INTRODUCTION

The prehistoric village of Yangguanzhai (YGZ) dates to the Middle to Late Yangshao period (3200-3,000 BCE). It is one of the largest settlements of its kind. The site is located in the Jing River Valley, approximately 25 kilometers north of the ancient city of Xi’an in northwest China. Since 2004, in preparation for a major construction project, the Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Archaeology began to conduct large-scale excavations and exploratory surveys – by means of test trenches and coring with the Luoyang spade – in various parts of the site. More than 18,000 square meters have been excavated to date. These activities revealed a moat, a row of cave dwellings, subterranean houses, child urn burials in the residential areas, and numerous pottery kilns. The quantity and quality of finds were impressive enough for the Chinese authorities to halt commercial development and declare the area a protected archaeological site.

In 2010, as part of the ongoing excavation, a joint UCLA/Shaanxi Province Archaeological Academy/Xibei University project began to operate at the site. This project is shifting the focus from the large-scale exposure of architecture to a more careful and systematic analysis of local stratigraphy and a stronger emphasis on anthropological interpretations. Most recently, researchers from the Shaanxi Province Archaeological Academy have discovered an extensive cemetery at the site, the only known cemetery so far dating to the Miaodigou Period (4th millennium BC).
In its initial five seasons (2010-2014), the YGZ project excavated the northeastern portion near the moat, exposing multiple layers of domestic architecture. Like the other excavated sections of the YGZ site, no clear pattern of planning or coherent arrangement of habitation spaces is evident, as compared to other known Neolithic villages in the region. Many features were found either adjacent or at very short distance from the moat. In 2016, the field project excavated several house foundations and hearths, as well as a potential pottery kilns and a child urn burial, adjacent to a large artificial reservoir in the south central part of the site. In 2017, field school work returned to the northeastern section of the site. There, students discovered additional pits, a possible dwelling, and the inhumation burial of an infant inside the fill of a pit - an unusual feature for the Miaodigou Period. In 2018, we once again investigated the area surrounding the central reservoir of the site, continuing some of the work of 2016. The students excavated several pits that intersect with dwellings or with each other. The complicated internal stratigraphy of these pits indicates that even when used as refuse dumps, the pits would be modified to walk or even build upon. In addition, our teams uncovered the partial remains of a disturbed child urn burial and worked in a portion of the reservoir itself to further determine how it was structured and maintained.

Although full understanding of Yangguanzhai still eludes us, a clearer picture has begun to emerge. Based on research into the formation processes of the moat and one of the pits excavated by the IFR field school, preliminary site formation models have been formulated. Results from the analysis of micromorphological samples suggests that the function of the moat has changed from “potentially defensive or symbolic in nature” (M. Fox 2016) to a garbage dumping place. Both environmental (mostly by water) and anthropogenic actions were responsible for such change, however, reasons behind the changes in human behavior throughout the occupation history of the site are still unclear.

The testing results and newly available \(^{14}\text{C}\) dates indicate the existence of a long-lasting farming community at Yangguanzhai. The community subsisted on millet cultivation, husbandry of pigs, wild animal hunting, fishing, and wild plant gathering. Yangguanzhai’s inhabitants also invested heavily in ceramic manufacture, demonstrated not only by the enormous amount of pottery sherds discovered at the site, but the remaining kilns found in all seven excavated sectors at Yangguanzhai. Unlike earlier Neolithic villages where ceramic manufacturing was separated from the village in adjacent locations, the ceramic kilns found in Yangguanzhai are next to or built within residential areas. Imported ceramics such as white paste rings, either plain or painted with red colored patterns, attest to the fact that long distance contacts with other regions was commonplace.

