NEANDERTHALS & MODERN HUMAN ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES AT COVA GRAN DE SANTA LINYA, SPAIN

COURSE ID: HIST 301CV
Jun 26-Jul 23, 2022

Academic Credits: 8 Semester Credit Units (Equivalent to 12 Quarter Units)
School of Record: Iowa Wesleyan University

DIRECTORS
Dr. Rafael Mora Torcal: Professor, Universitat Autonoma Barcelona (Rafael.mora@uab.cat)
Dr. Jorge Martinez-Moreno: Research Associate, Universitat Autonoma Barcelona (Jorge.martinez@uab.cat)

Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, only fully vaccinated students will be allowed to attend this program. Please contact CFS Enrollment Department if you have any questions or concerns.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Human settlements in mountain landscapes are important for understanding prehistoric lifestyles. Traditionally, these harsh and unattractive environments have played a marginal role in paleoanthropological discussions. However, the investigation of mountain sites with evidence of foragers sheds light on utilization of resources, adaptation to the environment and social structures and organization. Hunter-gatherers have been documented and are well known in some parts of the Old World but understanding of this organizational system in the south Pyrenees of Spain remains elusive. Archaeological sites attributed to the Upper Pleistocene and Holocene are rare in this region, and it is difficult to trace human occupation trends throughout these periods. The notion that the south Pyrenees could be considered an “empty” landscape deserves to be explored further.
Cova Gran de Santa Linya (Lleida, Catalunya) ([http://cepap.uab.cat/recerca.htm](http://cepap.uab.cat/recerca.htm)) is a rock shelter located at the seam between the first range of the southern Pyrenees. The cave is rich in evidence of human occupation covering the last 50,000 years of human settlement in the area. Investigation at the site allows us to recognize both the evolution of forager groups and the differences between Neanderthal and anatomically modern human (AMH) adaptive strategies.

The archaeological deposits at Cova Gran contains animal bones, hearths, and Middle and Upper Paleolithic artifacts. The Early Upper Paleolithic assemblage contributes to the debate on the Middle/Upper Paleolithic “transition.” Additionally, excavations at Cova Gran confirmed the existence of important cultural deposits related to human occupation dated to Last Glacial Maximum (Magdalenian). Recently, a new archaeological sequence attributed to the Late Glacial (Bolling/Allerod) and Younger Dryas has been identified. This phase is critical to understanding changes in the hunter-gatherer sphere transitioning from the “Ice Age” to a new climatic condition. Finally, much evidence indicates the presence of important but poorly known deposits relating to the appearance of the agropastoral system. Cova Gran could play a relevant role in the development of sophisticated pastoral strategies affecting the south Pyrenees.

The long human occupation sequence at Cova Gran provides excellent opportunities to explore and document an extensive regional cultural sequence, beginning ca. 50,000 years ago. This rock shelter permits testing of multiple hypotheses and models that explain local adaptations and cultural evolution that are essential to understanding prehistoric evolutionary processes that affected the people living in the Western Mediterranean. Cova Gran is fundamental to understanding key biocultural events at the heart of paleoanthropological debate in the Iberian Peninsula, from the demise of Neanderthals in parallel with the spread of anatomically modern humans 40,000 years ago to the impact of the Neolithic “revolution” in the area 7,000 years ago.

### IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER

The Center for Field Sciences was established to support field training in a range of sciences at sites across the world. Traveling and conducting field work involves risk. Students interested in participating in any CFS program must weigh the potential risk against the value of education provided for the program sites of their choosing.

Risk is inherent in everything we do and the CFS takes risk seriously. A committee of leading scholars review each field school location prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the CFS continually monitor conditions at the program site, its academic quality and ability to conduct as safe of an experience as possible.

The CFS does not provide trip or travel cancellation insurance. Students are encouraged to explore such insurance policies on their own. Post Covid 19, most basic policies do not cover trip cancelation due to pandemics. If you wish to purchase an insurance policy that cover such contingencies, explore Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) plans. [Insuremytrip.com](http://Insuremytrip.com) or [Travelguard.com](http://Travelguard.com) are possible websites where students may explore different insurance policies.

