

**REPORT ON IRA FUNDED ACTIVITY:  
UNIV 498 FIELD TRIP TO SANTA CRUZ ISLAND  
SPRING 2013**

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From Friday, April 12, to Sunday, April 14, 2013, I led a three-day IRA-funded field trip to Santa Cruz Island for the students of a UNIV 498 course that I taught related to archaeological research. The primary focus of this course was to analyze shell midden samples from different archaeological sites that I had excavated previously on Santa Cruz Island. However, the goals of the course were much broader: through experiential learning in the lab and on field trips, students were able to learn about and apply a range of field and laboratory methods available for acquiring, analyzing, and interpreting archaeological data. The ultimate goal was for students to develop a working knowledge of and proficiency in a variety of common archaeological methods and theoretical perspectives, and to generally gain a greater understanding of the anthropological research process through direct experience.

Given that students were working with archaeological materials from Santa Cruz Island, it was imperative that one of their field trips be to the island to visit relevant archaeological sites. In this particular case, an opportunity arose for students to also participate in service learning. I have been conducting compliance work on Santa Cruz Island for the National Park Service (NPS) since the late 1990s. In this specific case, I had the opportunity to involve the students in that compliance work for the benefit of them and the NPS. They were able to participate as archaeologists in fieldwork that is common within the professional compliance realm (known as cultural resource management), including archaeological survey and site recordation. Since we were staying at NPS housing, the students also had the opportunity to meet NPS rangers and other employees, and to generally learn about what is like to work for and with this agency.

Field trip activities included hiking from and to NPS housing; active discussions of local geology, biology, archaeology, and history; visiting archaeological sites; and engaging in archaeological fieldwork including site assessment and mapping. With the direct supervision of myself and another professional archaeologist, students evaluated existing records on prehistoric sites, assessed the physical condition of the sites, and produced site maps and other relevant documentation.

Students were assessed in the field based on the application of concepts and techniques that they had been discussing, learning, and using on campus prior to the field trip. Included in this was the assessment of the quality and accuracy of the site documentation they generated. In addition, they were required to write a paper that related to the experience (see attached field trip prompt).

Based on immediate feedback and written student evaluations, the field trip was extremely successful in all of its goals and had other positive outcomes such as social bonding. It is quite evident that the students benefited greatly from the experiential and service learning aspects of the trip. I have led similar kinds of trips in the past and, while they haven't always been as enjoyable and positive as this one, they are most always transformational for the students involved. Oftentimes these kinds of trips are catalysts for students, either crystalizing their

current goals or prompting significant change. It is amazing to be able to facilitate these kinds of experiences and they are in fact the most rewarding aspects of my job as a teacher.

In reviewing the student evaluations, the one consistent suggestion for improvement was to make the trip longer (which is a very positive comment!). Although it is not feasible to extend the length of the trip during the semester (due to class and work schedules), it is viable to do so during the summer. In fact, the Anthropology Program has plans to develop coursework in archaeological field methods that will be taught on Santa Rosa Island, with students living and learning at the new field station. The positive feedback from these shorter trips further confirms that we are moving in the right direction in terms of these longer and more intensive fieldwork opportunities.

The attachments that follow are: the field trip prompt provided to the students beforehand and the typed student comments. A total of 4 out of 5 students provided written feedback.

**UNIV 498**  
**Faculty Student Collaborative Research**  
**Spring 2013**

**Field Trip to Santa Cruz Island**

Field notes are an important component of conducting fieldwork in any field-based discipline. One way of thinking about them is that they are the diary of activities and circumstances experienced while conducting fieldwork. Field notes may become critical supplements to official paperwork, as they may contain other information that assists future researchers and managers in their interpretations and decision-making. For example, let's say that 20 archaeological sites were recorded during a previous survey. Your job is to return to that particular area 30 years later to assess these sites and find any other sites that may have been missed during the original survey. Imagine if the field notes contained a comment like: "we noticed that a recent fire went through this area and, as a result, ground visibility was excellent. We feel very confident that we were able to find most sites, even small ones." Contrast this with: "The whole area was choked with poison oak and it was very slow-going because they were almost no ground visibility. We ended following a deer trail and got lots of ticks." Think about how these statements might guide your current work.

