

Prehistoric Archaeology: Thunderstones and the search for our ancient past

Start date	15 April 2018	Time	10:00 – 16:45
Venue	Madingley Hall Madingley Cambridge		
Tutor	Dr Isabelle Vella Gregory	Course code	1718NDX056
Director of Programmes			Emma Jennings
For further information on this course, please contact			Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 746237
To book	See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262		

Tutor biography

Isabelle Vella Gregory is an archaeologist, formerly a Junior Research Fellow at Christ's College and now an affiliate scholar at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

Born in Malta, where she first studied archaeology, she moved to Cambridge to pursue her Master's and doctoral studies. She teaches undergraduates at the University of Cambridge, focusing on prehistory, methodology and an inter-disciplinary approach to archaeology. Her expertise lies in central Mediterranean prehistory, from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age, and archaeological method and theory. Isabelle has conducted fieldwork in Malta and Italy and museum studies in Sardinia.

Isabelle's teaching style is aimed at enabling participants to develop their critical thinking skills and encouraging group discussion. She finds that heavy use of mixed media, particularly vision and sound, stimulates thought and discourse and enables participants to really take a close look at the many fascinating things under discussion. Her approach is very much multi-disciplinary- after all an understanding of humanity requires many tools and approaches. Interacting with adult students is, for Isabelle, always a pleasure- participants bring with them a wealth of experience and perspectives and they are always willing to engage in lively debate.

Course programme

09:30	Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee
10:00 – 11:15	The quest begins
11:15	Coffee
11:45 – 13:00	Barbarians and progress
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	Does anything change?
15:15	Tea
15:30 – 16:45	Whither archaeology?
16:45	Day-school ends

Course syllabus

Lecture 1: The quest begins: When did people start their search for antiquity? Did they think of a past? The journey will start in Iraq in the 6th century BC and meander across time and space to Britain. We will encounter some famous and not so famous historical figurines, including Nabonidus, Bishop Ussher and the Sun King.

Lecture 2: Barbarians and Progress: When does 'man' become civilized? What do barbarians look like? The journey to progress makes us face uncomfortable historical moments. How do we define **who** is human? This session provides ample opportunity for debate and reflection.

Lecture 3: Does anything change?: This session explores the idea of change. Does humanity ever change? What causes change? Does science answer all our questions? This session explores big questions as we journey from Denmark to Zimbabwe.

Lecture 4: Whither archaeology?: Does the quest for the antiquity of humankind have an end? What will the archaeology of the future look like? Archaeology has changed dramatically, and not just because of progress in scientific techniques. These days there is a wider engagement with the public and archaeologists are ethically bound to respect multiple points of view, for example when it comes to human remains. Yet, controversies still happen on a daily basis. We will explore some of the more recent discoveries and the current state of play.

Aims:

1. Develop a good understanding and knowledge of the history of archaeology through the lectures which is tested during the discussion sessions
2. Enhance analytical and critical thinking skills through the group and individual exercises under the guidance of the lecturer
3. Increased appreciation of, and engagement with, the complexities of human history and its more challenging moments.

Content:

People have searched for the antiquity of humankind since at least the 6th century BC. They sought historical legitimacy and along the way grappled with discoveries that changed their world order. As they explored the mists of time, they encountered things like thunderstones (arrowheads, thought to be magical thunderbolts that fell from the sky) that made them curious and uncomfortable. The search for what it means to be human is one fraught with uncomfortable questions, social upheaval, severe censorship and the greatest scientific discoveries. Join a quest that tells us as much about antiquity as it does about ourselves.

Please note that throughout the day we will encounter uncomfortable themes like racism and exploitation. The history of archaeology is full of shocking moments, much like the history of the world and the world in the present. These themes will be discussed in context and in a sensitive manner.

Presentation of the course:

Illustrated lectures, class discussion.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

- To identify and understand the major moments in the search for the antiquity of humankind
- To apply analytical skills to the complexities of history.
- To increase knowledge of where we come from and why certain ideas have become so entrenched.
- To pursue further independent study using the tools acquired in this course.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk *

Bahn, Paul (ed). 1998. *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Archaeology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bahn, Paul (ed). 2013. *The History of Archaeology*. London and New York: Routledge.

Fagan, Brian. 2014. *The Great Archaeologists*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Gamble, Clive. 2015. *Archaeology: The Basics*. London and New York: Routledge.

Renfrew, Colin & Bahn, Paul (eds) 2016. *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice*.

Schnapp, A. 1996. *The Discovery of the Past: The Origins of Archaeology*. London: British Museum Press.

I will bring books and other materials which participants are welcome to consult. The books above offer a good introduction to archaeology and its development. Other books and articles tend to be far more specialized. Post-course, participants will be able to search for and consult these resources if they wish. Because archaeology is a global discipline, this course necessarily focuses on select areas, but provides the tools to widen future pursuits.

Additional information

Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:
<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk or +44 (0)1223 746262.

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 15 March 2018