



**Centre d'Estudis Patrimonial
Arqueològic Prehistòric**

UAB
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona


**CONNECTICUT
COLLEGE**

COVA GRAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT, SPAIN

50,000 YEARS OF HUMAN SETTLEMENT IN THE SOUTH PYRENEES

Course ID: ARCH 365E

June 23 -July 27, 2019

FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTORS:

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INTRODUCTION

Hunter-gatherer sites shed light on utilization of resources, adaptation to the environment, and socio-organizational structures in prehistoric human life. While hunting and gathering practices have been documented and are well known in some parts of the Old World, their manifestation in the south Pyrenees of Spain remains elusive. Upper Pleistocene and Holocene archaeological sites are rare in this region making it difficult to trace human occupation trends throughout these periods.

The notion of the south Pyrenees as an “empty” landscape deserves exploration. Cova Gran (Lleida, Catalunya) (<http://cepap.uab.cat/recerca.htm>) is a rock shelter located at the first range of the southern Pyrenees and contains evidence of human occupation in the area. Investigation of the site is allowing us to recognize both the evolution of forager groups and the differences between Neanderthal and modern human adaptive strategies. Cova Gran archaeological sequence contains animal bones, hearths, and Middle and Upper Paleolithic artifacts as well as Early Upper Paleolithic assemblages, contributing to debate on Middle/Upper Paleolithic “transition.” In addition, excavations at Cova Gran confirmed the existence of important deposits related to human occupation during the Last Glacial Maximum (Magdalenian) and the site was used by the first Neolithic herders in the south Pyrenees.

The long human occupation at Cova Gran provides excellent opportunity to explore an extensive chrono-cultural sequence representing the last 50,000 years. This rock shelter allows for testing hypotheses and building models that could explain local adaptations and cultural shift essential to

understanding the evolution of prehistoric processes that affected people living in the Western Mediterranean. Finally, this record contains key evidence to analyze fundamental historic events in the Iberian Peninsula such as the spread of modern humans 40,000 years ago and the Neolithic revolution.

ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS

Credit Units: Attending students will be awarded 8 semester credit units (equivalent to 12 quarter credit units) through our academic partner, Connecticut College. Connecticut College is a private, highly ranked liberal arts institution with a deep commitment to undergraduate education. Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school (see grading assessment and matrix). This field school provides a minimum of 160 direct instructional hours. 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 home institution at no cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the National Student Clearinghouse: <http://bit.ly/2hvurkl>.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for this course. This field school involves hands-on, experiential learning, and students will study how to conduct archaeological research onsite. Archaeological fieldwork involves physical work and exposure to the elements and thus, requires a measure of acceptance that this will not be a typical university classroom learning environment. You will get sweaty, tired and have to work in the outdoors. Students are required to come equipped with sufficient drive and adequate understanding that archaeological endeavor requires real, hard work (sometimes under the hot sun), on your feet with your excavation equipment.

DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Our primary concern is with education. Traveling and conducting field research involve risk. Students interested in participating in IFR programs must weigh whether the potential risk is worth the value of education provided. While risk is inherent in everything we do, we do not take risk lightly. The IFR engages in intensive review of each field school location prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it complies with all our standards and policies, including student safety.

We do our best to follow schedule and activities as outlined in this syllabus. Yet local permitting agencies, political, environmental, personal, or weather conditions may force changes. This syllabus, therefore, is only a general commitment. Students should allow flexibility and adaptability as research work is frequently subject to change.

Archaeological field work involves physical work in the outdoors. You should be aware that conditions in the field are different than those you experience in your home, dorms or college town. Archaeological fieldwork at Cova Gran may be physically demanding and mentally challenging. You should be prepared for conditions that include hot and dry days. There is little relief during the night. Pollen and dust are in abundance. Expect to work long days excavating at the site and working in the lab.

If you have any medical concerns, please discuss them with your doctor. You are welcome to discuss conditions with your project director as well.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course has two goals:

- To provide students with a practical, working knowledge of **archaeological field methods** including survey, excavation, laboratory analysis, artifact cataloging, and conservation.
- To introduce students to the **intellectual challenges presented by archaeological research** including research design, interpretation of data, and continual readjustment of hypotheses and field strategies following information recovered in the field.

Cova Gran Archeological Project (CGAP) is a collaborative program between the Institute for Field Research (IFR), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (CEPAP-UAB), and Centro Nacional de Investigación Evolución Humana in Burgos (CENIEH). This program will combine lectures, field survey, excavation, and laboratory training. The course begins on Sunday, June 23 and runs through Saturday, July 27, 2019.

METHODOLOGY

Excavation: The goal of the excavation is the retrieval of artifacts, bones, and remnants of hearths. A work program will be established beforehand detailing the tasks and the sequence in which they will be performed during the excavation. Participants will be trained in the specific tasks assigned to them as well as on the general objectives of the excavation. Sediments will be sifted in order to retrieve micro artifacts, seeds and micro vertebrates. Personal digital assistant (PdA) will be used onsite to register and process the data, with topographic instruments being directly linked to the computer system.

