

Spring 2026

**History and Archaeology of Industrial Connecticut
HIST 233/ARCP 233**

****Syllabus Subject to Change****

Co-taught by Jennifer Tucker (HIST) and Katherine Brunson (ARCP)

Class Project Advisor: David Naumec (Connecticut Historian and Museum Consultant)

Class Meetings: MW 1:20-2:40pm in Exley 351

Student Office Hours and Open Lab Hours: MW 3-4:30 in Exley 351 or by appointment

Despite the fact that Middletown is a UNESCO Site of Memory and is home to many preserved historical sites, there has been little archaeological excavation, documentation, and storytelling specifically focused on extant industrialization, weaponry, and carceral artifacts dating to the Revolutionary War and early industrial eras. This course will explore the rich history of industrial sites in Middletown and surrounding regions of Connecticut. Students will learn about historical and archaeological methods for the study of past material culture, landscapes, and environments, focusing on how objects and sites can reveal hidden traces of Middletown's ties to agricultural, textile, munitions, and other forms of industrial production over the last few hundred years. Students in the course will have opportunities to work with archaeologists and museum professionals as they research local historic and archaeological objects. Students will also take part in archaeological investigations of local sites near Wesleyan's campus. As a final project, students will produce a public-facing online exhibit, physical exhibit, or public outreach activity based on their research. Students enrolling in the course must be available for a weekend fieldwork activity in April involving survey and/or excavation of a local archaeological site. This course is supported by a Mellon Foundation grant.

Course Overview:

The course will be divided into three parts focusing on the themes of object analysis, landscapes/site analysis, and public-facing exhibit design. In general, Monday class meetings will focus on history and will be led by Prof. Tucker, and Wednesday classes will focus on archaeology and will be led by Prof. Brunson.

Our primary goals will be:

- Integrate local archaeological and historical sources of information in order to investigate revolutionary and industrial histories in Connecticut over the last 300 years.
- Sort and analyze archaeological materials from local excavations housed in the Wesleyan Archaeology & Anthropology Collections (AAC). Develop comparative collections and type collections that can be used for future research and public outreach endeavors in the AAC.
- Work with students to develop public-facing exhibits about local archaeology and industrial history. Potential projects might include online ArcGIS StoryMap exhibits showing changes in spatial patterns in site locations through time, physical exhibits about objects from the AAC, or educational modules about local history that can be used for future public outreach events.
- If possible, conduct small-scale archaeological survey and/or excavation of a local site (possibly Vine Star Mill in Wadsworth Falls State Park or the Nathan Star house on High Street).
- Develop a public workshop in April where students will present their research and network with museum professionals and local archaeologists.

Assessment:

Participation and attendance	20%
Weekly assignments	25%
Research project proposal	10%
Research project draft	20%
Final research project	25%

You must complete all course requirements to pass the class. No late work will be accepted. Please note that A+ grades will only be given in rare and exceptional cases.

Participation and Attendance: Students should attend all class meetings and participate in discussion. We will take attendance. More than two absences will result in a 2% deduction per subsequent missed class. Lecture slides will be made available on the class website after each class meeting. **Students are also expected to attend the April weekend fieldwork activities on April 11-12 and be prepared to present their research at the CSGS Annual Student Research Conference on April 24.** Students will also be asked to keep a lab journal/notebook where they can record information about the collections we will work with as well as their personal reflections.

Weekly Assignments: Required readings and assignments should be completed before our Monday class sessions. Students are also responsible for completing a short, approximately 1-2 page assignment every week related to the readings and course activities. **Assignments are usually due on Mondays before 12:00pm (noon).** Each assignment will be graded out of 2 points (2 points for a complete and thoughtful response to the prompt questions, 1 point for a satisfactory response, and 0 points for an incomplete or late assignment). **The assignment with the lowest grade will be dropped automatically.** Assignments are intended to be low-stakes way for you to think about the readings in preparation for discussions.

Estimated Time Allocation: The class should not take more than approximately 10-12 hours per week of work including attending class, completing assigned readings, writing weekly response assignments, and conducting research for your final project. If you are spending more time than this on a regular basis, we encourage you to check in with us.

