboratory methods, including systematic archaeological survey, field recordation, artifact processing, and artifact analysis. At the conclusion of the field school, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of principles of archaeological research design
- Efficiently conduct systematic archaeological survey
- Collect standardized field data on site using traditional field notebooks, paper forms, and digitally
- Use standard recording methods to document archaeological fieldwork
- Conduct preliminary artifact processing
- Conduct preliminary analysis and record data for a variety of artifacts and ecofacts

ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS

Credit Units: Attending students will be awarded 8 semester credit units (equivalent to 12 quarter credit units) through our academic partner, Connecticut College. Connecticut College is a private, highly ranked liberal arts institution with a deep commitment to undergraduate education. Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school (see grading assessment and matrix). This field school provides a minimum of 160 direct instructional hours. Students are encouraged to discuss the transferability of credit units with faculty and registrars at their home institutions prior to attending this field school.

Transcripts: An official copy of transcripts will be mailed to the permanent address listed by students on their online application. One additional transcript may be sent to the student's home institution at no additional cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the National Student Clearinghouse: <http://bit.ly/2hvurkl>.

PREREQUISITES

There are no academic prerequisites. This is hands-on, experiential learning and students will study on-site how to conduct archaeological research. Archaeology involves dynamic physical work and exposure to the elements and thus will not be the typical university learning environment. You will get hot, sweaty, tired, and will have to work in the outdoors, walking several kilometers daily on the site. Students are required to come equipped with sufficient energy, excitement and adequate understanding that the archaeological endeavor requires hard, physical work. Students must be willing to engage with the local community in a professional and respectful manner both in an official capacity on site and unofficially when off duty.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through participation in this field school, students will gain knowledge about archaeological research design, field and laboratory methods, and ancient and modern cultures in Italy. Upon successful completion of the field school, students will be able to:

- understand archaeological research design strategies;
- understand archaeological field methods using the scientific method;
- apply systematic archaeological survey methods to a variety of topographic environments;
- use standard mapping and recording techniques to document survey data;
- process artifacts collected during fieldwork;
- conduct preliminary analysis of culturally significant materials recovered during fieldwork;
- and

- appreciate the scientific method as applied to archaeological research.

GRADING MATRIX

Field school grades are based on a 200 point scale.

Field Journal (50 points): Students will learn how to record archaeological fieldwork in field journals. Each student will be assigned to record descriptive and reflective observations in one of the instructional field notebooks one day every week. Each instructional field notebook will be rotated among students on a pre-determined schedule. At the end of each week, the project director will collect all instructional field notebooks and will grade each daily entry. The characteristics of recorded observations must: (1) be accurate in recording a particular moment in time; (2) be organized in how your observations are structured; (3) be descriptive and detailed about the events activities undertaken; (4) be focused upon the research objectives at hand; and (5) be reflective in recording your personal insight and thoughts.

Exams (125 points): Five exams, each worth 25 points, will be administered during the field school. Exam 1 is an artifact identification exam administered as a practical with 20 stations where artifacts are placed with an accompanying question the student must answer. Students have two minutes per station and rotate to the next question. Exam 2 is a culture history exam where students must provide short answers to 20 questions. Exam 3 is an artifact illustration exam when all students are presented with five different rim sherds and must provide a technical illustration of any two sherds. Students are given five days to complete this exam and may work together, but must submit individual illustrations. Exam 4 is an archaeological mapping practical where student teams are responsible for documenting a small set of surface archaeological features. The exam is timed and demonstrates both cartographic and photographic skills. Exam 5 is an archaeological fieldwork practical during which the student leads the crew for a period of two hours while a project staff member monitors their performance.

Fieldwork and Laboratory Participation (25 points): Students are required to participate in daily field school activities, including survey and laboratory work. Assessment will be undertaken by the supervisory team and will be based on attendance, willingness to work and to try diverse tasks, attention to detail and accuracy, participation in teamwork, and contribution to discussions.

TRAVEL & MEETING POINT

Students should plan to arrive at the Aeroporto di Palermo Falcone e Borsellino (airport code PMO) on Sunday, 27 May 2018. Please note that travel to Europe from the United States involves a date change, therefore to arrive on a Sunday, you must depart the United States on Saturday. Numerous air carriers service the Palermo airport; however, travel from the United States usually requires a connection elsewhere in Europe first. Students are responsible for providing project staff with arrival information at least one week prior to arrival. Project staff will meet students in the arrivals hall of the Palermo airport, immediately beyond the frosted glass doors dividing baggage claim from the arrivals terminal. If you missed your connection or your flight is delayed, please call, text, or email the project director immediately. A local emergency cell phone number will be provided to all enrolled students. If you cannot call, text, or email the project director, please wait patiently and do not exit the ground level of the arrivals hall or accept rides from anyone else.

Students will depart from the Aeroporto di Palermo Falcone e Borsellino (airport code PMO) on Saturday, 30 June, 2018. Program staff will transport students to the airport on the departure date.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

US Citizens do not need a visa for tourist or business stays of up to three months in Italy. Your passport should be valid for at least three months beyond the period of your stay.

Citizens of other countries are asked to check the Italian Embassy website page at their home country for specific visa requirement.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students will be housed in an apartment complex in the city of Balestrate. Students will complete assigned, daily chores in order to keep the apartments clean. The project will transport all students to and from the site daily, as well as to local grocery stores and shops. Breakfast and lunch will be provided Monday through Saturday. Students will make and pack their lunch Monday through Friday. Dinners will be provided Monday through Friday at Ristorante Corallo, located on the ground level of the apartment building. Dinner on Saturday, and all Sunday meals are not provided. Vegetarian, gluten-free, or any other special dietary requests will be accommodated. The water in the apartment is potable; however, bottled water will be provided to all project participants. All students are expected to be respectful to apartment and restaurant staff at all times.

