

SITE STUDY
Anthropology 103
Winter 2008

DUE: Monday, January 14, 2008

Purpose: To use a contemporary example to give students experience observing material remains, discerning their spatial patterns, making social/behavioral inferences, and preparing a report.

What to do: Pick a location outdoors where there are material remains (e.g., trash) on the ground. The area should be big enough to have sufficient artifacts for study but not so big that the project becomes overwhelming. As a rough guideline, the area should have at least 50 artifacts but not more than 150. Once you have picked your location and defined its boundaries, draw a sketch map of it. Then survey the area by systematically walking back and forth over it. As you do your survey, record the locations and kinds of artifacts observed on the surface of the ground.

Once your survey is completed, then prepare a report that includes the following in the order listed:

1. title page
2. sketch map with scale and key (neatness counts!)
3. inventory list of artifacts recorded on map
4. a several page write-up that addresses each of the following points:
 - a. introduction with statement of purpose, description of survey area (e.g., location, size, appearance), date of fieldwork, description of fieldwork conditions
 - b. summary of the kinds and quantities of artifacts found, including a description of what kinds occur most frequently and which are perishable; include an overall assessment of the proportion of perishable artifacts
 - c. description of spatial patterning of artifacts overall and for particular categories of artifacts (e.g., random, clustered, linear)
 - d. inferences about the natural and cultural processes that would have affected the kinds of artifacts present, the quantities of artifacts, and their spatial patterning
 - e. if you had no prior knowledge of your site, what kinds of social/behavioral inferences would you draw from your inventory and sketch map about the people who used your site and the kinds of activities that occurred there (e.g., number of people, kinds of people, diet, activities, organization)?
 - f. if you eliminated the perishable artifacts, how would your inferences in part f above be affected?
 - g. given that you have prior knowledge about the site, how accurate would your inferences in parts e and f above be? If they would be inaccurate, what reasons can you give for the discrepancies? Are there any activities that you know take place at the site but are not evidenced in the archaeological record?
 - h. conclusions about insights that can be gained and difficulties that can be encountered in studies of material remains at an archaeological site

This assignment is worth 50 pts. One grade notch will be deducted for each section that is omitted. One-half grade notch will be deducted for messy maps and “rough” writing. Students are advised to visit the writing center for assistance in polishing their writing.

Your report should be stapled and type written double spaced with normal font size. Three points will be deducted from papers with no staple. Late reports will have penalty points deducted as indicated on the course syllabus.