

ARCX 326 | Excavating Prehistory on an Aegean Island: Gourimadi Archaeological Project Summer Session I 2025, 15 June – 12 July 2025

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1. Course Description

This course will take place as part of the Gourimadi Archaeological Project (GAP), an international prehistoric research excavation on the southern tip of the Aegean Island of Euboea (modern *Evia*). It is designed to provide advanced archaeological field experience to undergraduate students and a theoretical and methodological background regarding excavation techniques and Aegean Archaeology. The course will introduce the students to modern excavation, recording, and documentation methods, and the knowledge gained will translate well into other areas of the world and time periods.

2. Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of both the fieldwork (8 AM - 3 PM) and class lecture (one-hour sessions on weekdays, 6:45 PM) sections of the course, the students will have learned how to:

- stratigraphically excavate an archaeological site;
- document their excavation units in writing and sketch drawings;
- create *Harris matrices* of their trenches;
- analyze architectural remains;
- fly a drone to obtain aerial imagery and *orthomaps* of an archaeological site;
- create photogrammetrical 3D models of trenches and small finds, using a DSLR camera;
- process small finds and ceramics in the project *apothiki* (storeroom/lab);
- carry out floatation to collect archaeobotanical finds;
- set up a *total station* and use it for spatial documentation.

In addition to these practical skills, they will also acquire academic knowledge on:

- excavation methodologies;
- remote-sensing techniques;
- history of archaeological documentation;
- Aegean prehistory from the Palaeolithic to the end of the Bronze Age;
- GIS applications in archaeological excavations and surveys;
- archaeobotany and other disciplines of archaeological sciences;
- introductory pottery and small finds illustration.

3. Course Requirements & Grading

Fieldwork – 50%: Fieldwork participation will be the most important part of the course. Each student will need to learn and complete a series of excavation-related tasks, including—but not limited to—sketch drawings of the trench that they are working in, filling the digital excavation unit form on the project tablets on the field, setting up and recording with the Total Station. Timely attendance of fieldwork and following the directions of the project directors and trench supervisors will be essential for the successful completion of the course.

Weekly Memes/Poems/Diary entries – 10%: Students will reflect on their personal excavation experience on a weekly basis, in the form of memes, poems, or any other creative work.

Final Exam – 25%: A take-home Final Exam will be based on the evening lectures and will test the student's academic knowledge regarding archaeological theory and methodology. Students will have one week to complete the exam.

Class Participation and Attendance – 15%: Attendance at evening lectures is mandatory. The frequency and quality of the questions raised and contributions to in-class discussions will determine your class participation grade.

4. Gourimadi Archaeological Project

GAP includes the systematic excavation of a Late Neolithic - Early Bronze Age site near Karystos in Southern Euboea and its scientific analysis and publication. The project is organized by the Norwegian Institute at Athens and conducted under a permit from the Greek Ministry of Culture and Tourism with the supervision of the Ephorate of Antiquities of Euboea. GAP is directed by Dr. Žarko Tankosić and co-directed by Drs. Fanis Mavridis and Paschalis Zafeiriadis.

The site of Gourimadi, meaning "Big Rock" in the local Arvanitika language, lies on the outskirts of the Katsaronio plain,

about 6 km from the modern town of Karystos in southern Euboea.

The prehistoric habitation extended over a natural hill with excellent defensive properties and a key position in the local landscape. This hill offered unobstructed vistas not only of its immediate surroundings but also of the neighboring regions of eastern Attica and the northern Cyclades (Andros, Tinos, Mykonos, Giaros, and Kea).

The project aims to investigate the earliest farmers in southern Euboea, who may have played an essential role in the eventual colonization of the central Aegean islands. As a multi-period site, spanning as much as two and a half millennia, from the Late Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age, Gourimadi will also play a crucial role in our understanding of the transition to the age of metals. Its peculiar location in the local topography, hundreds of arrowheads found during excavations, and its enigmatic architecture all indicate a special function for the site, as opposed to an ordinary farming village. Adobe (earthen) architecture attested in some of our deepest trenches is likely the earliest found in the region. The large structural terrace system documented in the 2024 season

