



Archaeology

Bringing the past into the present

"Studying archaeology at Otago gave me a solid grounding in both the academic and practical aspects necessary to excel in this field, proving invaluable in my studies in the area of underwater archaeology."

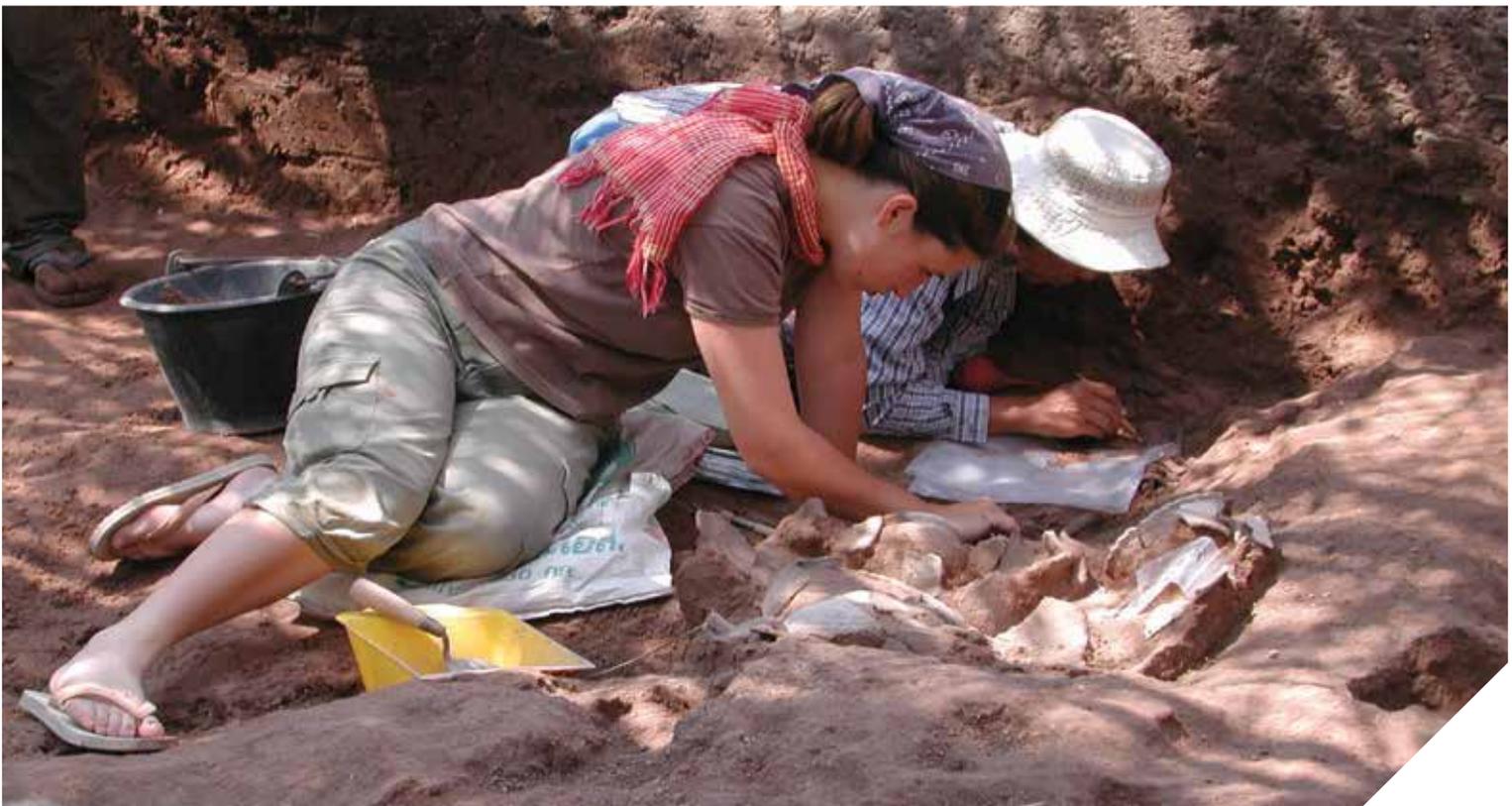
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Archaeology seeks to understand earlier human societies and cultures through the study of material evidence from the past. This evidence can include assemblages of portable artefacts such as stone tools, larger monumental structures like Mayan temples, and entire human-modified landscapes. Archaeologists generate data through fieldwork and excavation, and use both laboratory science and interpretive theory to study that data. Archaeology is essentially a humanities discipline, since it studies human societies and their history – but it draws on a range of other fields, particularly from the sciences.

Archaeology is our primary source of knowledge about the deep history of humankind, and the gradual developments in culture and society that led to the present-day arrangement of human communities. Otago offers a range of stimulating archaeology papers, including opportunities for postgraduate students to carry out supervised field and laboratory research, particularly in New Zealand and the Pacific.

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Archaeology at Otago

Archaeology at Otago is taught as part of the broader discipline of Anthropology; the comparative study of humanity and culture. Students who wish to specialise in Archaeology major in Anthropology. The major normally takes three years and requires a minimum of nine papers in the subject, out of a minimum of 20 papers for a degree. Anthropology majors graduate with a Bachelor of Arts or with a BA(Hons) (an extra year). There is also an Anthropology minor option requiring a minimum of five papers.