You must actively take notes while we are on the field trip. Record any observations you have made about the environment, archaeological sites, or otherwise. Nothing is too small or insignificant; you never know what may become critical information in the future.

While you are on the island, you should select a particular research question of interest relating to the archaeology of Santa Cruz Island. Please let me know if you would like help in figuring out what your focus should be. In your paper, cite specific lines of evidence observed and discussed during the field trip and anything relevant from your time in the lab. You may also incorporate relevant readings, such as those you have done for your article reviews, although the primary focus should be on what you learned during the field trip. Examples of possible topics include: island biogeography, prehistoric subsistence, chert quarries and tool technologies, and different issues related to cultural resource management.

Your paper will be graded based on: a clearly defined research question, specific lines of evidence cited, organization, and grammar and spelling. Failure to cite specific examples from the trip will result in point deductions. If you reference any readings, you must also include in-text citations, not only for direct quotes, but also any time you are referring to specific information that comes from a specific source. Citations should include the specific page number(s) from which the information comes - such as (Arnold 2001:15).

Your 3 to 5 page paper is due on **Friday, April 26th, 2013.**

## STUDENT RESPONSE:

1. The activity was a three day trip to Santa Cruz Island. We left Friday morning and returned Sunday evening. We spent all three days examining and searching for archaeological sites on the islands. We looked at some sites for the purpose of discussing current issues in site preservation, and others we determined the parameters of so that faulty site records could be updated.
2. The course dealt with Dr. Perry's research out on the Santa Cruz Island. Our main objective was sorting through artifacts that she had brought back from sampling a site. The field trip was pertinent because we were able to examine sites that were very similar to the one where the midden we were sorting had come from, in addition to just tying in with all the archaeological theory that we had learned over the semester.
3. The entire activity was a strength. It had no weak spots. We got to put to see and put places and situations together with the concepts we had read about. We participated and learned much more about site mapping, and how to record a site properly. It enhanced what we were talking about in class, in addition to going far above and beyond, with a lot of additional information.
4. See above; perhaps the only weakness is that it was far too short.
5. I think it was a great activity. The only thing that maybe could have been added to make it even better would have been some sampling, to demonstrate just how you get the midden from the ground to the bags that we sort from.
6. We all learned so much. I in particular learned a lot more about site recording, and what needs to be included in order to make it a viable reference. I also learned how to think about the past in a whole new way; how to imagine different landscapes, how to guess how landscapes would have looked years ago, under different natural and cultural influences. We had to do this to try and find some of the sites that we were correcting. I also learned a whole new perspective on site preservation, and what our options could be to improve this aspect of archaeological work.

## STUDENT RESPONSE:

We took the Univ 498 trip to Santa Cruz with goals of updating several archaeological site records for the Parks records. We had been taught various survey techniques, as well as mapping skills and had the opportunity to apply these in a real life setting on this trip. Overall in the course we had been working with Dr. Perry in the lab to sort and analyze shell midden taken from a site on Santa Cruz she was working with. We used that knowledge gained in the lab directly on the island to help us identify sites which were mostly shell midden and then update the site records.

The greatest strength of the activity is being able to apply all that we learn in a class setting on actual sites. Going out and using what we learn in class settings to assist our professors research is one of my favorite parts of this class. It also really helped build unity among all of the students, which in many classes you do not always get! Because Dr. Perry has done a lot of work on the island being able to stay in the Ranger housing was a huge benefit! Camping would have been fantastic as well but having a bed helped keep us rested and ready to work. As far as weakness and improvements go if we could have stayed longer and been able to visit more sites, that would give us more of an appreciation of the island and the Chumash that lived on the land. We could have spent many hours and days working, but because of the limited time, sometimes it felt rushed. That being said, Dr. Perry still used every moment to teach about archaeology and the Chumash, sometimes changing the plan but always teaching. The entire process taught me so much more about the layout and use of the island, but for me the chance to practice and learn different techniques for mapping was the most valuable.

## STUDENT RESPONSE:

(1) provide a description of the activity;

Our University 498 class went to Santa Cruz Island for three days in order to learn how to conduct archaeological field work first hand. We also worked with the intention of better understanding Chumash culture on the island. We stayed in the National Park Services housing. Each day we hiked to archaeological sites on the island to survey, map, and discuss them. This was a great opportunity to apply the skills we learned in class to actual field work. Also, we helped the National Park Service by updating several sites that needed to be re-surveyed.

