



ARCH 350: Archaeological Field Workshop

Course Syllabus

Summer Session 2026

Instructors: Prof. Giampiero Bevagna, Prof. Pedar Foss, Prof. Rebecca Schindler, in cooperation with the Intrageo team of professional archaeologists

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 45+

Prerequisites: None

Workshop Hours: Please see week-by-week schedule below

Office Hours: By appointment

Course Type: Field Workshop

Lab Fee: USD\$165

Course Description

This course is an archaeology practicum held in the municipality of Castiglione del Lago, a medieval town on the shores of Lake Trasimeno in Umbria, 40 km. from the regional capital of Perugia. Through this course, students participate in the survey and excavation of the Via Belvedere site and contribute to ongoing research about the ancient heritage of Lake Trasimeno.

Through lectures and fieldwork, this course introduces students to the basics of archaeological field research: surveying and mapping, excavating, processing finds, and analyzing and interpreting artifacts. As the site is uncovered and artifacts accumulate, we discuss and plan the preservation and display of archaeological materials for the general public. For this reason, the theory and practice of Museum Science is also part of the course. Students learn how to inspect, interpret and value archaeological material by considering: What does this material teach us? What can we learn from societies long disappeared? What can the process of discovery offer to our own personal enrichment? This approach to archaeology not only acquaints us with the world of 2000 years ago, but also teaches us about ourselves and contemporary society.

This field workshop involves physical work outside under existing weather conditions, which may range from cool rain to extremely hot sun (>100° F). Students will get instructions on how to pack for, and adapt to, those conditions. At the beginning of the campaign, students often experience sore limbs, blisters, and fatigue. This is normal. There may be insects (gnats, flies, mosquitos) and agricultural allergens. Drink plenty of water, use sunscreen liberally, and get plenty of sleep. The amount of work and the expectations of effort for this project cannot be compared with other Umbra summer courses.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Measures Course requirements that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome
Understand archaeological survey, using GPS and GIS to	Field participation; exam

document the location of archaeological finds.	
Excavate an archaeological site using the stratigraphic method.	Field participation; exam
Follow recording procedures (photography, context sheets; section, plan, and feature drawing; site maps).	Field journal
Recover, identify, and interpret artifacts and features, contexts and stratigraphy.	Field participation; exam
Prepare basic reports (documentation of inventory and field results).	Field journal and final summary

Course Materials

Readings

- Course reader. All reading materials will be made available in digital format on Google Drive. See “Course Readers for Archaeology Courses” handout provided in the orientation folder for more information.

Assessment

- Class and Fieldwork Participation 50%
- Midterm Exam 25%
- Field Journal with Final Summary 25%

Grading

Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional
A-	90% - 92%	Excellent
B+	87% - 89%	Superior
B	83% - 86%	
B-	80% - 82%	
C+	77% - 79%	Satisfactory
C	73% - 76%	
C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	Low Pass
D	63% - 66%	
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

Course Requirements

The Archaeological Field Workshop includes classroom sessions and a practicum. Grades are based on active engagement, effort, attentiveness to context and details, care, thoughtfulness, and attitude. Students should adopt a serious, cooperative, and productive attitude to the instructor and to fellow students. Not respecting the schedule or behaving improperly may lead to a lowering of students' final grade.

• *Class and Fieldwork Participation (50%)*

In the field, students participate Monday through Friday (picking, troweling, sweeping, cleaning walls and features, shoveling, sorting, wheelbarrow, recording procedures, washing, sorting, and recording finds, etc.), according to assignments by the instructors and professional staff. We encourage you to find your 'niche' while demonstrating your willingness to learn the other tasks and contribute your best to the project. All students are expected to contribute to all parts of the work in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the realities, challenges and learning opportunities of field research. We do our best to rotate students through each job on the site, though there may be times when we need students skilled or able in a particular way to complete tasks

that best advance the project. If you physically cannot do certain jobs due to a health issue or injury, please let us know. We do not want anyone to get hurt through overexertion. Fieldwork can be challenging, especially in hot weather. If you feel dehydrated or over-exposed to sun, please let us know—there are always jobs to be done.

In addition to the physical activity of digging, students participate by helping document the archaeological record and contributing to conversations about site stratigraphy. Students rotate filling out US (*Unità Stratigrafica*) sheets for every stratum (both sediment and feature) excavated. Students keep individual field notebooks about the daily progress on the site (see below). We also expect students actively to discuss what we are digging, how it came to be deposited or constructed, its function, and its destruction. To demonstrate your knowledge, particularly where you have worked, expect to give at least one "trench talk" during the campaign.

