UAB
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Methods and Techniques in Prehistoric Archaeology

Code: 106852
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Archaeology	FB	2

Contact

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Teachers

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the end of this document.

Prerequisites

Have previously studied the subject of Introduction to Archeology.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The subject's objective is the practical introduction to the basic knowledge of the methodology and field techniques in prehistoric archeology. Special emphasis will be placed on the methods and techniques for analyzing the formation of archaeological sites and archaeological stratigraphy.
Excavation techniques, sampling strategies, documentation and field record will be used.

Learning Outcomes

1. CM08 (Competence) Plan the process of field work in archaeology, identifying its different phases (planning, execution and results analysis), organising work teams and distributing different tasks among its members to achieve the expected goals.
2. KM10 (Knowledge) Apply multidisciplinary techniques and methods to the processing and analysis of archaeological records and materials in field work: introduction to topography, archaeological drawing of

plans and sections, analysis of sediments and stratigraphy, identification in the field of the different types of archaeological materials and application of techniques for the preservation of movable and immovable archaeological materials.

3. KM11 (Knowledge) Organise different activities in archaeology field work that are adapted to the different types of proposed operations and purposes.
4. KM12 (Knowledge) Analytically classify different movable and immovable archaeological materials and remains.
5. SM09 (Skill) Critically assess the different situations that arise during field work and be able to reorganise the processes of field work and treatment of archaeological materials depending on the circumstances that have occurred.
6. SM10 (Skill) Apply the main methods, techniques and instruments of analysis in field of archaeology: archaeological prospecting, stratigraphic surveys and open area excavations.
7. SM11 (Skill) Use technological equipment in field work: total stations, theodolites, GPS and image production equipment.
8. SM12 (Skill) Use the basic procedures for consolidation and preservation of archaeological materials in the field.

Content

1. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROJECTS
- Preliminary approaches to an archaeological excavation: research projects, categories of archaeological interventions.
- Methods and field techniques in prehistoric archeology

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROSPECTION
- Prospecting as an archaeological methodology for space analysis.
- Prospecting and sampling strategy: targeted prospecting and systematic prospecting
- Techniques of surface survey and remote sensing.
- The systems of registration in archaeological surveys.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

- Fundamentals for the elaboration of an archaeological excavation project: the choice of the site, the planning of the excavation, equipment and equipment.
- The development of excavation techniques. The concept of stratification: archaeological surveys. The excavation in extension. General drilling strategies.
- Excavation documentation. Excavation units: observation and analysis units. Plants and sections. Computerization of archaeological data. The photography and the digital recording in Archeology.
- Examples of excavation methodology.
- Case studies and analysis of the archaeologists contributions relevant to the discipline.
-Ethics and professional activity.
- Memoirs and reports on archaeological survey and excavation projects. Publication of archaeological data.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			

Theoretical introductions during field practice sessions	5	0.2
Theoretical introductory lessons in the classroom	10	0.4
Training methods in field archaeology, topography, stratigraphy, identification, registration of archaeological elements, sampling, gender inclusion.	50	2
Type: Supervised		
Bibliographic research	10	0.4
Tutorials: Comment and disscussion of practice dossiers	13	0.52
Type: Autonomous		
Completation of the fieldwork dossier	30	1.2
Writting papers	30	1.2

Directed Activities
The course focuses on conducting fieldwork practices in prehistoric archaeology. On-site teaching is structured into classroom activities and practical activities involving archaeological fieldwork.

1. Classroom Activities
   The classroom activities have two objectives. The first is to prepare for practical fieldwork within archaeological research projects, which forms the core of the course's on-site component. The second is to provide an introduction to the methods and techniques used in prehistoric archaeological fieldwork. The content and schedule of the different sessions will be detailed on the first day of class.

2. Fieldwork Practices in Archaeology
   The practical activity involves integrating students into an archaeological fieldwork campaign. It will take place over one week in June (Monday to Friday), during which students will take part in scheduled archaeological excavation projects, participating at all levels.
   On-site practical sessions will be preceded by theoretical sessions (held at the excavation site), during which the specific procedures and techniques to be applied each day will be presented and their scope and limitations discussed within the broader framework of archaeological research.
   At the end of each day, a debriefing session will be held to emphasize the key methodological aspects addressed during the practical work.
   Each student will compile a practice dossier to be completed throughout the excavation work. The aim is to apply the knowledge previously acquired in the *Introduction to Archaeology* course.
   Special attention will be given to the particular features of prehistoric archaeological fieldwork, highlighting the specificities that prehistoric sites may present compared to those from more recent periods.

3. Autonomous Activity
   Based on the introductory sessions and the course dossiers, students will work on expanding and assimilating the basic concepts involved in archaeological research. Their application during the fieldwork will support the acquisition of the core competencies required for carrying out archaeological excavations.

Note: 15 minutes of one class, as established by the center/degree program's calendar, will be reserved for students to complete surveys evaluating the teaching performance and the course/module itself.

Students will have access to specific documentation on safety procedures for activities carried out off the UAB campus, which they must read and agree to.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Fieldworks and delivery of the internship dossier	70%	1	0.04	CM08, KM10, KM11, KM12, SM09, SM10, SM11, SM12
Planning of the excavation project prior to the fieldwork	30%	1	0.04	CM08, KM11

Competencies will be evaluated through work.

The evaluation system is organized in 2 modules:

Module 1: planning pre-field research project: global weight of 30%

Module 2: Fieldworks and dossier of practices: global weight of 70% (20% fieldworks and 50% dossier of practices).

The final grade will be the average of the different modules. To pass the subject, a score of 5 must be obtained on a scale of 10.

It will be considered not presented in the case that the student does not carry out practical work on the ground or does not submit one of the written works.

In order to be eligible for the re-assessment test, the student must have completed the 5-day fieldwork and presented the work of planning and planning a pre-field research project. The re-evaluation will consist of a

written test on methods and techniques of fieldwork in prehistoric archeology.

At the time of completion/delivery of each assessment activity, the teacher will inform (Moodle, SIA) of the procedure and date of revision of the grades.

Students will obtain a Not assessed/Not submitted course grade unless they have submitted more than 30% of the assessment items.

In the event of a student committing any irregularity that may lead to a significant variation in the grade awarded to an assessment activity, the student will be given a zero for this activity, regardless of any disciplinary process that may take place. In the event of several irregularities in assessment activities of the same subject, the student will be given a zero as the final grade for this subject.

If tests or exams cannot be taken onsite, they will be adapted to an online format made available through the UAB's virtual tools (original weighting will be maintained). Homework, activities and class

participation will be carried out through forums, wikis and/or discussion on Teams, etc. Lecturers will ensure that students are able to access these virtual tools or will offer themfeasible alternatives.

However, it is considered essential to be able to carry out the field practices in person. If this is not possible, the teaching team will look for an alternative to guarantee the training of the students.

This subject does not incorporate single assessment.

Bibliography

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Software

No specific software is needed.

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this link. To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PCAM) Field practices	11	Catalan/Spanish	second semester	morning-mixed
(PCAM) Field practices	12	Catalan/Spanish	second semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan/Spanish	second semester	morning-mixed