

Celtic Culture and Archaeology

Anthropology 222

Advent 2008

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Course Description:

Grounded in the Anthropological perspective, this course will primarily explore ancient Celtic society through archaeology, ethnohistory, linguistics, and a focus on myth and religion. Our study begins in Austria with the early Iron Age (the Hallstatt Period of 800 BC to 450 BC). Subsequent units examine the later Iron Age across the European continent (the La Tene Period of 450 BC to Roman Conquest). In Britain and Ireland, the La Tene Period continued through early medieval times and concluding course components consider the continuity and influence of Celtic traditions in areas least-impacted by Roman rule (Ireland, Scotland and parts of Wales). This class will require intensive research.

Content:

The course will introduce students to the non-Greek, non-Roman origins of western society through a study of some of the first truly “European” people to settle across the continent from Spain to Poland and from Croatia to islands west of Ireland. Tracing the Celts from tribal origins to chiefdoms and proto-states, we will consider how information about Celtic societies may be gleaned through archaeology, and how our interpretations of the archaeological record may be challenged or supported by Greek and Roman ethnographic accounts of the Celts in war and in daily life. Narrowing our focus to Ireland (the fringe Celtic territory unconquered by Rome) we will consider the endurance there of Celtic forms of kingship and kinship, law, religion and artistic styles for nearly a millennia after Roman conquest disrupted Celtic traditions on the continent. In this pursuit, we will examine how the “Early Irish” literature (600-900 AD) correlates with archaeological finds and the writings of the Greek and Roman ethnographers. We will further examine Celtic monasticism and saints’ cults and consider what remains of Celtic tradition and folk liturgy today at holy wells.

Texts:

James, Simon. 1996. *The World of the Celts*. London: Thames and Hudson. (Primary text)

Green, Miranda. 1997. *The World of the Druids*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Gantz, Jeffrey. 1981. *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*. N.Y.: Penguin.

Harding, D.W. 2007. *The Archaeology of Celtic Art*. London: Routledge.

Haywood, John. 2001. *The Historical Atlas of the Celtic World*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Newell, Phillip. 1996. *Listening for the Heartbeat of God: A Celtic Spirituality*. Edinburgh: SPCK.

*Course pack available at the University book store. Coursepack includes readings and lecture outlines.

I have given you a rather long (25+ pages) reading bibliography to consult when researching a particular topic for our class or exploring your own interests. Many of the texts are on reserve for you at Du Pont Library. You WILL want to make use of inter-library loan for your research projects: remember it may take weeks for a particular book to arrive. You can also keep the library staff happy by pooling your requests.

Course web site for your reference: <http://www.sewanee.edu/anthropology/anth222/>

Requirements and Grading:

Three Exams: Exam I = 20%, Exam II = 25%, Final Exam cumulative = 30%-----75%

Exams are challenging. Students need to know course materials very well to earn a “B.” An “A” requires that you can also apply your comprehensive knowledge to new material. Remember this rule of thumb: for each hour spent in the class room, students should spend three hours studying course material.

One Group Project-----10%

You will work in groups of 4 students (these same groups will also discuss Unit 5 readings). Each student will individually type a two to three page paper related to their portion of the group project with a **minimum of 5 sources (excluding WWW sites and textbooks)**. Individual papers should demonstrate original (and *individual*) thought, reveal one’s contributions to the group effort, and are due in class on the day of the presentation.

Students will use visual aids (slides, overheads or PowerPoint, etc.). Be mindful that the focus in your assessment is not on flashy PowerPoint images, but on the content of your presentation—its conception, logical flow, organization, and its accessibility and value to your classmates. If you snatch images off the Internet the night before your presentation—this is obvious.

Group presentations will be tightly organized and last no longer than 15 minutes. To keep presenters on schedule, a moderator will cut off groups exceeding this time limit; so, rehearse your presentations with a clock. Exceptionally relevant video clippings may be interspersed with discussion, but may collectively take up no more than five minutes of presentation time.

