UCLouvain

larko2241

2026

Environment and societies: Archaeozoology, archaeobotany, biological anthropology, geoarchaeology

5.00 credits	30.0 h	Q2

This biannual learning is being organized in 2026-2027

Teacher(s)	Goffette Quentin ;Langohr Charlotte ;Preiss Sidonie ;
Language :	French > English-friendly
Place of the course	Louvain-la-Neuve
Main themes	This course focuses on understanding the complex interactions between societies and their environment, across different scales of time and space. It provides an introduction to the concepts and analytical methods involved in applying life and earth sciences to archaeology. The disciplines covered include archaeobotany and archaeozoology; biological anthropology and an introduction to archaeothanatology; and geoarchaeology. This introduction to these disciplines provides a better understanding of the function of archaeological sites, but also of the impact of societies on the evolution of landscapes and, conversely, the influence of the environment on the organization of societies. The themes addressed by case studies may vary: resource exploitation and management, distribution and consumption of production, waste management, resilience of societies to environmental change, and anthropization of environments.
Learning outcomes	
Evaluation methods	The course assessment is based on an original piece of work produced by the students. The theme of the work is directly related to the disciplines and fields of study that were presented and discussed during the sessions led by experts. Working individually or in groups, students analyze one or two articles submitted to them and write a critical review. This work will be the subject of a detailed oral presentation accompanied by supporting materials, given by students to their peers and teachers. Where applicable, a written report on the work presented orally must be submitted. In parallel, and depending on the themes selected by the seminar, the assessment may, on certain occasions, concern, in whole or in part, the production of video clips and/or the organization of an exhibition. In conjunction with LARKE2710, a one-week internship of at least five working days completes the course. Its assessment is an integral part of LARKO2710.
Teaching methods	The course consists of joint sessions led by experts, which take the form of a general introduction (concepts, analysis methods, research questions) or focus on an in-depth presentation of specific case studies, as well as practical work and/or visits to laboratories or museums. Each session may be prepared by reading an article in advance. Methods for preparing biorest samples and analyzing them in the laboratory may, where appropriate, be the subject of work within the framework of the LARKE2710 core internship. A minimum one-week internship of five working days in a laboratory completes the training. For this internship, we recommend the management, analysis, and/or promotion of archaeological or natural science collections.
Content	This course focuses on understanding the complex interactions between societies and their environment, at different scales of time and space. It provides an introduction to the concepts and methods of analysis relevant to the application of life and earth sciences in archaeology. The disciplines covered include archaeobotany and archaeozoology; biological anthropology and an introduction to archaeothanatology; and geoarchaeology. An introduction to these disciplines provides a better understanding of the function of archaeological sites, but also of the impact of societies on the evolution of landscapes and, conversely, the influence of the environment on the organization of societies. The topics covered by case studies may vary: resource exploitation and management, distribution and co-introduction to the disciplines of archaeobotany and archaeozoology, including highlighting their complementarity. Introduction to the different modes of exploitation of animal and plant resources via a set of markers (domestication indices, cultivation practices, livestock farming, consumption profiles). Methods of sampling, recording, and description, as well as perspectives for the study and interpretation of plant remains (seeds, fruits, wood, pollen, etc.), animal bones, and invertebrate remains (arthropods, mollusks, etc.) will be presented through a theoretical approach and case studies. The basic principles of archaeometric research that can be conducted on these bioremains will also be discussed. An introduction to these disciplines provides a better understanding of Methods of conservation, description in biological anthropology, and measurement of the various elements of the human skeleton will be addressed through a theoretical approach and case studies. Theoretical and thematic questions related to the history of funerary archaeology may also be addressed in order to introduce students to the issue of interpreting funerary data.

	Finally, the course includes an introductory training in geoarchaeology (concepts, methods, applications) enabling students to navigate the specialized literature and identify the geoscientific techniques useful for solving archaeological problems. Consumption of products, waste management, resilience of societies to environmental change, anthropization of environments.
Inline resources	Dedicated Moodle space, including document files and useful resources depending on the activities organized.
Bibliography	Une bibliographie est proposée à la suite de chaque séance, en fonction des disciplines et thèmes abordés.
Faculty or entity in charge	EHAC

Programmes containing this learning unit (UE)

Program title	Acronym	Credits	Prerequisite	Learning outcomes
Master [120] in History of Art and Archaeology : General	ARKE2M	5		
Master [60] in History of Art and Archaeology : General	ARKE2M1	5		