



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

NMC 261Y - FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY G.R.A.P.E. 2023

GADACHRILI GORA REGIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT EXPEDITION

MAY 1 – JUNE 12, 2023

JUNE 21-JULY 17, 2027

Instructors: Ira Schwartz

Dr. Elizabeth Gibbons

Course Description

This course is designed as a general practicum in archaeological field methods. As a field course, emphasis will be placed on active participation in the ongoing research of the Gadachrili Gora Regional Archaeological Project Expedition (G.R.A.P.E.) in the Republic of Georgia. Students will receive extensive training in excavation methods, recording procedures, and the preliminary processing of artifacts. Weekend field trips exploring the archaeology and culture of the region will supplement the primary focus on field experience. All students are eligible to participate. No prior field experience is necessary.

Required Readings

Course pack reader: a number of short instructional papers put together by the different experts to help you understand the region and materials.

Extra Readings (For the enthusiast)

Hansen, S., Mirtskhulava, G., 2012a. "The neolithic settlement of Aruchlo. Report on the excavations in 2009- 2011." In: Lyonnet, B., Guliev, F., Helwing, B., Aliyev, T., Hansen, S., Mirtskhulava, G. (Eds.),

Ancient Kura 2010-2011: The first two seasons of joint field work in the southern Caucasus. *Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan* 44, pp. 58-70.

Hansen, S. 2007. "Aruchlo: A Neolithic Settlement Mound in the Caucasus." In *NEO-LITHICS 1/07 The Newsletter of SouthwestAsian Neolithic Research*. pp. 13-19

Lyonnet et al. 2016. "Mentesh Tepe, an early settlement of the Shomu-Shulaveri Culture in Azerbaijan." In: *Quaternary International* 395 (2016) 170-183

Connor, S., Sagona, A., 2007. "Environment and society in the late prehistory of southern Georgia, Caucasus." In: Lyonnet, B. (Ed.), *Les cultures du Caucase (VIe- IIIe millénaires avant notre ère). Leurs relations avec le Proche-Orient*. CNRS Editions/Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations, Paris, pp. 21e36.

Kushnareva, K.K. 1997. *The Southern Caucasus in Prehistory: Chapt. 2: The Neolithic and Eneolithic*. Tr. H.N.

Michael Philadelphia: The University Museum University of Pennsylvania. pp 13-41

Lyonnet, B., 2009. "Surveys and excavations in western Azerbaijan : settlement changes and relations with surrounding areas, from the neolithic to the bronze age." In: Azerbaijan, Land between East and West. Transfer of Knowledge and Technology during the "First Globalization" of the VIIth-ivth Millennium B.C. Deutsches Archaologische Institut, Berlin, pp. 41-47.

Lyonnet, B., Guliyev, F., 2010. "Recent discoveries on the Neolithic and Chalcolithic of Western Azerbaijan." Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi Arkeoloji Dergisi (TÜBA-AR) pp. 13, 219-228.

Lyonnet, B., 2012. "Mentesh tepe pottery". In: Lyonnet, B., Guliev, F., Helwing, B. Aliyev, T., Hansen, S., Mirtskhulava, G. (Eds.), Ancient Kura 2010-2011: The first two seasons of joint field work in the southern Caucasus. Archaologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan 44, pp. 97-107.

Lyonnet, B., Guliev, F., Helwing, B., Aliyev, T., Hansen, S., Mirtskhulava, G. (Eds.), 2012a. "Ancient Kura 2010- 2011: The first two seasons of joint field work in the southern Caucasus." Archaologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan 44, pp. 1-190.

Maghradze et al. 2016. "Grape and wine culture in Georgia, the South Caucasus". In: BIO Web of Conferences 7, 03027: Proceedings of the 39th World Congress of Vine and Wine, Bento Gonçalves, Brazil, Oct. 23-8, 2016.

Sagona 2018 "The Archaeology of the Caucasus: From the Earliest Settlements to the Iron Age." Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 3 Transition to Settled Life: The Neolithic (6000-5000 BC): 84-130)

Course Objectives

This course aims to:

- A) introduce students to archaeological excavation, recording, and survey methods.
- B) demonstrate to students how an archaeological field project is structured and how it functions as part of a larger research framework.
- C) familiarize students with the historical and cultural time periods of the Trans Caucasus and the broader Near East.
- D) Engage students with experiential procedures of artifact manufacture (Pottery, Stone Tools, Bone Tools)

At the end of this course each student should be able to:

- 1) understand the basic methods and process of archeological survey towards site identification and sampling.
- 2) apply standard excavation methods to a typical archaeological context.
- 3) employ conventional and new recording procedures to document excavation process and results.
- 4) perform preliminary processing and documenting of artifacts and samples using the techniques introduced during lab tutorials.
- 5) assemble and organize the preliminary results of excavation and communicate those results to:
 - a. the broader public
 - b. other archaeological professionals
- 6) recognize the different branches of an archaeological field project and understand how they are linked together.