You should be aware that conditions in the field are different than those you experience in your home, dorms or college town. You will be exposed to the elements, live in rustic accommodation, and expect to engage in physical activity daily.

We do our best to follow schedule and activities as outlined in this syllabus. Yet local permitting agencies, political, environmental, personal or weather conditions may force changes. This syllabus, therefore, is only a general commitment. Students should allow flexibility and adaptability as research work is frequently subject to change.
All students must consult medical professionals to ensure they are fit to participate in this program. If you have any medical concerns, please consult your doctor. For all other concerns, please consult with the program director – as appropriate.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This program is an immersive, practical experience in archaeological fieldwork involving hands-on experiential learning: students will study how to conduct archaeological research. Archaeology involves physical work and exposure to the elements and thus requires a measure of acceptance that this will not be the typical university learning environment. You will get sweaty, tired and have to work in the outdoors. Students are required to come equipped with sufficient excitement and adequate understanding that the archaeological endeavor requires fieldwork experience.

The main goals for this program are:

- Provide students a practical working knowledge of **archaeological field methods**, including survey, excavation, laboratory analysis, artifact cataloging, and conservation.

- Introduce students to the **intellectual challenges presented by archaeological research**, including research design, the interpretation of data, and the continual readjustment of hypotheses and field strategies in response to information recovered in the field.

From a methodological perspective, fieldwork includes three main aspects:

**Excavation:** The goal of the excavation is the retrieval of artifacts, ecofacts and features within context. Participants will be trained in the specific excavation and analysis tasks as well as on the general objectives of the excavation and its research design.

**Lab Work:** Lab work is a key part of our archaeological strategy and includes inventory, classification and initial study of the artifacts, bones and archaeological structures found at the site. Project staff will train all participants in the study of the material retrieved during the excavation. Each day, we will discuss the activities to be performed and the results that are being obtained in order to plan for the work ahead and to fully involve participants in the project.

**Lectures:** Activities will be complemented with lectures. Lectures will be 45-60 minutes each and presented by staff. Lecture titles and themes are listed below. The schedule may be subject to change, depending on weather and research activities.

**LEARNT SKILLS**

We are aware that many students may not seek academic careers but will pursue employment in the Cultural Resource Management (CRM) sector. To that end, we are following the Twin Cairns Skills Log Matrix™ ([https://twincairns.com/skill-set-matrix/](https://twincairns.com/skill-set-matrix/)) and will provide training for the following skills:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Skill Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artifact Processing</td>
<td>Ability to identify, collect and record a wide range of artifact types, understanding their relative fragility within different site types and conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact Recovery</td>
<td>Ability to record, safely excavate and storage artifacts and ecofacts made of different types of materials and various level of fragility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact Illustration</td>
<td>Ability to draw and illustrate different artifact types for report and publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification &amp; Seriation</td>
<td>Understand how to assign artifacts to accepted cultural spheres, across space (classification) and across time (seriation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording-Excavations</td>
<td>Ability to understand, collect and record all excavation process and data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...
Screening | Ability to use geological and general screens to identify, collect and record small scale finds
---|---
Understanding Stratigraphy | Ability to understand the relationships between layers of both cultural and natural depositions
Flotation | Able to use flotation machine to collect flora and fauna
Small Hand Tools | Can operate a trowel or similar small hand tool to conduct excavations
Large Hand Tools | Can operate a pickax, hoe or similar large hand tool to conduct excavations
Section Drawings | Ability to understand concepts of physical and chronological stratigraphy and the method to record those accurately

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Course structure may be subject to change upon directors’ discretion.

**Fieldwork schedule week 1-4**

**Monday to Friday:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00-9:00am</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00am-12:00pm</td>
<td>Lab work, lectures &amp; discussion in Sant Llorenç de Montgai facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-2:30pm</td>
<td>Lunch &amp; Free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30-8:00pm</td>
<td>Fieldwork at Cova Gran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00-8:30pm</td>
<td>Drive back to field house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00pm</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On Fridays, between 4-8pm, we will visit sites of interest – both natural and cultural – in the area around la Noguera.

