



School of Geography, Archaeology, and Irish Studies
University of Galway

Archaeology



Final Year BA Programme 2026/2027

Welcome to 3rd/4th year!

Please note, some of this information may be subject to change.
Always check www.universityofgalway.ie/archaeology for the most up-to-date version.

Welcome Back to Archaeology!

The Department of Archaeology is situated in the Arts/Science Building overlooking the River Corrib on the north side of the main campus. Members of staff have a wide variety of research interests and expertise in different aspects of Archaeology in Ireland and internationally. We have many postgraduate students undertaking research, some of whom study in the Department's reading & postgraduate rooms.

Contacts

Our Head of Department is Maggie Ronayne. She is also the year co-ordinator for 3/4BA and is available to answer any queries you may have about the year's programme at maggie.ronayne@universityofgalway.ie

Our administrator, Fiona McInerney, may be contacted at fiona.mcinerney@universityofgalway.ie or on (091) 49 2167. Her office hours are from 9am to 1pm (Room ARC217).



Archaeology is located beside Career Services and above ISS

Final Year BA Archaeology

2026/2027 Handbook

Year Co-ordinator: Maggie Ronayne

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Teaching and Learning

On-campus lectures begin on **Monday 7th September**.

This booklet contains a summary of the Archaeology modules in the final year of the BA and the core readings that are recommended for each module. In the event of any changes during the academic year, you will be notified through Canvas or in class. We are ready to help you out and glad to meet you, so please do contact us with any questions you may have.

Important Message: Student Attendance and Engagement

Attendance at on-campus lectures and labs is a core, mandatory, component of studying at university, and will be monitored and recorded. If you fail to attend regularly at class, you may not be permitted to take examinations and assessments. In addition, the Department reserves the right to restrict assignment choices in cases where a student attends only 50% or less of classroom hours in a module.

Enrolment on a full-time programme means a commitment to 40-50 hours of total student effort per week throughout all the weeks of each semester.

- ✦ Scheduled classes (lectures, tutorials, field classes) are only one component of the total effort that is required in order to succeed.
- ✦ Assessments and assigned coursework are designed on the basis that students are undertaking the full effort required and are not based solely on material covered in scheduled class time.
- ✦ Students should make sure that they timetable in their own diaries adequate time for study, reading, coursework and revision across the semester. Success at university level is not possible through cramming at the last minute.

Canvas

Canvas pages are set up for each module/course, with resources that complement the lectures and field classes. Typically, guidelines for assignments (announced in class) will also be posted on Canvas. Unless otherwise indicated, this is also where you will upload your assignments. Assignments are graded via Canvas. Take a tour and familiarize yourself with the layout and contents; these will vary from course to course. Set up/Allow notifications to make sure you don't miss important announcements.

Medical & Other Absences

If you are absent from any lecture, you must inform the College Office (see details below) with a valid reason for your absence i.e. bereavement or medical. When absence is due to an illness, a medical certificate should

be submitted as soon as possible to Ms. Catherine Mc Curry in the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies. Her office is in the Arts Millennium Building – Room 217 on the first floor.

Policy on Recording in Lectures

Voice or video recording of lectures is prohibited. A student who is registered with the Disability Service may be permitted to record a lecture if it is deemed that they require the facility to do so. Should this be the case, please speak with the lecturer prior to the commencement of the lecture and **before** you start any recording.

Department Library

The Archaeology Department Library (Room ARC202) is available as a study space for students enrolled on any Archaeology course. It is typically open during normal daytime hours when staff are present in the Department. If it is locked, you can get the key from the Department administrator Fiona McInerney. However, the room is sometimes used for meetings or other purposes, so you need to check for notices on the door.

Exams and Assessment

The overall degree result at the end of your BA is based on 30% of the final 2nd year mark and **70% of the final 3rd/4th year mark**, so this year plays a major role in the outcome of the final degree. See page 7 of Marks & Standards for all Fulltime Undergraduate Degree Examinations:

<https://www.universityofgalway.ie/media/registry/exams/policiesprocedures/QA228--Undergraduate-Marks-and-Standards-approved-Sept-2022-at-AC-Standing-EN&IR-Final.pdf>

All modules are examined by continuous assessment. Students who do not pass at first sitting will have the opportunity to take re-sit examinations in August. Instructions for re-sits will be posted on Canvas in May/June. Please note that the form which the course assessment takes may differ between first and second sittings and a number of courses are examined by an in-person class test/exam only at the second sitting in late July. Lecturers will inform you of the details at the beginning of each course and on Canvas.

All examination results are provisional, and subject to change, until the official results are released by the Examinations office at the end of the academic year (June).

How Assignments are Assessed and Graded

Assignments are graded according to a combination of three criteria:

1. Intellectual Content
2. Research
3. Preparation (including citation and bibliography)

If illustrations and the effective use of illustrations are relevant to the topic, this aspect (and their referencing) is assessed too.

Intellectual Content:

Good assignments (i) have clear analysis; (ii) address the question/topic clearly and with assurance; (iii) make a clear, unambiguous and well-structured argument; (iv) make appropriate and skilful use of relevant evidence/sources.