What makes Yangguanzhai and other contemporary sites stand out in the Neolithic Period is the fact that about 90% of all uncovered features are pits. We aim not only to discover the reasons for this phenomenon, but also to make use of it in order to challenge the traditional notions of “pits” in Chinese archaeology. Up to now, settlement pits in China are commonly designated huikeng, literally meaning “ash pit”, but better translated as “refuse pit”. However, this describes only the last function in the use life of a pit, whereas many of the pits at Yangguanzhai are much too large to have started off as mere garbage dumps. One of the main purposes of our research is thus to elucidate the initial function of these pits, as potential pit dwellings for example, through careful excavation and documentation as well as micromorphological analysis to study their formation in depth. This is supplemented by the typology of artifacts that have not entered the pit as refuse and the analysis of botanical remains from the pits. This way, we attempt to replace the simplistic concept of “refuse pits” in Chinese archaeology with a more nuanced idea of what functions settlement pits may have had.

In the coming 2019 season, the project will start work in a new area of the site, namely the eastern edge. Coring and initial excavations indicate that the moat continues in this area. As mentioned above, several aspects of the moats function and use over time remain unclear, so that further investigation
into the nature of the moat is one of our main concerns. Furthermore, previous excavations always noted a high density of features, such as houses and kilns, adjacent to the moat, even outside of the area it enclosed. The relationship between the moat and these features may tell us more about the original purpose of the moat and its chronological position. Of course the features themselves will provide additional material for the study of ancient life at Yangguanzhai as will the large amount of artifacts we expect to find in the fill of the moat. There is even the possibility of discovering another gate as was found at the moat on the western side of the site. The recently discovered cemetery is located to the east of the site, so the presence of another gateway on the eastern side connecting it with the settlement is not far-fetched. With this line of investigation, geoarchaeology will play an important role, so we will put particular emphasis on the detailed description of sediments and stratigraphy. Students will witness and participate in the procurement and preparation of samples for micromorphological analysis from the moat and any pits we uncover. Another focus will be on post-excavation techniques such as flotation and the cataloguing of artifacts.

The Yangguanzhai project provides not only training in field excavation, but also a full exposure to Chinese archaeology through lectures and visits to museums and archaeological sites of various periods. In addition, it provides opportunities for students to interact on a daily basis with Chinese students and to work closely with highly experienced Chinese archaeologists.

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 institution 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 more transcript may be sent to the student home institution at no cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the National Student Clearinghouse: http://bit.ly/2hvurkl.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This field school is a collaboration between the Institute for Field Research, UCLA, the Shaanxi Province Archaeological Academy, and Xibei University in Xi’an, China. The course will begin on June 16 and will meet daily until July 19. Students will be able to depart for onward travel or return home on July 20.

Students will spend the first week in Xi’an for four days of lectures and instructional museum tours. The classroom lectures will focus on questions of archaeological method and theory on the one hand and the particularities of Chinese archaeology on the other hand. The students will be introduced to some of the most important archaeological finds in the Wei River Valley, as well as to various anthropological themes related to the Yangshao culture and the Yangguanzhai site. Important topics covered in the class include the history of Chinese archaeology, the origins of agriculture and animal domestication, sedentary villages, ritual, and craft specialization.

Following this initial week of preliminary instruction, three weeks will be spent in the field performing survey, excavation, and lab work at the Yangguanzhai Station near the Yangguanzhai site.

ARTIFACT IDENTIFICATION
Students will learn the basic artifact types found at the YGZ site. These include pottery sherds, lithics, and ceramic tools. Students will also learn to excavate and identify human and animal bones. Students will learn how archaeologists use artifacts to reconstruct the layout of an ancient site, in order to learn about activities and ways of life in antiquity.

**DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY**

Our primary concern is with education. Traveling and conducting field research involves risk. Students interested in participating in any IFR program must weigh whether the potential risk is worth the value of education provided. While risk is inherent in everything we do, we take risk seriously. The IFR engages in intensive review of each field school location prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it complies with all our standards and policies, including student safety.

Archaeological 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 or college town. This program operates during the summer. During the day, temperatures in the shade can exceed 90°F and humidity is high. Our excavation units will be covered by partial-shade tarps but we are still working in the outdoors. Sturdy shoes, a hat, and work clothes are mandatory. Appropriate attire includes loose clothing that protects skin. Long pants and closed toe shoes are required for excavation work. Avoid dangling jewelry. Sunglasses with UV protection are recommended. Mosquito repellent and sun block lotion are also needed.

