

Artefact Analysis

Code: 106857
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Archaeology	OB	2

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

Prerequisites

Have previously taken the subject of Introduction to Archeology.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The subject aims to introduce the basic concepts of the methodology and techniques of laboratory studies in Prehistoric Archaeology. It will introduce students to the Archaeometry of lithic materials, ceramics, metals, focusing particularly on how to plan and develop the study of primary materials, production techniques and consumption patterns. The continguts of this subject are aimed at donating to the students the basic instruments necessary to be able to work the archaeological materials in the category of historical documents.

Learning Outcomes

1. CM09 (Competence) Plan the work processes of archaeology, specifically information processing in the field and laboratory analysis activities, organising work teams and distributing different tasks among their members to achieve the expected goals.

2. KM12 (Knowledge) Analytically classify different movable and immovable archaeological materials and remains.
3. KM13 (Knowledge) Apply multidisciplinary techniques and methods to the processing and analysis of archaeological records and materials in laboratory and off-site work: analysis of ceramics, industry, archaeozoology, archaeobotany and osteoarchaeology, digital processing and treatment of archaeological images and data, statistics and quantification.
4. KM14 (Knowledge) Organise different laboratory activities in archaeology and the processing of archaeological information and images based on the characteristics and requirements of the proposed activity.
5. SM13 (Skill) Apply the main typological classification systems to archaeological materials from different chronologies, taking into account their morphological characteristics, the materials used and the processes of taphonomic alteration and decay.
6. SM14 (Skill) Apply the main methods, techniques and instruments of analysis in the field of archaeology (obtaining and processing images), and in off-site (digitisation of images, creation of databases) and laboratory work (analysis of different types of archaeological remains).
7. SM15 (Skill) Use technological equipment in field and laboratory work: total stations, binocular loupes and microscopes and imaging equipment.
8. SM16 (Skill) Employ the basic procedures for consolidation and preservation of archaeological materials in the laboratory, assessing their suitability and their impact on future analyses of the same materials.
9. SM17 (Skill) Use the typical digital and computer equipment and tools for research and professional practice in archaeology in order to represent and order archaeological records (total stations, cameras, specialised software) and to perform analyses of different types of materials (binocular loupes and microscopes, calipers and digital scales, specialised software).

Content

BLOCK A. GEOARCHEOLOGY I ARCHEOMETALURGY (Roberto Risch)

A.1.- SOME NOTIONS OF GEOLOGY

1.1.- The structure of the land

1.2.- The formation of rocks and dipsits

1.3.- Identification of minerals and rocks

A.2.- METAL·LÚRGIA I THE STUDY OF METALS (Marcelo Peres)

2.1. Metal mining

2.2. Reduction and air inflation

2.3. Pit, finish, us and maintenance

2.4. Archaeometric analysis techniques

BLOCK B.- STUDY OF LITICAL MATERIALS TALLATS (Antoni Palomo)

1.- Introduction: What explains the lithic materials?

2.- Technology (Origins, technological analysis and "operational chain")

3.- Technical modes (Mode 1, Mode 2, Mode 3, Mode 4)

4.- Remuntatges and retouched artifacts

BLOC C.- POTTERY TECHNOLOGY (Xavier Clop)

- 1.- The study of ceramics: why and for what?
- 2.- Forms and typologies: what are they? what are they for?
- 3.- Raw materials: selection, procurement, treatment
- 4.- Modeling techniques
- 5.- Surface treatment
- 6.- Structural analysis of decorations
- 7.- Drying and firing
- 8.- Function and social use

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Classes	15	0.6	
Practica lesson	30	1.2	
Type: Supervised			
Commentary and discussion of practical dossiers (individually or in small groups)	15	0.6	
Tutorials	5	0.2	
Type: Autonomous			
Practical preparation	25	1	
Reading and documentation	20	0.8	

Directed activities

The subject focuses on the learning of the study of different types of archaeological materials based on theoretical-practical sessions carried out at the Laboratory.

1.-Activitats al Laboratori. Theoretical-practical sessions will be carried out to combine the presentation of theoretical concepts, study and analysis systems, study variables, etc. with the realization of practical activities that allow us to put into practice and evaluate the capacity to obtain significant data of the acquired concepts. The practical activities will consist of the presentation and discussion of study cases, analysis of archaeological materials, etc.

2. Autonomous activity. From the introductory theoretical sessions and the subject dossiers, the students will work on the expansion and assimilation of the basic concepts involved in the study of archaeological materials. The application during the practices will facilitate the acquisition of the necessary skills required for the study of the different types of archaeological tract materials.