**Saturday & Sunday:** Days off, free time

In case of rainy days, lectures and lab work will replace field work.

**ACADEMIC GRADING MATRIX**

The general framework of evaluation is presented below:

**70% Field Participation & Collaboration** – This encapsulates daily participation and progress in learning techniques of excavation, survey and lab work. Students will be trained to carry out accurate, careful archaeological work, use basic field equipment, and to comprehensively record data. Ability to carefully observe and follow instructions regarding field procedures, preparing forms, identifying artifacts, processing screen residue, and overall attentiveness in class are all important. Each student is expected to develop a solid grasp of recording procedures (provenience, soil attributes, excavation notes, computer data base in the field and in the lab, etc.). Equally important is overall good citizenship and cooperation as part of the archaeological research team. Archaeology requires commitment to promptness; cooperation in loading and unloading gear at the beginning and end of each field day; anticipating field tasks; helping fellow team members with recording, measurements, excavation, and lab tasks; helping to maintain group morale.

**30% Final essay** – Students will present a paper with a maximum length of 10 pages, describing their participation in the project, and the meaning of Cova Gran to contextualize human settlement in Western Europe. Students will be assessed on their ability to organize the information and their comprehension of the readings.

**SKILLS MATRIX LEVELS**

The school instructors will evaluate the level each student has achieved on the list of skills provided above. Each skill will be graded on one of the following three levels:
**Basic:** Can perform the skill/task with some supervision.

**Competent:** Can perform the skill/task without any supervision.

**Advanced:** Can perform the skill/task and teach others how to do it.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

The required minimum attendance for the successful completion of the field school is 85% of the course hours. Any significant delay or early departure from an activity will be calculated as an absence from the activity. An acceptable number of absences for medical or other personal reasons will not be considered if the student catches up on the field school study plan through additional readings, homework or tutorials with program staff members.

**PREREQUISITES**

None. This is hands-on, experiential learning and students will study on-site how to conduct archaeological research. Field work involves physical work and exposure to the elements and thus requires a measure of understanding that this will not be the typical university learning environment. You will have to work outdoors and will get sweaty and tired. Students are required to come equipped with sufficient excitement and adequate understanding that field work requires real, hard work, in the sun and wind. The work requires patience, discipline, and attention to detail.

**PROGRAM ETIQUETTE**

The staff will promote an atmosphere combining freedom and responsibility during the program. All participants are adults and are responsible for their own person and actions. Students are always seen as representative of the project by local community members and must act accordingly.

The village of Sant Llorenç de Montgai is a safe environment. We are living among friends from this small, rural, calm community of fewer than 150 inhabitants. Local people know and like the foreign students that are present in the village through different archaeological programs developed since 2001. To ensure a continuation of these relationships, appropriate and respectful behavior towards the habitants of Sant Llorenç de Montagi is mandatory. If any issues arise, communicate immediately to the staff.

This project does not tolerate any kind of harassment or discrimination for reasons of gender, language, ideology, race, or sexual orientation. Students experiencing or witnessing such behavior should immediately contact designated project staff members.

**EQUIPMENT LIST**

Tools used in the excavation and lab will be provided by the project. For personal items, students should bring the following:

- Shower towel
- Shower sandals
- Hat
- Canteen
- Sunscreen
- Light jacket or raincoat
- Light cotton work pants
- Long & short sleeve cotton shirts
- Tennis shoes (not rigid boots)
- Socks
- Insect repellent
- Sunglasses with UV protection
- Beach towel & swim suit
- Personal medication (as needed)

**TRAVEL & MEETING POINT/TIME**

We suggest you hold purchasing your airline ticket until six (6) weeks prior to departure date. Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and a range of other factors may require the cancelation of a program. The CFS typically takes a close look at local conditions 6-7 weeks prior to program beginning and make a Go/No Go decision by then. Such time frame still allows for the
purchase of deeply discounted airline tickets while protecting students from potential loss of airline ticket costs if CFS is forced to cancel a program.