Final Research Project: Students will complete an independent research project on a topic chosen from the list below. This project can take a variety of creative forms as long as it includes written text equivalent to approximately 3000 words. Students are encouraged to develop a public-facing component to their project such as an online exhibit, a physical exhibit on campus, a type collection that can be used for class visits to the AAC, or an educational module that could be used in future archaeology and history public outreach events. Projects will involve research using a combination of primary sources and published scholarly sources. Students will submit drafts for feedback and editorial suggestions from the instructors. These suggestions should then be incorporated into the final submitted project. **Students will submit a short project proposal due on March 2. Project rough drafts are due on April 15. Final projects are due during the scheduled final exams period.**

Potential final research project topics:

1. Research a material type represented in the AAC historic collections (e.g., glass bottles, buttons, nails, porcelain, pipestems, etc.) and develop a public-facing exhibit or reference type collection that focuses on the production and use of your chosen material.
2. Research a theme related to industrial production in historic period Middletown (e.g., industry and social class, shipping along the Connecticut River, industrial production of objects for

personal adornment, etc.) and develop an exhibit or other public-facing creative project involving representative objects in the AAC historic collections.

3. Research locations of historic sites and create a map that links locations with materials represented in the AAC historic collections. Examples might include creating an online interactive map of sites associated with a particular family, creating an online interactive map of mill sites in Middlesex County, or developing a walking tour of historic sites in Middletown.

Wesleyan University Syllabus Statements

Accommodation Statement

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, its programs and services. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

If you have a disability, or think that you might have a disability, please contact [Accessibility Services](#) in order to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. Accessibility Services is located in North College, rooms 021/022, or can be reached by email (accessibility@wesleyan.edu) or phone (860-685-5581).

Religious/Spiritual Observance Resources

If you anticipate that your religious/spiritual observance may conflict with academic obligations such as attending class, taking examinations, or submitting assignments, you can work directly with your professor to make reasonable arrangements. Should you require additional support or guidance, please feel free to reach out to Rabbi David Teva, Director of the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at dleipziger@wesleyan.edu or any of the chaplains in the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at <https://www.wesleyan.edu/orsl/index.html>.

For a list of religious holidays celebrated by members of the Wesleyan community, go to Wesleyan's Multifaith calendar which can be found at: <https://www.wesleyan.edu/orsl/multifaith-calendar.html>.

Title IX Resources

If gender-based and/or sexual violence related trauma inhibits your ability to fully participate in class, please contact Debbie Colucci, Title IX Coordinator, at dcolucci@wesleyan.edu, or your class dean. Additionally, and if you are comfortable, you can work directly with your professor to make reasonable arrangements. You may also choose to talk with a confidential resource about all of your options for care and support. Confidential resources can be found the Office of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), WesWell, and the Office for Religious and Spiritual Life.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, ability, and nationality. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun.

Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on the student code.

Discrimination and Harassment

Wesleyan University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment and does not tolerate identity-based discriminatory harassment and/or sexual misconduct against students, faculty, staff, trustees, volunteers, and employees of any university contractors/agents. For purposes of this Wesleyan policy, identity refers to one's race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and gender expression. The Office for Equity and Inclusion serves students, faculty, administrators and develops policies and procedures regarding issues of diversity and equal opportunity/affirmative action. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office for Equity and Inclusion at 860-685-4771.

Honor Code

All Wesleyan students are responsible for knowing and upholding the Honor Code. Feel free to contact me about any questions related to course expectations. If you have a question related specifically to the honor code, please contact Assistant Dean of Student/Director of Community Standards Kevin Butler - (kbutler@wesleyan.edu).

Tentative Schedule

Part 1: How can historians and archaeologists study Connecticut's past material culture?

