

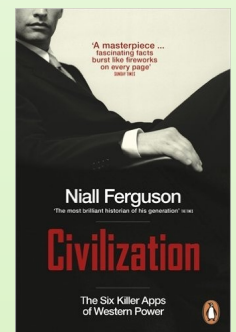
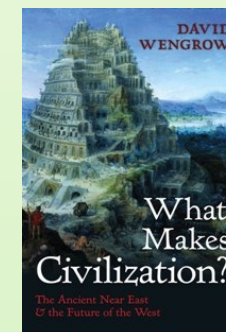
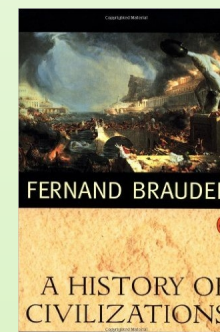
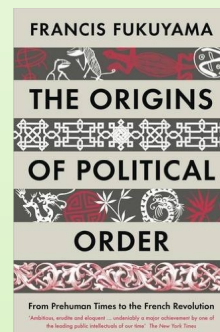
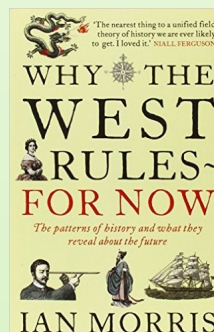
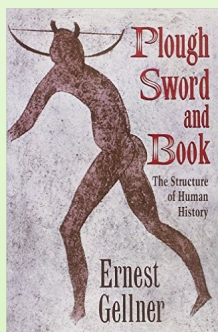
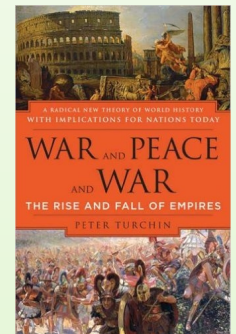
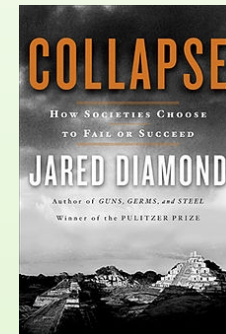
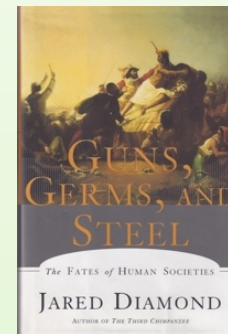
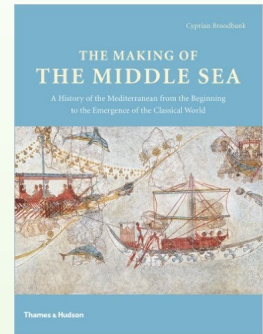
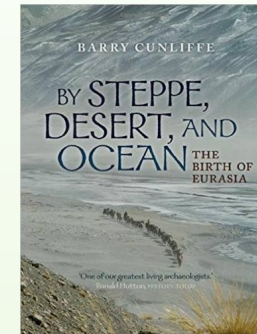


# UCL

## ARCL3097 Archaeology in the World

A module assessed  
by student blogs

[mark.lake@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:mark.lake@ucl.ac.uk)



# Basic facts

- 3rd year undergraduates
- Compulsory course
- c. 50-60 students
- Assessed by individual student blogs on MyPortfolio




## ARCL3097: The Pacific past in the European imagination

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ARCL3097: The Pacific past in the European imagination

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**4. Case study: Easter Island**

Posted by Melissa Shirens on 22 January 2018, 10:05 PM

Few places in the world conjure such images of *remoteness and mystery* in the popular imagination as Easter Island. The moai, the huge, enigmatic stone statues standing like sentries along the island's coast, have been the subject of European speculation for centuries. Add to the mixture the curious Rongorongo tablets, the only written script found anywhere in Polynesia but to this day still untranslated; and stories of the 'Birdman cult' which supplanted competitive statue-building: it's not hard to see why Easter Island has appealed to European curiosity for so long. *Imagery of the moai* makes frequent appearances in television, film, advertising and fiction. But is there any basis to this view of Easter Island as the remains of a 'lost civilisation' who brought about their own demise? Is this another case of European myth-making in the Pacific? And what can archaeology tell us?



