

ROCA VECCHIA FIELD SCHOOL CERAMIC ANALYSIS LABORATORY PROGRAM EXTENSION

Course ID: HIST 489

Sep 27 – Oct 10, 2026

Academic Credits: 4 Semester Credit Units (Equivalent to 6 Quarter Units)

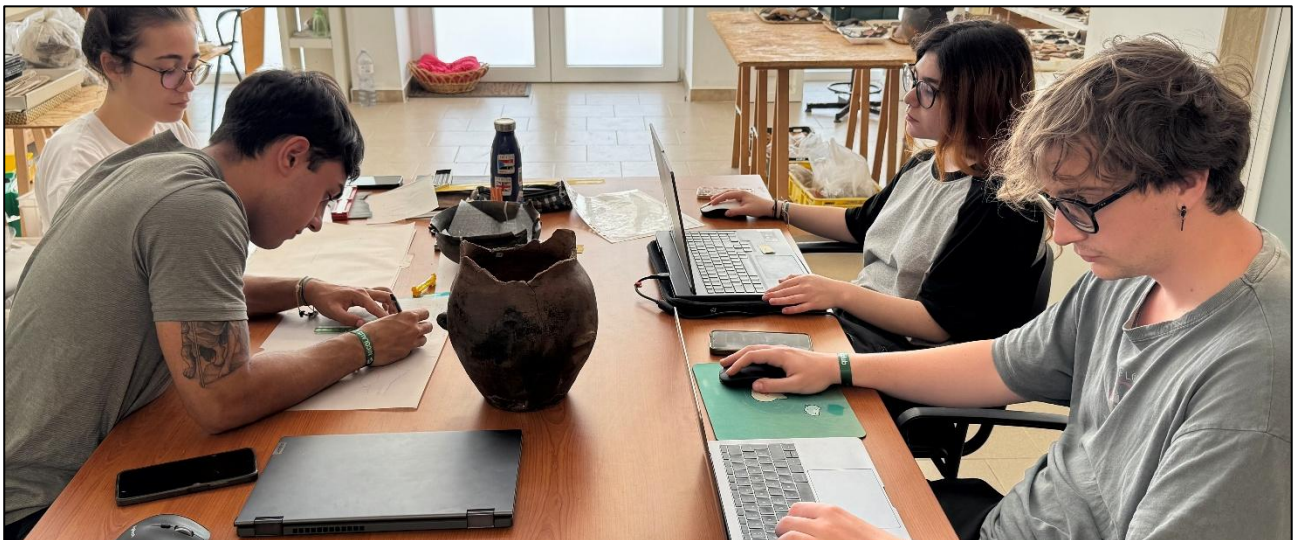
School of Record: Culver Stockton College

This program is open to students who participate in the Roca Vecchia field school in 2026 or in previous years. The program is also open to any student who can demonstrate basic knowledge of Southern Italian Bronze Age ceramics.

This program provides accommodation only. Students are responsible for their own meals. There are plenty of restaurants and grocery stores in the area where students reside and work, at all price ranges.

DIRECTOR:

Prof. Teodoro Scarano – Associate Professor of Prehistory and Protohistory, Dipartimento di Beni Culturali-Università del Salento (teodoro.scarano@unisalento.it)



INTRODUCTION

During the final week of the 2025 season at Roca Vecchia, excavations led to the unexpected discovery of an oval-shaped structure at the western end of the site. At the time of its destruction by fire—likely during the second half of the 12th century BCE—the structure was filled with pottery, offering an exceptional archaeological context.

This two-weeks lab extension will focus on this ceramic collection and other finds that will likely occur during the 2026 excavation season. The program will allow students to deepen their knowledge of Bronze Age Southern Italian ceramic, as well as learn professional documentation and study of ceramics recovered at archaeological sites. Students will document, analyze and conserve wheel-thrown Grey Ware and Italo-Mycenaean Ware, as well as handmade Impasto and Matt-Painted

Southern Italy Pottery. Students will also deepen their knowledge in drawing and photographic documentation of archaeological ceramics, along with morphological and functional analyses aimed at typological seriation and classification and broader cultural and chronological interpretation.

Roca Vecchia is a fortified Bronze Age settlement, located on the Adriatic coast of South-Eastern Italy. Roca Vecchia was a strategic key-site for the crossing routes between the Aegean and the Central Mediterranean. The site was initially built in the mid-17th to the late 11th century BCE, and was protected by a massive wall, repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt over time. Finds from the Middle Bronze Age (17th-14th century BCE) clearly attest to the early involvement of Roca Vecchia within the Aegean commercial & trade networks. Artifacts include an unusual variety and peculiarity of products such as Lustrous-decorated, Burnished, Matt-painted and Minyan-type pottery imports. There are also plenty Italo-Minoan objects. These artifacts indicate active trading along the southern Adriatic routes already at these early dates.