A typical working day schedule; times refer to students on the site, ready to work:

- **Full day: 6:30-13:30, with 15-min. breaks ca. 9:00 and 11:00**
- **Part day: 7:00-12:00, with a 15-min. break at 9:30**

Class lectures will be either in the morning or afternoon. Please bring snacks to the site for the morning break (or whenever you need a quick bite). Of course, bring plenty of water every day: at least two containers.

Participation is evaluated on the basis of student engagement with the fieldwork, including active participation in class and on the site, contributions to discussions about the excavation and what we are finding, working on the documentation of the stratigraphy and processing of the finds, and collegiality. *If students have questions or concerns about their participation, for example regarding certain physical activities, please talk to the faculty so we can make suitable arrangements.*

- *Midterm Exam (25%)*

The exam covers the basics of archaeological methods and theories, and asks students to apply their knowledge in the context of the archaeological campaign at the site. It is closed-book and closed-notes. There will be 6 essay questions on the exam and you will answer 4 of them. These questions are based on the information presented in the lectures and the course readings (and the knowledge gained during fieldwork and field-trips). It takes approximately 90 minutes to complete. Except in the case of a certified, serious illness or other emergency, it will not be rescheduled. There are no make-up assignments for a missed exam. Exam scores are based on the ability to explain not only what archaeologists do, but also why we employ specific methods and theories. The best answers will reference specific examples in support of your argument. Exams are evaluated on the basis of detail, knowledge, logic, clarity, and perspective.

Note: this exam is scheduled for June 18 [the same day as the ARCH 325 exam]

- *Field Journal with Final Summary (25%) – **due Tues., July 7, 18:00***

Each student acquires a soft-bound notebook with gridded paper to write in, as a Field Journal. Archaeologists use field journals to track what happened at the site each day and to record the excavation *in progress*. This includes both what we did each day *and* why we did it. Your journal should have an entry for each day that you worked in the field. You should explain in detail what you did, why you did it, and what the current hypotheses are about the stratigraphy in your area. Be reflective. You should include sketches of your excavation square as well as any interesting details about the features or the artifacts that you are finding.

At the end of the season you write a Final Summary of what occurred in the areas you worked, the questions that arose during the course of excavation, what was answered, and what remains to be explored. You also describe notable finds and how those finds help contribute to our understanding of the function of the features and/or chronology of the site. Imagine: next year someone else will be taking your place on the excavation and they need to know what happened where you worked, and why.

The instructors reserve the right to adapt the course requirements due to changes in the field conditions and/or the number of students enrolled in the course.

Additional Course Information

The exact schedule of classroom lectures and fieldwork days may change, depending on fieldwork necessities such as weather, governmental decisions, etc. Students should be flexible; changes will happen.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance and field participation is **mandatory**. For medical or other serious emergencies please contact the faculty and Umbra staff as soon as possible; emergencies are considered excused absences. However, for this course there are no “free” absences. Each unexcused absence will lower the students’ grade by one grade level (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B). If students miss class, they are responsible for informing the professor, obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours.

Excessive unexcused absences (3 or more) may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action.

Furthermore, times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason.

Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important for student performance. Missing a mandatory field trip, unless for a serious reason that is communicated to the professor and Umbra Academic Director in a timely manner, will lower students’ final grade by one grade level (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

Academic Integrity

All forms of **cheating** (i.e., copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and **plagiarism** (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

Classroom Policy

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate **respect** for the historical premises that the school and project occupy. Please note that **cell phones** must be turned off before the beginning of each class.

Additional Bibliography

- C. Renfrew – P. Bahn, *Archaeology: Theories, Methods, and Practice* (Thames & Hudson 2012)
- K. Greene – T. Moore, *Archaeology. An Introduction* (Routledge 2010)
- H. Swain, *An Introduction to Museum Archaeology* (Cambridge 2007)
- C. Gamble, *Archaeology: The Basics* (Routledge 2001)
- *A Companion to Archaeology*, J. Bintliff (ed.) (Blackwell 2006)

ARCH 350: Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

(Please, also refer to the master calendar for all lectures and activities related to the Umbra Summer Archaeological Program)

WEEK 1

Thur., May 28 16:00-17:30	Academic Orientation in Castiglione del Lago with Umbra Staff classroom ('aula')
Fri., May 29 16:00-18:00	Site Prep

