

Plants and Animals in Past Societies

Module Code:	ARC7046-B
Academic Year:	2019-20
Credit Rating:	20
School:	School of Archaeological and Forensic Sciences
Subject Area:	Archaeology
FHEQ Level:	FHEQ Level 7 (Masters)

Pre-requisites:

Co-requisites:

Contact Hours

Type	Hours
Lectures	24
Seminar	16
Fieldwork	5
Laboratory	16
Directed Study	139

Availability Periods

Occurrence	Location/Period
BDA	University of Bradford / Semester 1 (Sep - Jan)

Module Aims

This module provides an overview of i) human responses to environmental change during the Holocene; ii) selected techniques used to reconstruct past economies and past environments; iii) the impact of environmental and climatic change on people; and iv) human impacts on the natural environment.

Outline Syllabus

Introduction to the topic. The study of the ecological setting of past human communities using common biological proxies – pollen, wood and insect remains. Plants and animals as

resources for past human populations. Archaeological evidence for subsistence practices by hunter-gatherer-fishers, agrarian communities and pastoralists. The domestication of plant and animal resources. Sustainable and other exploitation of woodlands. Practical experience in the identification, quantification, analysis and interpretation of archaeozoological and archaeobotanical assemblages developing critical awareness of palaeoeconomic studies and human palaeoecology. Anatomical and species identification: mammals, birds, fish, cereals, wood. Taphonomy; recognition and interpretation of biological material (e.g. modification of animal bone, food utility models, processing of food products, wood-working). Interpretation (e.g. age at death, sex, stature of animals, weeds and cereal ecology, woodland management). Integrative approaches to topics e.g. food and fodder, seasonality, marginality, social status, trade and exchange. Field studies of past land use on moorland and woodland in the Bradford district.

The module aims in particular to: (1) provide experience and in-depth understanding of the practical and interpretative issues concerning the identification and analysis of plant and animal remains, specifically in relation to human subsistence and economic activities; (2) provide experience in the identification of plant and animal taxa, intraspecies variation, sexual dimorphism, ageing, evidence of disease and trauma; (3) develop critical skills in assessing published literature and presentation skills.

Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to...

- 1 critically review the study of past environments and economies, human responses to environmental changes, and human causes of those changes.
- 2 evaluate palaeoecological, zooarchaeological and archaeobotanical datasets.
- 3 demonstrate advanced experience and in-depth understanding of the practical and interpretive issues concerning the identification and analysis of environmental data, specifically in relation to human subsistence.
- 4 critically review specialist practical and interpretive methods available for reconstructing past environments and past subsistence strategies in the field and laboratory.
- 5 demonstrate mastery of the identification of species, intraspecies variation, sexual dimorphism, ageing and evidence of disease and trauma
- 6 use and evaluate methods for palaeoenvironmental and palaeoeconomic reconstruction.
- 7 record zooarchaeological and archaeobotanical data
- 8 demonstrate advanced skills in the interpretation of palaeoecological and palaeoeconomic evidence.
- 9 demonstrate skills in quantification and data analysis.
- 10 integrate evidence from diverse sources to assess ancient economic and dietary strategies
- 11 integrate evidence from diverse sources to assess past environmental conditions
- 12 defend conclusions based on environmental data.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

A wide variety of teaching techniques are employed: lectures, laboratory classes, seminars, field visits, coursework feedback, exam skills preparation and directed private study. The assessments are designed to assess practical and interpretive skills in archaeozoology and archaeobotany, while the examination assesses theoretical knowledge and ability to extrapolate human behaviour and environmental conditions from archaeological and palaeoecological evidence. Supplementary coursework is designed to assess both practical skills and theoretical understanding.

Lectures cover the subject foundations which are developed in seminars and laboratory work; case studies and other applications are explored in student-led seminars; identification skills are developed in practical classes; and landscape interpretation is experienced during fieldwork. Assessment tests the ability to communicate scientific and archaeological information in a report.

During Directed Study hours students are expected to undertake reading to consolidate and expand on the content of formal taught sessions; research and prepare for seminars/tutorials and for assessments; revise material from formal taught sessions; and undertake specific elements of reading as directed.

Mode of Assessment

Type	Method	Description	Length	Weighting	Final Assess'
Summative	Examination - closed book	Written exam	1.5 hours	40%	Yes
Summative	Coursework	Portfolio	0-2500 words	60%	No

Legacy Code (if applicable)

Reading List

To view Reading List, please go to [rebus:list](#).