

ANTH 3334:
FANTASTIC ARCHAEOLOGY AND PSEUDOSCIENCE:
LOST TRIBES, SUNKEN CONTINENTS, AND ANCIENT ASTRONAUTS

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY
JANUARY TERM 2018

Professor:	Whitney A. Goodwin, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Anthropology
Contact:	wgoodwin@smu.edu
Course Time:	Monday-Friday, 9:00am-12:00pm, 1:00-4:00pm
Course Location:	TBD
Office Hours:	TBD

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Archaeology, like any other science, is no stranger to today's world of half-truths and 'alternative facts'. Fantastic claims have been made about everything in the field, from crystal skulls to entire civilizations. In this course, you will acquire the tools to form critical opinions about archaeological phenomena and become able to take apart shaky arguments based on incomplete, false or nonexistent evidence. At the same time, you will learn that science is never straightforward, neat, and simple. When it comes to many issues, legitimate controversies among scientists about what is known and what is knowable can turn into speculations about the past that go beyond any possibility of documentation. In fact, you will learn that sometimes these frontiers between the legitimate and the lunatic are the most dynamic and interesting of all.

In this course we will also consider, thematically and periodically throughout the course, the difference between legitimate controversy within scientific archaeology, what is termed a "Paradigm controversy", and controversy pitting scientists against pseudoscientists and charlatans. As Ken Feder describes in the first two chapters of his book, *Frauds, Myths and Mysteries*, a controversy between legitimate scientists operates by clear and consistent rules of evidence, even if those scientists have very different interpretations of evidence. A controversy between scientists and charlatans (people who capitalize on the gullibility in others) pits people working with such rules against people who ignore them.

Through the close examination of case studies about pseudoscience, cult archaeology and creationism, we will dispel archaeological myths and mysteries which are often depicted as fantastic or cult archaeology. We will also briefly look at local case studies of fantastic phenomena, from the 'Taos hum' to tales of haunted houses, and come to our own conclusions as to what these mean. You will learn that a strong adherence to scientific investigation can uncover facts about prehistory that are as interesting as the myths. Perhaps most importantly, the tools and skills you acquire in this course will hopefully help you better examine and navigate the world of information and misinformation that surrounds you.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will be able to recognize a pseudoscientific claim, particularly about the human past involving archaeology

2. Students will learn techniques for critical thinking and analyzing seemingly scientific claims
3. Students will learn the proper structure of scientific argumentation and how to avoid common logical fallacies in pseudoscientific thinking
4. Students will examine the role and popularity of pseudoscientific claims in contemporary American culture and the power archaeology has to create national, religious, social, ethnic, and political narratives
5. Students will be exposed to how seemingly “silly” pseudoarchaeological claims have harmful and sometimes violent effects on indigenous groups in the form of social/political/religious/ethnic marginalization, economic exploitation, and “romanticizing” an “exotic other”.

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

This course fulfills the Philosophical and Religious Inquiry and Ethics (Level 2) and Individuals, Institutions, and Cultures (Level 2) Pillars; the Humanities and Fine Arts and History, Social and Behavioral Sciences Depth Requirements; and the Human Diversity, Information Literacy, Oral Communication, and Writing Proficiencies for the University Curriculum.

1. For the Philosophical and Religious Inquiry and Ethics (Level 2)

- Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to critically reflect on or apply the theoretical methods of philosophy or religious studies via a focus on a specific area or set of issues.

2. For the Individuals, Institutions, and Cultures (Level 2)

- Students will be able to analyze different theoretical or interpretive perspectives in the study of individuals, institutions, and cultures that shape economic, political and social experiences.
- Students will be able to evaluate critically the research outcomes, theory, and/or theoretical applications in the study of individuals, institutions, and cultures that shape economic, political and social experiences.

3. For the Humanities and Fine Arts Depth Requirement:

- Students will analyze and construct clear and well-supported interpretations of creative or innovative works within a particular discipline.
- Students will demonstrate the ways in which creative works reflect values and modes of thought in individual or cultural contexts.

4. For the History, Social and Behavioral Sciences Depth Requirement:

- Using extensive primary and/or secondary sources students will explain, in their own prose, how and why historical changes occur in a particular time and society.
- Using primary and secondary historical sources, students will situate disciplinary/professional subject matter within its changing historical contexts.

