



THE BRAŞOV
BIOARCHAEOLOGY
PROJECT

THE SÂNPETRU BIOARCHAEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL, ROMANIA

July 7 - August 3, 2024

Course ID: ARCH 365BM

Academic Credits: 6 Semester Credit Units

FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTOR(S)

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OVERVIEW

The field school takes place in the quaint village of Sânpetru, located a few km north of Braşov, in southeast Transylvania (historical region of Romania), and is part of the broader Braşov Bioarchaeology Project, established in 2014 after rescue excavations in the centre of Braşov exposed a large medieval cemetery and associated medieval and post-medieval structures. Our team has since explored the

history and development of Braşov and environs through the analysis of archaeological and bioarchaeological evidence.

Located in the heart of the Carpathians and founded in the 12th century by Central European colonists (generally referred to as Saxons), invited as settlers by the Hungarian king Géza II, the city of Braşov (called Kronstadt/Corona in medieval times) was a crossroads during the Middle Ages for travelers, merchants and diplomats from central Europe and the Middle East, where communities from various ancestral backgrounds coexisted. Such a multi-cultural reality, still poorly understood, was the result of centuries of population movement across Transylvania. From pre-Roman times to the Middle Ages, the fertile Transylvanian lands were traversed and pillaged by nomadic tribes, colonised by European settlers, or disputed and conquered by more powerful entities. The Saxon cities of Transylvania (Braşov, Sibiu, Sighişoara, to name a few), are emblematic of the persistence of this historical heritage.

The Sânpetru Bioarchaeology Field School combines training in both bioarchaeological analysis and archaeological fieldwork, and in 2024 aims to achieve two crucial research objectives:

1) The post-excavation processing (cleaning and drying) and organization (anatomical sorting and preparation for storage) of human skeletal remains from the Braşov medieval parish church cemetery, an extremely interesting site not only for its complex stratigraphy and abundance of finds, but also because of its uninterrupted use by the wealthy and upper echelons of Braşov society for over five centuries, between the 12th and the 18th century AD. This was rare for Transylvanian cemeteries, the use of which was discontinued after the Reformation. Students will be able to learn new skills, both practical and theoretical, by working with skeletal materials from single, multiple and commingled burials.

2) To continue exploring the history and origin of the fortified Saxon church of Sânpetru, a village known for this religious building and for its 14th century painted chapel. During the 2023 season, two trenches (S.18 and S.19) relative to the outer fortified walls were excavated. Students were able to expose and retrieve an articulated calf skeleton, evidence of wall collapse, and a very interesting arched structure, together with pottery sherds from diverse historical periods, and scattered animal and human bones.

The 2024 excavations in Sânpetru will also aim to:

- Further our knowledge of the structural remnants discovered in the 2023 season;
- Continue investigating the origins and development of the settlement, which was donated to the Order of the Cistercians in 1240 AD;
- Clarify the relationship between the 13th century fortified structures and the religious buildings with them associated.

Students will also be able to witness the ongoing process of conservation and restoration of the church and associated fortified enclosures and to participate in cultural heritage activities. This is a unique opportunity which will allow students to experience the importance of interdisciplinary projects and discover how the combined efforts of researchers from diverse fields of study can answer compelling research questions and bring back to life sites rich in culture and heritage.

ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS

Credit Units: Attending students will be awarded 6 semester credit units (equivalent to 9 quarter credit units) through our academic partner, Connecticut College. Connecticut College is a highly ranked liberal arts institution with a deep commitment to undergraduate education. Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school (see assessment, below). This field school provides a minimum of 270 hours of experiential education. 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's home institution at no cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the [National Student Clearinghouse](#).

PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites other than the willingness to learn and get involved. The field school is aimed at students and graduates interested in developing their knowledge of and achieving hands-on experience on human skeletal remains and archaeological excavation methods and techniques. This intensive field school will alternate theory and practice and focus on topics relevant to the bioarchaeology of human skeletal assemblages. Basic identification and anatomy of animal bone will also be provided.

Students should be aware that archaeological field work is physically demanding and must be prepared to work outdoors in variable weather conditions and occasionally walk/hike, especially during field trips. All work is manual and requires patience, attention to detail and diligence. Although independent thinking and initiative are very important, collaboration, a tolerant and respectful attitude, and team spirit are also essential for the success of the field school in a nurturing, positive atmosphere.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Core objectives of the course are of theoretical and practical nature and aim to introduce students to the principles of archaeology and bioarchaeology and their methods and techniques both in the field and in the laboratory. Learning objectives will be distributed across several activities including lectures, workshops, archaeological fieldwork, post-excavation processing, lab analysis, independent readings of suggested bibliography, note taking, trips to heritage sites and seminars with local specialists.