Group members may share no more than three sources in common. Each individual should make a unique contribution to the group effort and therefore have located her or his own sources. You have a long resource bibliography (and your instructor) to consult, you have interlibrary loan and multiple electronic databases through which to access journal articles. Your individual bibliographies should reveal a strong grasp of your subject (you should have read enough on your chosen topic to know which sources are good sources and worthy of citing).

You may divide the labor as you choose: if one person is more willing to do the actual presenting, then another might take on a larger share of the library research or visual aid-production in return. To ensure cooperation, members of each group will assess each other’s input (meaning: slackers will be peer-reviewed and this assessment will be considered in assigning grades).

Each group will select one of the following topics:

- The “Celtic” Urumchi Mummies of China (Sept.11)
- Map museums across Europe (at least 15) and explain experimental archaeology at reconstructed villages at museum parks. Give your class a tour through the major Celtic collections of Europe. This does require web research and a PowerPoint presentation. Instead of a paper, each student prepares the class handouts listing museums, their locations, and the highlights of their collections. Group members may research by region, artifact type or artistic style. You need not submit a bibliography of sources, though you will need to consult scholarly works to answer an important question for your classmates: “Where are the major artifacts that we have considered in class located now?” The group presentation lasts 20 minutes. (Sept. 18)
- Consider the major Celtic tribes of France. What do they share? Where were their centers of power? Who allied with whom? Give your classmates a handout of a map of Celtic Gaul. Where were the major oppida? What rivers were important to their travel and trade? (Oct.9)
- Consider the major “Celtic” tribes of Britain. What do they share? Where did they exist? Who allied with whom? Give your classmates a handout of a map of the British Iron Age tribes (Chadwick’s or one more recent). (Oct.21)
- Consider the geographic distribution of specific deity worship and regional expressions of veneration.

(For example, in Ireland, Lugh was revered above Donn or the Daghdha, who did he override on the continent?) One group will consider Epona/Rhiannon/Macha through inscriptions, sculpture, art, myth, and the early ethnographies. Another group will consider Lugh/Mercury. (Nov.4)

Semester Project---*Due anytime between Nov.24 and Dec. 3rd*-----15%

To insure availability of library resources, students will sign up for one of the topics below. More than one student may undertake one of these topics *with different foci*. If you have another topic you'd prefer to research, please talk with me. You may complete this project as an individual or in groups of two. **Groups of two write an 8 page paper and both receive the same grade. Individuals write a 6 page paper. This paper length includes the "works cited" page which will contain a minimum of 10 sources (excluding websites/text books).** The number of sources required is the same for individuals as for groups of two.

- Celtic domestic architecture (fortified or unfortified) OR Celtic dress
- Post-1990 writings on the oppida—how have interpretations evolved?
- Map and consider interpretations of the Late Hallstatt Princely burials. Where are the major mound burials and is there a pattern to their distribution? Which have been excavated and when? A concluding third of the paper should consider how this "conspicuous consumption" vanished with the transition to La Tene. What does this say about a change in lifestyle and, *perhaps*, worldview?
- Celtic Coinage
- Compile information on Catholic Saints' Days based on festivals for Celtic gods & goddesses
- Celtic gods turned folk heroes or saints in Medieval times
- Consider fairies, gnomes, sprites, elves, etc. as denizens of old Celtic pantheons (if you are an English major—you might want to consider 19th century literature recording oral traditions such as that of Yeats, Lady Gregory, Kipling, Alexander Carmichael)
- Consider Celtic interactions with a group of their contemporaries (the Teutons, Cimbri, Scythians, Thracians).
- Consider Indo-European similarities between the Celts and their non-Mediterranean contemporaries? What do you make of the claims for Indo-European commonalities?
- Consider Celtic animism and totemism
- Consider early ethnographic accounts of any Celtic ritual behaviors
- Two people may work together to update the reading bibliography
- Consider Lughnasa celebrations across Europe. What remains?
- Celtic Saints (other than Brigid, Patrick and Colmcille)
- Trace the impact of the Irish Age of Saints on the continent. Where were their European missions and what remains of them today?
- Consider multiple interpretations of Celtic practices of human sacrifice. Detail the major archaeological sites from which these interpretations derive and provide a map of their locations.
- Consider climatic impacts on "Celtic" culture and how climatic change enabled Roman conquest.
- Placenames and other linguistic evidence for Celtic presence in Spain and Turkey and Poland
- Bog body and other ritual deposits in Ireland *as* boundary markers (mostly post 1995 publications)
- The Picts of Scotland OR analysis of standing stone motifs by type
- Consider the current use of Celtic languages (who still speaks what in which regions of what countries? what are the governmental policies relating to their use? How do they reflect current nationalisms and identity politics?)

