Approaches to Archaeology

This is an abbreviated version of the syllabus with information about the required text. A full syllabus will be provided the first day of class.

Course Description
Archaeology is the study of past human cultures through their material remains, including such things as artifacts, ecofacts, features, and structures. In this course you will be introduced to some of the amazing discoveries that archaeology has made about life in the past, and you will learn some of the secrets of the discipline, in terms of its methods, its history, and its theoretical debates. We will combine readings, lectures, discussions, and applied activities—all online—with some “virtual dig” software and a related project. The class is designed to give you a more sophisticated understanding of popular accounts of archaeological research, as well as a good foundation in the discipline should you choose to pursue it further. The questions that we will study will require you to expand your imagination beyond the modern world, and stretch your ideas about the diversity of human lifeways back in time hundreds and thousands of years.

Learning Goals
- Knowledge of past human cultures & increased awareness of human cultural diversity
- Analytic skills in evaluating links between interpretive generalizations & supporting data
- Critical & creative thinking, written & oral communication, teamwork & problem solving

GER
This class satisfies Social Science (SS) GER. It teaches you how to: 1) recognize and analyze socio-cultural aspects of human behavior (criteria a) via their material remains; and 2) identify and apply archaeological methods for studying societies (criteria d). One of the aspects of this class that will be assessed for SS GER is your final project, which requires you to integrate multiple types of archaeological evidence to answer questions about Occaneechi society and its responses to change. The rubric used to assess this aspect of the course is provided in the section of the full syllabus that reviews course requirements and grading.

Required Readings and Where to Find Them
There is one required text, which should be obtained before class starts:
Archaeology Essentials; by Renfrew & Bahn; 2nd or 3rd edition; Thames & Hudson
You may want to hunt up a new or used copy via the campus bookstore or through an on-line seller. There will be a copy available on 2-hour loan at the library. The text is also available in digital form through the publisher:

Class Structure
This class is completely online and modular, with weekly deadlines. Your grade will build from quizzes (20%), applied activities that build the parts of your final project (20%), discussion forum (20%), final project (20%), and final exam (20%). You will work intensively with a virtual dig and will need access to and competence in powerpoint-compatible software; I will offer on-campus computer lab office hours for those who want face-to-face help. All students will need reliable computer access to complete this course successfully.