

## **Pot Creek Pueblo 2013 Field School SMU in Taos Summer Program**

**Instructor:** Dr. Kit Nelson

### **Course Description**

This course is a detailed and hands-on introduction to field methods in archaeology and to the Prehistoric Period of Taos area. The introduction to field methods will include four phases:

#### **Phase 1. Initial Pre-excavation Preparation**

The first several days of the field school will be spent in lecture and practice exercises, developing a general understanding of the region and archaeological processes. Students will work closely with staff on practicing skills in field note taking, field data collection, and initial mapping. Lectures will include the importance of complete recording, an introduction to archaeological field methods, and a summary of the prehistory of the Taos area.

#### **Phase 2. Excavation Methodology**

Students will work closely with the archaeological staff to develop field method skills while excavating Puebloan architecture at the site of Pot Creek Pueblo. With a focus on context and maximizing data collection, students will be guided through all stages of excavation. Students will be exposed to various data collection techniques during lecture and will follow through by utilizing those methods in the field. These include, but are not limited to, profile and planview mapping of features and architecture; sediment (soil) identification, collection and processing; identification and utilization of context in examining archaeological material; the collection and processing of radiocarbon samples; and the identification of context, type and function of archaeological material culture.

#### **Phase 3. Artifact Processing and Initial Analysis**

As part of developing skills used to interpret the archaeological record, students will conduct initial processing and analysis of materials that they excavate in the field. Student will learn to processes, sort, catalog and conduct initial analysis of pottery, lithics, sediment, ground stone, and other archaeological material. Staff (which includes specialists in different aspects of analysis) will work closely with students to insure complete understanding of the steps of artifact inventory and processing, as well as to aid those with a deeper interest in one aspect of analysis.

#### **Phase 4. Data Summary**

Using information gained from both the field and the lab, students will complete an excavation and analysis summary. This will follow the format used by contract archaeology companies as required by state agencies so that students are introduced to the process of government reporting and academic publishing.

Together we will discuss the role of these data in interpreting the past. This final write up will act as the final grade for the course.

### **Excavation**

The 2013 field school will take place at the site of T'aitdna or Pot Creek Pueblo (TA-1). The site of Pot Creek Pueblo has long been recognized as an important center for population aggregation. This, along with being acknowledged as an ancestral site to both the Taos and Picuris Puebloan groups, highlights the importance of this site in understanding this period of social restructuring in the northern extent of the Puebloan Southwest and in the development of later Puebloan communities.

The site is located adjacent to the Fort Burgwin campus. The site, with a peak occupancy from approximately 1250 to 1350 AD, is composed of a set of roomblocks, including approximately 400 ground floor rooms, surrounding plazas. The inhabitants of the site focused on an agriculture subsistence primarily of corn, beans, and squash, and survey of the area has revealed extensive evidence of agricultural intensification. Inhabitants also participated in trade, stone tool and pottery production, and hunting resulting in a myriad of interesting and informative archaeological remains.

The 2013 field season will be focused on the northern sector of the site and will compare and contrast these rooms with those of other sections of the site which were previously tested. Important to this year's project will be the testing of the plaza area surrounded by roomblocks 7, 8, and 9. Previous archaeologists have noted the possibility of a great kiva at this location. If indeed a great kiva is present, a section will be tested to compare orientation, organization, construction and function to the great kiva located in the southern sector of the site. We will also be excavating several rooms surrounding this plaza to examine room use and their association to the plaza, as well look for evidence of intentional burning or ritual closing of this part of the site.