WEEK 2

Mon, Jun 1 8:30-9:30	0: Introduction to the archaeology of TRAP a) R.K. Schindler, P.W. Foss, S. Spiganti, G. Bevagna, "Recent archaeological work in the territory of Castiglione del Lago," <i>Bollettino di Archeologia On Line</i> XIV (2023) Suppl. 1 (https://bollettinodiarcheologiaonline.beniculturali.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2023_Suppl_1_SCHINDLER_et_al.pdf)
9:45-11:15	1: Introduction to Archaeological Principles a) B.M. Fagan and N. Durrani, <i>In the Beginning: an introduction to Archaeology</i> (13 th ed., Routledge 2016) 2-25
11:30-13:00	2: Stratigraphy a) K. Greene, <i>Archaeology. An Introduction</i> (Routledge 2010), pp. 89-101, 124-29, 135-41
16:00-18:00	Initial Site Visit; Site Prep
Tues, Jun 2 7:00-12:00 16:00-17:00	REPUBLIC DAY Part day of fieldwork 5: Introduction to Museology a) H. Swain, <i>An Introduction to Museum Archaeology</i> (Cambridge 2007), Ch. 1, "What for whom?" 3-17 b) H. Swain, <i>An Introduction to Museum Archaeology</i> (Cambridge 2007), Ch. 12, "Displaying Archaeology: Methods", 210-33 c) H. Swain, <i>An Introduction to Museum Archaeology</i> (Cambridge 2007), Ch. 13, "Displaying Archaeology: Examples", 234-64 • Visit the new museum space
Wed, Jun 3 7:00-12:00 17:30-18:30	Partial day of fieldwork 7: Landscape and Survey Archaeology a) C. Renfrew and P. Bahn, <i>Archaeology: Theories, Methods, and Practice</i> (Thames & Hudson 2008) "Survey and Excavation of Sites and Features", 73-106
Thur, Jun 4 7:00-12:00 16:00-18:00	Partial day of fieldwork 8: Ceramics Workshop a) J.T. Peña, <i>Roman Pottery in the Archaeological Record</i> (Cambridge 2007), 1-33.

WEEK 3

Mon-Tues, Jun 8-9 6:30-13:30 16:30-18:30	Full day of fieldwork (9:00 & 11:00, 15-min breaks) Optional work in the magazzino in the afternoon (students should rotate in)
Thur-Fri, Jun 11-12 6:30-13:30 16:30-18:30	Full day of fieldwork (9:00 & 11:00, 15-min breaks) Optional work in the magazzino in the afternoon (students should rotate in)

WEEK 4

Mon-Tues, Jun 15-16 6:30-13:30 16:30-18:30	Full day of fieldwork (9:00 & 11:00, 15-min breaks) Optional work in the magazzino
Wed., Jun 17 6:30-12:00 16:00-18:00	Part day of fieldwork Afternoon: study for mid-term exams [profs. available for consultation]; Team Topic choice
Thur, Jun 18 11:00 am	Mid-term exam [ARCH 350]
Fri.-Sun, Jun 19-21	<u>3-day weekend for personal exploration</u>

WEEK 5

Mon.-Fri, Jun 22-26 6:30-13:30 16:30-18:30	Full day of fieldwork (9:00 & 11:00, 15-min breaks) Optional work in the magazzino

WEEK 6

Mon.-Tues, Jun 29-30 6:30-13:30 16:30-18:30	Full day of fieldwork (9:00 & 11:00, 15-min breaks) Optional work in the magazzino
Wed., Jul 1 6:30-12:00 16:30-18:30	Part day of fieldwork (6:30-12:00) Team Topics Presentations (@ Residence)
Thur-Fri, Jul 2-3 6:30-13:30 16:30-18:30	Full day of fieldwork (9:00 & 11:00, 15-min breaks) Optional work in the magazzino

WEEK 7

Mon., Jul 6 6:30-13:30 16:30-18:30	Full day of fieldwork and/or inventory work Optional work in the magazzino
Tues, Jul 7 8:30-13:30	Part day of inventory work Notebooks due (18:00) Press Conference
Wed., Jul. 8 8:30-13:30 evening	Part day of inventory work Afternoon: packing <i>Farewell Group Dinner & Festa</i>
Thur., Jul. 9	<i>Early morning bus departure for Rome (FCO) Airport</i>