



THE MENDIK PROJECT, TURKEY: First farmers, first temples

Course ID: TBD

September 1-September 26, 2024

Academic Credits: TBD Semester Credit Units

FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTOR(S)

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OVERVIEW

Turkey has evidence of one of the earliest transitions from hunting and gathering to sedentism in the world. We know the first cultivation emerged during the period when Mendik was occupied. This project aims to investigate the origins of settled agricultural communities and the emergence of the world's earliest monumental ritual buildings. The site of Mendik is located near the modern city of Şanlıurfa and close to the famous World Heritage site of Göbeklitepe and seems to be a predecessor of that site. There are several other Neolithic sites in the vicinity like Göbeklitepe, now being excavated as part of large regional project to which the Mendik excavations are linked and which we will be able to visit during the weekends. . Şanlıurfa is itself a fascinating city with great museums and monuments to visit, as well as

its own distinctive cuisine. Working alongside experts in the analysis of evidence from Epipalaeolithic and early Neolithic communities and professional excavators, students will learn a range of archaeological research techniques and methods and about the wider context of Anatolian archaeology.

ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS

Credit Units: Attending students will be awarded TBD semester credit units (equivalent to TBD quarter credit units) through our academic partner, Connecticut College. Connecticut College is a highly ranked liberal arts institution with a deep commitment to undergraduate education. Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school (see assessment, below). This field school provides a minimum of TBD hours of experiential education. 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's home institution at no cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the [National Student Clearinghouse](#).

PREREQUISITES

No prior experience in archaeology is required. This is hands-on, experiential learning and students will study on-site how to conduct archaeological research. Archaeology involves physical work and exposure to the elements and thus, requires a measure of acceptance that this will not be the typical university learning environment. You will get sweaty, tired and have to work outdoors. The food is Turkish style; if you are fussy about new or unfamiliar cuisine, this program may not be the best choice for you. Students are required to come equipped with sufficient excitement and adequate understanding that the archaeological endeavor requires real, hard work – in the sun, on your feet, and with your trowel.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objective of the course is to enable students to better understand how archaeology is practiced in the field. To achieve this objective, this course has three primary goals: (1) to provide students a practical working knowledge of **archaeological field methods**, including survey, excavation, laboratory analysis, artifact cataloging, and conservation; (2) to introduce students to the **intellectual challenges presented by archaeological research**, including research design, the interpretation of data, and the continual readjustment of hypotheses and field strategies with regard to information recovered in the field; and (3) to introduce students to the Neolithic and later archaeology of Anatolia.

The course primary directive is to enable students to better understand how archaeology is practised in the field. Students will also learn how archaeologists study the beginnings of sedentism in an area where it first began and the origins of ritual buildings and religious institutions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students completing this course will have significantly developed excavation and recording skills and thus be able to operate more independently and take on more responsibility on future archaeological fieldwork; they will have achieved a better understanding of the whole archaeological process including interpretation, which will be a good preparation for graduate work, should they pursue; they will have

developed significant transferable skills—collaboration and team work, initiative, working to demanding deadlines, and adaptability in the face of challenging conditions—all prized by a wide range of employers and key to success on future field projects of whatever nature.

ASSESSMENT

Undergraduate Student grading:

- **33% of Grade:** One essay on Anatolian Epipalaeolithic-Neolithic archaeology
- **67% of Grade:** Fieldwork participation, assessed in relation to competence in:
 - **Excavation tool use and observation of stratigraphic phenomena**
 - **Accurate and precise planning**
 - **Comprehensive, accurate, precise and insightful compilation of context and feature records**
 - **Contribution to retrieval processes such as flotation and residue sorting**
 - **Effective on site survey**
 - **Contribution to team activity**

COURSE SCHEDULE

All IFR field schools begin with a safety orientation. This orientation addresses local and program protocols concerning student behavior, appropriate attire, local practices and sensibilities that may be unfamiliar, potential fauna and flora hazards, IFR harassment and discrimination policies, and the student Code of Conduct.

EXCURSIONS

Excursions are planned within the course: (1) extended visits to the nearby site of Göbeklitepe and related Neolithic sites; (2) a day trip to Urfa and its museum (if open) and other sites; and, (3) visits to local post-Neolithic sites.

SCHEDULE

Week 1: Lectures and Site Visits

Lecture: The Epipalaeolithic of the Near East

Lecture: The origins of agriculture

Lecture: The Neolithic of Turkey

Mendikı lecture

Göbeklitepe lecture

NB, depending on numbers of students these may become evening lectures instead.