*Fig. 7. Six of the f/teen moai on the ahu (ceremonial platform) of Tongariki (Wikimedia Commons, 2006)*

Southeast Polynesian seafarers, likely from Mangareva, first made landfall on Rapa Nui (Easter Island) between 800 and 1200 AD and developed a complex, centralised society. By the time Europeans arrived in 1722, the population was in decline. This was the beginning of the following narrative. The people of Rapa Nui *exceeded the resources* available to them. They chopped too many trees down too quickly (to move the moai and to grow crops), depleting their supply of wood for canoes, making fishing impossible. The lack of trees caused erosion and degraded the quality of the soil. This ultimately led to internecine warfare and a catastrophic decline in the population. However, archaeology has debunked this story, showing that the Polynesian rat played a *significant role* in the deforestation of the island. *Archaeological evidence* shows that the Rapa Nui were enriching their soils for agriculture. They were also eating far more marine protein than previously assumed. As for using up all the trees as rollers to move the statues on, experimental archaeology has demonstrated a much more likely answer; that statues were maneuvered using ropes, which was relatively easy in terms of the amount of time and labour necessary.

The evidence suggests that they were able to adapt to and manage changing environmental conditions. It's also become apparent that by far the biggest depredations to Rapa Nui's population was caused by the introduction of European disease, 'blackbirding', and forced removals of indigenous people.



Nevertheless, the narrative of the indigenous population causing their own downfall shows no signs of going away. Jared Diamond's best-selling *Collapse* was instrumental in popularising this story. It's a popular subject for television documentaries. A cursory search on youtube will show videos with titles

# Aims of the course

- Intellectual development
  - Independently making connections
- Personal development
  - Communicating the relevance of their discipline
- For archaeology
  - Graduate ambassadors

## Year 1

TERM 1	Introduction to Archaeology	Sites and Artefacts	World Archaeology	Social Anthropology
TERM 2	Field Methods	People and Environments	World Archaeology	World Archaeology Option

## Year 2

TERM 1	Interpreting Evidence	Current Issues in Archaeological Theory	Science/Skills option	Free option
TERM 2	Research & Presentation Skills	Public Archaeology	World Archaeology Option	Free option

## Year 3

TERM 1	Dissertation	Fieldwork Portfolio	World Archaeology Option	Free option
TERM 2		Archaeology in the world	Science/Skills option	Free option

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# The blog - topic

- Student's **free choice**

**The North/South Divide in Archaeology**

**ARCL3097: The Pacific past in the European imagination**

**“Not in my backyard” – Why Won’t Academia Associate with Alternative Approaches?**

**Tags:** Ancient Empire, civilisation, Collapse, Egyptian Empire, Empire, equality, Fall, inequality, Old Kingdom, Power, Qin Empire, Rise, Roman Empire, Society

**The rise and fall of Ancient Empires: Power and Inequality**

**Beauty in the eye of the iPhone holder**

**The Uniqueness of the West**

**‘For a free and united Europe’: the zenith of the West?**

**Veganism Meets Archaeology**

**Should animal products be the thing of the past?**



# The blog - assessment criteria

- Assignment-specific criteria match learning outcomes
  - 15% Choice and understanding of theme
  - 15% Choice of case studies and relevance to theme
  - 15% Overall coherence and balance of blog; effective juxtaposition of scales
  - 15% Connection to contemporary concerns beyond the discipline
  - 20% Quality and style of writing
  - 10% Referencing. Correct citations and, where necessary, copyright notices.
  - 10% Appearance, and use of images and/or multimedia



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# The blog - formative feedback

- Blog plan
- 1st entry

MyPortfolio

Log In

TWTT0 ARCL3097: Archaeology in the World - Why Won't Academia Associate with Alternative Approaches

"Not in my backyard" - Why Won't Academia Associate with Alternative Approaches?

Posted by Darren Smith-Suzuki on 22 January 2018, 6:09 PM

Archaeology and mysticism have always been inextricably linked. Keen to protect occultism in other societies in the name of cultural and ethnic diversity, 'Western' archaeologists continue to evade the alternative approaches embodied in their own territory.