MONDAY	WEDNESDAY
Jan 26. Course introduction. What is history?	Jan 28. What is archaeology? What is historical archaeology? Object biography activity.
Feb 2. How can we study industrial histories using historical, archival, and museum sources? (part 1). Overview of local history.	Feb 4. How can we study local history using archaeology? Introduction to the final research project.
Feb 9. Presentation by class Project Advisor: David Naumec (Connecticut Historian and Museum Consultant). How can we study industrial histories using historical, archival, and museum sources? (part 2)	Feb 11. LAB—Dating sites using pipestems.
Feb 16. Guest visitor Steven Lubar (Prof of Public History, Brown University, former Chair of History of Tech Div, NMAH, Smithsonian)	Feb 18. Guest visit from Wendi Field Murray and introduction to the AAC. LAB—Methods for sorting and identifying historic collections. Discuss issues in museum collections management.
Feb 23. Visit to Special Collections and Archives	Feb 25. Guest visitor Sarah Sportman (CT State Archaeologist). LAB—collections sorting and analysis.
Mar 2. RESEARCH TOPIC PROPOSAL DUE LAB—continue collections sorting. Discuss final research projects and finalize topics.	Mar 4. LAB—continue collections sorting.

Part 2: How can archaeologists and historians study Connecticut's past landscapes and archaeological sites?

MONDAY	WEDNESDAY
Mar 23. Discuss historic maps. Discuss landscapes of industrial sites and buildings in CT.	Mar 25. Introduction to landscape archaeology, survey, and mapping techniques. LAB—continue collections sorting.
Mar 30. Guest visitor Francesca Liuni (RISD exhibit designer)	Apr 1. View AAC Beman Materials. LAB—continue collections sorting.
Apr 6. Discuss environmental impacts of industrial production from a historical perspective. LAB—continue collections sorting.	Apr 8. Discuss environmental archaeology and the environmental impacts of industrial production from an archaeological perspective. Prepare for weekend fieldwork.
SPECIAL CLASS MEETING ON THE WEEKEND OF APRIL 11-12. SURVEY AND/OR EXCAVATION OF A LOCAL SITE.	

Part 3: How can we share local historical and archaeological finds with the public?

MONDAY	WEDNESDAY
Apr 13. Debrief from weekend fieldwork activities. Work on final projects.	Apr 15. DRAFT OF FINAL PROJECT DUE. VISIT TO MIDDLESEX COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MIDDLETOWN WALKING TOUR.
Apr 20. Work on final projects and presentations for the student research conference. LAB—continue collections sorting.	Apr 22. Work on final projects and presentations for the student research conference. LAB—continue collections sorting.

FRIDAY, APRIL 24 PRESENTATIONS AT STUDENT RESEARCH CONFERENCE	
Apr 27. Debrief about workshop. Work on final projects. LAB—continue collections sorting.	Apr 29. Work on final projects. LAB—continue collections sorting.
May 4. Wrap up any remaining work on final projects and collections sorting.	May 6. Course summary and conclusions. REVISED FINAL PROJECT DUE DURING SCHEDULED FINAL EXAM PERIOD

List of Readings

Week 1 no class meetings

Week 2 (Jan 26 and 28)

1. Weicksel, S. J. (2024). A Case for Objects: Material Culture in the History Classroom. *The American Historical Review*, 129(3), 1129-1153.
2. Nelson, P. & Gonzalez S. "What do Archaeologists Do?" *Sapiens*, February 9, 2023.
<https://www.sapiens.org/archaeology/what-do-archaeologists-do/>
3. Deetz, J. (1977). *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday. (Chapter 1-4)

Week 3 (Feb 2 and Feb 4)

1. Deetz, J. (1977). *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday. (Chapters 7-9).
2. Loren, D. & Beaudry, M. (2006). Becoming American: Small Things Remembered. In Hall, M & Silliman, S.W. (Eds.) *Historical Archaeology* (pp. 251-271). Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA.
3. Hall, P. (1981). *Middletown: Streets, Commerce, and People, 1650-1981*. Wesleyan University Sesquicentennial Papers, No. 8. Lunenburg, VT: Stinehouse Press.
4. Explore this resource on local history from the Middlesex County Historical Society:
<https://mchsct.org/exhibits-displays/their-own-stories-online-exhibit/>