Two first-year papers provide an introduction to Archaeology – ANTH 103 Introduction to Anthropology and ANTH 106 Human Origins and Civilisations.

ANTH 103 is taught in two blocks with lectures on Archaeology and Social Anthropology (the study of contemporary culture). In the Archaeology block, ANTH 103 considers the history, techniques and ideas of archaeology with special attention to problems that have challenged archaeologists.

In ANTH 106 students are introduced to the archaeological evidence for the biological and socio-cultural origins and development of the human species. The course reviews the major changes in human society and culture from our earliest days up until the emergence of early civilisations around the world.

In upper-level papers students can study the regional archaeologies of New Zealand, the Pacific islands and Asia, as well as the archaeology of recent colonial societies. Other courses train students in the methods and practice of archaeology and the study of animal remains and artefacts. Students who specialise in archaeology are encouraged to carry out field or laboratory research for postgraduate theses (MA and PhD).

Teaching style

Our staff are committed to providing high quality teaching through lectures and tutorial interactions, field instruction and laboratory supervision and training. They are all active researchers who incorporate their research programmes and findings into their teaching.

Double major/degree options

It is possible to major in Anthropology with Archaeology papers only, although students wishing to specialise in Archaeology are encouraged to take one or more lower-level Social Anthropology papers too (including the joint ANTH 103 paper). Archaeology students may also wish to take Biological Anthropology courses concerned in part with the study of human biological remains from archaeological sites. These courses are offered through the Department of Anatomy. Students with strong interests in archaeological science and lab techniques may wish to credit other relevant science papers in their degree.

Some useful double major options include History, Classics, Geography, Politics, Māori Studies, and Languages. Students can also take archaeology papers in double degrees with Law, Science and Commerce.

Why study Archaeology?

Archaeology is taught as part of the Arts degree at the University of Otago so our students receive excellent instruction in research, and are skilled in the construction and presentation of well-reasoned and articulated arguments – in both written and oral form. These are the fundamental skills necessary for a wide range of careers and our graduates are currently employed in many different professions. Those with a graduate degree in archaeology often elect to take up positions in archaeological research, heritage management, museum studies or in related fields.

In general, the study of archaeology will broaden your understanding of the development of human society and culture. At Otago you will learn about the methods and findings that have led archaeologists to understand how and why complex societies emerged throughout the world. Otago courses provide a unique 50,000 year perspective on early human colonisation and cultural change in Asia and the Pacific. Students gain novel insights into human social and material environments and interactions in the past. Students can also prepare for a career that promotes new and exciting

research into our human heritage, and the care of archaeological sites today. Graduating archaeology students will have critical skills in the systematic recording, analysis and interpretation of the cultural past.

Background required

There are no formal secondary school prerequisites for enrolment in an Anthropology degree.

Careers in Archaeology

In most modern countries some and occasionally all archaeological sites are protected under law from modification. Government agencies responsible for archaeological site protection may employ archaeologists to help manage sites, or to respond to applications to modify sites for development or research purposes.

In New Zealand some archaeologists are employed by Heritage New Zealand, the national agency responsible for site protection. Such archaeologists may process applications to modify sites and otherwise work to promote the identification, understanding and protection of archaeological places and areas.

The Department of Conservation also employs archaeologists.

Local authorities are increasingly assuming greater responsibilities for archaeological heritage in New Zealand and overseas, and may offer archaeological employment. Public museums may also employ archaeologists as curators, or for specific conservation purposes and research.

Many archaeologists work in a private consulting capacity, offering services and advice to local and national government and other public institutions. They may also be contracted to carry out investigations required during development work, or to advise on the management and care of particular sites and artefacts.

Archaeological skills and knowledge contribute usefully to other professions such as planning, surveying, museum management, history and tourism.

PROFILE

Danielle Trilford

BA (Honours), MA | Archaeologist, CFG Heritage

I was drawn to archaeology for two reasons, firstly I was fascinated by the discipline, and secondly, I really wanted to have a job that contributed to New Zealand's identity – how we understand ourselves and our history.

The best part about studying archaeology in Otago is the support from the start – I had access to material from New Zealand's earliest archaeological sites, I analysed the information using the Otago Electron Microscopy Laboratory electron microscopes, I had access to funding, world class supervisors, and iwi support.

By the end of the study I ended up with a real spread of skills – such as how to test theoretical concepts, how to sample an archaeological site, how to think about New Zealand and Pacific history from an archaeological and anthropological point of view.

The Otago course has it all – from the glamorous stuff like old mapping methods (which I use in my job often), excavation techniques, artefact and bone analysis, and world-class laboratories, to the less glamorous but equally important skills employers need

like communication and writing, software use, cataloguing techniques, and sample preparation.

I now work as an archaeologist for a consultancy and get to work on significant archaeological sites, helping community groups, iwi, and clients make sure New Zealand archaeology is protected and managed properly. This means I do the paper work, the excavation, the analysis, stakeholder engagement – all the steps of what it means to be an archaeologist, thanks to the Otago University Archaeology Course.

The Otago Department shares strong networks with potential employers as well as other universities across the world, and it's through these networks that I gained my first work as an archaeologist. The department encourages students to meet New Zealand archaeologists, engage in volunteer programmes, and put the skills you learn to work in the "real-world".



For questions about
Archaeology
otago.ac.nz/archaeology