The methodology employed in GAP is based on the removal of stratigraphic units (termed "excavation units") which, wherever possible, correspond to natural and anthropogenic episodes of archaeological deposition. For faster and more precise measurements, a Total Station device is used throughout the excavation procedure (planning, excavating, and recording), including all elevation points taken for moveable artifacts, architectural features, and excavated units. All the excavated soil is dry-sieved and standardized flotation samples were systematically collected from each excavation unit. All written recordings (excavated units and their specifications, unearthed features, all artifactual categories, and coordinates) are paperless and are logged in a customized digital database using iPads on the field. The visual recording includes hand-drawn sketches, photogrammetrical 3D models of excavation units, and drone-based 3D modeling of the entire excavation area. The spatial information is integrated and analyzed in the project GIS. By the end of the project, the CYA students will be familiar with all these aspects of an archaeological excavation.

Class Schedule

Weekdays, 6:45 p.m.

Week 1

Sunday, 15.06 Arrival to Karystos, General Project Meeting at 7 p.m.

1. 16/06 Gourimadi Excavations 1

History of the Project
Research Questions
General Summary

2. 17/06 Gourimadi Excavations 2

Excavation Methodology
Digital Documentation
Goals of the 2025 Season

3. 18/06 Basic Principles of Archaeological Stratigraphy

Single Context vs. Spits
Harris Matrix
Harris 1989
Pavel 2010, p. 51-58.

4. 19/06 Prehistoric Archaeology 1

Palaeolithic & Mesolithic
Bintliff 2012, pp. 28-29, 35-36
[Rutter, Lesson 1](#)

5. 20/06 Photogrammetry

3D recording and field archaeology
Architectural Illustration & Photogrammetry
Boyd et al. 2021
Sapirstein and Murray 2017

Week 2

- 6. 23/06 Photogrammetry Practice**
- 7. 24/06 Prehistoric Archaeology 2**
Agricultural Revolution & the Spread of Farming
Neolithic in Greece
[Hofmanová et al. 2016](#)
[Runnels and Murray 2001, p. 41-64](#)
- 8. 25/06 The Use of Drones in Archaeology**
History of aerial photography and archaeology
Aerial imagery as a remote sensing tool
Drone-based orthomaps & photogrammetry
[Campana 2017](#)
[Musson et al. 2013](#)
- 9. 26/06 Prehistoric Archaeology 3**
Neolithic & EBA in Central Greece, Euboea, and the Cyclades
Contextualizing Gourimadi
[Mavridis and Tankosić 2016](#)
[Rutter, Lesson 2](#)
[Berg 2019, Chapter 3](#)
- 10. 27/06 Drone Practice**

Week 3

- 11. 30/06 Archaeological GIS I**
Basic Concepts of archaeological GIS and spatial recording
[Conolly and Lake 2006, Chapter 2](#)
[Renfrew and Bahn 2020, p. 93-97](#)
- 12. 01/07 Archaeological GIS II**
Gourimadi Project GIS
- 13. 02/07 Pottery Studies**
Why and how to study pottery?
Introduction to pottery illustration
[Orton and Hughes 2013, p. 24-38](#)
- 14. 03/07 Pottery Illustration Practice**
- 15. 04/07 Video Lecture**
Ancient-DNA Revolution and a new understanding of the human past
Archaeological critique
[Callaway 2018](#)
NO CLASS – The weekend starts immediately after fieldwork

Week 4

- 16. 07/07 Remote Sensing in Archaeology**
Geophysical Methods of Remote Sensing
LIDAR
Thermal Imaging
Satellite Imagery
[Renfrew and Bahn 2020, p. 81-92](#)
- 17. 08/07 Archaeological Sciences**
Archaeobotany, zooarchaeology, physical anthropology, isotope analysis

[Wiener Lab | Research | ASCSA](#)

Renfrew and Bahn 2020, Chapter 4

18. 09/07 Lithics Studies

General Introduction to stone tool industries
Lithics at Gourimadi

19. 10/07 Archaeological Ethics

The Legacy of Colonialist Archaeology
Problems of Digital Archaeology
Ethics of Burial Excavations
Morgan 2022
Sandis 2014, Chapter 7

20. 11/07 Final Review & Discussion

Why Study the Ancient World?
[Class Discussion Prompt](#)

TAKE-HOME FINAL
DUE 12.07, 7 PM

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