5. For the Human Diversity Proficiency:

- Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the historical, cultural, social, or political conditions of identity formation and function in human society, including the ways

in which these conditions influence individual or group status, treatment, or accomplishments.

6. For the Information Literacy Proficiency:

- Students will be able to select and use the appropriate research methods and search tools for needed information.
- Students will be able to evaluate sources for quality of information for a given information need.

7. For the Oral Communication Proficiency:

- Students will be able to select, organize and use appropriate evidence or information to suit a specific or targeted audience.
- Students will be able to use appropriate vocal and visual cues to deliver a presentation to a specific or targeted audience.

8. For the Writing Proficiency:

- Through multiple opportunities supervised and/or directed by a professor, an editor or other authority, students will demonstrate proper use of language through completion of a substantial amount of purposeful writing appropriate for a specific or targeted audience.

REQUIRED TEXT:

There is one required textbook for this course. It is available at the SMU bookstore or can be purchased online.

Frauds, Myths, and Mysteries: Science and Pseudoscience in Archaeology, 8th Edition, Kenneth L. Feder, McGraw Hill, NY

Additional assigned readings will be available online as PDF documents on Canvas. Students are required to have completed all assigned readings by the date indicated on the course schedule.

CANVAS:

This class uses Canvas. I will send announcement alerts via Canvas to your SMU email account. ***It is your responsibility to check your SMU email account regularly to get these announcements.*** The syllabus, additional readings, and other materials will be placed on Canvas for you. You also will be able to track your grade in the class by clicking on the My Grades link. ***You are responsible for monitoring your grades to catch any errors that may occur.*** Please bring these to my attention right away – do not wait.

COURSE FORMAT AND GRADING:

Grades for the course are based on the following:

	Pts.	%
Class Participation	200	40%
Writing Assignment	100	20%
Exam	300	40%
Total	500	100%

Class Participation:

Class participation is determined on the frequency, relevance, clarity, and creativity of contributions to in-class discussions. Students are expected to engage the course material, including lectures, readings, and films. Surfing the web, checking e-mails, texting, etc. are disruptive to your own learning and the learning of others and will not be tolerated. Cell phones should be switched to silent at the beginning of each class. Students who do not respect these rules will be asked to leave and marked absent. Participating actively in the discussion also means showing an understanding of the required readings. Readings are due on the day assigned. **It is critical you do the readings before you come to class**, so that you will be prepared to understand the lectures and participate in discussions.

Writing Assignment

You will be required to write a 5-6 page paper (double-spaced, 12 pt font, 1 inch margins) that explores in more detail one of the major topics of pseudoscience that we address during the course of the semester. Topics must be approved in advance. Research will be a combination of internet and library-based resources. You will be provided with a more detailed assignment later in the semester.

Exam

There is one cumulative exam required for this course. The exam will cover readings, lectures, class discussions/activities, and videos. The exam format will include: i) multiple choice, ii) matching, iii) fill in the blanks, iv) definitions, v) short answer, and vi) essays. A review session will be held the morning before the test. Students must bring questions to the review and have begun studying by that class date. It is strongly recommended that students review course material each week. There are no make-up exams.

COURSE POLICIES:**Attendance**

Attendance to every class is mandatory. Daily attendance will be taken and students are expected to be present for all classes and prepared to discuss topics, readings, and films. Students more than ten minutes late to class will be marked absent.

Excused absences will be given for the observance of religious holidays, participation in University extracurricular activities, documented cases of extreme illness, or documented personal emergencies. In cases of religious holidays and extracurricular activities, I must be provided with notification by **TBD**.

***Religious Observance:** Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.)

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result

of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalog)

Three unexcused absences or more will affect your grade. Four or more unexcused absences may be grounds for disenrollment in the course. Please be on time and respectful to your fellow students. If you miss a lecture, you are still responsible for the material that was covered, so I encourage you to obtain lecture notes from other students.

Incompletes and Withdrawals:

A grade of 'I' is given only in cases of documented emergency or special circumstances late in the semester, provided that you have been making satisfactory progress. Students are responsible for knowing the deadline for withdrawing from the course without grade penalty.

Disability Accommodations

Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit <http://www.smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/DASS> to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor as early in the semester as possible, present a DASS Accommodation Letter, and make appropriate arrangements. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement (See University Policy No. 2.4).