Students will be met by program staff at the Bar-Cafeteria at Lleida-Pyrenees RENFE railway station on June 26 at 7:00am (19 hr). Trains to Lleida-Pyrenees depart frequently from the Sants RENFE train station at Barcelona. Trains from the Barcelona airport to the Sants RENFE station depart every 30 minutes. The train schedule from the Sants RENFE station to Lleida Pirineus can be found at http://www.renfe.com/EN/viajeros/index.html.

This program will last 4 weeks, beginning on Sunday June 26 and ending on Saturday, July 23 of 2022. If you missed your connection or your flight is delayed, please call, text or email the project director immediately. A local emergency cell phone number will be provided to all enrolled students.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

Spain forms part of the Schengen Visa Agreement. US citizens may enter Spain for up to 90 days for tourist or business purposes without a visa. Stiff fines may be imposed for overstaying the 90-day period. Your passport should be valid for at least three months beyond the period of your stay.

MEALS & ACCOMMODATION

Sant Llorenç de Montgai is a small village located in a scenic landscape by the Sant Llorenç Water Reservoir. This a quite rural community composed mostly of retired local farmers. Summers are usually sunny and warm (between 95-105°F). Direct exposure to the sun could be dangerous and regular hydration and the use of strong sun cream are necessary. Occasionally, strong summer storms may happen. The area has some mosquitoes, annoying but not dangerous (they do not transmit malaria or other illnesses).

Participants will live at the Alberg LaCova guest house. This rural house has shared rooms (6-8 people) and community areas. The house, bathrooms and rooms will be regularly cleaned. The Alberg provides sheets – sleeping-bags are not necessary. There is WiFi and a laundry machine for students to wash their clothes. Students will take turns and help maintain clean community spaces such as the dining room and dormitories.

The program will provide two large meals a day – lunch and dinner. These meals will include different local dishes composed of a mix of vegetables, meat, and fish, with fresh fruit. Vegetarian and participants with celiac allergies are welcome but may face limited and repetitive food options.

Balaguer-Lleida is the regional town and there are 2-3 daily commuter train to there from the Sant Llorenç train station (http://lleidalapobla.fgc.cat/home). Students may travel to Balaguer-Lleida for ATM, supermarket and other shopping for items not found at Sant Llorenç. If necessary, staff will transport participants to Balaguer-Lleida (medications, medical visits, etc).

The health system in the Catalunya region offers medical assistance to foreign visitors for a fee. The fee will be covered by the CFS health insurance. Look at the CFS website for details.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

International dialing code: + 34

Money & Banks: The Euro is the local currency. ATMs machines are available in Balaguer (10 km).

Credit & Debit Cards: Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, all businesses now accept credit & debit card payments. This situation may change as the Spanish, and/or Catalunya government directive to local businesses.

Local Language: Sant Llorenç de Montgai is in Catalunya and Catalan is the usual language in the village, but everyone speaks Spanish as well. Project staff speak fluent English.
Measure units: degree Celsius (°C), meter (m.), gram (gr.), liter (l)

ACADEMIC CREDITS & TRANSCRIPT

Attending students will be awarded 8 semester credit units (equivalent to 12 quarter credit units). Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school based on the assessment matrix (above). This program provides a minimum of 160 direct instructional hours. Students are encouraged to discuss the transferability of credit units with faculty and the registrar at their home institutions prior to attending this program.

Students will be able to access their transcript through our School of Record – Iowa Wesleyan University. IWU has authorized the National Student Clearinghouse to provide enrollment and degree verification (https://secure.studentclearinghouse.org/tsorder/schoolwelcome?ficecode=00187100). Upon completion of a program, students will get an email from IWU with a student ID that may be used to retrieve transcripts. The first set of transcripts will be provided at no cost; additional transcripts may require payment. If you have questions about ordering a transcript, contact the IWU office of the registrar at registrar@iw.edu.

REQUIRED READINGS

PDF files of all mandatory readings will be provided to enrolled students via a shared Dropbox folder.


RECOMMENDED READINGS

Neanderthals, anatomically modern humans, hunter-gatherer lifestyle and other issues dealt with in the project have an immense bibliography. As general introductory readings, we suggest the following general books that it can easily be found at your local university library.