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. Archaeological survey in Italy is carried out in diverse weather conditions – including rain and intense heat. You are required to bring suitable clothing and footwear as well as sunscreen and snake guards. Survey will include moderately strenuous physical work. Students must be in good physical condition and able to walk three miles a day comfortably over varied, sometimes difficult terrain.

If you have medical concerns, please discuss them with your doctor. All other concerns may be discussed with the project director – as appropriate.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This field school introduces students to archaeological field and laboratory methods and Italian archaeology through hands-on participation, evening lectures, and field trips. Field trips contextualize the territory of Alcamo archaeologically, historically, spatially, and culturally within western Sicily. Monday through Friday, students and staff depart from Balestrate at 7:00 am and return at 3:00 pm, with 15 minute breaks at 9:30 and 2:00, and a half hour lunch at noon, all while on site. Saturdays, students and staff depart from Balestrate at 8:00 am and return at noon, with a 15 minute break at 10:00 am. Upon returning from the field, all students and staff wash artifacts and/or label pottery and complete assigned chores (sweeping floors, emptying trash/recycling, cleaning bathrooms, etc.). Field trips will take place on Saturday afternoons and Sundays. PLEASE NOTE: this schedule may be modified to accommodate review of archaeological methods, weather conditions, and community requirements.

Week 1	Sunday	Student arrivals
	Monday	Orientation to field school and research goals
	Tuesday	Orientation to project area, pottery identification lecture
	Wednesday	Fieldwork and artifact processing, survey techniques lecture
	Thursday	Fieldwork and artifact processing, pottery identification group discussion
	Friday	Fieldwork and artifact processing
	Saturday	Fieldwork and artifact processing Field trip to Segesta Pottery identification exam
Week 2	Sunday	Field trip to Selinus

	Monday	Fieldwork and artifact processing, culture history lecture
	Tuesday	Fieldwork and artifact processing
	Wednesday	Fieldwork and artifact processing, culture history group discussion
	Thursday	Fieldwork and artifact processing
	Friday	Fieldwork and artifact processing
	Saturday	Fieldwork and artifact processing Field trip to Salemi Culture history exam
Week 3	Sunday	Field trip to Mozia and Erice
	Monday	Fieldwork and artifact processing, artifact illustration lecture
	Tuesday	Fieldwork and artifact processing
	Wednesday	Fieldwork and artifact processing, artifact illustration discussion
	Thursday	Fieldwork and artifact processing
	Friday	Fieldwork and artifact processing
	Saturday	Fieldwork and artifact processing Field trip to Monte Iato Artifact illustrations due
Week 4	Sunday	Field trip to Levanzo
	Monday	Fieldwork and artifact processing, mapping lecture
	Tuesday	Fieldwork and artifact processing
	Wednesday	Fieldwork and artifact processing, mapping group discussion
	Thursday	Fieldwork and artifact processing
	Friday	Fieldwork and artifact processing
	Saturday	Fieldwork and artifact processing Mapping practical exam Dinner at Ardigna
Week 5	Sunday	Field trip to Palermo catacombs
	Monday	Fieldwork and artifact processing Fieldwork practical exams
	Tuesday	Fieldwork and artifact processing Fieldwork practical exams
	Wednesday	Fieldwork and artifact processing Fieldwork practical exams
	Thursday	Fieldwork and artifact processing Fieldwork practical exams
	Friday	Fieldwork and artifact processing Fieldwork practical exams Exit interviews
	Saturday	Student departures

EQUIPMENT LIST

Students are required to bring personal equipment for archaeological survey. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Work gloves: leather gloves are best
- Hiking boots: Comfortable hiking boots. NOTE: Sandals are not to be worn on site
- Snake guards: protect from snakes and brambles
- Sunscreen: to be worn daily while on site and at the beach
- Hat: wide brimmed is better, but baseball hats are fine

REQUIRED READINGS

Balco, W.M.

2012 Chapter II: Physical, Historical, and Social Settings. In *Material Expressions of Social Change: Indigenous Sicilian Responses to External Influences in the First Millennium B.C.*, pp. 20-85. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

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1985. *Student's Guide to Archaeological Illustration*. Archaeological Research Tools 1. Los Angeles: Institute of Archaeology, University of California.

King, Thomas F.

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Kolb, M. J. and R. J. Speakman

2005 Elymian regional interaction in Iron Age western Sicily: a preliminary neutron activation study of incised/impressed tablewares. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 32:795-804.

Kolb, M. J., P. Vecchio and C. Tyers

2007 The lost settlement of Halikyai and excavations at Cappasanta, Salemi, Sicily. In *Uplands of Ancient Sicily and Calabria: the archaeology of landscape revisited*, edited by M. Fitzjohn, pp. 197-208. vol. Volume 13, Accordia Specialist Studies on Italy. Accordia Research Institute, University of London, London.

Leighton, R.

2005. Later prehistoric settlement patterns in Sicily: Old paradigms and new surveys. *European Journal of Archaeology*, 8(3), pp.261-287.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

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Ayla, G. and M. Fitzjohn

2002 Seeing is Believing: Questions of Archaeological Visibility in the Mediterranean. *Antiquity* 76(292):337-338.

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1999 *Sicily Before History*. Cornell University Press.

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2000 *Sicily from Aeneas to Augustus*. Edinburgh University Press.

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2008 Plant remains from the early Iron Age in western Sicily: differences in subsistence strategies of Greek and Elymian sites. *Vegetation history and archaeobotany*, 17(1), pp.139-148.