Poor assignments typically (i) have little analysis; (ii) fail to address the question/topic; (iii) draw on irrelevant evidence/sources; (iv) lack argument, structure and direction.

Research:

Good assignments (i) display knowledge of relevant sources; (ii) select and use relevant data/evidence/theories competently and with discernment.

Poor assignments show (i) poor knowledge of relevant sources; (ii) misunderstanding of data/evidence/interpretations and theories.

Preparation:

Good assignments are (i) carefully prepared and revised; (ii) are carefully proof-read for spelling, grammar, punctuation and expression; (iii) are fully referenced in-text and have a complete and accurate bibliography or references section (including citation of sources of figures)

Poor assignments show little evidence of (i) careful preparation and revision; (ii) have not been properly proof-read, have spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors, and expression is poor; (iii) do not cite sources adequately The Department will spot-check by oral exam in cases of suspected plagiarism.

Please refer to the [Archaeology Stylesheet](#) for in-text citation and bibliography which is on the Department of Archaeology website.

Grades reflect the following qualities:

100-70: exceptional performance; strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyse and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.

69-60: good performance; evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.

59-50: intellectually adequate performance; evidence of some familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques; limited focus and structure; basic analytic ability only.

49-40: minimally acceptable performance; minimal knowledge of relevant literature and techniques; lack of breadth; unsubstantiated statements; lack of thesis; poor structure.

39-0: inadequate performance; little evidence of even superficial understanding of subject matter; lacking critical and analytical skills; limited or irrelevant use of literature.

Submission of Assignments & Plagiarism Policy

All assignments will be submitted in digital format through Turnitin on Canvas. Your lecturers will explain to you how and when to do this.

Declaration of Authorship

All work submitted to the Department of Archaeology should have the following anti-plagiarism statement printed clearly on the Title Page:

I hereby declare that this submission is entirely my own work, in my own words, and that all sources used in researching it are fully acknowledged and all quotations properly identified.

Note: this statement of authorship is a solemn declaration that you have observed the rules around plagiarism and academic integrity generally as set out by the University (see:

<https://libguides.library.universityofgalway.ie/Plagiarism>), and that **the work presented is 100% your own.**

The Department will spot-check by oral exam cases of suspected plagiarism or suspected inappropriate use of artificial intelligence to generate assignments.

Penalties for Late Submission

It is department policy that penalties will be applied to all assignments which are submitted after the appropriate deadline date. A deduction of **5%** will be applied for the first day late and **1%** for every working day thereafter. The penalties will not apply in cases where a medical certificate is submitted or in certain extenuating circumstances e.g. bereavement.

Capping of Marks

All exams or assignments that must be repeated will be capped at 40%, which is the pass rate for each module. This is a University regulation – see page 6 of Marks and Standards for all Fulltime Undergraduate Degree Examinations at:

<https://www.universityofgalway.ie/media/registry/exams/policiesprocedures/QA228--Undergraduate-Marks-and-Standards-approved-Sept-2022-at-AC-Standing-EN&IR-Final.pdf>

Please be aware that this could have a significant impact on your overall degree result.



Modules, Class Times & Venues

Students studying for a regular BA must take six modules in two subjects to make up the total of 60 ECTS per academic year. Students must complete six Archaeology modules over the academic year (three in semester one and three in semester two). All modules are weighted at 5 ECTS and all are assessed by continuous assessment. Students must complete the three core modules in semester one, and the two core modules plus one of the option modules in semester two.

Semester 1

Core Modules

AR2101	Early Kingship: From Chaos to Cosmos
AR3104	Archaeological Post-excavation
AR3106	Bronze Age Roots of European Civilization

Semester 2

Core Modules

AR343	Public Archaeology
AR3108	Exploring the Past

Option Modules – Choose one

BSS2104	Introduction to Sustainability
AR325	Minor Dissertation (only available to students with an overall result of 2H1 or above in second year)
AR347	Palaeoecology – Reconstructing Past Environments
AR3105	Archaeological Training Excavation (only open to students who have completed the on-site, two-week excavation in summer 2026)

Field Classes

Please wear suitable clothing on field classes. It will be necessary to dress appropriately and be fully prepared for all weather conditions on the various planned field classes. Over the years we have experienced everything from blistering sunshine to driving blizzards, so prepare for the worst and hope for the best! For field classes in poor weather, please ensure to bring a few layers of warm clothing, a full set of waterproofs, a hat, gloves, and boots.

Semester 1

AR3104 Date to be confirmed: field class to National Museum of Ireland, Dublin, led by Dr Michelle Comber (this will be a weekday).

AR2101 Saturday 26th September: field class to Tara led by Conor Newman.

Semester 2

AR3108 Saturday 13th March: field class to Sligo led by Dr Carleton Jones.

