Course description

One could be forgiven for thinking that little of archaeological interest survives in Hong Kong’s built-up and densely populated environment. But that could not be further from the truth. Contrary to the politically-motivated myth of ‘a barren rock’ as portrayed by the British in the 19th century, Hong Kong actually has a rich archaeological heritage spanning at least 6000 years of human history. Who were the earliest inhabitants, where were they from, and what brought them to Hong Kong? This course reviews major archaeological discoveries in Hong Kong from the 1920s to the present, examines cultural developments from the Neolithic to the Qing Dynasty, and discusses the material culture, economies, social structures and (as far as is possible) the belief systems of Hong Kong’s ancient peoples.

The course will also compare and contrast the evidence for prehistoric and historical cultural developments in Hong Kong with those occurring in South China and the wider Southeast Asian region. The significance of Hong Kong archaeology in the contexts of prehistoric and historical South China and Southeast Asia will also be evaluated. In addition, there will be an exploration of the tensions and potentials existing in Hong Kong between its development-driven economy and rich archaeological resource, as played out in the field of impact assessment archaeology. Finally, the notion of ‘public archaeology’ will be used to highlight how archaeological remains are ‘packaged’ and presented as heritage properties in contemporary Hong Kong, and as a means of situating our studies in their ‘real world’ context where the contrasting needs and aspirations of a diverse range of stakeholders must be addressed.

Topics of this course include the following:

- A bridge between two landmasses – the significance of Hong Kong archaeology.
- The landscape and natural resources of Hong Kong
- History of Hong Kong archaeology
- The early inhabitants of Hong Kong
- Why there was no state in Bronze Age Hong Kong?
- Peoples and their way of life in Hong Kong from Han dynasty to the colonial era.
- Cultural dynamics between Hong Kong, South China and Southeast Asia
- Balancing the needs of development and heritage conservation: ‘impact assessment’ archaeology
- Public archaeology in Hong Kong
Learning outcomes

After taking this course, students should:

- Understand the trajectory of pre/historical cultural development in Hong Kong and have a good grasp of the key changes through time and their associated research issues;
- Have a critical awareness of debates surrounding cultural exchanges and human diaspora between Hong Kong and adjacent areas;
- Fully understand how material remains and associated archaeological data have been used to reconstruct past socio-economic lifeways in Hong Kong;
- Have enhanced their capacity for multi-disciplinary, critical, and independent thinking.

Learning activities

Two 45-minute lectures and one 45-minute tutorial per week for one semester, plus a field trip to an archaeological site/ landscape (tentative timing: Sunday 11th November, destination TBA).

Course assessment

(1) Mid-term take-home exam: 40%
Exam paper available to download from Blackboard 7pm Wednesday 25th October – completed papers with Veriguide receipts to be submitted to Dept. Office by 5pm Friday 2nd November.

(2) Final take-home paper (c. 4500-6000 words): 60%
Essay questions available on Blackboard 7pm Wednesday 14th November – completed papers with Veriguide receipts to be submitted to Dept. Office by 5pm Friday 7th December.

Submissions & academic honesty

As required by the university, students must submit a soft copy of their computer-generated text assignments to VeriGuide at a specified URL. The system will issue a receipt containing a declaration of honesty statement. Students should sign the receipt, print a hard copy of their assignment, and submit the hard copy and the receipt to teachers for grading. The university says that assignments without the receipt will NOT be graded.

The Chinese University of Hong Kong places very high importance on academic honesty, and adopts a policy of zero tolerance on cheating in examinations and plagiarism. Any such offence will lead to disciplinary action including possibly termination of studies at the University. Students should know how to properly use source material and how to avoid plagiarism. Students should read the detailed guidelines and examples for the acknowledgement of sources in the University’s website at http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/, which also gives details of how to submit papers through Veriguide.
Medium of instruction: English

Lecture topics and reading materials

NB: Please ensure that you read texts or websites marked thus **; and as many of the others if you have time.

Lecture 1 (Week 1; 4th September): Introduction: course structure, objectives and methodology.

Readings:


(Section 6.4 Overview of the landscape character of Hong Kong)


Lecture 2 (Week 2; 11th September): A brief history of Hong Kong archaeology.