University Honor Code:

In *all* work for the class you are expected to follow the SMU Honor Code. The Honor Code states, "Students and faculty members must mutually share the knowledge that any dishonest practices permitted will make it more difficult for the honest student to be evaluated and graded fairly and will damage the integrity of the whole University." If you have any questions about what that means, see:

<http://www.smu.edu/StudentAffairs/StudentLife/StudentHandbook/HonorCode>.

Acts of academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism will **not** be tolerated under any circumstances. Students who violate the SMU Honor Code will be subject to immediate disciplinary penalties including the submission of a Faculty Disposition form to the Honor Council, failure of the assignment, possible failure of the course, and/or dismissal from the University.

As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings etc., which belong to another (even if you have the permission of that person). If you have any questions about how to properly use source material, especially from the web, I strongly encourage you to consult *Writing with internet sources*, produced by Harvard's Expository Writing Program or Gordon Harvey's (2008) *Writing with sources: a guide for students*:
http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic244006.files/writing_with_internet_sources.pdf
<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic624846.files/WritingSourcesHarvard.pdf>

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Monday, January 8

- Introduction and Orientation
- Why People Believe Weird Things
 - Feder chapter 1
 - Posted Reading: Shermer 2002, chapter 1
- Science and Epistemology: How Do We Know What We Know?
 - Feder chapter 2
- Recognizing Pseudoscience: The “Baloney Detection Kit”
 - Posted Reading: Shermer 2002, chapter 3
 - Posted Reading: Sagan, 1996, chapter 12
- An Introduction to Archaeology
 - Posted Reading: Archaeology 101
- Archaeology and pseudoscience in Taos – visit to Taos Pueblo (afternoon)

Tuesday, January 9

- The “Discovery” of North America: The First Americans
 - Feder chapter 5
- After Native Americans, Before Columbus: The Chinese and Europeans
 - Feder chapter 6
- Vikings in the New World?
 - Posted Reading: Wallace 2000
- The Mysterious Moundbuilders
 - Feder chapter 7
- **Last day to declare pass/fail**

Wednesday, January 10

- Mormonism and Mesoamerican Archaeology
 - Posted Reading: Coe 1973
- African Diffusion and the Olmec
 - Posted Reading: Ortiz de Montellano et al. 1997
- The Maya and 2012
 - Feder chapter 13, pp. 330-334, 336-340
 - Posted Reading: Hoopes 2011
- The Curse of the Crystal Skulls
 - Feder chapter 12, pp. 319-320
 - Posted Reading: Walsh 2008 (Archaeology)
- Indiana Jones and an “Aztec Birthing Figure”
 - Posted Reading: Walsh 2008 (Societe de Americanistes)

Thursday, January 11

- The Origins and Perpetuation of the Atlantis Myth
 - Feder chapter 8
- Ancient Aliens
 - Feder chapter 9

- Posted Reading: Shermer, 2002 chapter 6
- The “Mystery” of the Egyptian Pyramids
 - Posted Reading: Mendelssohn, 1971
- The Curse of King Tut
 - Feder chapter 10
- **Paper topics due**

Friday, January 12

- Introduction to Evolution and Natural Selection
 - Feder chapter 12, pp. 293-299
 - Posted Reading: Coyne 2010
- Evolution, Creationism, and Intelligent Design
 - Posted Reading: Scott 1997
- Evolution in the Classroom and Courthouse
 - Posted Reading: Shermer 1998, chapter 11
- Film clips: *The Revisionaries*

Monday January 15

- Biblical Archaeology: Noah’s Ark, the Shroud of Turin, James Ossuary and the Holy Grail
 - Feder chapter 12, pp. 299-306
 - Posted Reading: Feder 2011, Lovett n.d.
- Trapped in the Matrix: Ideology, Nationalism, and Nazi Archaeology
 - Posted Reading: Arnold 2006
- **Papers due via SafeAssign on Canvas**

Tuesday, January 16

- Psychic Archaeology
 - Feder chapter 11
- Paleo-Fantasy: Ancient Encounters with Sex and Gender
 - Posted Reading: Russell 1998
 - Posted Reading: Zihlmann 1998
- The Paleo-Diet: Getting Ripped or Getting Ripped Off?
 - Posted Reading: Jabr 2013
- Last day to drop/withdraw to receive a “W” grade

Wednesday, January 17

- Real Mysteries of a Veritable Past: Stonehenge and the Easter Island Moai
 - Feder chapter 13

FINAL EXAM TBA