We do our best to follow schedule and activities as outlined in this syllabus. Yet local permitting agencies, political, environmental, personal or weather conditions may force changes. This syllabus, therefore, is only a general commitment. Students should allow flexibility and adaptability as research work is frequently subject to change.

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

**SOILS, STRATIGRAPHY, AND GEOARCHAEOLOGY**

An archaeological site cannot be interpreted without an understanding of how the layers of sediment at the site became deposited over time, both by natural and human processes. Students will learn how archaeologists identify different soil and sediment types and then use this information to help reconstruct a chronology of the archaeological strata, as well as to clarify the relationships between different parts of the site and excavated artifacts.

In addition, students will learn about the geoarchaeological method of micromorphology. This technique consists in extracting samples of sediment from archaeological features for further analysis in a laboratory, which can reveal the specific composition of the earthen matrix and the history of its deposition. These insights are of tremendous help in understanding how certain features were formed and how they were impacted by the environment. Students will learn about the extraction and preparation of samples first hand, while the laboratory part of the analysis will be covered in lecture by a specialist.

**ASSEMBLAGE ANALYSIS**

Once the excavation of a site has begun, archaeologists must have a clear understanding of the spatial relationships of various parts of the site. Vertical and horizontal stratigraphy provide critical contexts for understanding the function and use of artifacts, as well as determining the occupation history of the
site, including how its major and minor features relate to each other. Students will gain an understanding of this interpretive process as the excavation proceeds. They will thereby learn how spatial analysis creates a framework for excavation planning and post-excavation analyses.

**SURVEY TECHNIQUES**

Students will be introduced to a survey technique that is unique to Chinese archaeology: the Luoyang spade. Students will work together with YGZ field technicians and learn how to identify soil samples from natural and cultural deposits.

**FLOTATION**

Archaeological flotation involves using water to process soil or archaeological deposits to recover tiny artifacts, specifically botanical remains. At the Yangguanzhai site, students will use simple techniques in flotation to extract plant seeds for later analysis.

**GRADING MATRIX**

Grading will be based on two different components: Fieldwork and presentations. The following is the grade breakdown:

**Fieldwork (60%)**: Students are required to participate in excavation activities at the site every working day and to keep field records, which will be checked regularly. This grade also reflects the ability to work well in a team.

**Two presentations (2 x 10%)**: Each team of students is required to prepare two PowerPoint presentations - a mid-season and a final presentation –informing their teammates, the instructors, and Chinese collaborators about the progress of their work and any results they have obtained. The presenters will draw on their own experience in the field as well as materials from lectures and readings. Grades will be assigned for each team member based on the grade assigned to the team and individual performance.

**Final report (20%)**: Every student is required to submit a short report after the end of the field season. The report consists of 3-5 written pages summarizing the content of their work at Yangguanzhai and putting it into a wider context. With the approval of the instructors, the report can also focus about a specific subject relating to the work at Yangguanzhai that the student is particularly interested in.

**PREREQUISITES**

There are no prerequisites for participation. This course will focus on hands-on, experiential learning. Students will study onsite how to conduct archaeological research. Excavation involves physical work and exposure to the elements as well as a certain amount of improvisation, and it requires a willingness to adapt to new situations and an ability to react to unforeseen developments in a creative and flexible manner. An archaeological field school like ours is therefore rather different from the typical university learning experience. Furthermore, excavations are a team effort requiring cooperation and willingness to discuss and compromise.

You will encounter unfamiliar situations and people who think very differently from yourself, which can be a challenge but also a great adventure. You will get sweaty and tired and have to work outdoors, so please be sure that you are physically able to do so.

Students are required to come equipped with sufficient excitement and adequate understanding that the archaeological endeavor requires real, often hard work – in the sun, on your feet, and with your trowel.
We will use bicycles every day to get to the site and back. The ride is about 10 to 15 minutes long, on asphalt and dirt roads. Previous experience in how to ride a bike is appreciated, but we are willing to train any unskilled participants.

It will also help if you know how to eat using chopsticks, but again, we can teach students without previous experience.

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

During the first week of the field school, students will live in a student dormitory at Xibei University in the city of Xi’an. While in the field, students will reside at the Wufulinmen Hotel near the site.