Readings:


**AMO. 2007a. ‘Recent Archaeological Discoveries and Research in Hong Kong’, *Kaogu* 6: 3-9
(香港古物古蹟辦事處 2007 香港近年的考古發現與研究。《考古》2007 年第 6 期，3-9 頁)

**Meacham, W. 2009a. *The Archaeology of Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
(Pages 10-65: sounds a lot but it is mostly pictures)

NB: No class Week 3 (18th September) (Teacher at Conference) or Week 4 (25th September) Mid-Autumn Festival

Lecture 3 (Week 5; 2nd October): Hong Kong’s palaeoenvironment: a landscape full of resources?

Readings:


(呂烈丹 2007 香港史前的自然資源和經濟形態。《考古》2007年第6期，36-45頁)


**Meacham, W. 2009a. *The Archaeology of Hong Kong.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. (Pages 74-80)


Ng, S. W. H. 1998. The Spatial Pattern of Prehistoric Sites around Estuary of Pearl River. Journal of the Hong Kong Archaeological Society (*JHKAS*) 14: 41-60
(吳偉鴻 1998 珠江口史前遺址分佈規律。《香港考古學會會刊》1993-1997年第14期，41-60頁)

**Lecture 4 (Week 6; 9th October): Neolithic Hong Kong.**

**Readings:**


Antiquities & Monuments Office Web Site (regarding the Middle Neolithic period, Late Neolithic Period and the list of sites of archaeological interest in HK):


**Meacham, W. 2009a. *The Archaeology of Hong Kong.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. (Pages 81-109; see also map at front of book for site locations)

Shang, Z. 2000. 再論香港新石器時代文化的分期與斷代 (Further Discussion on Hong Kong’s Neolithic Culture), pp.33-46.

**Lecture 5 (Week 7: 16\textsuperscript{th} October): Neolithic: wider contexts & connections.**

**Readings:**


**Higham, C. 1996.** *The Bronze Age of Southeast Asia.* Hong Kong: Cambridge University Press. (Pages 73-89)


**NB: No class Week 7 (17\textsuperscript{th} October) (Chung Yeung Festival)**

**Lecture 6 (Week 8: 23\textsuperscript{rd} October): Bronze Age Hong Kong.**

**Readings:**

**Atha, M and Yip, K. (2016).** *Piecing Together Sha Po: Archaeological Investigations and Landscape Reconstruction.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. (Chapter 5: pages 63-85)
(香港古物古蹟辦事處 2007 香港近年的考古發現與研究。《考古》2007年第6期，3-9頁)

(香港古物古蹟辦事處 2007 香港南丫島沙埔新村遺址發掘簡報。《考古》2007年第6期，10-29頁)

AMO Web Site (regarding the Bronze Period):  


**Meacham, W. 2009a. *The Archaeology of Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.  
(Pages 110-129 and map of site locations in front of book)

**Lecture 7 (Week 9: 30th October): Bronze Age wider contexts & connections.**

**Readings:**


**Higham, C. 1996. *The Bronze Age of Southeast Asia*. Hong Kong: Cambridge University Press. (Pages 90-107)


**Meacham, W. 2009a. *The Archaeology of Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.  
(Pages 139-142)

**Meacham, W. 2009b. *Rock carvings in Hong Kong*. Published by the author. (Especially pages 102-121)


**Lecture 8 (Week 10; 6th November): Neolithic-Bronze Age Subsistence Strategies**
Readings:

Chan, W. 1978. Identification and analysis of excavated fish remains, in W. Meacham (ed.) Sham Wan, Lamma Island: an archaeological site study: 248-258. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Archaeological Society


(呂烈丹 2007 香港史前的自然資源和經濟形態。《考古》2007年第6期，36-45頁)

Morton, B. 1978. Shells from the archaeological site at Sham Wan, in W. Meacham (ed.) Sham Wan, Lamma Island: an archaeological site study: 259-271. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Archaeological Society

Ng, S. W. H. 1998. The Spatial Pattern of Prehistoric Sites around Estuary of Pearl River. Journal of the Hong Kong Archaeological Society (JHKAS) 14: 41-60
(呂偉鴻 1998 珠江口史前遺址分佈規律。《香港考古學會會刊》1993-1997年第14期，41-60頁)

**Rogers, P.R. 1995. Subsistence continuity in the prehistory of south coastal China, in C.T. Yeung & W.L. Li (eds.) Conference on Archaeology in Southeast Asia: 467-478. Hong Kong: the University Museum and Art Gallery, HKU.