### **Field Trips**

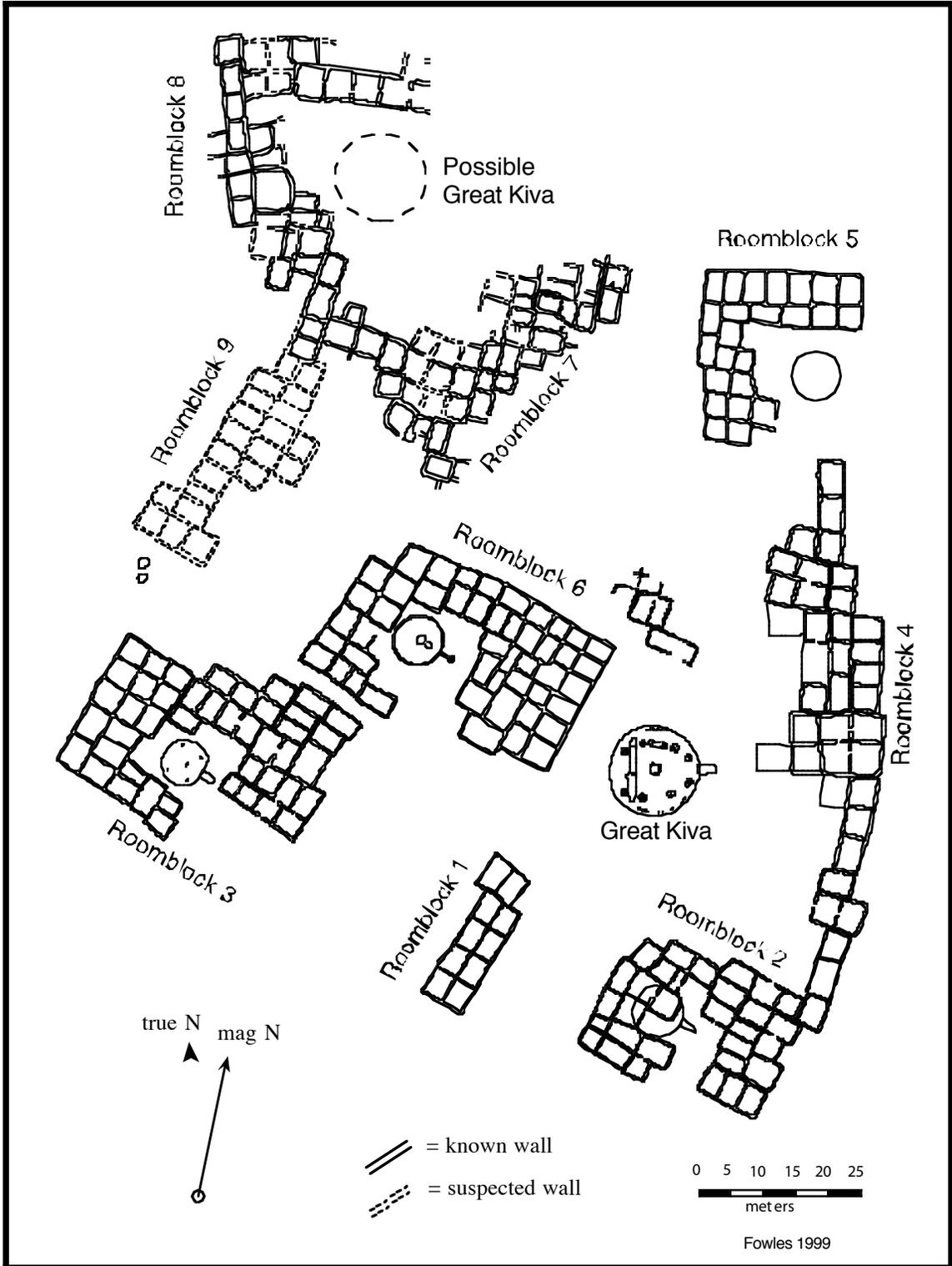
Several field trips will be taken to explore the archaeology and culture of the region. Additional field trips may be scheduled if time and weather permitting.

San Juan Feast Day (June 13)

Taos Pueblo

Bandelier National Monument (geology and archaeology trip)

**Equipment/Clothing Recommendations and a more detailed syllabus will be emailed to you in your acceptance package.**



**Suggest Readings before the Field (PDF versions will be available to students who are accepted to the field school)**

Cordell, Linda (excerpts from)  
2009 *Archaeology of the Southwest*. Left Coast Press, Inc. Walnut Creek, California.

Fowles, Severin  
2005 Historical Contingency and the Prehistoric Foundations of Moiety Organization among the Eastern Pueblos. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 61(1):25-52.

Woosley, Anne  
1980 *Taos Archeology*. Fort Burgwin Research Center, Southern Methodist University. Dallas, Texas.

**Course Objective:** The objective of this course is to introduce students to field methods in archaeology and the prehistory of the Taos region. In this class students will develop a basic understanding of the factors involved in excavation, artifact and sample processing, and basic archaeological analysis. They will also explore the specific prehistory of the Taos region in the larger context of the American Southwest. Specific objectives include a broad understanding of the following:

1. The methods and theories archaeologists use to reconstruct the past.
2. The methods used in both excavation and artifact and sample processing.
3. The timing and technologies associated with the site of TA-1.
4. The dynamics of human society in the Taos Area.
5. Factors associated site and room use.
6. The professional conduct expected when working in the field.

**Outcomes:**

In light of the stated objectives, students should be able to understand the processes and procedures of archaeological excavation and analysis. They should also be able to comprehend the importance of the archaeological record in interpretation and have a basic knowledge of the prehistory of the Taos Region.

**Course Requirements**

Grading will be based on short written and verbal quizzes given throughout the 6 weeks based on field, lab, and field trips and the final written project.

**Schedule**

**Week 1** – Introduction to field and laboratory methods

- Location – Fort Burgwin Campus
- Campus tour and history, site visit, mapping and excavation exercises,

field note and form recording introduction, and initial lectures on the Prehistoric Period of the Taos area.

**Week 2 – Week 5** – Excavation and recovery at Pot Creek Pueblo (TA-1), sample and artifact processing and analysis.

- Location – T'aitdna (TA-1)
- Students will break up into excavation teams and begin excavation at T'aitdna during the day.
- Laboratory processing and Analysis in the afternoons.
- Evening lecture series at Fort Burgwin and class evening lectures.

**Week 6** – Completion of Excavation and site and equipment maintenance.

- Location – T'aitdna (TA-1) and Fort Burgwin
- Wrapping up site excavation and completion of artifact and sample processing.
- Completion of final report write-ups.