

ANTH 348

FIRST PEOPLING OF NEW TERRITORIES

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Quentin Mackie

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

When Europeans set out on voyages of “discovery” some 500 years ago, people were already living almost everywhere on earth, including the most remote and apparently inhospitable lands. In this course, we will look at a series of case studies from which we can derive some of the major themes and issues which surround the process of “first peopling,” that is, the arrival of humans into previously unoccupied lands. Among these are well known geographical case studies, such as the ancient Americas and Australia. Despite decades of research, the process and timing of human arrival and dispersal over these continents is poorly understood widely debated. We will also look at enigmatic cases, such as the first peopling of the small, scattered islands of Oceania. How did people even gain knowledge of these remote islands’ existence, let alone have the ability to settle them thousands of years ago? Similarly, we will address the relatively late discovery of Iceland, Madagascar and the Falkland Islands. As humans expanded their range they changed, and were changed by, the new environments they were encountering. We will take a holistic and critical approach to the creation of the human diaspora including considering the social context of archaeological research, the flawed concept of “terra nullius,” and the role of oral narratives in understanding archaeological processes.

The primary focus will be on the archaeological record produced by anatomically modern humans, *Homo sapiens sapiens*, and so the spread of *Homo erectus* or related species, and the original “Out of Africa” model won’t be explicitly taught.

Skills Development

The class will emphasize comprehension and synthesis of a highly interdisciplinary suite of materials, via readings, lectures and assignments. Readings will include current journal articles from the scientific, historical, and other literature. Through the written assignments, students will also focus on research preparation and concise writing within a template format similar to a grant application. This

assignment will also familiarize students with the structure, logistics, and costs of archaeological research programs.