At its apex, Roca Vecchia had complex fortifications and elaborate site plan, with at least five gates and a monumental main entrance. Sometime around the mid-14th century BCE, Roca was attacked and put under siege. The attackers were eventually successful and Roca Vecchia was destroyed by a large fire. The site has not been occupied since, leaving Roca Vecchia as a distinct time capsule of the Italian Middle and Late Bronze Ages.

IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER

The Anthropocene Research Center was established to support field training in a range of sciences at sites within the U.S. & across the world. Traveling and conducting field work involves risk. Students interested in participating in any ARC program must weigh the potential risk against the value of education provided by the program of their choosing.

Risk is inherent in everything we do, and the ARC takes risks seriously. A committee of leading scholars review each field school location prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the ARC continually monitors conditions at the program's site and so we can provide an experience that is as safe as possible.

The ARC does not provide trip or travel cancellation insurance. Students are encouraged to explore such insurance policies on their own. Post Covid 19, most basic policies do not cover trip cancellation due to pandemics. If you wish to purchase an insurance policy that covers such contingencies, explore Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) plans. [Insuremytrip.com](https://www.insuremytrip.com), [Squaremouth.com](https://www.squaremouth.com) or [Travelguard.com](https://www.travelguard.com) are possible websites where students may explore different insurance policies.

Students should be aware that conditions in the field are different than those experienced at home, dorms or college towns. Students will be exposed to the elements, live in rustic accommodation, and expect to engage in daily physical activity.

We do our best to follow schedule and activities as outlined in this syllabus. Yet local permitting agencies, political, environmental, personal, and/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 modification.

All students must consult medical professionals to ensure they are fit to participate in an ARC field program. ARC is not qualified to provide medical advice. For all other concerns, please consult with ARC staff members or program director(s) – as appropriate.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This program is a continuation of the field school activities carried out at Roca Vecchia. During the excavation, pottery finds are washed and cleaned, and a preliminary classification is carried out to divide sherds into different classes (such as fine ware from impasto ware) and then to separate general fragments from diagnostic elements (rims, handles, etc.). This two-weeks laboratory program

extension will allow students to continue the work started on the field, moving from the basics to the advanced skills of documenting, analyzing and studying pottery assemblages.

The main activities include:

- Archaeological illustration (pencil and vector drawing)
- Photographic documentation of artifacts
- Typological, functional and comparative study of artifacts
- Chronological and cultural analysis of pottery assemblages in relation to both the context of provenance and stratigraphical sequence

This program enables students to acquire practical and methodological skills essential for the study of the material culture of the Italian Bronze Age. While the focus is on Bronze Age Italian ceramic assemblages, the methodologies can be applied to any ceramic assemblage found anywhere in the world.

This program will consolidate student's understanding of both excavation and post-excavation processes and develop research autonomy in the interpretation of ceramic artifacts.

The program will take place at the Department of Cultural Heritage, at the University of Salento.

LEARNT SKILLS

We are aware and strongly support students who seek employment in the Cultural Resource Management sector – whether with private CRM companies or in government compliance agencies. CRM employers seek to understand the skills students learn at the field school, so listing (and ranking) those should help students secure CRM employment. To that end, we are listing all the skills students will learn during this program. At the end of the field school, students will get a Certificate of Completion, where each skill will be ranked at one of three levels:

- ✓ **Basic:** Can perform the skill/task with some supervision.
- ✓ **Competent:** Can perform the skill/task without any supervision.
- ✓ **Advanced:** Can perform the skill/task and teach others how to do it.

Students will be trained in the following skills:

Skill	Skill Definition
Artifact Preservation	Ability to actively impact artifact materials or environment to enhance its life span
Artifact Restoration	Ability to restore artifacts from different, broken parts
Artifact Documentation	Ability to measure, record, photographed and classify various artifact types in the lab/post ex setting
Artifact Seriation	Ability to sort artifact type by the time period in which they were produced
Artifact Classification	Ability to sort artifacts by the cultural affiliation of their makers
Artifact Drawing (Paper)	Ability to scientifically draw artifacts manually
Artifact Drawing (Digital)	Ability to create professional artifact drawing using software
Artifact Photography	Ability to professional photograph archaeological artifacts

COURSE SCHEDULE

This program will expose students to the relationship between ceramic technology, style and materials to the social life of humans who created these objects. To understand social interaction, we will study the ways in which local communities take advantage of long-distance connections to shape their own social organization. We will consider how archaeologists study such processes. And, we will reflect what may be learned from patterns seen in the past about events and interactions taking shape in the present.