Timetable Semester 1

Code	Module Name	Day	Time	Venue
AR2101	Early Kingship: From Chaos to Cosmos	Monday	12 pm – 1 pm	AC203
AR3104	Archaeological Post-excavation	Tuesday	12 pm – 1 pm	CSB-1007
AR3104	Archaeological Post-excavation	Tuesday	1 pm – 2 pm	CSB-1007
AR3106	The Bronze Age Roots of European Civilization	Wednesday	12 pm – 1 pm	AC202
AR3106	The Bronze Age Roots of European Civilization	Thursday	12 pm – 1 pm	Mc Munn
AR2101	Early Kingship: From Chaos to Cosmos	Friday	12 pm – 1 pm	AC213

Timetable Semester 2 Core Modules

Code	Module Name	Day	Time	Venue
AR343	Public Archaeology	Monday	12pm-1pm	D’Arcy Thompson
AR3108	Exploring the Past	Tuesday	1pm-2pm	CSB-1006
		Wednesday	12pm-1pm	CSB-1007
		Thursday	12pm-1pm	CSB-1005

Timetable Semester Two - Option Modules

Code	Module Name	Day	Time	Venue
BSS2104	Introduction to Sustainability	Thursday	4-6pm	Live Online
AR325	Minor Dissertation	Time chosen with students		
AR347	Palaeoecology – Reconstructing Past Environments	Monday	2pm – 3pm	Larmor
AR347	Palaeoecology – Reconstructing Past Environments	Wednesday	2pm – 3pm	D’Arcy Thompson
AR3105	Archaeological Training Excavation	2 weeks on site	Summer 26	Prospecthill Court tomb

SEMESTER 1 CORE

AR2101 Early Kingship: From Chaos to Cosmos

Third Year core module (semester 1)
Module Co-ordinator: Conor Newman

Structure of module:

24 lecture hours over 12 weeks in Semester one and a field class to Tara.

Semester one: classes in this module begin on 7th September and end on 27th November.

Lecture times and venues

Day	Time	Location
Monday	12 – 1 pm	AC203
Friday	12 – 1 pm	AC213

Assessment:

Assignment 1 (25% of overall mark): on-campus and on-Tara exercise.

Assignment 2 (75% of overall mark): essay Submission dates TBA.

Course Weighting:

5 ECTS

Module Summary

This course focuses on the earliest chapters of kingship, when the principal role of the institution of kingship was to establish and maintain order (cosmos), and to safeguard against chaos or 'worldlessness'. Underwritten by sacred marriage (hierogamy), the function of kingship was to negotiate and navigate the relationship between culture and nature. The institution finds its archaeological expression in cult centres and 'royal' complexes like Tara, Emain, and Cruachain, in special objects decorated with symbols of deep antiquity, and in early mythology. This course, therefore, blends the most up-to-date archaeological investigations of royal sites, complexes and artefacts, with mythology and symbolism.

Lecture Themes

- Problematizing the nature-culture interface;
- Kingship and cosmogony;
- Wisdom and places;
- Place and ceremony;
- From complex to cosmograph;
- Regalia of kingship;
- Case-studies.

Learning Outcomes

Students taking this module will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of early sacral kingship and the sacralisation of the places and landscapes associated with it.
- Handle a broad range of evidence types and how they can be combined.
- Understand how archaeologists formulate research design, from field survey and excavation to interpretation.
- Think critically about how to combine archaeological data with early literary sources.



**BULL SACRIFICE, GUNDESTRUP CAULDRON,
DENMARK**

AR3104 Archaeological Post-excavation

Third year core module (semester one)