Food is provided Monday to Saturday (breakfast, lunch, and dinner). Students are responsible for their own meals on Sundays. While students are free to obtain their own breakfast and lunch with a daily allowance we provide, all dinners are taken together, since we will use this opportunity to get the whole team together and catch up on the progress of the day. The daily diet in North China is heavily based on rice, noodles, and vegetables. Specialized diets (vegan, kosher, etc.) are difficult to maintain in this location. Vegetarians may find options somewhat limited and should be prepared to be flexible when eating the local food, or should bring supplemental food (e.g. protein bars) if they think it will be necessary.

**TRAVEL & MEETING POINT**

We suggest you hold purchasing your airline ticket until six (6) weeks prior to departure date. Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and a range of other factors may require the cancellation of a field school. The IFR typically takes a close look at local conditions 6-7 weeks prior to program beginning and make Go/No Go decisions by then. Such time frame still allows the purchase deeply discounted airline tickets while protecting students from potential loss if airline ticket costs if we decide to cancel a program.

Students will be met at the Xi’an airport or train station or may travel themselves directly to the Xibei University Hotel (also known as Cuiyuan Hotel) on June 16. Students may travel to Xi’an by train or may fly into the Xi’an-Xianyang international airport (XIIY). Please note that train tickets often sell out in summer and should be purchased well in advance through a website such as English.Ctrip.com or through a local travel agent. From Beijing to Xi’an, high speed trains leave every 1 to 2 hours throughout the day. If you are unable to purchase the ticket you desire, you can always take a slower train. There are also many domestic flights to Xi’an from other points of entry into China such as Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Beijing, and some international flights go directly to Xi’an.

To make it easier for the program coordinators to meet you at the airport, arrange to arrive on June 16 between 11 AM and 2 PM and email the specific time of your arrival to the instructors beforehand. Those who miss the meeting time can take the public transportation or a taxi to the Xibei University Hotel.

The address of the Xibei University Hotel (aka Cuiyuan Hotel) is: No. 229 TaibaiBeilu, Northwest University, Xi’an (西北大学翠园宾馆，太白北路 229 号)

From the airport, take the shuttle bus to Nanshaomen (7 天酒店西安小雁塔南稍门机场大巴店,25 RMB), then take a taxi to the Xibei University Hotel, (西北大学翠园宾馆, 14 to 16 RMB), or you can take a taxi at the airport directly to the hotel (106-116 RMB).

From Xi’an North Station (high speed railway station): Take Subway Line 2, to Yongningmen (永宁门), take Exit C, walk about 170 meters, to the Nanmen stop of Bus 701; the fourth stop is XinnanChengjiao (西南城角), get off, cross the street (please take the crosswalk!!), and you will arrive at the north gate of
Xibei University (XibeiDaxue). Pass through the north gate and walk straight south on campus to the Xibei University Hotel (about 10 min).

From Xi’an West Station (station for non-high speed trains): walk 400 meters to the West station stop of Bus 900 or Bus 21, the fifth stop is the XibeiDaxue stop. Get off, walk to the west gate of the campus. Pass through the west gate, walk east on campus to the Xibei University Hotel (about 10 min).

More information will be provided to all enrolled students in the pre-departure online orientation.

VISA APPLICATION

Non-Chinese participants are required to secure a tourist visa to China prior to arrival. You should apply for the visa at least one month ahead of time. You can download your visa application [here](#).

All students should apply for a Tourist visa (L visa) for **60 days, unless you plan to stay in China longer.** On Section 2 of the form, please fill in the fields using the following options:

2.1: mark: Tourism
2.2: mark: One entry valid for 3 months, unless you want to come back to China multiple times this year.
2.5: write down the days you plan to stay in China: at least 40 days--our program is 34 days.
2.6: 06/16 – 07/19; Shaanxi, Xi’an; Northwest University Hotel, No. 229 TaibaiBeilu
2.7: myself

There is no need to fill out field 2.8. We will provide all enrolled students with the hotel reservation, which you have to submit along with the visa application form and a copy of your flight ticket.