Lab Work: lab work a key part of our archeology strategy and includes inventory, classification and initial study of the artifacts, bones and archeological structures found at the site. The project management will train all the participants in the study of the material retrieved during the excavation. We will discuss the activities to be performed daily, and the results that are being obtained in order to plan for the work ahead and in order to get the participants fully involved in the project. Also, regular talks will be held in order to introduce the participants in the archeological and evolutionary meaning of Neanderthals and to discuss the different theories surrounding this species.

GRADING MATRIX

General framework of evaluation is presented below:

65 % Field Participation, Collaboration and Practical Exam – This encapsulates daily participation and progress in learning techniques of excavation, survey and lab work. Students will be trained to carry out accurate, careful archaeological work, how to use all basic field equipment, and how to comprehensively record data. Ability to carefully observe and follow instructions regarding field procedures, preparing forms, identifying artifacts, processing screen residue, and overall attentiveness in class are all important. Each student is expected to develop a solid grasp of recording procedures (provenience, soil attributes, excavation notes, computer data base in the field and in the lab, etc.). Fieldwork is a continuous practical exam allows students to demonstrate competency in a wide range of field and lab skills instructed over the program.

Equally important is overall good citizenship and cooperation as part of the archaeological research team. Archaeology requires commitment to promptness; cooperation in loading and unloading gear at the beginning and end of each field day; anticipating field tasks; helping fellow team members during archaeological work in the field and in the lab; helping to maintain sociability in the group.

35% Final essay– Student will present an essay with a maximum length of 10 pages, explaining their participation in the project and the contribution of Cova Gran in the general context of the Prehistory in

Western Europe. Students will be assessed on their ability to organize the information and competency of the readings. Recommendations to ameliorate the program will be welcome.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students will stay at the [Alberg la Cova hostel](#) at Sant Llorenç de Montgai. This village is approximately 30 km north of Lleida (Catalunya, Spain). The building has excellent facilities with communal space, laundry, and Wi-Fi.

Students will share communal bedrooms (6-8 people in each room). Alberg la Cova will provide sheets, which will be changed regularly. All members must participate in setting tables for meals and washing up and cleaning common shared spaces after lunch and dinner (living room, bedroom). Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are provided by the program on work days. On free days, students may choose to take their meals at local restaurants in the area.

The project accommodates special dietary needs such as celiac, diabetes, and vegetarian. The participant must communicate to project directors to ensure that these, or more challenging dietary needs, can be managed by the house staff.

TRAVEL & MEETING POINT

Hold purchasing your airline ticket until six (6) weeks prior to departure date. Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and a range of other factors may require the cancelation of a field school. The IFR typically takes a close look at local conditions 6-7 weeks prior to program beginning and make Go/No Go decisions by then. This time frame still allows the purchase of discounted airline tickets while protecting students from potential loss of airline ticket costs if we decide to cancel a program.

Students will meet at the Bar-Cafeteria at [Lleida-Pyrenees RENFE railway on Sunday June 23th at 7:00pm](#). Trains to Lleida-Pyrenees depart from Sants RENFE station (Barcelona) frequently. Trains from the Barcelona airport to Sants station depart every 30 minutes. Train schedule from Sants station to Lleida Pirineus can be found at <http://www.renfe.com/EN/viajeros/index.html>.

The program will conclude afternoon of Friday, July 26. Students should plan onward travel or flights back home on Saturday, July 27.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

Spain form part of the Schengen Agreement. US citizens may enter Spain for up to 90 days for tourist purposes without a visa. Stiff fines may be imposed for overstaying the 90-day period. Your passport should be valid for at least three months beyond the period of your stay.

EQUIPMENT LIST

Tools used in the excavation and lab will be provided by the project. Recommended personal items are:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Shower towel and sandals✓ Wide brim hat or head cover✓ Canteen or water container✓ Sunscreen✓ Light jacket or rain coat✓ Light cotton work pants✓ Long and short sleeve cotton shirts | <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Socks✓ Tennis shoes (<u>not rigid boots</u>)✓ Insect repellent✓ Sunglasses with UV protection✓ Beach towel & swim suite✓ <u>Personal medication</u> |
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COURSE SCHEDULE

All IFR field schools begin with safety orientation. This orientation includes proper behavior at the field area, proper clothing, local cultural sensitivities and sensibilities, potential fauna and flora hazards, review of IFR harassment and discrimination policies, and review of the student Code of Conduct.

Fieldwork schedule week 1-5 (tentative time table):

Sunday to Friday:

9:00 -12:00 AM: Lab work, lectures & discussion in Sant Llorenç de Montgai facilities.

12:30- 14:30 PM: Lunch & Free time.

14:30-20:00 PM: Fieldwork in Cova Gran.