Weeks 1-4: Excavations at Mendik. Daily program: 6 am -1 pm, 3.30-6 pm. Students will rotate between excavation, sampling, laboratory work and planning on site and in the labs.

Weekends trips: Probably 1 weekend will be free for relaxation

Week 5: finish field work

REQUIRED READINGS

PDF files of all mandatory readings will be provided to enrolled students. Students are encouraged to download and/or print readings prior to traveling. Course participants are expected to be prepared to engage the discussions led by facilitators, all of whom will be looking for compelling evidence that students have read and thought about the assigned readings prior to the scheduled day on which they are first discussed.

Sagona, A and Zimansky, P 2009 *Ancient Turkey*. Routledge (relevant to week 1 and site excursions)

Banning, E. B. (2011). So fair a house: Göbekli Tepe and the identification of temples in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic of the Near East. *Current anthropology*, 52(5), 619-660.

Schmidt, K. (2007). *Göbekli Tepe* (p. 105). Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları.

Dietrich, O., Heun, M., Notroff, J., Schmidt, K., & Zarnkow, M. (2012). The role of cult and feasting in the emergence of Neolithic communities. New evidence from Göbekli Tepe, south-eastern Turkey. *Antiquity*, 86(333), 674-695.

Collis J. 1996 Digging Up the Past – an introduction to archaeological excavation. (Available as a Kindle edition) (relevant to weeks 2-5)

Dietrich, L., Meister, J., Dietrich, O., Notroff, J., Kiep, J., Heeb, J., ... & Schütt, B. (2019). Cereal processing at Early Neolithic Göbekli Tepe, southeastern Turkey. *PLoS One*, 14(5), e0215214.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Borić, D. (2014). Theater of predation: beneath the skin of Göbekli Tepe images. In *Relational Archaeologies* (pp. 42-64). Routledge. Hodder I and Meskell, L 'A "Curious and sometimes trifle macabre artistry"' *Current Anthropology* 52/2, 251-2

Lichter C 2007 ed. *Die ältesten Monumente der Menschheit*, 123. Badische Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe. (Some sections in English and good images of Neolithic sites)

Peters, J., & Schmidt, K. (2004). Animals in the symbolic world of Pre-Pottery Neolithic Göbekli Tepe, south-eastern Turkey: a preliminary assessment. *Anthropozoologica*, 39(1), 179-218.

Schmidt, K. (2010). Göbekli Tepe—the Stone Age Sanctuaries. New results of ongoing excavations with a special focus on sculptures and high reliefs. *Documenta Praehistorica*, 37, 239-256.

Sweatman, M. B., & Tsikritsis, D. (2017). Decoding Göbekli Tepe with archaeoastronomy: what does the fox say?. *Mediterranean Archaeology & Archaeometry*, 17(1).

Schmidt, K. (2000). Göbekli Tepe, southeastern Turkey: A preliminary report on the 1995-1999 excavations. *Paléorient*, 45-54.

Gresky, J., Haelm, J., & Clare, L. (2017). Modified human crania from Göbekli Tepe provide evidence for a new form of Neolithic skull cult. *Science advances*, 3(6), e1700564.

PART II: TRAVEL, SAFETY & LOGISTICS

NOTICE OF INHERENT RISK

Traveling and conducting field research can involve risk. The IFR engages in intensive review of each field school location and programming prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it still complies with all our standards and policies, including those pertaining to student safety. Participants should also take every reasonable step to reduce risk while on IFR programs, including following the safety advice and guidelines of your program director, being alert to your surroundings and conditions, letting someone know where you will be at all times, and assessing your personal security.

The IFR does not provide trip or travel cancellation insurance. We strongly encourage participants to consider purchasing this insurance, as unexpected events may prevent your participation or cause the program to be canceled. Insurance is a relatively small cost to protect your educational investment in an IFR program. When comparing trip cancellation insurance policies, make sure the policy covers the cost of both airfare and tuition.

We do our best to follow a schedule of activities, methods training, and programming as outlined in this syllabus. However, this schedule can be easily disrupted by unforeseen circumstances, including weather, revisions by local permitting agencies, or conditions onsite. While this schedule represents the intentions of the program, adaptability is an intrinsic part of all field research, and necessary alterations to the schedule may happen at any time.

If you have any medical concerns, please consult with your doctor. For all other concerns, please consult with the program director and staff.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC FIELD CONDITIONS

This program operates in a hot Mediterranean summer environment. During the day, temperatures in the shade fluctuate between 70°-90°F. However, under the sun they may reach 85°-95°F. Humidity is relatively low and some mosquitoes and/or flies may be close to the excavation area and dig house. In order to be protected from sunburn and/or insects students will not be allowed to work in shorts or tank tops at the site. Good footwear, working clothes, and sun protective gear (hat, sunglasses and sunscreen) are required.