In this course we expect students to:

- i) take a critical approach to the material and techniques being studied.
- ii) analyze and synthesize the material being studied.
- iii) apply the knowledge acquired on site and in the lab in an independent setting.
- iv) adhere to and respect the rules and regulations of the field project and the host country.

Course Evaluation

Activity	Weight
Participation	40%
Preliminary Notebooks Review	10%
Field Skills Evaluation	15%
Final Notebook Review and Submission	35%

The participation grade will be based on the following criteria: contribution to on-site and lab work, cooperation with staff and students, acquisition of new knowledge and its application.

- Each student will be required to submit their field notebook at the end of the season for final evaluation.
- Students will be required to provide their own notebook. Students will also write in their daily notebook journal to record the daily and weekly progress of their excavation unit including excavation strategies, observations, top plans and other illustrations as daily work progresses.
- Further information and instructions for the content and format of Field Notebooks are in the Manual, and will be provided on site.
- Each student will be evaluated individually or as part of a group (depending upon the activity) on the various tools and techniques learned over the course of the project. This evaluation will be primarily observational by the instructors during which students will be asked questions about each observed activity and will be expected to provide oral responses to such enquiries as they occur (on the spot!).
- The evaluation will be a combination of question types from multiple-choice to short answer.
- Content for the exam will be based on the assigned readings, field trips and museum visits as well as occasional evening lectures provided by on-site specialists.

Additional Information on Activities:

- **Experimental sessions:**
- **A: Pottery making:**
 - Experimental pottery making is a unique experience that our project provides students with. In pottery making sessions, students will learn how to produce ceramic objects using ancient methods and techniques. Students will partake in all steps necessary in the manufacture of ceramic vessels. These steps are:
 - Identifying and collecting raw clay from riverbeds.
 - Processing the clays through crushing, adding tempers (inclusions) and hydrating the clays.
 - Forming and shaping vessels and objects.
 - Applying surface treatment, such as burnishing and slipping to vessels.

- Firing the vessels in an open fire or a kiln constructed by the group.
- This process is intended to help students understand the steps that ancient potters carried out to produce the vessels that we find in the archeological record. By carrying out these tasks the students will gain intimate knowledge of our recording system as modern ceramic analysis aims to understand the steps that were involved in the production process.
- Recommended watching: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZGFTmK6Yk4>
- **B: Stone tool lithic knapping:**
 - ‘Flint-knapping’ is the process of manufacturing stone tools, where flakes are sequentially knocked off a rock to achieve a particular form.
 - Obsidian stone tools represent a significant proportion of the material that we will be excavating on site.
 - Through experimental flint-knapping students will develop an understanding of the technological process involved in stone tool production and in turn should help them to distinguish anthropogenic lithic material from site.
- Recommended watching: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IF7B73rGiW8>

2- Lab training and seminar sessions:

- **A. Archaeological pottery Analysis:**
 - Archaeological ceramics represent some of the most ubiquitous materials found at ancient sites. As such documenting these remains are an integral part of any archaeological project.
 - In this section students will be exposed to the methods and techniques used by archaeologists to analyze ceramic remains.
 - Our methods aim to help students understand ceramic production and use in the past by drawing on a chaîne opératoire (production sequence) approach.
 - During these sessions students will partake in recording, drawing and digitizing ceramic remains, all of which are important skillsets necessary for future archaeological endeavors.
- **B. Archaeological faunal analysis**
- **C. Archaeological stone tool analysis**

3- Lectures:

Throughout the field season, several lectures and presentations on various related topics will be conducted at the dig house. Here is just a sample of some of the lectures that will be given:

- Georgia; an introduction
- Contextualizing Georgia in the Neolithic; Georgia and the Neolithic “revolution
- Ceramic analysis: what does the pot say?

4- Field training:

- Archaeological excavations:
- Field notes and field notebook training:
This session will be an introduction to our recording system and our excavation methodology. Students will be divided into three groups and given an introductory session on the recording system that is used at our sites.



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This session is meant to introduce students to archaeological fieldwork and demystify how archaeologists know what they know. This will be an essential first step in a student's field experience before excavations start.

- Total Station and 3D point provenience recording
- Archaeological Photography

This session will introduce students to the principles surrounding archaeological photography today.