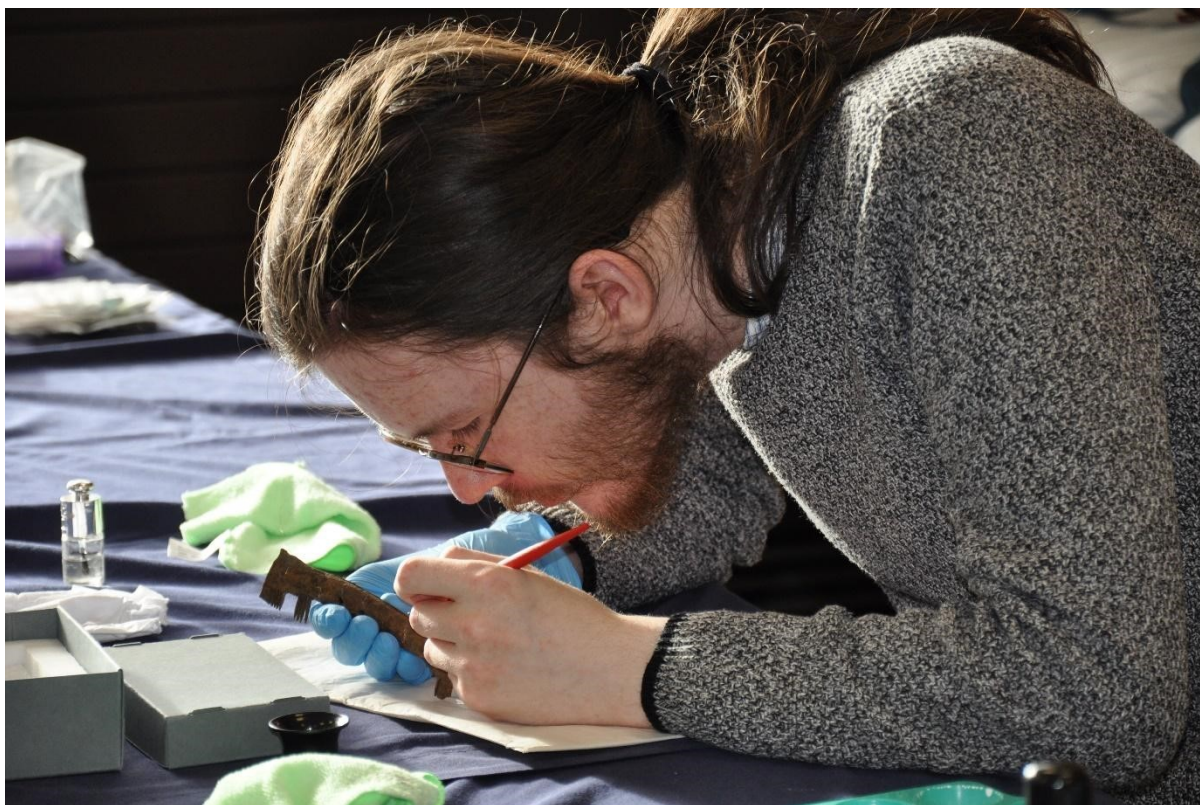
Module Co-ordinator: Dr Michelle Comber

Structure of module:

10 lecture hours and 10 lab hours over ten weeks in semester one. There will be a field class to the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin.

Semester One:

Classes in this module begin on 8th September and end on 10th November (the museum trip may be before or after this date: details will be announced in class).



Lecture times and venues

Day	Time	Location
Tuesday	12 – 1 pm	CSB-1007
Tuesday	1 – 2 pm	CSB-1007

Assessment:

Post-excavation artefact project at end of module. Each student is assigned an artefact and must complete cataloguing, photography, research, and report writing.

Submission deadline for the project is **Tuesday 24th November 2026**.

Course Weighting:

5 ECTS

Module Summary

This module is designed to train students in the basic skills of archaeological post-excavation, processing, and results dissemination. It will explain the varied methods used by archaeologists to analyse and process different types of archaeological material and provide experience in a number of necessary skills. These may include washing and numbering of artefacts, basic conservation, artefact illustration and cataloguing, sample washing and sorting, sample sieving, sample flotation, inking-up and digitising of excavation drawings. This will be achieved through standard lectures, laboratory-based talks, physical demonstrations, and hands-on experience. The module will also explore how and where to publish results, and interaction with the media and public.



Lecture Themes

- Finds and sample processing
- Artefact conservation
- Specialist artefact analyses
- Ecofact analysis
- Animal and human bone analysis
- National Museum requirements

Expert speakers will include:

- A professional conservator
- Consultancy-based archaeologists
- National Museum of Ireland staff



Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- outline the organisation of post-excavation projects.
- demonstrate basic skills of archaeological post-excavation and processing.
- list more advanced/specialist post-excavation techniques.
- work on post-excavation projects, worldwide.
- access publication and dissemination opportunities.

Core Texts

Renfrew, C. & Bahn, P. 2019 *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice*. London, Thames & Hudson.

OR

Greene, K. 2010 *Archaeology: An Introduction*. London, Routledge.

Balme, J. and Alistair P. eds. 2013 *Archaeology in Practice: A Student Guide to Archaeological Analyses*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

National Museum of Ireland 2022 *Standards for the Care and Treatment of Archaeological Objects from Excavations*. Dublin, NMI.

IAI 2006 *Codes of Conduct*. Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland.

<https://www.iai.ie/codes-of-conduct/>

AR3106 Bronze Age Roots of European Civilization

Third year core module (semester one)
Module Co-ordinator: Dr Carleton Jones

Structure of module:

24 lecture hours over twelve weeks in semester one.

Semester One:

Classes in this module begin on 9th September and end on 26th November.

Lecture times and venues

Day	Time	Location
Wednesday	12 - 1pm	AC202
Thursday	12 - 1pm	Mc Munn

Assessment:

Two smaller assignments during the course and a final essay.

- Assignment 1 (15% of overall mark): Source-checking and fact-checking exercise on an AI-generated text (will be provided) discussing an aspect of the Bronze Age. Due Monday, October 5th.
- Assignment 2 (20% of overall mark, 700 words): Short essay focused on types of evidence used by Bronze Age researchers. Due Thursday, November 19th.
- Final Essay (65% of overall mark, 2500 words) due on Thursday December 17th.

Course Weighting:

5 ECTS

Module Summary

The European Bronze Age was characterized by unprecedented population growth, the emergence of more hierarchical societies, the expansion of trade and exchange, competition and warfare between relatively small polities, and the accumulation of wealth by those at the apex of societies. All these phenomena that first became prominent in this formative period in Europe's past have continued to shape the trajectory of European history ever since, all the way to our modern era. The story of the European Bronze Age is a story spread out over roughly two and a half millennia and across landscapes ranging from sunny Mediterranean shores to chilly Nordic mountains, and from Atlantic islands in the west to the vast eastern steppes that merge into the Asian continent. In this class we journey through these centuries and across these landscapes using the discoveries of archaeologists and other scholars and scientists to better understand this ancient and yet very influential period in Europe's past.