We live in a friendly but conservative small city community. We must respect local customs so clothes that do not reveal any flesh are appropriate for these reasons as well as to protect you from the sun. In contrast to hot daytime temperatures it can be cool in the evening and morning. Food is Turkish style so make sure you are happy with unfamiliar foods.

If you have any medical concerns, please consult with your doctor. For all other concerns, please consult with the program director and staff.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

In order to attend an archaeological excavation in Turkey you will need a research visa. These are arranged through a permit application by Professor Baird. Before you travel to Turkey you will need to pick up your research visa from a suitable consulate in USA or elsewhere. This may involve a trip to the consulate or mailing your passport with a secure prepaid return delivery envelope, these arrangements

may vary by consulate and you will have to be in touch with your local consulate to check their arrangements. Be aware that this process will take time and some effort on your part, as well as the cost of the research visa.

Passport Validity: The Turkish government requires that your passport be valid for at least 6 months from the date you enter Turkey and that there is a full blank page for the entry and exit stamps.

Citizens not from the USA are asked to check the embassy website page at their home country for specific visa requirements.

STUDENT HEALTH

An IFR field school is designed to provide safe, positive, and constructive experiences for participating communities, students, and researchers. We are committed to protocols and practices that support the health and well-being of all involved in our field school projects, including the members of the community in which these projects take place.

We recommend that students adopt best-practices for arriving in a good state of health to protect themselves and their peers' readiness to set about the work of the field school. A thriving field camp environment is a constant exchange of energy, patience, effort, respect, and service. Arriving healthy is every student's first act of service — their first opportunity to behave in a way that respects the safety and wellness of one another.

TRAVEL (TO AND DURING THE PROGRAM)

Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and various other factors may force the cancellation or alteration of a field school. IFR recommends students only purchase airline tickets that are fully refundable and consider travel insurance in case a program or travel plans must change for any reason. General information for this program is below, but keep in mind we will discuss any updated travel information and regulations during the required program orientation, which could affect travel plans.

In addition, Professor Baird suggests you wait to purchase airline tickets until the issue of research visas is confirmed.

The closest city to the site with an airport is Şanlıurfa GAP airport; most flights route through Istanbul. Professor Baird will meet IFR students at that airport. Alternatively, one can fly to Istanbul and travel by bus but that is a long trip. Professor Baird will also meet people at the bust station, if required. You will be driven from the collection point to the accommodation in the dig vehicle.

If you missed your connection or your flight is delayed, please call, text or email the field school director immediately. A local emergency mobile phone number will be provided to all enrolled students.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Our accommodation will in a new dig house near the site. Students will share bedrooms. Laundry facilities are available. There are no specific security concerns. Adjustments can be made to cater for whatever mix of transgender/non-binary gender identities might be involved. Some of these arrangements may be subject to change depending on the circumstances of COVID-19 in summer 2024.

The catering arrangements will involve prepared breakfast and dinner and a picnic lunch. Vegans, vegetarians and gluten-free diets are catered for. The food is varied and nutritious but it will be thoroughly Turkish, which might not appeal to fussy eaters. It is, of course, halal.

EQUIPMENT LIST

What to bring checklist. We supply bedding and facilities for clothes washing, as well as work equipment, but you should bring or obtain the following before you come to site (the items marked * can easily be obtained in Turkey; those marked ^ are not easily available, unavailable for larger/taller people or surprisingly expensive in Turkey and should be brought with you). Note that there are more specific notes on some of these items elsewhere in this guide.

- Towel*
- Toiletries* in a bag that can be hung in the showers while you wash
- Sheet sleeping bag if using communal sheets creeps you out
- Flip-flops for use in shower, bathroom and around the dighouse
- A minimum of 2 changes of work clothing (light, strong and covering arms and legs)^
- Work shoes (desert boots or similar – no or very light tread)^
- Wide brimmed hat^
- Sunblock^
- 4 inch pointing trowel and plasterer's leaf – US -Marshalltown^ (Pack in hold luggage!)
- Water bottle*
- Torch and replacement batteries
- Small rucksack or bag to take gear to site
- Entertainment: books, cards, tablet/i-devices
- Stationery for personal use (notebook, pens etc)
- Personal medication (many medications are available in Turkey but bring specific medicines)
- Insect repellent
- Rehydration salts – e.g. UK Dioralyte.
- Diarrhoea relief tablets e.g. Immodium etc.
- Currency and/or cash cards plus a credit card
- Covid 19 masks