(2) how did the activity relate to a course(s) and/or learning objectives?

How did it not? Every activity we engaged in on Santa Cruz Island somehow related to our course work. We spent most of the semester researching Chumash habitation on Santa Cruz Island, analyzing shell midden, and surveying sites. However, we did all of this work in a lab setting. Being able to apply this knowledge in a actual field setting really allowed us to better understand archaeology as a whole. You can learn all the details of how to survey and map a site in a classroom, but it's not until you're actually on that site searching for middens and artifacts that you truly understand the importance of accurate, detailed work.

(3) what do you see as the strengths of the activity?

Dr. Perry made sure to prepare us for the trip so that we could work efficiently and productively every minute on the island. Dr. PErry also made sure to keep all of the activities very interactive; She asked us questions, had us take notes, and really encouraged us to consider ourselves archaeologists rather than students on the trip. That helped all of us take th work seriously, and take pride in the work that we were doing. This was so much more than a class field trip; It was a life lesson.

(4) What would you say are/were the activity's weaknesses?

Honestly, I don't think there were any weaknesses. It was very clear that Dr. Perry put in a great amount of effort to insure that our trip would be educational, productive, and enjoyable.

(5) how would you improve this activity for next time?

The only recommendation I have for next time is that the trip should be longer.

(6) what did you learn from the process?

On this trip, I learned how to efficiently map and survey sites, locate sites using site maps, and history about the Chumash who inhabited the island. I also learned more about the geology of Santa Cruz Island, as well as how that affects archaeological field work. Another thing I learned was how to distinguish between human and environmental impacts on the island (e.g. erosion, wind deflation, and trail making). I didn't realize how much of the island consists of archaeological sites until I went to the island, either. Overall, I learned more on this field trip than on any other field trip I've gone on.

## STUDENT RESPONSE:

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE UNIV 498 FIELD TRIP TO SANTA CRUZ ISLAND:

(1) PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY;

We took a boat over to Santa Cruz Island on Friday morning, April 19 and stayed through Sunday afternoon. We spent each day hiking on the island, bringing food, water and our various archaeological equipment. We were all given packets containing site maps and information on the islands, and were told to keep an eye out for anything we had seen in our shell midden during our time in the lab. We spent most of Saturday editing poorly constructed site maps, and had to find site locations on our way, by using topography maps, compasses, and other archeological knowledge. We learned about wind erosion and deflation, the history of the island, preservation, and truly bonded not only with the island, and archeology, but as a group.

(2) HOW DID THE ACTIVITY RELATE TO A COURSE(S) AND/OR LEARNING OBJECTIVES?

WE CONSTANTLY HAD TO USE PREVIOUSLY ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE. WHEN EXAMINING THE ENDLESS AMOUNTS OF SHELL MIDDEN FOR EXAMPLE, WE COULD DISTINGUISH THE VARIOUS SHELL FRAGMENTS BECAUSE OF ALL OF OUR TIME SPENT SORTING SHELL MIDDEN IN LAB. EVEN JUST WALKING ON A TRAIL WE COULD IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZE A TINY PORTION OF AN EXPOSED SHELL FRAGMENT. WE FOUND STONE TOOLS AND WERE ABLE TO RECOGNIZE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ROCK, AND COULD ALSO RECOGNIZE GROUND STONE.

(3) WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE STRENGTHS OF THE ACTIVITY?

EVERYTHING. HOW WE HAD TO EDIT PREVIOUS SITE MAPS, THE REAL LIFE FIELD EXPERIENCE, THE BONDING OF THE GROUP.

(4) WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE/WERE THE ACTIVITY'S WEAKNESSES?

THAT WE DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME ON THE ISLAND.

(5) HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE THIS ACTIVITY FOR NEXT TIME?

SPEND A WEEK ON THE ISLAND!

(6) WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE PROCESS?

That all my knowledge from any anthropology class came full circle in this one weekend, everything just clicked and made sense. It's one thing to be in class, listen to lectures, be in seminars, read a book and see graphs, diagrams and pictures. It's another thing to see everything in its actual context. In a crazy way, we became part of the island and its history, forever bonded.