Attendance and Participation:

This does not compose a specific percentage of your grade, it is simply expected. At the end of term, should you be hovering between a plus or minus, your participation could be the tipping factor.

On some days students will be asked to come to class with discussion materials or ready to present a summary of readings (such as the Irish myths of Unit 5). It is the responsibility of a student who misses class to get the assignment and to be prepared for the next meeting. Some activities may be required outside of class including film-viewing, a lecture, and an evening event near the end of the semester. If you miss a lecture, you miss course material. Skill in good note-taking is essential in any career in which you meet and exchange ideas with other people—so unless you plan on managing a lighthouse, this is a skill you should acquire in college.

Focusing on prehistory, history, art history, the archaeological record and literature, this class is primarily lecture-driven so that you need to have completed your readings prior to class to follow the lecture. Questions and discussion are happily encouraged, but the usual course format (and in deed the unfolding of course material) is designed in a traditional “tried and true” sequence to enable you to become knowledgeable on the current state of Celtic studies.

A lecture class is not a time to sit back passively, enjoy the slide show, and hope you remember things. You are to be constantly thinking about the material and continuously taking notes. The form and content of your notes evidence your level of intellectual engagement. Lecture outlines are provided to key you in to important points and themes about which you should make notes. A lecture class is hard work. Your notes are usually the most important thing you will take away from a day’s meeting. You must retain and master the material from lectures to be able to critically assess our current views of the Celts and hypothesize new interpretations. You will have to know dates, you will have to thoroughly know artistic styles, regional variations, individual ethnographer’s names and other types of information students sometimes think of as “details.” When the difficult part of what one is trying to do is in the many small details, we say “the devil is in the details.” You must master and actively synthesize “the details” to be capable of saying anything, especially anything new, about the Celts, and you will be expected to integrate course material with your own original insights and interpretations in your group and individual projects.

If, as you review for an exam, you come across a subject about which your knowledge is hazy and you have consulted the indices and glossaries of your text books, you might also wish to consult the *Dictionary of Celtic Myth and Legend* by Miranda Green (1997) or *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia* (2006, 5 volumes), both of which are in the reference section of our library.

Grading Scale: **A+=100, A=99-94, A- = 93-90**
 B+=89, B= 88-84, B- = 83-80
 C+=79, C= 78-74, C- = 73-70
 D+=69, D= 68-64, D- = 63-60
 F =<60

Pass/Fail status is NOT permitted for this course.

How will your work be evaluated?

- 1) Clear statement of the central issue (What is your argument? Why is it important? Did you make your reader hunt for your thesis or is it clearly stated early in the paper?)
- 2) Coherent development of your thesis (Does your introduction tell what you are going to present and how you will do so? Does your material flow from point to point, pulling the reader/hearer along every step of the way? Does your conclusion briefly review your arguments and then suggest what insights your project offers for interpretations of the Iron Age generally?)
- 3) Full exposition of your argument (Do your citations support your thesis? Do you synthetically draw material from a range of sources? Do you address the complexities of your subject, avoiding stereotyping and reductionism?)
- 4) Creativity and originality (Feel free to play with form and concepts. Avoid repetition of class lectures and readings. What new linkages and meanings can you find?)
- 5) Use of class concepts. Any exercise for any class is to test your facility with course ideas and how well you can apply them to new subject matter.