When we, as archaeologists, encounter any form of spiritualism or occultist practices in other countries, we are happy to be as accepting as possible of the beliefs of indigenous populations. This appears to be either out of a hope to placate them so that we may carry out what is essentially destructive work in their sacred spaces, or out of a sense of 'Western' benevolence.

So why is it that archaeology is keen to accept the occult when it belongs to foreign societies, but won't associate with such spiritualist beliefs from our own?



Above, a Neolithic burial dating from 1959, in Rappahannock, Ireland. By Haukorth (Own work) [CC-BY-SA 3.0] (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>) or GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>), via Wikimedia Commons

Geographically 'Other' and Culturally 'Other' vs Geographically 'Here' and Culturally 'Other'

Perhaps when such spiritualist practices are 'foreign' to another location separate from our own, we are able to deal with them, due to their connection to a society that is not our own. It seems like there is a sense of threat surrounding alternative approaches to science and academia, that is considered 'other' when belonging to cultures that are different to ours.

These things that are deemed to be powerful in other communities, we have rationalised away - perhaps due to a fear of their disruptive impact on our society - a society that is considered 'below' such beliefs.

Furthermore, there are deep colonial undertones to this point of view, that we are not accepting of spiritualist and alternative approaches due to the fact that we perceive ourselves to be an 'enlightened' society, which has moved past them.

My intent in writing this blog is to explore the nature of this relationship, as well as why academia won't associate with our own alternative approaches. Through this overarching theme, I will analyse the potential reasons behind this strange dynamic through a series of case studies where the scientific world and the 'spiritualist' world collide.

## ARCLG3097 Blog Plan (2017/18)

### Formative assessment

You must publish **one blog entry** on Campus Pack Blog by 23:59 on 30th November 2017. You must also complete this **blog plan** and upload it to the "Formative Blog Plan Inbox" on Moodle by 23:59 on 30th November 2017. There is no need to print either the blog plan (this document) or the formative blog entry. Please do not upload anything to Turnitin.

Note that you may alter the plan for your blog following formative feedback. Note also that you may include the one formative blog entry among your final six entries, or revise it, or replace it entirely, as you wish.

#### Your name:

XXXX

#### Blog secret URL:

<https://myportfolio.ucl.ac.uk/view.php?tucl1XwKFVbSkA9jxzeRM>

#### Disability

Please note here if you are registered with Student Disability Services and wish us to be aware of a learning difficulty (such as dyslexia) or other condition.

### Brief summary of your theme

Briefly explain to us what overarching theme connects your blog entries and what message you hope the reader will take away from the set of blog entries considered as a whole.

#### Theme

Archaeology and mysticism have always been inextricably linked. Keen to protect occultism in other societies in the name of cultural and ethnic diversity, 'Western' archaeologists continue to evade the alternative approaches embodied in their own territory. My intent in writing this blog is to explore the nature of this relationship, as well as why academia won't associate with our own alternative approaches. In this, I will analyse the potential reasons behind this strange dynamic through a series of case studies where the scientific world and the 'spiritualist' world collide.

### Blog entry subjects

Very briefly describe the subject matter of each blog entry. You may find it useful to use one or two entries to set the scene or draw overall conclusions. Note also that you are free to change the specific subject matter of individual blog entries prior to submitting the final assessed blog.

#### Blog 1

##### "Not in my backyard" - Why Won't Academia Associate with Alternative Approaches?

'Introductory' entry, setting out the scene of archaeology's relationship with the occult, and why we won't associate with such spiritualist beliefs from our own culture. If we respect it from the past, why don't we respect it now? Looking at the Colonial implications of this, how the 'natives', in a sense, are allowed to have their ritual aspects but we as an 'enlightened' society are not.

#### Blog 2

##### 'Hippies at Stonehenge': Archaeology vs Neo-Druidism

First case study, looking at Druids at Stonehenge, the history of Neo-Druidism at Stonehenge, before examining the tenuous relationship between the archaeologists working on the site, and the religious groups that consider it a sacred site.