The practical aspect of the field school schedule will be two-fold, with the aim to offer 1. Archaeological excavation practice and 2. Hands-on bioarchaeological experience.

During practical sessions, students will be assigned a burial context each/by group to clean and prepare for storage. They will be able to learn post-excavation procedures of skeletal remains through individual training and face-to-face interaction with their directors and instructors; students will also be assigned group activities and will be encouraged to ask questions and openly discuss any doubts in a friendly and judgment-free environment.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Throughout and at the end of the course, students are expected to achieve independent thinking and a basic level of competence and practical skills in:

- Excavation techniques;
- On site and lab recording methods;
- Finds post-excavation processing;
- Awareness of the unique nature of archaeological finds and biological specimens;
- Methods (and laws) for the ethical treatment of human remains from excavation from the archaeological or forensic context to storage;
- A basic knowledge of skeletal anatomy, analytical methods and paleopathology;

Learning outcomes will be monitored by the supervisory team in the form of day-to-day tasks, written assignments, group activities and field journals.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment of student progress and achievements throughout the course will be based on the individual and combined scoring of the following activities:

Participation (50%): Students are required to participate and show active interest in everyday activities. These include lectures, workshops, helping open and close the site daily, fieldwork, group discussions, post excavation finds processing, keeping the excavation area and work premises tidy and clean. This component will be assessed over the duration of the course and will reflect engagement both in the excavation and post-excavation components. It should be stressed that students are also expected to show enthusiasm for both independent activities and team-work, and a general positive attitude in order to contribute to a friendly learning experience and atmosphere. Negative behaviour will be addressed and graded accordingly.

Field journal (20%): Students will be asked to maintain a field notebook with daily entries, which will be submitted to the supervisors at the end of the last week. Guidelines and suggestions on what should be the content of the journal will be provided on the first day on site by project directors and instructors. Students will be allowed to use their creativity and personal flair to compile the journal as long as the content is scientifically grounded and reflects the content of the field school program and their learning outcomes.

Group practical exam (Bioarchaeology)/ Recording sheets and drawings (Field Archaeology) (30%): At the beginning of the final week students will be divided in groups and will be asked to assess a burial context and associated archaeological finds/skeletal material. They will lay skeletal remains out in anatomical position and produce a short osteological report, which will be submitted with the field journal on the last day. Guidance and bibliographic support will be provided. Similarly, for archaeological field work and theory students will be required to practice and submit one sample of work for each category as communicated by the Directors on the first day and throughout the field school.

COURSE SCHEDULE

All IFR field schools begin with a safety orientation. This orientation addresses local and program protocols concerning student behavior, appropriate attire, local practices and sensibilities that may be unfamiliar, potential fauna and flora hazards, IFR harassment and discrimination policies, and the student Code of Conduct.

The field school consists of four types of learning activity evenly spread across the program:

- 1. Theory (Lectures/workshops/seminars):** introduction to Transylvanian Archaeology, Romanian history, Bioarchaeology, Archaeological methods and practice, information about the research project. Bioarchaeology workshops will consist of both theory and practice.
- 2. Practice:** fieldwork (excavation, post-excavation), bones post-ex processing, bioarchaeological analysis and all associated activities.
- 3. Weekly field trips** to historical, archaeological, cultural and environmental landmarks, museums, cultural events.

- 4. Independent/group study time:** students will be allocated time to discuss daily achievements and will be asked to produce a presentation summarizing excavation/bioarchaeological analysis highlights at the beginning of each week.

WEEK	DAY	ACTIVITY*	
		Morning	Afternoon
I	1	Arrival	Welcome meeting
	2	Project orientation and induction	Lecture/visit: Sânpetru fortified church and village historical and archaeological landmarks
	3	Fieldwork: Preparation of trenches	Fieldwork: Preparation of trenches
	4	Field trip 1	
	5	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab	Bioarchaeology Lecture I
	6	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab
	7	Group activities/Day off	
II	8	Day off	
	9	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab
	10	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab	Bioarchaeology Lecture II
	11	Field trip 2	
	12	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab
	13	Archaeology Lecture/Workshop	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab
	14	Visit to Hărman village and fortified church*	
III	15	Day off	
	16	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab
	17	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab	Bioarchaeology Lecture III
	18	Field trip 3	
	19	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab	Archaeology lecture/workshop
	20	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab
	21	Group assignment/Day off	
IV	22	Day off	
	23	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab

	24	Group final assignments	Fieldwork/Bioarchaeology lab
	25	Field trip 4	
	26	Fieldwork: Closing the excavation	Fieldwork: Closing the excavation
	27	Final preparations	End of program cultural event
	28	Departure	

*Please note, **this is an indicative schedule** and may be subject to changes on directors' discretion. In addition, depending on the number of students, they might be divided into groups for easier access to facilities and better face-to-face tuition and instruction. Exact dates/times of visits to sites and festivals will depend on the official calendars issued closer to the beginning of the field school.