Form:

All papers will be double-spaced in New Times Roman font size 12 (using another font will incur a full letter grade deduction). When a minimum page length is specified, this refers to *full* pages. Always number pages. Please print your papers double-sided if you are able. Avoid passive voice. Please take advantage of the University's Writing Center.

Gender-neutral language: Students will employ gender-neutral language whenever appropriate. For example, using "man" or "mankind" to mean humans generally will result in a five-point deduction. This is the twenty-first century. Using terms such as "mankind" or "chairman" instead of "humankind" or "chair" is no longer conventional—it has not been since before you were born—despite what your high school English teacher may have told you. If citing a source that uses "man," for example, use [sic] within your quotes.

Citations:

All written work will employ proper citation forms. Use any style you prefer, just use it correctly and consistently. Anthropological citation style places the author's name, followed by the date of publication, and the page number which you cite within parentheses before the period of the sentence in which the cited idea or quote appears: e.g. Smith suggests that La Tene art is "of a skill level superior to Hallstatt art" (Smith 1999:19). If you are unsure whether or not to cite, talk with me or visit:

http://www.uncc.edu/colleges/arts_and_sciences/history/citations.htm

Web sites, encyclopedias and dictionaries are not acceptable bibliographic sources. The purpose of this project is to teach you not only something about the Celts, but to teach you how to research. Perusing encyclopedias and dictionaries, or web surfing, may give you some starter ideas, but does not teach you how to research. No web sites, even those affiliated with universities, will be permitted as sources. Do not ask for a special exception, just do the research.

Vary the sources you cite. Citing the same source throughout a paragraph means you have simply paraphrased the cited authors' work. Distinguish between general knowledge and specific facts and ideas for which you must give an author credit. Perhaps you did not know much about your topic when you began your paper, but by researching a variety of sources you have become a mini-expert on the subject and should develop your own ideas and interpretations. Synthesize the various sources you have consulted to produce your own creative thesis and remember that each paragraph should have its own topic sentence that supports the over-arching thesis.

Extension Policy:

NO extensions. Since your ideas must be well-formulated for successful argument and presentation, extensions are non-negotiable. All test dates and due dates firm. My sympathy for your anxieties has no relationship to due dates. **Do not leave voice mail or email messages the evening before an exam or a paper due date; if you have waited that long to find you need advice, you have not properly prepared.** Except when a student's own medical problems or family illness impact deadlines and performance, students asking for exceptions and exemptions lower their own performance rating. Such requests reveal an assessment of the course work as less important than other demands. Ask yourself how a future boss might interpret such requests (and the possible consequences of making them) before you consider actually asking for a special accommodation. I am happy to discuss your work with you and encourage you to come in and talk well in advance of deadlines.

If you have an exam in another class on the same day on which a paper is due in this class, plan ahead and finish the paper early. Should your computer fall from your dorm window—we now have accessible computer labs all over campus. Plan ahead and do not try to print out your assignments 10 minutes before they are due. Flying home for a sibling's birthday, attending a concert, and oversleeping are not excuses for missing class. Lest you try myriad other tales (assume I have heard them before—I probably have)-- a death in the family or a doctor's note for your own illness are the only reasons for missing an exam/quiz or paper due date. With the exception of those two situations there will be no exam or quiz make-ups. Requesting individual indulgences that cannot be offered to your classmates is unfair to them. If you feel you have another valid reason for requiring an extension (they do exist), simply obtain a note from the Dean.

Papers and typed work will be due *in class*. Any late paper will have one letter grade deducted for each day it is late.

If you need assistance, guidance or just want to chat about your readings, research or writing, drop by during my office hours, any time the door is open, or schedule an appointment.