Bronze Age palace of Knossos on Crete



Irish Bronze Age high-status ornamentation and weaponry

Learning Outcomes

- Ability to critically assess the merits and demerits of various explanatory models and theories put forward regarding the nature of societies in Bronze Age Europe.
- Ability to compose an organized, logical argument.
- Understanding of how ethnographic-based models of chiefdoms have been used by archaeologists to model European Bronze Age societies.
- Have knowledge of key archaeological issues and sites of the European Bronze Age.
- Have a developed understanding of the deep roots of European civilization.

Core Texts

A comprehensive reading list will be provided at the start of the course on Canvas.

SEMESTER 2 CORE

AR343 Public Archaeology

Third year core module (semester two)

Module co-ordinator: Maggie Ronayne

Structure of module:

23 lecture hours over six weeks in semester two.

Semester Two:

Classes in this module begin on 11th January and end on 18th February.

Lecture times and venues

Day	Time	Location
Monday	12 – 1 pm	D’Arcy Thompson
Tuesday	1 – 2 pm	CSB-1006
Wednesday	12 – 1 pm	CSB-1007
Thursday	12 – 1pm	CSB-1005

Assessment:

An in-class assignment (30% of overall mark) and a project (3000 words and 70% of overall mark).

Project due on Monday 1st March 2027 .

Course Weighting:

5 ECTS

Module Summary

This course is an introduction to Public Archaeology addressing the key question for archaeologists in the 21st century: accountability to communities whose cultural heritage we may be investigating or who are defending their community and its heritage. We will examine professional ethics and standards and the practical ways in which archaeologists can work with grassroots communities.

Case studies will range from heritage destruction resulting from the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan to a consideration of the impact of development projects such as roads in Ireland, large dams in Turkey and heritage tourism at home and abroad. Other topics will include an introduction to community archaeology and the public presentation of archaeological research.

Learning Outcomes

This course will enable students to:

- Identify the variety of areas of work within the field of public archaeology.
- Demonstrate critical understanding of the roles and responsibilities of professional archaeologists in contemporary society.
- Recognise the work, achievements and knowledge of people who are not archaeologists who work for the survival and continuity of culture and heritage.
- Appreciate the need for professional ethics and standards in Archaeology and compare practices in different parts of the world.
- Demonstrate critical understanding of the role of archaeology in development and its implications for communities and their heritage.
- Explain the need for mutual accountability between professional archaeologists and communities.
- Recognise and discuss key issues in community archaeology.
- Construct a clear, coherent argument.
- Assess archaeological writing, projects or other work regarding level and type of engagement with the public.



Core Texts

- Hamilakis, Y. and Duke, (eds) 2007. *Archaeology and Capitalism. From Ethics to Politics*. California: Left Coast Press. (Selected papers).
- Vitelli, K.D. (ed.), 1996. *Archaeological Ethics*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.
- Zimmerman, L.J., Vitelli, K.D. and Hollowell-Zimmer, J. 2003. *Ethical Issues in Archaeology*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.

Students are also advised to consult issues of the journal *Public Archaeology*. A more detailed reading list will be provided in class and much of this material will be available on Canvas.

AR3108 Exploring the Past

Third year core module (semester two)

Module Co-ordinator: Maggie Ronayne

Structure of module:

16 lecture and workshop hours over 5 weeks in Semester two and a field class.

Semester Two:

Classes in this module begin on 22nd February 2027 and end on 22nd March.

Lecture times and venues

Day	Time	Location
Monday	12 – 1 pm	D’Arcy Thompson
Tuesday	1 – 2 pm	CSB-1006
Wednesday	12 – 1 pm	CSB-1007
Thursday	12 – 1pm	CSB-1005

Assessment:

- 3 multi-media project assignments (worth 30% each of the overall mark for the course);
- 10% for participation and engagement in class.

Submission dates TBA.

Course Weighting:

5 ECTS

Module Summary

This course provides students with an exciting opportunity to engage with topics in the current areas of research of academic staff in the discipline of Archaeology as well as developing skills in the presentation of archaeology to varied audiences. Staff members provide lectures, workshops, guidance and a field class in their own areas of research specialization and on multi-media projects which form the basis for student assessment. Participating lecturers and topics vary from year to year. Topics may include research on the archaeology of Early Medieval and Viking Ireland, the archaeology of Ireland’s Great Famine, exploration of the difficult heritage of institutions of the recent past in Ireland and beyond, and identity and kinship in prehistoric societies. The course develops understanding not only of the particular topics being studied, but also introduces students to the practices of research-led enquiry, including the engagement with different audiences that this requires.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Acquire a critical understanding of a number of current research topics in archaeology.
- Develop an understanding of how research-led enquiry is structured.
- Develop acuity in analysis and interpretation in archaeology, including in a fieldwork setting.
- Acquire skills in presenting archaeology to varied audience.



Topics will include:

Ancient Places: interactions with the ancestors.