EQUIPMENT LIST

- Passport
- Entry visa to China
- Close-toed shoes
- Sunscreen
- Mosquito repellent
- Wide brim hat
- Sunglasses
- Rehydration powder
- Imodium or PeptoBismol
- Medications or prescriptions that you need
- Preferred feminine hygiene products
- A few pairs of work pants and shirts

Alert your credit card company and ATM bank that you will be abroad so they don't think your cards have been stolen and cancel your access.

If you want to use your phone, alert your carrier that you will be abroad and ask about rates, or plan to obtain a local SIM card.

Electrical adapters to the Chinese electrical system – have a look [here](#) to see what you need for China as compared to what you may already own.

COPURSE SCHEDULE

All IFR field school begins with safety orientation. This orientation includes proper behavior at the field area, proper clothing, local cultural sensitivities and sensibilities, potential fauna and flora hazards, review IFR harassment and discrimination policies and review of the student Code of Conduct.

All reading materials will be provided as PDF files to students through a shared Dropbox folder.

**PART ONE: Lectures and Museum Tours (June 16-21)**

**June 16, 2019 (Sunday)**

6:00 PM: Participants meet at Xibei University Hotel for dinner and program briefing.
June 17, 2019 (Monday)

The first week of classroom lectures focuses on three topics: the history of Chinese archaeology; a brief review of Shaanxi archaeology with emphasis on Wei River Neolithic archaeology and the YGZ site; theory and method of archaeology. Students need to pay attention to the keywords of each lecture. The full citations of the required readings are at the end of this syllabus.

Breakfast 7:00AM Student dining hall, Xibei University
Orientation 8:30-8:45AM
Program safety briefing; review of IFR policies including sexual harassment, discrimination, and code of conduct
Lecture I 8:45-10:15AM
Lothar von Falkenhausen: Brief History of Chinese Archaeology
Keywords: Jinshixue tradition, modern archaeology in China, methodology, research questions, recent topics in Chinese archaeology
Discussion: 10:00-10:30
Break: 10:30-10:45
Lecture II 10:45-11:45AM
Zhang Hongyan: Introduction to Chinese archaeology
Keywords: Geographical overview, chronology, cultures, features, key sites in Shaanxi (Paleolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age, Qin to Tang dynasties)
Required readings: Yan 2000
Discussion: 11:45AM-12:00PM
Lunch break 12:00-2:30PM
Lecture III 2:30-4:30PM
Zhang Hongyan: Neolithic Cultures of the Wei River Valley
Keywords: Laoguantai culture (8000-7000 BP), Yangshao culture (7000-5000 BP), Longshan culture (5000-4000 BP)
Required readings: Li 2013

June 18, 2019 (Tuesday)

Breakfast 7:00AM Student dining hall, Xibei University
Lecture IV 8:30-9:30AM
Richard Ehrich: Archaeological goals and our method
Keywords: definition of archaeology, context, excavation, documentation
Required readings: Schiffer 1972, Shelach 1998
Discussion: 9:30-10:00
Break: 10:00-10:15
Lecture V   10:15-11:30AM
Brett Kaufman: Environmental Archaeology
Discussion: 11:30AM-12:00PM
Lunch break   12:00-2:30PM
Tour   2:30-5:00PM
Zhang Hongyan: Laboratory and Xibei University Museum visit

June 19, 2019 (Wednesday)
Breakfast   7:00AM Student dining hall, Xibei University
Lecture VI  8:30-9:45AM
Professor Qian Yaopeng: Settlement Archaeology in China
Keywords: Neolithic settlement in the Yellow River region, Settlement remains analysis, Settlement pattern analysis, Settlement relationships
Required readings: Lee 2007, Peterson and Shelach 2012
Discussion: 9:45-10:00AM
Break: 10:00AM-10:15AM
Lecture VII 10:15-11:45 AM
Elizabeth Berger: Human Osteology
Handout: Introduction to human osteology, selection from physical anthropology handbook
Lunch break   12:00-1:00PM
Tour   1:00-5:00PM Qian Yaopeng: Banpo Museum visit