#### Blog 3

##### Ian Hodder and the Cult of the Mother Goddess

Case study on the excavations at Catalhöyük. Looking at the interactions between the archaeologists working on the site, such as Ian Hodder, and the Earth Mother Goddess cult. Whilst Hodder is a post-processual, he is still an archaeologist and would have had to navigate between the two sides.

#### Blog 4

##### 'Math meets myth' - Ley Lines and Megaliths

Case study, will look at ley lines and Megalith enthusiasts and their 'appropriation' of archaeology, how these beliefs are approached by members of academia, in archaeology and in other fields as well. Have there been any incidences when there have been members of a 'grey area' that can work with both sides?

#### Blog 5

##### Parallels in Ecology and Medicine

A final case study to show that this is not a dynamic that is exclusive to archaeology alone. Will look at the differences between 'deep green' and 'light green' ecology movements, and how these two intersect. In medicine, will examine relationship between homeopathic medicine and conventional medicine, and to what extent homeopathic medicine is accepted or acknowledged by contemporary scientists.

#### Blog 6

##### Looking to the Future

A final, 'concluding' blog, will summarise findings as well as offer final thoughts on the previous case studies. Will ask more questions as to how this dynamic reflects us as a society, and how we, as archaeologists can change things and the future, and work to create a better relationship with New Age groups.

# The blog - formative feedback

- Blog plan
- 1st entry

- Feedback provided as **free text** and **markup** on **assessment grid**

## OVERALL COMMENTS:

We have discussed this at length, but it is good to see that the way you introduce and describe the case studies in the blog plan suggests a good grasp of what such case study contributes to the overall theme. That said there is something that possibly does require further work. As I understand it, you overall argument is that while academic rigour is essential, as it is to all other sciences, they don't have it. And, if not all of your blog can be devoted to demonstrating and exploring this later, so there is a risk that the format comes in somewhat just an assertion backed up with little or no evidence provided to back it up. I wonder whether you do actually want a case study for perhaps you can do this in the first entry) to demonstrate balance of the research in other sciences? One other related point is that I find the statement "If the same thing occurred on a foreign shore, we would embrace it, no matter how potentially toxic. Why can we respect this conclusion in the past, but not in the present?" slightly confusing - are we talking about taking the research evidence today, or studying in the past in which case that is a very different kind of information since all people can't think in a scientific way (quite the same way). This sample blog entry is written as an ongoing piece of work, but is still properly referenced (although you could consider considering the author your student status to be fully actual). There is arguably a bit of repetition in the choice of illustrations and, while you do credit them to sources, I suspect they are not strictly freely available to copy (in a public blog). Overall, a promising start.

Category	%	1 (0-40%)	2 (40-60%)	3 (60-80%)	4 (80-100%)
Learning outcomes 1) Possess detailed knowledge of one particular case and the ability to demonstrate a basic knowledge and skills they have acquired in other sciences are relevant to it 2) Enhanced their understanding of the potential and limitations of trading information from the particular to the general					
Choice and understanding of themes	25%	Good but limited choice of themes. Some evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Good framing of themes. Some evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Adapted framing of themes. Good evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Weak framing of themes. Limited evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.
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Overall coherence and the balance of the evidence presented	25%	Good but limited coherence. Some evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Good coherence. Some evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Good coherence. Some evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Weak coherence. Limited evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.

Category	%	1 (0-40%)	2 (40-60%)	3 (60-80%)	4 (80-100%)
Learning outcomes (1) Possess detailed knowledge of how a technology can inform debate surrounding current major issues facing humanity (2) The ability to compare and contrast the impact of science on a range of issues of technology to a range of other factors					
Choice of case studies and relevance to themes	25%	Good but limited choice of case studies. Some evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Good choice of case studies. Some evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Good choice of case studies. Some evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Weak choice of case studies. Limited evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.
Quality and style of writing	25%	Good but limited quality and style. Some evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Good quality and style. Some evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Good quality and style. Some evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Weak quality and style. Limited evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.
Referencing	25%	Good but limited referencing. Some evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Good referencing. Some evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Good referencing. Some evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Weak referencing. Limited evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.
Appearance and use of images	25%	Good but limited appearance and use of images. Some evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Good appearance and use of images. Some evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Good appearance and use of images. Some evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.	Weak appearance and use of images. Limited evidence of deep understanding, and a clear focus on the big picture, but without fully exploring the implications of the evidence.