Rogers, P.R., Leininger, N.W., Mirchandani, S., van den Bergh, J. & Widdowson, E.A., 1995. Tung Wan Tsai: A Bronze Age and Han period coastal site. AMO Occasional Paper No.3, Hong Kong: AMO.


Field Trip (tentative date: Sunday 11th November, destination TBA)

Lecture 9 (Week 11; 13th November): Qin-Tang dynasties.

Readings


Kong and Macau. Hong Kong: Museum of History, pp.176-217. NB: Read all if you have time but especially pp.176-188 and pp.213-217.


Cameron, H. and Williams, B.V. 1983. Sham Wan Tsuen, Chek Lap Kok (a Tang dynasty industrial site), *JHKAS* 10: 10-54.


**Meacham, W. 2009a. *The Archaeology of Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. (130-156)**


**Lecture 10 (Week 12: 20th November): Song-Qing dynasties.**

Readings

AMO Pamphlet 2008 ‘Wun Yiu Site and Fan Sin Temple’:  

AMO Web Site (Remnants of the South Gate of Kowloon Walled City):  


Lam, P. 1988. Late 15th to Early 16th Century Blue and White Porcelain from Penny’s Bay, *JHKAS* (12): 146-163

Meacham, W. 2009a. *The Archaeology of Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press. (Pages 157-178)

Lecture 11 (Week 13: 27th November): Archaeological Heritage Management in Hong Kong.

Readings:


**Sun, K. 2011. ‘The unclaimed baggage: who owns HK’s archaeological heritage?’ Huaxia Kaogu (Cathaysian Archaeology) 2011-1: 139-145**

Lecture 12 (Week 14: 3rd December - Monday): Public Archaeology in Hong Kong (1st 45 minutes); Review and Discussion (2nd 45 minutes).

Readings:


Websites:


Tutorial topics:


Lecture 2 (Week 2 – 11th September): ‘What are the positive and negative aspects of Hong Kong’s history of archaeological work?”

NB: No class Week 3 (18th September) (Teacher at Conference) or Week 4 (25th September) Mid-Autumn Festival

Lecture 3 (Week 5: 2nd October): ‘Hong Kong’s palaeoenvironment: a landscape full of resources or a major constraint on early human activity?’

Lecture 4 (Week 6: 9th October): Directed Reading AMO (1999): ‘What does the Ma Wan site really tell us about Late Neolithic society?’

Lecture 5 (Week 7: 16th October): Directed Reading – Tsang, C.H. (2005): ‘Does the HK-PRD Neolithic support or challenge the idea of a diaspora of Austronesian-speaking peoples from China, via Taiwan, the Philippines, and out into the Pacific?’

Lecture 6 (Week 8: 23rd October): Directed Reading – AMO (2007b) ‘Why is the Sha Po San Tsuen plateau such an interesting Bronze Age site?

Lecture 7 (Week 9: 30th October): ‘Was Bronze Age HK a chiefdom-level society?’

Lecture 8 (Week 10; 6th November): Directed Reading – Yang et al. (2013): ‘Why does Xincun, Taishan provide such an important contrast with Sha Ha, Sai Kung – how to interpret the evidence?’

Field Trip (tentative date: Sunday 11th November, destination TBA)

Lecture 9 (Week 11; 13th November): Directed Reading – Atha (2014): ‘What is so unusual about the San Tau cemetery site and its investigation?’

Lecture 10 (Week 12: 20th November): Directed Reading – ERM (2017): ‘How should we assess the present and future significance of the Kowloon Bay (To Kwa Wan) area in terms of the local and wider Southern Song-Yuan period?’

Lecture 11 (Week 13: 27th November): ‘How can we improve Hong Kong’s management of its archaeological heritage?’

Lecture 12 (Week 14; 3rd December - Monday): No tutorial due to final take-home paper