TYPICAL WORKDAY

Day 1, Introduction to the Program

The first day is dedicated to the **presentation of the activities** that will be carried out during the preceding two weeks. Students will be introduced to the **objectives of the work**, gaining an understanding of the importance of typological study and scientific drawing of pottery within the context of archaeological research.

The **methodologies** for analyzing ceramic artifacts will be explained, from the selection of material already processed during the excavation, to typological classification and graphic documentation. This introduction will provide students with a comprehensive overview of the laboratory program, giving them the foundation needed to approach the practical activities of the following days with clarity and confidence.

Time/Activity	Length	Comments
9:00am Welcome Breakfast	1 hour	Department of Cultural Heritage
10:00am Overview of the activities	2 hours	Department of Cultural Heritage
12:00pm Lunch	1 hours	At a location of your choice
1:00pm Introduction to ceramic typology and research methodology	2 hours	Department of Cultural Heritage
3:00pm Coffe break	15 min	At a location of your choice
3:15pm Discussion of practical activities for the following days	45 min	Department of Cultural Heritage
4:00pm return to B&B	15 min	Return to the B&B independently

Day 2 & Forward

Time/Activity	Length	Comments
9:00am Arrival at the Department and organization of daily activities	15 min	Department of Cultural Heritage
9:15am Typological analysis of selected ceramic material	1 hour 15 min	Department of Cultural Heritage
10:30am Coffee break	15 min	At a location of your choice
10:40am Resume activities	1 hour 15 min	Department of Cultural Heritage
12:00am Lunch	1 hour	At a location of your choice
1:00pm Archaeological drawing of pottery	1 hour 30 min	Department of Cultural Heritage
2:30pm Coffe break	15 min	At a location of your choice
2:45pm Documentation of finds and discussion of results	1 hour 15 min	Department of Cultural Heritage
4:00pm Return B&B	15 min	

- Laboratory activities may be subject to changes based on scientific, logistical, or organizational requirements set by the Scientific Director.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Students attending the 2026 Roca Vecchia field school will be transferred to the B&B at Lecce on the morning of Sep 26 (Sat). Students arriving for the program should arrive to the B&B by Sep 27 (Sun) at 5:00pm.
- Activities will begin on Sep 28 (Mon).
- Meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) are not included.
- Transportation between the B&B and the Lab will be by foot, as the two locations are approximately 550 meters apart (about an 8-minute walk).

ACADEMIC GRADING MATRIX

Students will be graded based on their work as follows.

- 70% participation: active involvement in all activities fostered by the field school, both onsite and offsite.
- 30% field notebook: all students will be asked to keep a journal of their excavation activities, thoughts, and discoveries.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The required minimum attendance for the successful completion of this program is 85% of the course hours. Any significant delay or early departure from an activity will be calculated as an absence from the activity. An acceptable number of absences for medical or other personal reasons will not be considered if the student catches up on the field school study plan through additional readings, homework or tutorials with program staff members.

PREREQUISITES

There are no academic prerequisites for this laboratory activity. The only prerequisite is participation to the Roca Vecchia program or basic knowledge of Bronze Age Southern Italy ceramic traditions.

Students will have the opportunity for hands-on, practical learning by working directly with the ceramic materials collected during field activities. The program allows students to deepen understanding of typological study and archaeological drawing of artifacts, following scientific methodologies and comparisons with similar artifacts.

This experience enables students to engage with all stages of post-excavation work, from observing and classifying ceramic fragments, to professional documentation, developing familiarity with laboratory techniques and the ability to critically analyze artifacts.

PROGRAM ETIQUETTE

This program is directed by Italian scholars and run at an Italian university. Italian culture is hospitable but somewhat different from American norms and ethics. Students are expected to be respectful to Italian social sensitivities, local dress codes, open to share new experiences with local students and staff and adapt to the different rhythms of southern Italian life. In particular, we enjoy later and longer dinner times, where we often engage in lively conversation.

EQUIPMENT LIST

All materials and equipment necessary for the activities will be provided by the program. The staff will ensure that students are supplied with everything required to fully participate in the program.