Typical schedule, working day (subject to change)

6:45 – 7:45 am	Breakfast
7:45 – 8:00 am	Transportation to site
8:00 am – 4:00 pm	Lectures, workshops, fieldwork and lab activities; one 15 minute break in the morning and a 30 minute lunch break
4:00 – 4:15 pm	Transportation to the hotel
4:15 – 4:30 pm	Tea break
4:30 – 5:30 pm	Group assignments, self-study
5:30 - 6 pm	Dinner

Excavation practice, lectures and post-ex/bioarchaeology lab work will rotate between morning and afternoon according to project needs, weather conditions and at the discretion of site supervisors and project directors.

Summer in Transylvania is a very busy time, with many cultural festivals in villages and cities. We will endeavor to add these festivals to our schedule to further your understanding of local culture.

REQUIRED READINGS

PDF files of all mandatory readings will be provided to enrolled students.. Students are encouraged to download and/or print readings prior to traveling. Course participants are expected to be prepared to engage the discussions led by facilitators, all of whom will be looking for compelling evidence that students have read and thought about the assigned readings prior to the scheduled day on which they are first discussed.

Brickley, M. & McKinley, J. 2004. Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains. BABAO & IFA. Available electronically on:

<http://www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/inPages/docs/pubs/humanremains.pdf>

- English heritage 2004. Human bones from archaeological sites. Guidelines for producing assessment documents and analytical reports.
- Marcu Istrate, D. (ed.) 2015. Redescoperirea trecutului medieval al Braşovului - Unearthing the medieval past of Braşov. Braşov: Editura Mega.
- Marcu Istrate, D. and Diana, A. 2017. The Black Church Cemetery: Interdisciplinary approaches to the study of a medieval urban skeletal assemblage (Braşov, Romania), *Studies in Digital Heritage*.
- Museum of London 1994. Archaeological Site Manual 1994. Museum of London Archaeology Service, Third edition. (This will be available on site)
- Wright, L., and Yoder, E. 2003. Recent Progress in Bioarchaeology: Approaches to the Osteological Paradox. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 11(1):43-70.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

- Bass, W.M. 2005. *Human Osteology: A Laboratory and Field Manual*. Fifth Edition. Special Publication No.2 of the Missouri Archaeological Society. Columbia, Missouri.
- Bello, S.M., Thomann, A., Signoli, M., Dutour, O., and Andrews, P. 2006. Age and Sex Bias in the Reconstruction of past Population Structures. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 129 (1):24-38.
- Buikstra, J.E. and Ubelaker, D.H. 1994. Standards for Data Collection from Human Skeletal Remains: Proceedings of a Seminar at the Museum of Natural History, Organized by Jonathon Haas. *Arkansas Archaeological Survey Research Series No. 44*. Fayetteville, Arkansas.
- Buikstra, J.E. and Beck, L.A. (eds.) 2006. *Bioarchaeology: The Contextual Analysis of Human Remains*, New York: Academic Press.
- Duday, H. 2009. *The Archaeology of the Dead*. Lectures in Archaeoethanatology. Oxford and Oakville: Oxbow Books.
- Hillson, S. 2005. *Teeth*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hitchins, K. 2014. *A Concise History of Romania (Cambridge Concise Histories)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781139033954
- Mazower, M. 2001. *The Balkans: From the end of Byzantium to the present day*. London: Phoenix.
- Ortner, D.J. 2003. *Identification of pathological conditions in human skeletal remains*. 2nd ed. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Schaefer, M., Black, S., Scheuer, L. 2009. *Juvenile Osteology: a Laboratory and Field Manual*. Elsevier Academic Press.
- White, T.D. & Folkens, P.A. 2005. *The Human Bone Manual*. Academic Press.

PART II: TRAVEL, SAFETY & LOGISTICS

NOTICE OF INHERENT RISK

Traveling and conducting field research can involve risk. The IFR engages in intensive review of each field school location and programming prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it still complies with all our standards and policies, including those pertaining to student safety. Participants should also take every reasonable step to reduce risk while on IFR programs, including following the safety advice and guidelines of your program director, being alert to your surroundings and conditions, letting someone know where you will be at all times, and assessing your personal security.