Activitats formative concretes

1. Laboratory practice (microscopy): Macro and microscopic identification of minerals and rocks

Additional documentation: Virtual campus: Rafael Sánchez López et al.:How to make the identification of minerals and rocks easier

2. Laboratory practice (microscopy): Macroscopic identification of metallic minerals and metallic remains

Additional documentation: Virtual Campus

3. Laboratory practice: Description and macroscopic analysis of useful substances related to metallurgy

Additional documentation: Virtual Campus

4.- Laboratory practice (microscopy): Analysis of production traces in lithic artifacts

Additional documentation: Virtual Campus

5.- Laboratory practice: presentation and discussion of study cases

Additional documentation: Virtual Campus

6.-Laboratory practice (microscopy): Identification of minerals, rocks and degreixants afegits

Additional documentation: Virtual Campus

7.- Technological analysis of lithic materials (Artifacts corresponding to technical modes)

Additional documentation: Virtual Campus

8.- Laboratory practice: description and macroscopic analysis of prehistoric ceramic materials

Additional documentation: Virtual Campus

9.- Laboratory practice: drawing of ceramic materials

Additional documentation: Virtual Campus

10.- Laboratory practice: identification of modeling techniques

Additional documentation: Virtual Campus

11.- Laboratory practice: identification of surface tractaments in ceramics to me.

Additional documentation: Virtual Campus

Note: 15 minutes of a class will be reserved, within the calendar established by the centre/degree, for the complementation by the students of the questionnaires for the evaluation of the professor's performance and the evaluation of the subject/module.

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
Attendance and participation in theoretical-practical classes	10%	5	0.2	CM09
Course work	60%	20	0.8	SM13, SM14, SM15, SM16, SM17
Practice dossier	30%	15	0.6	KM12, KM13, KM14

Competencies will be assessed through: assignments and evaluation of practical activities (work with geological materials and reproduced and/or archaeological objects, discussion of practical cases, commentary on articles...)

The evaluation system is organized as follows: Thematic block A: 20%; Thematic block B: 40%; Thematic block C: 40%.

The contents of this subject are developed in theoretical-practical classes in which objects are described, analyzed and manipulated using geological materials and reproduced and/or archaeological objects. From this classroom work, the practice dossiers and participation in classes are derived; and obviously the work or partial tests with which theoretical and practical contents are evaluated. To achieve the learning of the contents, attendance at classes is essential. Attendance at least 85% of the sessions of each block is required. Otherwise, the evaluation of the Block will be graded 0.

Each of the thematic modules will be evaluated as follows:

Attendance and participation in theoretical-practical classes (10% overall weight).

Module of delivery of practice dossiers (30% overall weight).

Coursework or final exam (theoretical and practical content) (60% overall weight).

The final grade will be the average of the weighted grade out of 100 obtained in the different blocks

To pass the subject, an overall score of 5 on a scale of 10 must be achieved.

At the time of completion/delivery of each assessable activity, the teaching staff will inform (Moodle, SIA,...) of the procedure and date of review of the grades.

To pass the subject, it is essential to pass all three thematic blocks, either for the continuous assessment or for the remedial test. Not passing one of the blocks means not passing the subject.

Students who do not submit the practices and/or the corresponding assignments for 2 thematic blocks will be considered non-evaluable.

Remedial: students who have not achieved a grade of 5 in any of the thematic blocks, and provided that they have had the required attendance at the sessions of the different blocks, may take the remedial test for the thematic block or blocks they have failed. The remedial test will consist of a written test.

In the event that the student carries out any irregularity that could lead to a significant variation in the grade of an assessment act, this assessment act will be graded 0, regardless of the disciplinary process that may be instructed. In the event that several irregularities occur in the assessment acts of the same subject, the final grade for this subject will be 0.

This subject allows the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies exclusively in bibliographic search tasks, text correction or translations. Other situations may be considered, always with the approval of the teacher.

The student must (i) identify the parts that have been generated with AI; (ii) specify the tools used; and (iii) include a critical reflection on how these have influenced the process and the final result of the activity.

The lack of transparency in the use of AI in this assessable activity will be considered a lack of academic honesty and will result in the activity being assessed with a 0 and not being able to be recovered, or major sanctions in serious cases.

This subject does not provide for the single assessment system.

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BLOCK C. Pottery Technology

1. The analysis of pottery: general works

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Software

No specific software is required.

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
(PLAB) Practical laboratories	11	Catalan/Spanish	second semester	morning-mixed
(PLAB) Practical laboratories	12	Catalan/Spanish	second semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan/Spanish	second semester	morning-mixed