This section of the module will attempt to break down chronological barriers used to define and understand the Irish past. The past is often presented in nice, neat eras, each clearly defined and distinct from the rest while, in reality, the relationships with what – and who – came before are, and have been, integral to a strong sense of identity at any given time. Antiquity and ancestry lend authenticity and legitimacy to a sense of self and to the presentation of that self in a variety of arenas for a variety of purposes. How the past, and its players, are perceived and utilised has changed over time, however that ancestral thread continued to be



woven into the social, economic, spiritual, and political fabric of societies throughout prehistoric and medieval Ireland. This is abundantly clear in celebrated 'prehistoric' locations such as Rathcroghan, Co. Roscommon. However, other sites and landscapes, including the archaeological laboratory that is the Burren region of Co. Clare, also facilitate an exploration of this enduring connection with the past and those who populate it.

7th-century 'ancestor' burial beneath late 10th-century cashel at Caherconnell, Co. Clare.

Prehistoric Irish tribes: exploring kinship, cooperation, and competition.

The structure and dynamics of living tribal societies around the world have been the focus of much anthropological research and some archaeologists have used these anthropological studies to help them interpret prehistoric societies known to us only through the archaeological record. In this set of lectures and workshops students will engage with relevant anthropological and archaeological literature on tribal societies and explore how this body of research can be used to better understand prehistoric Irish societies



in the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods. We will look in particular at the evidence from Irish megaliths (court tombs and wedge tombs) in order to better understand the people and groups that built and used these monuments and the social contexts within which they lived. Megalithic architecture, site distribution, finds, and ancient DNA analyses will all be explored.

Topic includes a field trip to County Sligo where students will have the opportunity to examine examples of megalithic architecture first-hand.

Sacred Places and Journeys of the Recent Past.

Some sacred places of the recent past whose origins may stretch further back into the past, such as holy wells and the journeys and pilgrimages associated with them, remain under-studied as a topic in historical archaeology. This is despite the fact that community knowledge about lore and practices associated with these paths and places can be plentiful. A number of these devotional landscapes and places continue to be part of the heritage of living traditions today. This section of the course, through a series of case studies associated with fieldwork, will place these landscapes into their wider archaeological, historical and social context while also developing, with students in the class, potential approaches to their investigation based on methodologies in community archaeology.

Core Texts

Will vary depending on the topic but some general reading includes:

Comber, M. and O'Connor, K. (eds.), 2025. *People, Prehistory and the Past*. Dublin: Four Courts Press.

Renfrew, C. 2007. *Prehistory - the making of the human mind*. London: Orion.

Orser, C. 1996. *A Historical Archaeology of the Modern World*. New York and London: Plenum Press.

Further readings will be provided on the course site on Canvas.

SEMESTER 2 OPTIONS

BSS 2104 Introduction to Sustainability

Third year option module (semester two)
Module Co-ordinator: Dr Gesche Kindermann

Structure of module:

22 lecture hours over eleven weeks in Semester two.

Semester 2:

Classes in this module begin on 14th January 2027 and end 1st April.

Lecture times and venues

Day	Time	Location
Thursday	4 – 6 pm	Live online

Assessment:

- Three online timed MCQ quizzes on the content covered in the previous 4 weeks' lectures, worth 40% of the final mark;
- A project and presentation on one of the UN sustainable development goals (to be assigned by the module co-ordinator), worth 50%;
- Class/online discussion board participation, worth 10%.

Assignment deadlines will be announced at the start of the module.

Course weighting:

5 ECTS

Module Summary

The module is future oriented and explores the concept of sustainability in the face of global change. The module introduces students to a broad range of relevant topics relating to all aspects of sustainability, including environmental, social and economic sustainability, and how these relate to each other. It encompasses a wide range of theory and practice and links international examples to local context and relevance. It utilises the expertise of staff from across the university who teach on this module and introduce students to relevant topics and research. The module encourages critical reflection on sustainability and current approaches to sustainability. Discussion sessions with several subject experts will be arranged throughout the term to discuss sustainability with the class from a variety of perspectives.

Topics will include:

- Introduction to Sustainability.
- Climate Change and the Anthropocene.
- Heritage, Communities, and Sustainability.
- History of Globalisation.
- Biodiversity and Sustainability.
- The Built Environment and Sustainability.
- Economic and Organisational Sustainability.
- Circular Economy.
- Personal and Environmental Resilience.
- Sustainable Consumption.
- Healthy Sustainable Futures.
- Sustainability and Global Perspectives.
- Building a Sustainable Society.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, the learner will be able to:

- Define and explain key aspects of sustainability.
- Critically assess existing evidence in relation to how sustainability can best be promoted, in particular in the face of global change and uncertainty.
- Evaluate approaches employed to lead on environmental issues and the impacts they have.
- Apply and appraise sustainable approaches that are used to help reduce environmental pressures and promote sustainability.
- Recommend appropriate practices to create a sustainable environment.

Core Texts

Jacques 2014, *Sustainability: The Basics*. Routledge US [ISBN: 978-04156084]

Monbiot, G. 2018, *Out of the Wreckage: a New Politics for an Age of Crisis*. Verso UK [ISBN: 978-178663289]

[UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

AR325 Minor Dissertation

Third year option module (semesters one and two)

Module Co-ordinator: Maggie Ronayne

Structure of Module:

This course has both taught and research based components. The taught part consists of ten lectures where various aspects of archaeological writing and research are addressed. There will also be a small group workshop where you present and discuss your dissertation topic. The remainder of the course consists of your research for, and writing of the minor dissertation. You will be assigned a supervisor with whom you will meet at fixed intervals to actively progress your work with the dissertation.