# The blog - summative feedback

- Final 6 blogs totalling 4000 words max.
- Text run through Turnitin
- External examiner receives spreadsheet with 'secret' URLs

**BLOG SECRET URL:** <https://myportfolio.ucl.ac.uk/view/view.php?i=sQ2vmBL6pMkIW5jP9N4b>

**DISABILITY**  
Please note here if you are registered with Student Disability Services and wish us to be aware of a learning difficulty (such as dyslexia) or other condition.

None

**MARKER'S COMMENTS**

CRITERIA	1	2:1	2:2	3	F
CHOICE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THEME. (15%)		X			
CHOICE OF CASE STUDIES AND RELEVANCE TO THEME. (15%)		X			
OVERALL COHERENCE AND BALANCE OF BLOG; EFFECTIVE Juxtaposition OF SCALES. (15%)	X				
CONNECTION TO CONTEMPORARY CONCERNS BEYOND THE DISCIPLINE (15%)		X			
QUALITY AND STYLE OF WRITING (20%)		X			
REFERENCING, CORRECT CITATIONS AND, WHERE NECESSARY, COPYRIGHT NOTICES. (10%)	X				
APPEARANCE, AND USE OF IMAGES AND/OR MULTIMEDIA. (10%)	X				

**THE BEST FEATURES:**

The relationship between inequality, power and civilization is undoubtedly a 'big' theme in human history and this, coupled with both the temporal and geographical scope of your case studies, means that your blog is very much in the spirit of the assignment. Moreover, this is a brave blog in that your overall argument is not currently fashionable, at least not in many parts of the West - it is good that you are not cowed by that. Your case studies effectively demonstrate the existence of within and between-state inequality in emergence of dominant societies. At a technical level, you have made a significant effort to source images with appropriate licenses for re-use and have been careful to credit both the authors and provide licensing information. It is also nice to see you using your own photographs. You have also made use of the opportunities afforded by blogging to include relevant video and the animated map of the spread of the Qin Empire is a nice touch. The style of writing is reasonably accessible and you engage the reader by posing questions.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

Given the contentious nature of your topic (you hardly, if at all, qualify your statement that "you must tolerate these inequalities"), the most important improvement to discuss your argument so as to make clear exactly what you are and are not arguing. For example, if (as you implied) the Roman Republic was more unequal than the Empire, but it is true to say that the Republic was more democratic and the achievement of that particular state, even if the inequality was good or bad? In other words, is inequality only ever to be evaluated in instrumental terms, or is there ultimately a moral limit to what magnitude or form of inequality is acceptable? And if inequality is to be measured in purely instrumental terms (i.e. what good things it enables), what is the calculus for determining "good" - is a world in which nobody starves and everyone has a roughly equal but still somewhat distant from any work of art, better or worse than one in which some people starve but there are marvellously beautiful works of art? In short, what is the purpose of civilization (since it is that which in your scheme justifies inequality)? This is, of course, a tough question, but it would be wise to acknowledge that it is difficult and to point to the varied thinking of philosophers and political theorists who have grappled with this over the centuries. Given that you are at UCL - whose spiritual father is often considered to be Jeremy Bentham - a good place to start is any would-be utilitarian, which in its basic form can be the greatest good for the greatest number. Despite your opening question "What is the world inequality composed of in the life, what comes up in your mind? Injustice, racism or sexism?" you could also be clear about what your argument applies equally to all forms of inequality, or whether some are more or less defensible than others? In fact, more explicitly dealing with this would be a good way to strengthen the connection of your blog to contemporary issues, which you have all done so much well though you might from your family work. For instance, there is currently debate around whether in parts of the West (USA and UK, among others) the focus on identity politics (gender, sexuality, ethnicity) is second best in neglect of "traditional" notions of economic inequality and whether the resurgence of the white right (in large part a backlash against that, something which you might be able to bring an external perspective to. So far as the technical quality of your blog is concerned there is not much about to improve: you could tidy up some occasional awkward phrasing (e.g. "basically what is racism?" should be "basically what does racism mean?") and perhaps slightly reduce the size of one sentence paragraph which does contain some distracting flow of argument. And a minor point - since figure 1 is a photograph I should to make this can be an "insert Chinese woman" as suggested in the caption.

