



# EXPERIMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY AND MATERIALITY OF THE HIGH MEDIEVAL PERIOD AT FERRYCARRIG

Course ID: ARCH 365AV

January 5–18, 2020

Academic Credits: 2 Semester Credit Units (Equivalent to 3 Quarter Units)

School of Record: Connecticut College

## DIRECTORS:

Dr Brendan O' Neill, University College Dublin ([brendan.oneill@ucd.ie](mailto:brendan.oneill@ucd.ie))

Dr Denis Shine, Irish Archaeology Field School ([denis.shine@iafs.ie](mailto:denis.shine@iafs.ie))



## INTRODUCTION

The program provides a practical introduction to the role of crafts, technologies and construction techniques in Ireland through time. Focusing on both the built environment and materiality in the later medieval period, students will actively participate in a range of bespoke experimental archaeology workshops and projects. Through participation on this program students will be equipped with a good understanding of medieval society in general, with a specific focus on the role of technologies and materiality in people's lives at that time. The program also teaches many 'life-skills' such as creativity, problem solving, teamwork, time management, resourcefulness and project design and implementation.

What makes this program unique is its collaboration with a leading archaeological research project – *Digging the Lost Town of Carrig*. The experimental archaeology program is delivered adjacent an authentic ringwork castle (the Carrick ringwork), within the confines of the Irish National Heritage Park (INHP) in Wexford, southeast Ireland. This ringwork is one of Ireland's most important medieval monuments and crucial to the earliest stages of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland, being the first Anglo-Norman fortification built in the country in 1169 CE. Archaeological excavations at the site by the IAFS since 2018 show that significant evidence of the site's medieval history is preserved below the ground – including remnants of a 12<sup>th</sup> century fort with wooden structures, 13<sup>th</sup> century stone castle and 14<sup>th</sup> century hall and chapel. As the archaeologists uncover the history of both the site and buildings the results are

communicated in almost 'live time' to the experimental archaeology students, underpinning their projects with exceptional authenticity and added significance.

A further strength of the program is the partnership with the INHP - Ireland's largest open-air museum, measuring 35 acres (14 hectares). The park depicts 9000 years of re-created history, from first settlers to the coming of the Normans, situated within natural forestry and wet woodlands. The park is a cornerstone of *Ireland's Ancient East* and provides a stunning backdrop to the program. INHP specializes in communicating heritage to the local community and wider public, including through the provision of experimental archaeology initiatives and craft workshops. During their time in the park students will be taught an appreciation on the importance of communicating heritage, and the role experimental archaeology can play in this.

The program is delivered by both the Irish Archaeology Field School (IAFS) and Dr. Brendan O' Neill of University College Dublin (UCD), one of the world's leading experimental archaeologists. Arising from the strengths of the partnership between the IAFS, UCD and the INHP a new initiative, entitled *Building the Lost Town of Carrig*, was conceived in 2019. This project will develop gradually over the next few years, as the excavations at Carrig reveal the scale and nature of the medieval settlement. However, in time it is hoped that a series of replicas, or faux medieval settlement, will be built in the INHP directly based on the archaeological findings. Programs such as this are a crucial first step in this process, and actively contribute in explaining the sites history to the public. Student's work will thus leave a lasting legacy as an educative resource for both the Carrig project and the INHP – allowing future visitors and students a chance to better comprehend the history of this most important site and medieval society in general.

While on the program students will be housed in homestay accommodation in rural locations. Their closest major town is the stunning medieval centre of Wexford Town.

#### *Wexford Town*

Wexford town is nestled on the estuary of the River Slaney, on the southeast coast of Ireland. The town is one of the country's great Viking and medieval townscapes, with intact medieval streetscapes and numerous upstanding archaeological monuments. The town of Wexford is named from the Norse "Waesfiord", meaning "the inlet of mudflats", a clear reminder of its Viking Heritage, which dates from the early 9<sup>th</sup> century CE. Since the Viking period the beautiful port town has been impacted by foreign invaders, sieges, a famous insurrection and the gradual decline of its once crucial maritime industries.

One of the most significant historical events to impact Wexford (and Ireland) occurred in May of 1169, when a force of roughly 500-600 Anglo-Norman and c. 500 Irish soldiers, led by Robert Fitzstephen, Maurice de Prendergast and the recently deposed Irish king of Leinster, Diarmait Mac Murchada, attacked and defeated the Norse-Irish town. Following the capture of Wexford Mac Murchada granted lands, including the Norse town itself, to Robert Fitzstephen and Maurice Fitz Gerald. In an effort to fortify the region Robert Fitzstephen built a wooden 'ringwork' castle on top of a large rock at Ferrycarrig, directly overlooking a strategic point on the River Slaney (approximately 4km west of the town). This ringwork is the current location of this IAFS program.

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The program will introduce students to a range of traditional building techniques as well as past crafts and technologies – with a focus on the high medieval period. During this two-week intensive program at the INHP students will deliver their own unique project(s), helping in both project design and implementation. Student learning will be complimented by tours to several heritage sites, as well as a series of archaeological lectures/workshops. After this program, students will:

- Have an understanding of traditional skills, crafts and technologies
- Understand the background of experimental archaeology in Ireland
- Critically interrogate historical records and archaeological survey data, as part of an overall project design
- Deliver a unique semi-permanent project, which will become part of the park's/archaeology project's teaching resource

- Have an understanding of the medieval history of both Ireland and Wexford
- Understand how heritage can be explained and presented in an engaging manner to visitors and the community alike – especially in the context of an open-air museum
- Gain a base understanding of changing materiality in Ireland through time, focusing on the medieval period

#### **ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS**

**Credit Units:** Attending students will be awarded 2 semester credit units (equivalent to 3 quarter credit units) through our academic partner, Connecticut College. Connecticut College is a private, highly ranked liberal arts institution with a deep commitment to undergraduate education. Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school (see grading assessment and matrix). This field school provides a minimum of 80 direct instructional hours. Students are encouraged to discuss the transferability of credit units with faculty and registrars at their home institution prior to attending this field school.

**Transcripts:** An official copy of transcripts will be mailed to the permanent address listed by students on their online application. One more transcript may be sent to the student home institution at no cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the National Student Clearinghouse: <http://bit.ly/2hvurkl>.

#### **PREREQUISITES**

There are no academic prerequisites. This program is hands-on, experiential learning in a live field environment. What is required is enthusiasm, an open mind and a readiness to ‘give it a go’.

#### **DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY**

Our primary concern is with education. Traveling and conducting field research involves risk. Students interested in participating in any IFR program must weigh whether the potential risk is worth the value of education provided. While risk is inherent in everything we do, we take risk seriously. The IFR engages in intensive review of each field school location prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it complies with all our standards and policies, including student safety.

The IFR does not provide trip or travel cancellation insurance. We encourage students to explore such insurance on their own as it may be purchased at affordable prices. [Insuremytrip.com](http://insuremytrip.com) or [Travelguard.com](http://travelguard.com) are possible sites where field school participants may explore travel cancellation insurance quotes and policies. If you do purchase such insurance, make sure the policy covers the cost of both airfare and tuition. See this [Wall Street Journal article about travel insurance](#) that may help you with to help to decide whether to purchase such insurance.

We do our best to follow schedule and activities as outlined in this syllabus. Yet local permitting agencies, political, environmental, personal or weather conditions may force changes. This syllabus, therefore, is only a general commitment. Students should allow flexibility and adaptability as research work is frequently subject to change.

You should be aware that conditions in the field are different than those you experience in your home, dorms or college town. Archaeological fieldwork in Ireland is carried out in all weather conditions – including rain. You are required to provide suitable waterproof and weatherproof clothing and footwear as well as wind protection. However, in bad weather you will also be provided with shelter. Program activities will include moderately strenuous physical work. Students must be in good physical condition and able to walk three miles a day comfortably.

If you have medical concerns, please discuss them with your doctor. All other concerns may be discussed with the project director – as appropriate.

#### **GRADING**

**Field school Participation (50%):** Students are required to participate in all field school activities, including, on-site building, lectures, workshops, experimental archaeology sessions etc. Assessment will be undertaken by the supervisory team and will be based on attendance, willingness to work and to try diverse tasks, attention to detail and accuracy, participation in teamwork and contribution to discussions.

**Field Journal (30%):** Students are expected to complete a field school journal and present it for evaluation during their final week. Project staff will instruct students on the expectations for journal entries and will provide guidance on journal completion throughout their time on the program.

**Ted Talk (20%):** Students are expected to deliver a c. 5 minute 'Ted Talk' at the end of their program. This needs to focus on their experimental archaeology sessions, preferably discussing something they have constructed or crafted, such as an artefact, furnace etc. The Ted Talk will be delivered to the group and graded by the Program Director(s).

## **ACCOMMODATION**

Students will stay with local families in Co. Wexford. Home Stay students live with local families, and experience true home life in provincial Ireland. Students will be brought to the site daily. Students should understand that the host families are in rural settings, requiring taxis to reach the town of Wexford. Breakfast and dinner will be provided along with a packed lunch. Students are encouraged to avail of their free time at weekends and explore Ireland.

## **TRAVEL & MEETING POINT**

We suggest you hold purchasing your airline ticket until six (6) weeks prior to departure date. Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and a range of other factors may require the cancellation of a field school. The IFR typically takes a close look at local conditions 6-7 weeks prior to program beginning and make Go/No Go decisions by then. Such time frame still allows the purchase deeply discounted airline tickets while protecting students from potential loss if airline ticket costs if we decide to cancel a program.

Students will be met at Ferrycarrig, Co. Wexford. Since students will arrive on different flights at different times of the day, we will meet all students on Sunday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, at the Irish National Heritage Park at 4pm. Full details on reaching the park will be provided in the online orientation once you are enrolled in the course.

If you fail to make the meeting, please call/text or email Dr. Denis Shine. You will be sent relevant contact details once you are enrolled in the course.

## **VISA REQUIREMENTS**

Citizens of the US and Canada do not require visas to enter Ireland. You will need your passport to be valid for at least 90 days and will enter on a tourist visa. Citizens of other countries are asked to check the embassy website page at their home country for specific visa requirements.

No vaccinations are required for entry to Ireland but anyone working in archaeology in Ireland needs to have an up-to-date tetanus shot.

## **CULTURE, LOCAL ENVIRONMENT & ETIQUETTE**

The town of Wexford is 155km (about 95 miles) south of Dublin. Wexford is a quintessentially classic, small, friendly and safe Irish town. Students are asked to respect local sensitivities and traditions and to understand that the presence of such a large expedition in town/Wexford does not entitle participants to any special treatment or privileges.

This project can involve the participation of volunteers from the local community (or elsewhere) alongside IFR students. Although everyone will speak English, all students should expect surprising cultural differences and exciting opportunities to learn not only about the past but about the lives of others as well. Students will be immersed in Irish culture through learning, language, food and music, and should be prepared for the rewards and challenges that life in a different culture will offer.

*Please note: As the project is a public archaeology initiative students must also be prepared to engage with the local community in a professional and respectful manner both in an official capacity on site and unofficially when off duty.*

## **EXCAVATION/TOOL KIT**

Students are required to bring a basic tool kit. This includes but is not limited to:

- Work **gloves**: gardening glove suitable for work in wet weather (textile glove with a rubberised palm).
- Work shoes or boots: **closed toe-footwear, waterproof** that will be comfortable for both walking and kneeling: a hiking style shoe or boot would be suitable. Gumboots/wellingtons are also suitable for use on site however if you choose to wear these on site, you may need pair of trail shoes or similar for field trips etc.
- **Waterproof outdoorwear**: a jacket (with a hood) and pants – gore-tex is best (but expensive). You will need something sturdy that will stand up to wear and tear of everyday use on site. You can buy waterproof gear locally in Ireland (if you choose to do this, budget to spend about €50/\$70).
- **Warm layers** – wool, fleece, thermal layers – you should bring and wear lots of layers rather than one warm/heavy layer. Bring things that are suitable for outdoor work.
- **Sunscreen**: students should wear an SPF daily to protect against UV exposure and windburn.
- **Hat**: something to keep your head warm. It will be cold and/or sunny.
- **Laptop/tablet**: a device on which you can prepare and submit your presentation and written assignments. A smart phone is not suitable for this.

## **FIELD PROGRAM**

The field program, while focused on experimental archaeology, includes instruction on Irish history and the archaeology of the medieval period in general. The program is based on the Ferrycarrig site in Wexford, although students will also be brought to regional heritage sites. Site and project orientations will be conducted at the start of week one.

**Week 1:** Following project orientation and induction students will be brought to a number of regional heritage sites, before participating in an in-depth orientation on the Carrick archaeological site, including its artefacts, archaeological features and archaeological recording techniques; students will then be introduced to ancient technologies and construction techniques in the medieval period. Working directly with the archaeologists (and informed by past archaeological results) students will be expected to design and deliver a project reflecting structures, such as a kiln or furnace, that once stood at the Carrick archaeological site. Following this construction students will be actively engaged in an iron smelt and bronze casting – producing both raw iron and finished artefacts that would have commonly been seen at Carrick in the medieval period.

**Week 2:** Students will be introduced to medieval life, with a focus on pottery, diet, textiles and craft, industry etc. Students will be expected to construct both coil/hand-built pots and wheel thrown pots (on both modern and medieval replica pottery wheels) – leading to an understanding of the crucial importance of the pottery wheel to medieval society. Through a range of experimental archaeology workshops, they will gain an insight to medieval society at large, and life at the Carrick site in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries more specifically.

## **SCHEDULE**

All IFR field school begins with safety orientation. This orientation includes proper behavior at the field area, proper clothing, local cultural sensitivities and sensibilities, potential fauna and flora hazards, review IFR harassment and discrimination policies and review of the student Code of Conduct.

In addition to working on site, students will be introduced to Irish archaeology through a series of lectures/workshops. Students are given free time on their one full weekend, to allow them to explore Ireland.

The normal working day is from 9:00am to 4.30pm with a morning tea break from 11:00-11:30am and lunch from 1:30-2:15pm. This time may be extended slightly dependent on light conditions during this winter program.

#### INDICATIVE SCHEDULE \*

Week	Day/Date	Time	Event
<b>Archaeology and Metallurgy</b>			
1	Sunday January 5 <sup>th</sup>	Evening	Students arrival and welcome meeting @ 4pm
	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup>	Morning	Project Orientation
		Afternoon	Field trip 1: Tour of INHP and visit to Wexford Town/Carrick 'Town'
	Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup>	Morning	Lecture/Workshop: Archaeology of Medieval Ireland/Wexford
		Afternoon	Field trip 2: Ferns Towns - A High Medieval Landscape
	Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup>	Morning	Lecture/Workshop: Landscape and Geology
		Afternoon	Field trip 3: The Hook Lighthouse, Bannow Bay, etc.
	Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup>	All day	Medieval furnace and metallurgy: students will build a furnace, based on the remains of an actual feature from the excavation, before smelting iron – which includes processing of charcoal, temperature control/bellowing, processing of raw bog-ore, hammering etc.
Friday 10 <sup>th</sup>	All day	Medieval furnace and metallurgy: as above	
Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup>	All day	Free Day	
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup>	All day	Free Day	
<b>Medieval Life &amp; Craft</b>			
2	Monday 13 <sup>th</sup>	All day	Medieval pottery: the Carrick excavation has uncovered c. nine different medieval pottery types thus far. Students will learn how to make several of these potteries, both hand-built and wheel-thrown, in the process gaining a better understanding of how the transition to wheel thrown pottery was so crucial to medieval society
	Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup>	All day	Medieval pottery: as above
	Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup>	All day	Medieval textiles: focusing on processing of raw wool, spinning wool into yarn using hand spindles and various types of weaving (including tablet and card weaving)
	Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup>	Morning	Ted talk Journal submission
		Afternoon	Medieval crafts
	Friday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Morning	Departure feast: Using several of the skills learnt during the program students will be expected to design and deliver their own 'feast', including all preparation of food, construction of cooking areas (if required), seating etc.
		Afternoon	Falconry workshop with a focus on the medieval period  Prepare for Saturday departure
Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup>	All day	Depart program	

*\*Please note: changes to this schedule will occur due to factors beyond our control such as weather, etc. Sessions may also be extended or curtailed, dependent on student progress, or replaced with other experimental sessions dependent on the requirements of the Building the Lost Town of Carrick project at that time.*

#### MANDATORY READINGS

*PDF files of all mandatory readings will be provided to enrolled students via a shared Dropbox folder.*

- Bennett, I. 1985. Preliminary Archaeological Excavations at Ferrycarrig Ringwork, Newtown Td., Co. Wexford. *Journal of the Old Wexford Society*, 10: 25-43.
- O'Sullivan, A., Powers, M., Murphy, J., Inwood, N., Gilhooly, B., Kelly, N., Malone, W., Mulrooney, J., Corrigan, C., L'Estrange, M., Burke, A., Kazuro, M., McDermott, C., Warren, G., O'Neill, B., Heffernan, M. and Sweeney, M. 2014. 'Experimental archaeology: making; understanding; story-telling. In B. Kelly, N. Roycroft and M. Stanley (eds). *Fragments of Lives Past : archaeological objects from Irish road schemes*. National Roads Authority. Dublin. 115-126.
- Sørensen, T. and O'Sullivan, A. 2014. Experimental archaeology in Ireland: its past and potential future. In Reeves Flores, J. and R. Paardekooper (eds). *Experiments Past: Histories of Experimental Archaeology*. Sidestone Press. Leiden. 47-66.
- Shine, D., Potterton, M., Mandal, S. and McLoughlin, C. (eds). 2019. *Carrick, County Wexford: Ireland's first Anglo-Norman stronghold*. Four Courts Press, Dublin. (Read as much as possible – the whole book is relevant).
- Shine, D. Mandal, S., Hayes, C. and Harris, M. 2018. Finding Carrig. *Archaeology Ireland*, 32 (2), 35-40.
- Shine, D. and Mandal, S. 2018. Digging the Lost Town of Carrig: Archaeological Excavation Report 2019. Unpublished technical report prepared for the National Monuments Section.

#### **OTHER READINGS**

- Beglane, F. 2010. Deer and Identity in Medieval Ireland. In Kucera, M. and G-K. Kunst (eds.) *Using Animals to Construct Human Identities in Medieval Europe: 77-84*. Vienna Institute for Archaeological Science.
- Beglane, F. 2015. *Anglo-Norman Parks in Medieval Ireland*. Four Courts Press. Dublin.
- Colfer, B. 2002. *Arrogant Trespass : Anglo-Norman Wexford 1169-1400*. Duffry Press, Wexford, Chapters 1-4.
- Duffy, S. 1997. *Ireland in the Middle Ages*. Gill and Macmillan, Dublin.
- McLoughlin, C. and Stafford, E. 2017. Excavation of the remains of an early thirteenth-century house at the Thomas Moore Tavern, Cornmarket, Wexford. In Doyle, I. and Browne, B (eds.). *Medieval Wexford: Essays in memory of Billy Colfer*. Four Courts Press, Dublin.
- O' Keefe, T. 2015. *Medieval Irish Buildings 1100-1600*. Four Courts Press, Dublin
- Rondelez, P. 2014. Ironworking in late medieval Ireland, c. AD. 1200 to 1600. Unpublished PhD thesis submitted to University College Cork.
- Scott, A.B. and Martin, F.X. (eds.) 1978. *Expugnatio Hibernica by Giraldus Cambrensis*. New History of Ireland Ancillary Publication No. III. Royal Irish Academy. Dublin.