ANTH 3334
FANTASTIC ARCHAEOLOGY AND PSEUDOSCIENCE: LOST TRIBES, SUNKEN
CONTINENTS, AND ANCIENT ASTRONAUTS
J Term 2016
Location TBD, 9am-12pm; 1pm-4pm

Instructor: Maeve Skidmore.
Email: mskidmor@smu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The popular culture that surrounds archaeology is filled with fantastic claims. How do
archaeologists weed through the outlandish to understand the human past? Using critical
thinking skills and scientific reasoning and logic, we will evaluate pseudo-scientific claims,
hoaxes, and other spurious arguments about the human past. We will use the same skills to
identify scientific controversies and distinguish these from pseudoscience. At the end of the
course, we will consider how popular representations of archaeology for entertainment impact
the scientific discipline of archaeology.

This course fulfills the Individuals, Institutions, and Cultures (Level 2) pillar; the Philosophical
and Religious Inquiry and Ethics (Level 2) pillar; and Information Literacy and Oral
Communication proficiencies and experiences.

POLICIES

Students are expected to adhere to the SMU Code of Conduct, available at
http://smu.edu/studentlife/studenthandbook/PCL_03_Conduct_Code.asp

Attendance is required and counts as part of the course grade. Emergency absences for
lectures and exams will be considered on a case-by-case basis based on university policies.
Students should contact the professor before missing class if at all possible. Arrangements to
accept late work due to excused absences will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Cell phones must be switched off (unless arrangements have been made with the professor),
and all laptops and other devices must have their wireless features disabled.

Attendance: Attendance is required and is necessary to succeed in this course. Students will be
evaluated for punctuality, attentiveness, and participation in class activities and discussions.

Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must
first contact Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) at 214-768-1470 or
http://smu.edu/alec/dass.asp to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for
accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make
appropriate arrangements. (See University Policy No. 2.4)

Religious Observance: Students that will miss class for religious observance of a holiday should
notify the professor in writing at the beginning of the semester and at that time discuss
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 Catalogue)

LEARNING OUTCOMES

All students are expected to come to each class meeting having read the assigned reading for the day. The assigned readings (below) will provide a structured introduction to the lecture, and students should be prepared to discuss them. The course grade will be calculated on the basis of two in-class exams, a research project and presentation, and several film quizzes. Exams will serve as the basis for evaluating the principal learning outcomes for the course, which are as follows:

1. Students will learn the basic underpinnings of scientific archaeology and critical thinking skills that allow them to evaluate pseudoscientific and other popular representations of archaeology in the media.
2. Students will examine why pseudoscientific claims are popular within contemporary American culture.
3. Students will identify logical fallacies and unscientific assertions in arguments.
4. Students will critically dissect academic debates within the field of scientific archaeology.
5. Students will gain appreciation for ways in which popular representations of archaeology for entertainment impact the scientific discipline of archaeology.

GRADED COMPONENTS

Quizzes (15% total, 3% each): 5 short quizzes will be given throughout the course to assess comprehension of readings and class materials, and to encourage attendance. You should expect a quiz most days that another major activity is not planned (e.g., student presentations, field trip or an exam).

Research Project (25% total, 10% annotated bibliography, 5% essay, 10% presentation): Students will research and prepare a short project on case studies of pseudoscientific claims related to archaeology. A project guide will be given out and discussed early in the term. Each student will prepare a short (3-4 page) written evaluation of the claim (s)he has selected and give a presentation concerning the material to the class.

Exams (60% total, 30% each): Two in-class exams will be given. The exams will cover the material presented in the readings and in lectures and questions will come in a variety of formats.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Scale</th>
<th>B-: 80.0-82.9</th>
<th>D: 63.0-66.9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: 93.0+</td>
<td>C+: 77.0-79.9</td>
<td>D-: 60.0-62.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-: 90.0-92.9</td>
<td>C: 73.0-76.9</td>
<td>F: Below 60.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+: 87.0-89.9</td>
<td>C-: 70.0-72.9</td>
<td>Note: grades will not be</td>
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<tr>
<td>B: 83.0-86.9</td>
<td>D+: 67.0-69.9</td>
<td>rounded</td>
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Late work policy: Assignments turned in late will be penalized 10% for every 24-hour period following the deadline (including weekends, holidays). Missed quizzes can only be made up with an excused absence. No late work will be accepted past the final day of term without prior approval by the instructor.

REQUIRED TEXTS


Supplementary readings will be posted on Blackboard. PR= posted reading

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>LECTURE AND ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>READING</th>
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| January 4     | Review of Course Policies and Introduction  
Archaeology, science and pseudoscience  
Epistemologies  
Introduction to the archaeology of SMU in Taos | Feder Chapter 2  
Recommended:  
Feder Chapter 1  
Arch 101 (PR) |
| (morning)     |                                                                                       |                                                                         |
| (afternoon)   | Field trip: Taos Pueblo                                                                |                                                                         |
| January 5     | Why do spectacular claims gain popular interest?  
CLASS ACTIVITY: ‘Baloney detection’ | Shermer 1998 Chapter 1 (PR)  
Sagan 1996 Chapter 12 (PR) |
| (morning)     |                                                                                       |                                                                         |
| (afternoon)   | Old World contact with the Americas: pseudoscientific claims  
CLASS ACTIVITY: Evaluating a fantastic claim | Feder pp.119-141  
Chapter 7 |
| January 6     | Old World contact with the Americas: scientific controversies  
CLASS ACTIVITY: Research Day (Project topics chosen) | Feder pp.103-118  
pp.142-153  
Recommended:  
Strauss et al. 2005 (PR) |
| (morning)     |                                                                                       |                                                                         |
| (afternoon)   | Archaeological hoaxes  
FILM: The Boldest Hoax  
Review | Feder Chapter 3  
pp. 69-83; 88-89 |
| January 7     | EXAM  
Atlantis | Feder Chapter 8 |
| (morning)     |                                                                                       |                                                                         |
| (afternoon)   | Work on class projects                                                                |                                                                         |
| January 8     | FILM: Atlantis Uncovered  
Aliens and the ancients  
The secrets of ancient Egypt | Feder pp.218-237; 241-242  
pp. 245-263 |
| (morning)     |                                                                                       |                                                                         |
| (afternoon)   | Biblical archaeology,  
FILM: Noah’s flood in context  
Creationism, Faith and Science | Feder Chapter 12 |
| January 11    | Field trip: Ghost Ranch                                                                |                                                                         |
| (ALL DAY)     |                                                                                       |                                                                         |
| January 12    | Archaeology, entertainment, and ethics  
FILM: Who owns the past? | Hall 2004 (PR) |
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<tr>
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<th>Review/Work on class projects</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 13</td>
<td>Presentation of class projects</td>
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<td>FINAL EXAM</td>
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