University of Colorado, Colorado Springs
Center for Cognitive Archaeology

ANTH 4915/5915: HISTORY OF COGNITIVE ARCHAEOLOGY SINCE 1969

Meet Professor Overmann

Professor: Dr. Karenleigh A. Overmann
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Karenleigh A. Overmann is an associate professor of anthropology (adjunct) at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs (UCCS) Center for Cognitive Archaeology. She recently completed two years of postdoctoral research at the University of Bergen (MSCA individual fellowship, EU project 785793) and is currently a visiting scholar at the University of Pittsburgh. She earned her doctorate in archaeology at the University of Oxford as a Clarendon scholar. Her research focuses on how societies become numerate and literate by using and modifying material forms over generations of collaborative effort, the effect this elaborational mechanism has on conceptual content, how material forms become increasingly refined to elicit specific behavioral and psychological responses, and what this might augur about the future of human cognition. She has also published on the cognitive significance of stone tools, Neandertal cognition, and the literary works of Jane Austen.

To date, she has authored 29 journal articles, 13 book chapters, and co-edited two special journal issues. In 2019 she published The material origin of numbers: Insights from the archaeology of the Ancient Near East (Gorgias Press), as well as an anthology co-edited with Frederick L. Coolidge, Squeezing minds from stones: Cognitive archaeology and the evolution of the human mind (Oxford University Press). She also teamed with Thomas Wynn to apply insights from Neolithic technologies like writing to cognitive evolution as understood through stone tools: “Materiality and human cognition” (2019, Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory) and “On tools making minds: An archaeological perspective on human cognitive evolution” (2019, Journal of Cognition and Culture).

Description

The course consists of a selected list of primary sources that have been instrumental in establishing cognitive archaeology as a viable and influential approach in the study of human evolution. The readings are biased toward Anglophone archaeology, and toward important issues in human cognitive evolution. The professor readily acknowledges that the course is idiosyncratic, and that important articles have had to be left out. If you run into problems or have questions, please email the professor.

Reading Material
This is a readings course. Very little information is presented outside of the primary sources themselves. All the reading material for the course is provided online.

**Evaluation**

Each of the numbered assignments has two components. The first is to write a brief annotated bibliographic entry for each of the readings. These you will keep and accumulate until the end of the course, when you will submit the complete bibliography. The second assignment is an essay of 500–1000 words in response to the prompts provided in each lesson. These will need to be submitted at the end of each lesson. The course is designed for you to complete one essay a week for fifteen weeks, and submission dates in Canvas will be set accordingly. You will be able to submit essays before the due date, but not after (unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as a Canvas failure).

In addition, graduate students will complete a 10–15-page essay (double spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins) in which you identify and critique one of the major themes you have encountered in the readings. Emphasis should be placed on how this theme has changed in cognitive archaeology over the last 40 years. For example, one might choose symbolic behavior or the modern mind or the role of developmental psychology. The topic should be chosen early in the semester and coordinated with the professor.

The graduate essay is due by the date noted in the syllabus and is worth 100 points.

**Grading Rubric**

Written assignments will be graded on how well they answer the assigned question, attention to detail, and use of examples from the reading. Answers must be typewritten and double spaced. Points will be awarded as follows: 30% Clarity (answers the assigned question in clear, concise, understandable writing); 30% Organization (thesis statement, topic sentences, development following the thesis, a conclusion that does not introduce new ideas), and 40% Support (includes examples from the reading that are relevant to the assigned question). Students wanting assistance with writing should consult the University Writing Center (Columbine Hall 316; see [http://www.uccs.edu/~wrtgcntr/](http://www.uccs.edu/~wrtgcntr/) for contact and scheduling information).

**Academic Calendar**

Please refer to the [Academic Calendar](#) for important logistical information such as the last day you may add a class during the semester, the census date, the final day you may drop a class and still receive a refund, fee deadlines, holidays, etc.

**Course Evaluation**

The UCCS Anthropology Department is committed to providing the best possible learning experience to every student. A key mechanism to provide ongoing excellence in teaching and learning is to gather your thoughts on each course and the effectiveness of our faculty. Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing an online evaluation, typically during the last two weeks of the semester. These faculty evaluations are called Faculty Course Questionnaires (FCQs). These are forwarded to the course professors after final grades are submitted and contain no identifying information in regard to individual students (i.e., they are anonymous). Additional instructions will be provided via a notification sent to student UCCS email accounts later in the semester. Please know that student feedback is
extremely valuable to your professor, the Anthropology Department, and UCCS as a whole. In particular, constructive comments guide the enhancement of future versions of this course.

**Excel Centers**

If you feel your performance in this class would benefit from additional tutelage, UCCS offers a network of five [online](#) and [on-campus](#) centers, each offering a unique program of academic support to help all UCCS students succeed in every aspect of their academic careers.

**Disability Statement**

A student with a disability who will need accommodations for this course must contact and register with the Disability Services Office, and provide them with documentation of the disability, so that appropriate accommodations for the student’s situation can be determined. To avoid any delay in the receipt of accommodations, the student should contact the Disability Services Offices as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and that disability accommodations cannot be provided until an accommodation letter has been given to the faculty member. The student may contact Disability Services at Main Hall, room 105, 719-255-3354 or dservice@uccs.edu for more information about receiving accommodations.

**Your Professor’s Expectations of You**

During completion of this course, you must abide by the [UCCS Student Conduct](#). This code specifies what is considered proper and improper student conduct, including matters such as cheating and inappropriate behavior. Students who do not abide by the code can receive sanctions ranging up to expulsion from the university.

Remember that this is a 3-credit-hour course at either the senior (4000) or graduate (5000) level. Please plan on spending a lot of time working on this class. This time will include reviewing the material and completing assignments. I suggest that you plan to spend at least 10 hours per week on average (or 20 hours per week for the accelerated summer version).

Of course, the amount of time spent does not guarantee you any particular grade. Your letter grade will reflect the amount of material that you learned, as reflected in your assignment scores and the overall quality of your contributions to the course.

We will be respectful of you as students. We will not demean you, insult you, or embarrass you. We expect that you will be respectful and civil in your communications with your professor.

**Solving Technical Difficulties**

When you’re having technical difficulties (pages not loading, connectivity problems, not able to view images, things not working as they should, etc.), please contact the 24/7 Canvas Telephone Support at 844.802.9230 or online at the [Canvas Support Community](#) page. Please note this service is separate from the [UCCS IT Helpdesk](#).

**Help Understanding Course Material**

When you have questions regarding course policies, grading criteria, quiz administration, etc., please ask your professor via email.

**Course Summary**
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| 7    | **Undergraduate Students:**  

| 8    | **Graduate Students:** ADD  

| 9    | **Undergraduate Students:**  

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