Week 4 (Feb 9 and Feb 11)

1. Gordon, R. B., & Malone, P. M. (1997). *The texture of industry: An archaeological view of the industrialization of North America*. New York: Oxford University Press. (Chapter 1)
2. Naumec, D. J. (2004). The Connecticut Contracted '61 Springfield: The Special Model to the "Good and Serviceable" Arm. *American Society of Arms Collectors Bulletin*, (90), 3-4.
3. Higgins, D. (2017). Guidelines for the recovery and processing of clay tobacco pipes from Archaeological projects. *National Pipe Archive, University of Liverpool English Heritage publication*.
4. Skim and familiarize yourself with these additional resources about pipe stems, including dating methods:
 - o McMillan, Lauren K. (2016) "An Evaluation of Tobacco Pipe Stem Dating Formulas," *Northeast Historical Archaeology*: Vol. 45 45, Article 3.
Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/neha/vol45/iss1/3>
 - o Atkinson, David L., and Oswald, Adrian (1969). *London Clay Tobacco Pipes*. University Press, Oxford, England.

- o Oswald, Adrian (1975). *Clay Pipes for the Archaeologist*. British Archaeological Reports, British Series 14. BAR Publishing, Oxford, UK.
- o Harrington, J.C. (1978). Dating Stem Fragments of Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Clay Tobacco Pipes. In: Schuyler, R. (Ed), *Historical Archaeology: A Guide to Substantive and Theoretical Contributions* (1st ed.). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315224404>

Week 5 (Feb 16 and Feb 18)

1. Lubar, S. D. (2017). *Inside the lost museum: Curating, past and present*. Harvard University Press. (Chapter 8 On the Ethics of Objects)
2. Lubar, S. (1987). Culture and technological design in the 19th-century pin industry: John Howe and the Howe Manufacturing Company. *Technology and Culture*, 28(2), 253-282.
3. Ford, R., Regele, LS (2024), "When government is the solution: creating the arms industry in the Connecticut River Valley in the 1800s". *Journal of Management History*, Vol. 30 No. 4 pp. 527–546, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMH-11-2023-0122>
4. Knoll, M.K. & Huckell, B.B. Guidelines for preparing legacy archaeological collections for curation. *Society for American Archaeology*. Released Feb 8, 2019. Available: https://documents.saa.org/container/docs/default-source/doc-careerpractice/saa-guidelines-for-preparing-legacy-arch-collections.pdf?sfvrsn=5a6a1e5_2

Week 6 (Feb 23 and Feb 25)

1. Sportman, S. (2023). Women in Early Colonial Connecticut: Hollister, Gilbert, and Wangunk Women at the Hollister Site, South Glastonbury. *Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Connecticut*, 85: 49-68.
2. Dyson, Stephen L. (1982). Material Culture, Social Structure, and Changing Cultural Values: The Ceramics of Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Middletown, Connecticut. In R.S. Dickens (Ed.), *Archaeology of Urban America* (pp. 361-380). Academic Press.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-214980-1.50024-X>
3. Skim and familiarize yourself with these resources on methods for identifying historic ceramics:
 - o Noel Hume, Ivor (1969). *A Guide to the Artifacts of Colonial America*. Reprinted in 1970 by Alfred A. Knopf, New York, NY.
 - o [//efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://jefpat.maryland.gov/Documents/mac-lab/historic-ceramic-chart-16x22.pdf](https://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://jefpat.maryland.gov/Documents/mac-lab/historic-ceramic-chart-16x22.pdf)
 - o <https://apps.jefpat.maryland.gov/diagnostic/BeginnersGuideToHistoricCeramicIdentification.html>
 - o <https://cartarchaeology.wordpress.com/2019/02/14/looking-it-up/>
 - o <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/histarch/ceramic-types/>

Week 7 (Mar2 and Mar 4)

1. No required readings this week. Please prepare your research topic proposal for approval from the instructors.

Week 8 (Mar 23 and Mar 25)

1. Johnson, K. M., Ives, T. H., Ouimet, W. B., & Sportman, S. P. (2021). High-resolution airborne Light Detection and Ranging data, ethics and archaeology: Considerations from the northeastern United States. *Archaeological Prospection*, 28(3), 293–303. <https://doi.org/10.1002/arp.1836>
2. Lavin, L. (2007). Connecticut Connections: The Places That Teach Us About Historical Archaeology. *Connecticut History Review*, 46(2), 294-308.
3. Roth, M. (1981). An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites. *Society for Industrial Archaeology*. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History. (Selections).
4. Additional mapping resources and articles on metal detection TBD.