The IFR does not provide trip or travel cancellation insurance. We strongly encourage participants to consider purchasing this insurance, as unexpected events may prevent your participation or cause the program to be canceled. Insurance is a relatively small cost to protect your educational investment in an IFR program. When comparing trip cancellation insurance policies, make sure the policy covers the cost of both airfare and tuition.

We do our best to follow a schedule of activities, methods training, and programming as outlined in this syllabus. However, this schedule can be easily disrupted by unforeseen circumstances, including weather, revisions by local permitting agencies, or conditions onsite. While this schedule represents the intentions of the program, adaptability is an intrinsic part of all field research, and necessary alterations to the schedule may happen at any time.

If you have any medical concerns, please consult with your doctor. For all other concerns, please consult with the program director and staff.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC FIELD CONDITIONS

Summer in Romania is generally mild to hot, with average temperatures between 25°C/77° F and 35°C/95° F. Students should plan accordingly by bringing clothes and sun protection suitable for hot and sunny weather, but should also consider the possibility of wet, colder days and thus bring waterproof, layered clothing. Sturdy footwear is recommended, preferably hiking or work boots. Although the working conditions in the field are by no means difficult, students must be aware that excavation entails considerable strenuous physical activity and a lot of energy and effort (both physical and mental) go into carrying out both excavation and lab activities.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

Students must hold a passport valid for at least six months on entry to Romania. Citizens of the US and Canada can stay in Romania without a visa for up to 90 days over a period of 6 months.

Citizens not from the USA are asked to check the Romanian embassy website page in their home country for specific visa requirements.

STUDENT HEALTH

An IFR field school is designed to provide safe, positive, and constructive experiences for participating communities, students, and researchers. We are committed to protocols and practices that support the

health and well-being of all involved in our field school projects, including the members of the community in which these projects take place.

We recommend that students adopt best-practices for arriving in a good state of health to protect themselves and their peers' readiness to set about the work of the field school. A thriving field camp environment is a constant exchange of energy, patience, effort, respect, and service. Arriving healthy is every student's first act of service — their first opportunity to behave in a way that respects the safety and wellness of one another.

IFR programs follow the health requirements and guidelines of local health authorities. We recommend that the students regularly consult websites of the relevant Romanian institutions:

<https://www.gov.ro/en/>;

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/covid-3/coronavirus-romania>

<https://gov.ro/ro/info-coronavirus-covid-19>

You may also wish to consult recommendations from the US Centers for Disease Control at: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list>.

TRAVEL (TO AND DURING THE PROGRAM)

Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and various other factors may force the cancellation or alteration of a field school. IFR recommends students only purchase airline tickets that are fully refundable and consider travel insurance in case a program or travel plans must change for any reason. General information for this program is below, but keep in mind we will discuss any updated travel information and regulations during the required program orientation, which could affect travel plans.

Our meeting point is the train station in Braşov, from where students will be taken by program staff to their accommodation in the village of Prejmer. Students can fly into Bucharest Otopeni International airport. From there, they will have to reach the central station (Gara de Nord) where they will be able to catch a train to Braşov. As of summer 2023, flights to the local airport of Brasov have started, which means flying into Brasov could be an option in 2024. More detailed itineraries and options will be provided on orientation day and the directors will be available for help and clarification with each student on the days of traveling.

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

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students will stay in guesthouses/hotels in the village of Prejmer, Braşov County. Rooms are simple, airy and all have en-suite bathrooms; they will be generally occupied by two to three students depending on the number of applicants. The accommodation is equipped with all essential amenities (Wi-Fi, kitchen, laundry facilities, communal areas) and offers ample outdoor spaces (garden, tables, pool) where the students will be able to relax, read, study, eat and socialize on hot summer evenings.

A professional cook/catering company will serve breakfast and dinner in the common dining room, while lunches will consist of sandwiches and field food prepared by students themselves from foods provided at the hotel each morning. Accommodations for vegetarian/vegan diets may be made, although as food

is prepared communally, specific dietary restrictions such as severe allergies and kosher or halal meals will not be feasible. The directors will try, however, to accommodate all needs as much as possible.

EQUIPMENT LIST

Students are required to bring:

- A four-inch pointed archaeology trowel, for example a Marshalltown type trowel or WHS trowel
- Sturdy, waterproof hiking boots
- Hats/bandanas
- Sunscreen
- Backpack
- Any prescription medication you need for the duration of the field school along with a written prescription for the medication
- Water bottle
- A rain jacket and a warm jacket
- Layers and clothes suitable for outdoor work and all types of weather
- Long work trousers
- Personal protective equipment such as gardening/work gloves

Students are also recommended to bring their own:

- Laptop/tablet
- Paintbrushes in a range of sizes for excavation and cleaning purposes
- Stationary