June 20, 2019 (Thursday)
Breakfast   7:00AM Student dining hall, Xibei University
Lecture VIII 8:30-9:45AM
Yang Liping: Important discoveries at Yangguanzhai
Key words: Miaodigou phase, Banpo IV phase, archaeological features
Required readings: Wang et al. 2009 (It's in Chinese, but look at the figures.)
Discussion: 9:45-10:00AM
Break: 10:00-10:15AM
Lecture IX  10:15-11:45AM
Dr. Ye Wa (UCLA): The Yangguanzhai Field School 2010-2018
Key words: Formation process (cultural deposition and environmental formation process), archaeological record, craft production
Required readings: Underhill 2002, Underhill and Habu 2006
Discussion: 11:45AM-12:00PM
Lunch break   12:00-1:00PM
Tour 1:00-5:00PM
Shaanxi Province History Museum visit

June 21, 2019 (Friday)
Breakfast 7:00AM student dining hall, Xibei University
Leave at 9:00AM from Xibei University. Bring all your belongings.
Tour to the Terracotta Warriors
12:30PM: Lunch at the Terracotta Warriors Museum or on the way to the hotel
3:00PM: Check-in at the Wufulinmen Hotel.
7:00PM: Dinner, meet at the lobby of Wufulinmen Hotel

June 22, 2019 (Saturday)
8:00AM: Breakfast at the Wufulinmen Hotel
9:00AM: Visit to the Yangguanzhai site, discussion of this year’s excavation plan in the field, safety briefing
12:30PM: Lunch
2:30PM: Visit of the Yangguanzhai Field Lab
Lecture:
Yang Liping: Yangguanzhai recording system
Handout: field journal
7:00 PM: Dinner, meet at the lobby of the Wufulinmen Hotel

June 23, 2019 (Sunday)
Free time, optional outing to supermarket

PART TWO: Fieldwork (June 24-July 19, 2019)
Intensive excavations and lab work at the Yangguanzhai site and the Yangguanzhai field research station. Students may return to Xi’an for organized field trips on the weekends, staying Saturday night at the Xibei University dorms at your own expense, and returning to the site on Sunday before 5 pm.

Project directors and scholars who visit the site will give lectures on site or at the hotel where we are staying. The times are not fixed yet, since it depends on their availability, but we will announce them to the team as soon as we know. We expect to have lectures on the following topics:
1) Geoarchaeology (stratigraphy, site formation, soils and sediments)
2) Mortuary Archaeology
3) Experimental Archaeology
Detailed assignment of each week’s tasks will be explained at the site.

In addition, we will make tours to other sites and museums, including the local base of the Shaanxi Province Archaeological Academy, the Hanyangling Museum (Han Dynasty imperial tomb), and the Xuechi site (Qin and Han Dynasty sacrificial site).
Notice: The monsoon season starts mid-June in northern China, so our lab work (washing pottery sherds, flotation, cataloging) is usually arranged on rainy days.

**Daily schedule (Monday through Saturday):**

6:40AM: Breakfast
7:00-11:30AM: Work (morning)
11:30AM-3:00PM: Lunch break
3:00-6:30PM: Work (afternoon)
7:30PM: Team Meeting and Dinner

**July 6, 2019 (Saturday)**

2:00PM: Mid-Season Presentation
Students present their research results and further questions at this stage in the season, 20 minutes per group. Professors from collaborating institutions will comment on the presentations.

**July 19, 2019 (Friday)**

2:00PM: Final Presentation
Same procedure as the mid-season presentation.

7:00PM: Farewell Party

**July 20, 2019 (Saturday)**

Students depart

**REQUIRED READINGS**


**RECOMMENDED READINGS**


Lu, Houyuan, Jianping Zhang, Kam-biu Liu, Naiqin Wu, Yumei Li, Kunshu Zhou, Maolin Ye, Tianyu Zhang, Haijiang Zhang, Xiaoyan Yang, LichengShen, Deke Xu, and Quan Li (2009). Earliest domestication of common millet (*Panicum miliaceum*) in East Asia extended to 10,000 years ago. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 106(18): 7367-7372.