First Examiner's Signature:	First Examiner's Mark Based on Content:	Provisional Overall Mark:
	Penalty (if any, and reason):	%
Second Examiner's Mark:	Agreed Internal Mark:	Final Mark:
Resolution:		





# Results - student feedback

- SEQ 3.4/5 3.1/5
- Objections
  - Compulsion in 3rd year
  - Repetition
  - Blogging not an academic activity
  - Blogging not useful
  - No need to teach blogging

This course seemed to waste time that we do not have in third year. Seemed to be redoing things and covering topics we had already covered many times before in core modules in previous years.

don't feel that this is a valuable form of assessment, or that I'm learning skills that will be of use to me after this course is over.

feel this is basically last years public archaeology course, but with a more inconvenient form of assessment. Considering the expense of university, I'm actually very unhappy with the nature and content of this course.

Do not feel blogging is a necessary skill for a degree. The degree is meant to be critical, so essays or a different format of assessment would be appropriate. This exercise discriminates against those who do not wish to be bloggers for a commercial unit. Investment banks value an archaeology degree but not that I spent 10 weeks of uncritical public pandering instead of critical thought.

year at the IoA. To improve I think a few less lectures on the technical side of blog work as they were unnecessary.

Novel Idea, but blogging should be an ability you already have if you finish a degree

# Results - student feedback

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Novel Idea, but blogging should be an ability you already have if you finish a degree

# Results - student feedback

- SEQ 3.4/5 3.1/5
- Objections
  - Compulsion in 3rd year
  - Repetition
  - Blogging not an academic activity
  - Blogging not useful
  - No need to teach blogging
  - Lack of authenticity

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**From:** "[REDACTED]" <[REDACTED].14@ucl.ac.uk>  
**To:** "Lake, Mark" <mark.lake@ucl.ac.uk>  
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**Date:** Mon 11 Dec 2017 15:59:24 GMT

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Hi Mark,

Sorry, I had to leave earlier in the lesson before the feedback. Have submitted feedback now.

Just wanted to let you know, have considered it a great third year course, that has really made me think and synthesise in a new way.

Many thanks for all your help,  
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I found that this course presented a really good opportunity to look back over what we have so far learnt during our degrees, to step beyond archaeology and think about what the point of it all is. I have definitely got a lot out of this course.



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# Reflection

- Do not dwell on the technicalities
  - Use remedial 'clinics'
- Do educate about copyright and licensing
- Formative assessment is very worthwhile
  - Focus for learning
  - Reduces 'fear' of non-standard assessment
- Rigorous summative assessment is possible
  - Doesn't systematically benefit (or penalise) weaker or stronger students
  - But can still 'surprise' individual students
- Directly tackle student perception
  - Blog ≠ uncritical stream of consciousness

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# Acknowledgements

- Archaeology staff
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  - Chris Holland
  - Katie Meheux
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  - Mira Vogel
- UCL Arena
  - Nick Grindle
- External examiners
  - Matthew Fitzjohn
  - Ruth Young



# Outstanding issues

- Are we trying to do too much with one kind of assessment?
- Should we increase the authenticity of the exercise?
- Can we streamline the workflow?

# Syllabus

- Thinking 'big'
  - Big themes and Deep history
  - 'Grand Challenges', 'Grand Narratives' and public intellectuals
- Communicating archaeology
  - Communication in public archaeology (GM)
  - Blogging workshop

# Syllabus

- Guest lectures
  - Past and future Earth (EG)
  - Escaping inequality: Can the Past Reshape our Future (DW)
  - Brexit, Boundaries and Imperial Identities (AG)
  - Power, violence and inequality (GM)
  - Niche construction from early agriculture to the Anthropocene (DF)
- Wrap-up
  - Formative feedback and 'mopping up'