

AAP308 – Environmental Archaeology

Module coordinator: Michael Charles

General aims:

This existing module had seen a steady decline in student numbers and the opportunity was taken to revamp its content and delivery to make it largely inquiry-driven; the aim of the CILASS project was to provide the students with a clear insight into the approaches used in environmental archaeology so that they are able to critically evaluate archaeological literature dealing with environmental issues.

Structure

The module is based around two research case studies; one in Central Anatolia, (Turkey) the other the Trent Valley (British Isles). Staff provide introductory lectures on primary topics outlining the methodological & theoretical issues of the disciplines involved. The students work in groups and are asked to present, analyse and write up data from the case studies. Given the extensive technical backdrop for each of the disciplines, it was important to ensure that students were adequately supported. This has been achieved by providing on-line teaching resources to a range of web-resources (in-house & approved web-sources). The following is a detailed outline of the way of the module has been organised:

AAP 308 session timetable

Week 1

- Introduction to module
- Introduction to IBL as it relates to the case studies:
 - Understanding of shared principles of environmental archaeology
 - Availability of on-line resources.
- Students to sign up to groups (of <8 students) either physically on pieces of paper or in class on WebCT.
- Introductory lecture on seminar 1 subject

Between weeks 1 and 2 students prepare presentation on Week 2 seminar topic.

Week 2

- Student powerpoint presentation on seminar 1 topic (Regional assessment of climate and environment in Western Asia since the last glaciation)
- Introduction to seminar 2 topic
- Introduction to on-line resources

Between weeks 2 and 3 students post assignment on Week 2 seminar topic using WebCT.

Follows the same approach covering the following topics:

Week 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9

- Area assessment of the environment of Central Anatolia
- Site assessment: Çatalhöyük - a mud-brick tell
- North West European environments: a regional assessment

- Area assessment of the environment of the British Isles
- Site assessment: Trent Valley
- Compare & contrast: professional & commercial archaeological approaches
- Dating deposits in the Trent Valley
- Integrating environmental & conventional archaeology

Alternative activities in other weeks are outlined below:

Week 6

- Feedback for mid-term assignment

Week 8

- Field Trip (ga/mc)

Students should arrive with a theoretical understanding of the types of sampling techniques they could they could realistically apply (i.e. the types of material & deposits likely to be preserved & to yield information relevant to reconstructing past environments)

- Assessing area for sampling.
- The purpose of this session is explicitly to develop an understanding of practical application of environmental techniques.
- Opportunity for students to take photographs.

Week 12

- Feedback for end-of-term assignment

ICT components.

As can be seen from the above structure, this module utilises WebCT in a number of ways: in order to provide access to:

- approved on-line resources;
- animated sequences relating to sampling in the file (produced by Rob Craigie);
- relevant databases of information (ADS, York).
- various banks of images of the 2 case studies available through ArchAtlas and the Trent Valley project website. These will be used by students for their presentations and as part of their submitted work