TRAVEL & MEETING POINT/TIME

There will be two meeting points for this program:

1. For students attending the 2026 Italy Roca Vecchia field school: Students will be transferred from the field school location to the B&B at Lecce, on Sep 26 (Sat) morning.
2. For all others: Arrive to [Rudiae Boutique Bed & Breakfast](#) on Sep 27 (Sun) by 7:00pm.

Staff will meet all program students on Sep 28 (Mon) at 8:30am at the entrance to the B&B to guide them on the first walk to the laboratory space at the university of Salento.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

There are no special visa requirements for American citizens travelling to Italy, if they do not stay longer than 3 months. Passport's expiration date should exceed the stay by at least 3 months.

Citizens of other countries are asked to check the Italian Embassy website page at their home country for specific visa requirements.

MEALS & ACCOMMODATION

Students will stay at the [Rudiae Boutique Bed & Breakfast](#), in double rooms. The accommodation is located approximately 550 meters from the Department, a walk of only about 8 minutes. The B&B is within an easy walking distance to the city center and, about 800 meters away (about an 11-minute walk). The surrounding area also offers a variety of supermarkets, cafés, and other dining options.

This program provides **accommodation only. Meals are not included** (we are aware that this is a Bed and Breakfast place but to reduce tuition costs, we pay for the accommodation only).

Lecce offers a wide variety of restaurants, cafés, and grocery stores to suit every taste and budget. Students will need to arrange their own meals. There are many accommodation options, and students will stay at the assigned hotel for the duration of the program.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

International dialing code: +39

Money/Banks/Credit Cards: Italy's currency is the Euro. Several ATMs are available throughout Lecce, making it easy for students to access cash when needed. Most shops/supermarkets accept major credit cards (except for American Express, which is not always accepted). However, credit cards are not commonly used for small purchases in Italy and students should carry small amount of cash for such purchases (for example coffee at a café).

ATM Availability: ATMs can be found throughout Lecce.

Local Language: Italian. Our field school is multi-lingual: we speak French, Italian and English.

Measure units: degree Celsius (°C), meter (m.), gram (gr.), liter (l)

ACADEMIC CREDITS AND TRANSCRIPT (ARC text-do not change)

Attending students will be awarded 4 semester credit units (equivalent to 6 quarter credit units). Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school based on the assessment matrix (above). This program provides a minimum of 80 direct instructional hours. Students are encouraged to discuss the transferability of credit units with faculty and the registrar at their home institutions prior to attending this program.

Students will be able to access their transcripts through our School of Record – Culver-Stockton College. C-SC has authorized the National Student Clearinghouse to provide enrollment and degree verification (<https://tsorder.studentclearinghouse.org/school/select>). Upon completion of a program, students will get an email from C-SC with a student ID that may be used to retrieve transcripts. The first set of transcripts will be provided at no cost; additional transcripts may require payment. If you have questions about ordering a transcript, contact the C-SC office of the registrar at registrar@culver.edu.

REQUIRED READINGS

L. Collett, Introduction to drawing archaeological pottery, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2017.

A. Cazzella, G. Recchia, Cultures and societies in Bronze Age Italy: case studies from the South-Eastern regions, in: J. Danckers, C. Cavazzuti, M. Cattani, Facies e culture nell'età del Bronzo italiana? Artes (Institut historique belge de Rome), XI. Turnhout: Brepols, 2019, 65-78.

R. Peroni, Introduzione alla Protostoria italiana, Bari 1994.

T. Scarano, *The Burnt Layer of the Apennine Fortification Walls of Roca (Lecce, Italy): the Typological Classification of Pottery Assemblages as an Instrument for Functional Characterisation of Archaeological Contexts*, in: B. Horejs, R. Jung, P. Pavúk (eds.), *Analysing Pottery. Processing, Classification, Publication*, Studia Archaeologica et Medievalia, Tomus X, Facultas Philosophica Universitatis Comenianae Bratislavensis 2010, pp. 245-262.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

D. Cocchi Genick (ed.), *Criteri di Nomenclatura e di Terminologia Inerente alla Definizione delle Forme Vascolari del Neolitico/Eneolitico e del Bronzo/Ferro*, Vol. II (mainly figures from selected chapters), Milano 1999.

T. Scarano, *Refuge or dwelling place? The Middle Bronze Age fortification walls of Roca (Lecce): spatial and functional analysis of Postern C*, Rivista di Scienze Preistoriche LXI 2011, pp. 95-122.

T. Scarano, *Roca I. Le fortificazioni della media età del Bronzo. Strutture, contesti, materiali* (with abridged English summary), Foggia 2012.