NB. This course is only open to 3BA and 4BA students who achieved an overall 2.1 (>60%) in Archaeology in 2BA

This course is not open to Visiting Students

Although students register for this module in semester two, aspects of this module commence in semester one.

Lecture times and venue:

Please note that the module convenor will arrange an initial meeting with the students taking this option in September in order to establish dates, times and a venue for the lectures which are convenient for all. **Note that all lectures are obligatory.** A deduction of 5% will be made for each lecture not attended.

Assessment:

- Research Design (10%) – due Monday 23rd November 2026.
- Annotated Bibliography (10%) – due Monday 8th February 2027.
- Final Dissertation (80%) - due Monday 19th April 2027.

Course Weighting:

5 ECTS

Module Summary

Students taking AR325 research and write a minor dissertation of 5,000 words on an approved topic. The aim is to give students an opportunity to gain research, analysis and writing skills while addressing key archaeological issues in some depth. This is highly recommended for students considering postgraduate

degrees. The emphasis is on the process of doing research. Ten lectures including library information sessions as well as a small group workshop will guide students on research design, interpretation, and presentation. Most of the time will be spent doing research on your chosen topic under the guidance of a member of staff and writing up the results.



At the first meeting all students will be allocated a supervisor by the course co-ordinator and students then arrange to meet with that staff member and select a topic in consultation with them. You will also arrange a consultation timetable together. As well as the dissertation itself, assessment includes submission of a research design as well as an annotated bibliography.

Learning Outcomes

This module enables students to:

- Identify key research issues and ask questions of archaeological interpretations and evidence.
- Formulate, plan and implement a coherent research design within a given time frame.
- Assemble evidence in support of a clear, coherent argument.
- Use bibliographic tools in an advanced way.
- Critically analyse evidence and draw conclusions from it.
- Interpret and present relevant research findings.
- Develop capacity for self-directed learning and independent research.
- Develop an in-depth and critical understanding of a research topic in archaeology.
- Prepare and deliver a brief in-class presentation.
- Discuss key issues with fellow students to support each other's research.

AR347 Palaeoecology – Reconstructing Past Environments

Third year option module (semester two)

Module Co-ordinator: Dr Karen Molloy

Structure of Module:

22 lecture hours over 11 weeks in Semester 2.

Semester 2:

Classes in this module begin on 11th of January and end on 24th of March.

Lecture times and venues

Day	Time	Location
Monday	2 – 3 pm	Larmor
Wednesday	2 – 3 pm	D'Arcy Thompson

Assessment:

Continuous assessment with

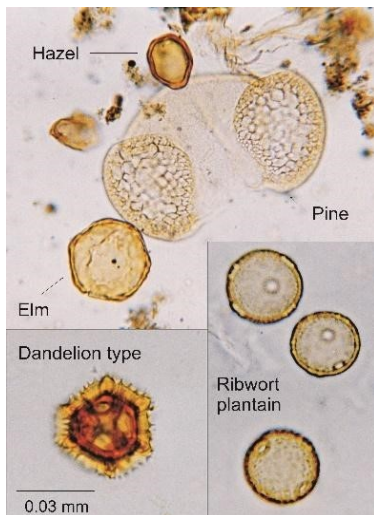
- weekly MCQs (10% of overall mark);
- assignment 1: based on on-campus field class (10% of overall mark);
- assignment 2: based on laboratory sessions (40% of overall mark);
- assignment 3: essay (40% of overall mark).

Deadlines: TBA in class.

Course Weighting:

5 ECTS

N.B. AR347 includes three **compulsory** 2-hour laboratory sessions (in weeks 4, 5, 6 and 7). The dates and times of these will be finalised at the start of Semester two. Attendance at the laboratory sessions is mandatory.



Module Summary

The Irish landscape as we know it today is governed by what has happened in the past. Both climate change and anthropogenic factors have played significant roles in shaping the development of the landscape. The objectives of this module are to introduce the student to palaeo-environmental methods, in particular pollen analysis, as a means of interpreting the past 15,000 years of vegetation and environmental change in Ireland.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course students will:

- Understand the main principles of pollen analysis.
- Understand the key vegetation changes that have occurred in Ireland since the end of the Ice Age.
- Have an appreciation of the role people have played in shaping the Irish landscape.
- Have a greater understanding of the natural world.
- Be able to interpret a pollen diagram.
- Be able to identify the pollen of the main native Irish trees.

Core Texts

Theory of pollen analysis

- Fægri, K. and Iversen, J. (1975, 1989). *Textbook of Pollen Analysis*. Blackwell (3rd ed) and Wiley (4th ed by Fægri K, Kaland PE, Krzywinski K.). 581.38
- Moore, P.D., Webb, J.A. and Collinson, M.E. (1991). *Pollen Analysis* (2nd ed). Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford.