21:00 PM: Dinner

Saturday: Free time

LECTURE SCHEDULE

Two lectures will be presented to the students each week. Lecture will be 45-60 minutes each and presented by project staff. Below are the lecture titles and themes. Specific time/dates will be announced at the beginning of each week:

- **Lecture 1: Practicum: introduction to Cova Gran artifacts: workshop on lithics, bones, ceramics and bone tools found at Cova Gran.** Staff Cova Gran.
- **Lecture 2: Human settlement during the Upper Pleistocene at the south face of the Pyrenees.** Reading: Mora et al. 2011 (see reading list on next page).
- **Lecture 3: Fieldwork methodology.** Readings: Martínez-Moreno et al. 2015.
- **Lecture 4: Cova Gran archaeo-sequence.** Readings: Mora et al. 2011, Mora et al. 2014.
- **Lecture 5: Site formation processes in Cova Gran.** Reading: Mora et al. 2011, Polo et al. 2014.
- **Lecture 6: Neanderthals at the southeastern Pyrenees.** Reading: Martínez-Moreno et al. 2010,
- **Lecture 7: The Middle to Upper Paleolithic “transition” in Cova Gran.** Reading: Mora et al. 2017
- **Lecture 8: Late Glacial adaptations in Cova Gran.** Reading: Mora et al. 2011, Mora et al. 2014.
- **Lecture 9: Early farmers and shepherds in the South of the Pyrenees.** Reading: Polo et al. 2014

EXCURSIONS

La Noguera has astonishing prehistoric, historic, and landscape heritage. The staff will organize at least one site visit each week, usually Friday afternoon. The tentative field trips are:

- ***Life and war at la Marca superior:*** La Noguera was the conflict border between Muslim and Christian kingdoms in the Middle Ages. Castles, Muslim villages and monasteries testify the Islamic and Christian conflicts along the IX-XII centuries (<http://www.balaguer.cat/turisme>)
- ***Roca dels Bous rockshelter*** offers the possibility to learn how Neanderthals inhabited the Pyrenees 40000 years ago. This living project proposes an interactive visit combining the use of digital tablets (iPAD) with the research advances carried out year after year. This window to the past facilitates understanding of the traces preserved at the site allowing to the participants to understand Neanderthals activities in the repeated visits to the shelter (<http://www.larocadelsbous.cat/en>);
- ***La Noguera landscape:*** a walk in the scenic landscapes of Mont-Rebei and Camarasa gorges (<http://www.lleidatur.com/Turisme/Visita/Espai-Natural-Congost-de-Mont-rebei/177.aspx>);
- ***Parc Arqueològic-Sant Llorenç de Montgai:*** educational and leisure facility designed to show what prehistoric life may have been like and introduce the methods of research used by archaeology. Its ultimate aim is to promote awareness of prehistoric heritage in the context of the surrounding landscape (http://cepap.uab.cat/en/campus_noguera_archaeological_park)

This list is tentative and these visits can be replaced by other similar visits, selecting interesting sites for their high scenic and cultural value. *The program has limited free time for independent sightseeing. Please consult with the faculty about independent travel during the program.*

REQUIRED READINGS

Cova Gran has an extensive bibliography published in many international, prestigious journals. All readings may be downloaded through the project website, IFR Cova Gran Dropbox and the profile Jorge Martínez-Moreno at Researchgate (https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jorge_Martinez-Moreno/).

Martínez-Moreno, J., et al. 2010. The Middle-to-Upper Palaeolithic Transition in Cova Gran and the extinction of Neanderthals in the Iberian Peninsula. *Journal of Human Evolution* 58: 211-226.

Martínez-Moreno, J., et al. 2015. From site formation processes to human behaviour: Towards a “constructive” approach to depict palimpsests in Roca dels Bous. *Quaternary International*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.quaint.2015.09.038>

Mora, R., et al. 2011. Chrono-stratigraphy of the Upper Pleistocene and Holocene archaeological sequence in Cova Gran. *Journal of Quaternary Science* 26: 635–644.

Mora, R., et al. 2014. A key sequence in the Western Mediterranean Prehistory: Cova Gran de Santa Linya (Pre-Pyrenees in Lleida). In: *Pleistocene and Holocene hunter-gatherers in Iberia and the Gibraltar strait*: 162-166. Burgos.

Mora, R., et al. 2017. Contextual, technological and chronometric data from Cova Gran: Their contribution to discussion of the Middle-to-Upper Paleolithic transition in northeastern Iberia. *Quaternary International*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.quaint.2016.05.017>

Polo, A., et al. 2014. Prehistoric herding facilities: site formation and archaeological dynamics in Cova Gran de Santa Linya. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 41: 784-800.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

There is an immense bibliography for Neanderthals, anatomically modern humans (AMH), hunter-gatherer lifestyle and other topics dealt with in the project. As general introductory readings, we suggest the following books that can easily be found at your local university library.

Binford, L. 1983. *In Pursuit of the Past: Decoding the Archaeological Record*. Thames & Hudson.

Gamble, C. 1999. *The Paleolithic societies of Europe*. Cambridge Univ. Press.

Mithen, S. J. 2003. *After the Ice: global human history-20,000-5,000 BC*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Klein, R. 2009. *The Human Career*. Univ. Chicago Press.

Stringer, C., Gamble, C. 1993. *In search of Neanderthals*. Thames & Hudson.

Stringer, C., Andrews, P. 2006. *The complete world of Human Evolution*. Thames & Hudson.