Course Schedule (*subject to change*)

Reading assignments appear by the relevant lecture topic. “C-11” indicates course pack reading #11.

Unit One: Introduction

Unit One provides a general introduction to the Celtic homelands, major archaeological sites and varied theoretical perspectives on “the past.” At your own pace and before Exam I—read pp 1-45 of Haywood.

- Aug. 28 (TH) Introduction: Did a “Celtic” culture exist? “Celtic Myth?”
After-class readings: C-11 (pp 111-119), C-12 (pp 120-123), C-13 (124-127)
- Sept. 2 (T) Interpreting “the past” through the archaeological record
Readings: C-14 (pp 128-133), C-15 (pp 134-136)
>>**Topics chosen for group project**<<
- Sept. 4 (TH) Research Session in the Library w/ Mr. Reynolds—meet in the library lobby
Followed by discussion of course pack readings in the same room.
- Sept. 9 (T) Pre-Celtic inhabitants of Europe; situating the Celts in time and space
Readings: James Chapters I & II

Unit Two: The Sources

You will become familiar with our main sources of knowledge about the Celts: *Archaeology* (artifacts, structures, environmental evidence and human remains), *Art, Linguistic evidence* (inscriptions and language use) and the *Greek and Roman ethnographic writings*. (We will consider medieval Celtic literature in a later unit.) Archaeologists are interested in *associations* between the various forms of evidence as revealed through stratigraphically-controlled *excavation* or through literary or linguistic applications in interpreting excavated material. Recurrent *patterns* of association help define *cultures*.

- Sept. 11 (TH) The Early Ethnographers: Greek and Roman sources on the Celts
Readings: James Chapter VIII; tribal distribution maps
*** First Group Presentation: Urumchi Mummies**
- Sept. 16 (T) Celtic Art & Interpretation--Hallstatt and La Tene:
Strict; Waldalgesheim; Plastic; Oppida Period
Readings: James Chapter VII ; Harding Ch. 3 & 4
- Sept. 18 (TH) Continued; Readings: Harding Ch. 11
***Group presentation on museums with Celtic collections**
- Sept. 23 (T) Placenames; Celtic Languages; Inscriptions; Coins; Native Literature
Readings: James Chapter III
- Sept. 25 (TH) Linguistic evidence continued
- Sept. 30 (T) The Galatians/Celts in Anatolia; Celtic Invasions South
Review for Exam immediately following class
- Oct 2. (TH) **Exam I**

Unit Three: Celtic Daily Life

Drawing on varied sources, we will discuss Celtic subsistence strategies, dispersed settlement patterns and the changing interpretations of *hill forts* and *oppida*. This unit will also consider daily life and physical appearance, socio-political structure, and class and gender relations.

- Oct. 7 (T) Celtic subsistence & Settlement patterns
 -- Noble Residences (*Fürstensitze*) & Princely burials (*Fürstengraben*)
 -- Hill forts followed by Oppida
 Readings: Portions of James Chapter III
- Oct. 9 (TH) Continued; oppida and domestic architecture
 Danebury (England), Manching (Bavaria) and Mont Beuvray (Burgundy)
 Heuneburg; Dürrenberg; Hallein
 Readings: Students will consult suggested web sites on the Heuneburg and Butser
***Group Presentation on Celtic Tribes of France**
- Oct. 14 (T) Celtic Society: political organization, gender, and social class
 feasts, the hospitality ethic and redistribution
- Oct. 16 (TH) *Fall Break*
- Oct. 21 (T) Appearance, clothing, personal adornment (burial evidence)
 Readings: James Chapter IV
***Group Presentation on Celtic Tribes of Britain**

Unit Four: Celtic Ritual Life

This unit examines the largely atectonic (lacking buildings) Celtic religion, human sacrifice, and the Druids. Archaeological interpretation of ritual at natural sites (springs, groves) is at present ambiguous; the early ethnographers' writings are biased and sensationalist. Contemporary phenomenological approaches provide potential insight based on *ethnographic analogies*, but these have comparative limits. What can we say, at present, about Celtic ritual life based on a synthesis of the main sources?