Week 9 (Mar 30 and April 1)

1. Review chapters 7 and 8 in Deetz, J. (1977). *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
2. Read these articles on Black history and archaeology, including in Middletown:
 - a. Battle-Baptiste, W. (2011). *Black Feminist Archaeology*. London and New York: Routledge. (Chapter 1).
 - b. <https://beman-triangle.research.wesleyan.edu/>
 - c. <https://connecticuthistory.org/middletowns-beman-triangle-a-testament-to-black-freedom-and-resilience/>
 - d. <https://slavewrecksproject.org/>
3. Read these articles on interpretation of historic sites and exhibit design:
 - a. Rabinowitz, R. (2013). Eavesdropping at the Well: Interpretive Media in the *Slavery in New York* Exhibition. *The Public Historian*, 35(3), 8–45. <https://doi.org/10.1525/tph.2013.35.3.8>.
 - b. Explore the following online exhibits for inspiration:
 - i. <https://chinesemuseum.historysanjose.org/>
 - ii. <https://www.boston.gov/departments/archaeology/boston-common-archaeology>

Week 10 (April 6 and April 8)

- Cronon, W. (2003 [1983]). *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England*. New York: Hill and Wang. (Selections).
- Mrozowski, S.A. (2006). Environments of History: Biological Dimensions of Historical Archaeology. In Hall, M & Silliman, S.W. (Eds.) *Historical Archaeology* (pp. 23-41). Blackwell Publishing, Malden, MA.
- Additional reading TBD.
- Supplemental readings (optional):
 - a. Landon, D.B. (2009). An Update on Zooarchaeology and Historical Archaeology: Progress and Prospects. In: Gaimster, D., Majewski, T. (eds) *International Handbook of Historical Archaeology*. Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-72071-5_6
 - b. Hardesty, D.L. (2009). Historical Archaeology and the Environment: A North American Perspective. In: Gaimster, D., Majewski, T. (eds) *International Handbook of Historical Archaeology*. Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-72071-5_5

Week 11 (April 13 and April 15)

1. No readings this week. Please attend the weekend fieldwork activities, work on your final projects, and finalize plans for the research conference.

Week 12 (April 20 and April 22)

1. Prepare for the research conference on April 24.
2. Leone, M.P. (1995), A Historical Archaeology of Capitalism. *American Anthropologist*, 97: 251-268. <https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1995.97.2.02a00050>
3. Browse the journal *Historical Archaeology*, especially 2023 volume 57 issue 3, which focuses on public historical archaeology: <https://link.springer.com/journal/41636/volumes-and-issues/57-3> . Choose an example to summarize for the rest of the class.
4. Explore some of these recent case studies in historical archaeology:
 - a. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/11/04/science/archaeology-simpsonville-civil-war.html>
 - b. <https://www.sapiens.org/archaeology/chinese-railroad-workers-utah/>
 - c. <https://www.sapiens.org/archaeology/archaeology-boston-north-end/>

Week 13 (April 27 and April 29)

1. Read more about cultural heritage laws in the US and the changing landscape of historical archaeology in the US:
 - a. Lidz, F. “In the U.S., Archaeology Stares Down an Uncertain Future.” *New York Times*. May 26, 2025.
 - b. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/archeology/laws-regulations-guidelines.htm>
 - c. <https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Services/Historic-Preservation>
 - d. <https://www.saa.org/about-archaeology/archaeology-law-ethics>
2. Additional readings TBD based on student interests.

Week 14 (May 5 and May 6)

1. No readings this week. Please work on final projects.