Vegetation history of Ireland and north-western Europe

- Hall, V. 2011. *The Making of Ireland's Landscape Since the Ice Age*. Collins Press, Cork. 554.15
- Mitchell, F. and Ryan, M. 1997. *Reading the Irish Landscape* (3rd ed.) Country House, Dublin. 551.4109415. (also previous edition useful: Mitchell, F. (1986). *The Shell Guide to Reading the Irish Landscape*, 2nd ed. Country House, Dublin. 911.415)
- O'Connell, M. and Molloy, K. 2001. Farming and woodland dynamics in Ireland during the Neolithic. *Biology and Environment (Proc R Ir Acad , Ser B)*, **101**, 99-128.
NOTE: this journal article is also available in book format as follows: Mitchell, F.J.G. (Ed.) 2001. *From palaeoecology to conservation: an interdisciplinary vision. Biology and Environment (Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Ser. B)*, Vol. 101B, issues 1-2. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. 3 copies in library at 574 BIO.
- O'Connell, M. 1994. *Connemara. Vegetation and Land Use since the Last Ice Age*. Office of Public Works, Dublin, 64 pp. At 574.94174; 2 copies in library.

AR3105 Archaeological Training Excavation

Third year option module (semester two)
Module Co-ordinator: Dr Michelle Comber

Structure of module:

Two weeks practical excavation on site **in summer 2026** (i.e. between second and third year).



Venue

On site

2026/27 venue: Prospecthill Court Tomb, Co. Galway.

Assessment:

- On-site skills checklist
- Active participation
- Reflective learner's journal/site diary.

Course Weighting:

5 ECTS

Module Summary

This intensive module is designed to provide students with their first taste of hands-on archaeological excavation. It will explain the varied methods used by archaeologists to excavate different types of site, whilst providing practical experience of at least one of those methods in the field. The module will also train students in a number of basic necessary skills, including grid establishment and use, trowelling techniques, artefact recovery and recording, sampling methodology, context recording, and planning and photography. This will be achieved through on-site talks, physical demonstrations, and hands-on experience working on an actual archaeological excavation.

Topics will include:

- Cutting layout.
- Site grids and coordinates.
- Excavation techniques.
- Feature excavation.
- Artefact excavation.
- Sampling.



Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

- Outline the basic organisation and running of an archaeological excavation (including health and safety).
- Demonstrate the basic skills of archaeological excavation and recording.
- Give examples of primary post-excavation techniques.
- Work on archaeological excavations worldwide.

Core Texts

Renfrew, C. and Bahn, P. 2019 *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice*. London, Thames & Hudson.

OR

Greene, K. 2010 *Archaeology: An Introduction*. London, Routledge.

Handbook: Comber, M. 2026 *Excavation Guidelines*. Unpublished.

Policy guidelines: DAHGI 1999 *Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation*. Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. Govt. of Ireland Stationary Office, Dublin.

Framework document: DAHGI 1999 *Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage*. Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. Govt. of Ireland Stationary Office, Dublin.

Online source: IAI 2006 *Codes of Conduct*. Institute of Archaeologists of Ireland. <https://www.iai.ie/codes-of-conduct/>

Active Learning– Some Practical Advice

Studying at University level is quite different from being at school. You will find that it is much more up to you to plan and organise your study long term and short term, from the programme modules you choose to the weekly and daily study schedule. To benefit fully from being enrolled in a programme we strongly advise you to settle into a good study practice right from the start. While the departments and the lecturers are committed to providing you with the best possible learning experience, the outcome is ultimately dependent on your contribution and dedication to your own learning. You have chosen to come here and you have chosen the subjects you wish to study. For that reason, we expect you to have significant interest in your chosen subjects. Our role is to help you to acquire the knowledge and the skills you will need in your future career. We therefore strongly recommend the following:

- **Attend all lectures, tutorials, seminars, field classes and other teaching opportunities offered to you.** In archaeology there are no textbooks that cover all the topics. This means that a lot of information will be provided only through lectures, tutorials and field classes. The lecturers are there to share their knowledge and experience with you for your benefit. Missing out on this will have severe negative impact on your learning.
- **Start reading the suggested course literature from the beginning of semester.** This will support your understanding of the presentations through lectures. In third level education you should not expect lecturers to repeat all the arguments put forward in articles. Their role is to assist you in evaluating data, methodology and theories, while you are responsible for acquiring basic information available in the course reading.
- **Participate in class discussions.** Lectures are much more interesting they if involve your active participation. You should not hesitate to raise and discuss points during class, or challenge and question what is being said. Feel free to be critical! The lecturer will not take offence – he/she will see this as a positive contribution to the teaching. An important skill that future employers look for is the ability to assess and discuss data and projects.
- **Plan and schedule your study.** It is important to apportion time to read, make notes and write throughout the semester, and it is particularly important to schedule time to complete your assignments. For recommendations, please read the suggestions from Aidan Moran in the first year handbook that you find on our archaeology website www.nuigalway.ie/archaeology/
- **Form small study groups.** Join up with a few fellow students. You can help each other by meeting regularly to discuss the course reading and the topics covered in the lectures.
- **Get involved in out-of-class discipline-related activities.** It is important to recognise that you learn a great deal from fellow students, at undergraduate as well as postgraduate level. They can assist and advise you informally on many things, and we encourage you to socialise with your fellow students, for instance by joining the Archaeological Society.