- Oct. 23 (TH) A Celtic Religion Or Celtic Mythology?
 Druids, Vates and Bards
 Readings: Green's *The World of the Druids* Chapters I – VIII, C-16
- Oct. 28 (T) Supernatural entities and places
- Oct. 30 (TH) Votive Offerings; Head Hunting; Human Sacrifice
 Readings: James Chapter VI ****Happy Samhain****
- Nov. 4 (T) ***Group presentations on Epona and Lugh**
- Nov. 6 (TH) "The Perfect Corpse"—interpretation of bog bodies; Review for Exam
- Nov. 11 (T) **Exam II**

Unit Five: Early Christian Ireland

Ireland remained un-Romanised—retaining a continuous Celtic tradition up to the Viking and Norman invasions.

Most of the written evidence we have of Celtic society (beyond the Classical propaganda) consists of the Early Irish Tales, Law Tracts and the Annals of Ireland. Using the literature of the islands ["Early Irish" Literature (600-900AD) and the Welsh Literature (late medieval manuscripts of 7th century tales)] we will consider the continuities and disruptions from our knowledge about the Celts of prehistory. Especially focusing on the stories of the Mythological and Ulster Cycles, we will consider how the tales (possibly survivals of oral, Iron Age traditions) relate to the classical texts and the archaeological record.

The Early Irish Literature comes to us via Christian monks who were influenced by druidic traditions and Celtic social structure and tradition. Celtic Christian missionaries traveled across Ireland and Europe throughout the Middle Ages and we will consider their tolerance of religious syncretism (incorporating local traditions within Christian worship and belief). We begin this unit by examining Early Irish society. From ceremonial and sacred sites of pagan Ireland we move on to consider monastic and missionizing sites of early Christian Ireland—exploring theological blending and accommodation along our way. At your own pace and before the final exam read Haywood pp. 72-125.

Nov. 13 (TH) Eire's Ancient Provinces; Early Irish Society: Honor, Brehons & the Law; Kingship & the idea of "Sovereignty"
Readings: James Chapter IX ***Groups select stories for Nov. 20th discussion**

Nov. 18 (T) Class meets in Library screening room for two-part film on Celtic Ireland
Nov. 20 (TH) Class meets in Library screening room for two-part film on Celtic Ireland

Nov. 25 (T) Filid (parasitoid or scholar-bards?)
Pagan Ceremonial Centers, Royal & Sacred Sites
Dún Ailinne; Cruachain; Emain Macha; Tara; Uisneach

Nov. 27 (TH) Thanksgiving

Dec. 2 (T) The Four Main Cycles of Early Irish Literature; the genres
Readings: The Mythological Cycle: *The Dream of Oengus, The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel, The Tochmar Etain*
The Ulster Cycle: *The Boyhood Deeds of Cú Chulaind*
Fenian Cycle: Macc Da Tho's Pig

***Groups prepare 5 minute summaries of 1 story to present. These detail plot, major characters (and what they represent), the cycle, the genre, and their motifs. Students read all stories.**

>>Dec. 3rd (M) last day that semester projects can be turned in at my office in hard copy.<<

Dec. 4 (TH) Early Irish Literature Continued; Celtic Christianity
Gallarus, Kilmalkedar, Reask, Clonmacnoise, Glencolumkille, Iona, Glendalough
Reading: *Listening for the Heartbeat of God: A Celtic Spirituality* by Newell

Dec. 9 (T) Catch-up; Review for final; last day of class

*******Final Exam December 12, Friday 9AM*******

My group project is _____

The other team members are:

My semester project topic is _____

Another class mate researching this topic is:

I am responsible for discussing the following stories from the Gantz book in Unit 5: