ANTH 095 TAP - ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE MEDIA

ASSIGNMENT ONE
Evaluating the presentation of archaeology on the web

50 points + 10 points for peer review
(1st draft due on Sep 26, final draft due on Oct 5)

The web has become a major venue for communicating archaeology to the public and this assignment requires that you evaluate two major websites that focus on archaeological subject matter. I choose these two because they rank in the top five most visited sites on the web when people search for "archaeology" (according to recent traffic data):

Archaeology Magazine
http://archaeology.org/

World Mysteries
http://world-mysteries.com/

For the essay, I ask you to critically evaluate the presentation, layout, and effectiveness of the websites. This assignment is not intended to test your knowledge of facts or accuracy of content, but rather to evaluate how well you can critique the effectiveness and clarity of an important form of media. This is also your first exercise in "unpacking" and "deconstructing" a major form of media; be sure to use the handouts on media literacy as a guide.

You might consider the following questions as you construct the essay:

- What are the goals of the website and are they made clear? Do you discern any hidden agendas or biases?
- What type of information is discussed and how effectively is it presented? What are the major themes? What themes or topics if any seem to be missing?
- What audiences does the webpage target? Are any excluded?
- Does the website adequately convey information about these ancient cultures through the display of images and use of text? Or similarly, through video or other devices? In your opinion, are critical elements missing? Are any of these devices misleading?
- Does the website provide enough background on the discipline of archaeology for the layperson?
- Is it clear who authored the content? If so, who are they? Who are the sponsors?

Please limit your essay to nine or fewer double-spaced, typed pages; use a 10- to 12-point font with one-inch margins. Number your pages. Be sure to include links in your essay if you refer to specific pages on the website—I’ll show you how in class. Upload your paper directly to Blackboard; no hard copies please.

The second part of this assignment involves peer review. You'll partner with another person in class who will "review" your essay before I grade it. You'll have a chance to revise and resubmit the essay following this peer review. You'll give your randomly-selected partner a completed peer
review form as well as a hard copy of their essay with written comments/changes. My grade will be based on your original essay, the revisions you make (following peer review), and the effort you made at peer-reviewing your partner’s paper.

“All ideas, arguments, and phrases, submitted without attribution to other sources, must be the creative product of the student. Thus, all text passages taken from the works of other authors must be properly cited. The same applies to paraphrased text, opinions, data, examples, illustrations, and all other creative work. Violations of this standard constitute plagiarism.”

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