

EXCAVATING SALONA, THE ROMAN CAPITAL OF THE EASTERN ADRIATIC SEA (CROATIA, FALL)

Course ID: HIS 489

Sep 13-Oct 11, 2026

Academic Credits: 8 Semester Credit Units (Equivalent to 12 Quarter Units)

School of Record: Culver Stockton College

This program provides full accommodation. Lunch & snacks are provided for days working at the site. Students are responsible for their own breakfast and dinner during days of excavation and all meals for days off.

DIRECTOR:

Dr. Dino Demicheli, Associate Professor at the Department of Archaeology, University of Zagreb (ddemiche@ffzg.hr)



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Salona was the capital of the province of Dalmatia and the most important Roman site on the Eastern Adriatic. As a Roman colony, it was established in the 1st century BCE, and it lasted until 7th century CE when Avar and Slavic raiders conquered Salona and forced its inhabitants to flee. It is probably the only provincial capital that didn't develop into a medieval and, consequently, a modern city. Instead, the royal medieval city of Solin was outside the site perimeter, and the remains of Roman Salona served as a quarry for the Medieval Solin, Split and even as far as Venice.

Roman Salona has been excavated for more than 200 years. Yet most of the site's area -- about 80% -- is still unexcavated and unknown. There is much we need to know about Salona,

including its building sequence, its integration of local population with Italian Romans, and its economic and political organization and institutions.

Our program focuses on digging at two distinct areas within the site. During the spring field school, we will excavate the towers dotting the city's walls, dated to the 2-4 centuries CE. To elevate the floor within the towers, the builders brought soil rich with ceramics and other materials from elsewhere at Salona (likely the nearby cemetery), creating a highly packed time capsule. During the fall field school, we will excavate a late antiquity building complex at the eastern section of Salona. This building is dated to the 4th-6th centuries CE and was a large-scale olive oil production facility. The building used to both press and store quantities of olive oil, providing an insight into the economic base and modes of production in late-antique Salona.

Both locations are rich in archaeological material, primarily pottery. They also contain other materials typical of a Roman city, including stone inscriptions and human remains. The tower excavation location offers a unique experience of understanding the building technique of a defensive tower. The layer below the floor surface consists of intentionally placed archaeological material, preserving evidence of earlier activity (pre tower phase) at Salona. Because the spectacular richness of this fill soil, all excavated materials will be screened. Finds will include not only pottery, bones and shells, but also many items that can be interpreted as personal belongings and grave goods. As we initiate excavations of new towers, the methodology will be adjusted since we first need to reach the level with the original flooring.

The excavation at the oil press facility offers more complex stratigraphy, attesting to at least four centuries of using the same space, with the remains of several buildings from different occupation levels. The discovery of an olive oil-producing facility is unique and the largest found so far in Salona. There are at least three different rooms from all stages of olive oil production, from the press area to the storage room with at least 7 large stone containers. Between those is a room where the separation process took place, and which was directly connected to the main city aqueduct. This room is to be excavated along with the room where the press was.

This program provides basic and practical archaeological training for international and Croatian students – ARC students will work side-by-side with students from the University of Zagreb. Our emphasis is on teaching archaeological field methods and emphasize teamwork. Students will learn how to excavate complex stratigraphic contexts and utilize a broad range of archaeological tools. Students will also learn how to sieve, sort and recognize various types of archaeological artifacts, and learn how to properly observe and document the excavation process. Finally, students will use the latest spatial technology and create plans and maps using differential GPS and Photogrammetry.

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 cancelation 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

By the end of the program, students will develop an in-depth, interdisciplinary understanding of archaeological excavation methods and practices. Students will learn how to scientifically excavate, analyze and interpret material culture. Students will also learn how to identify, date and classify Roman architecture and artifacts. The main purpose of this program is to enable participants to develop competencies and strategies for working at archaeological sites in various contexts and at multiple scales.

From a methodological perspective, fieldwork includes three main aspects:

Excavation: The goal of the excavation is the retrieval of artifacts, ecofacts and features within the archaeological context. Participants will be trained in the specific excavation and analysis tasks as well as in the general objectives of the excavation and its research design.

Lab Work: This is a key part of archaeological research, where artifacts recovered in the field are cleaned, documented, studied and are seriated (by time periods) and classified (by culture that created the artifacts) for interpretation and publication. Project staff will train participants in the study of materials retrieved during excavation. Each day, we will discuss the activities to be performed and the results that are being obtained to plan for the work ahead and to fully involve participants in the project.

Lectures: Field and lab work will be complemented with occasional lectures, at least once per week. Lectures will be 45-60 minutes each and presented by staff members and guest lecturers.

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
Understanding stratigraphy	Ability to understand the relationships between layers of both cultural and natural depositions
Small hand tools	Can operate a trowel or similar small hand tool to conduct excavations
Large hand tools	Can operate a pickaxe, shovel, hoe, or a similar large hand tool to conduct excavations
Grid and trench layout	Ability to lay accurate grid and generate reliable trench outline for excavations
Recording excavations	Ability to understand, collect and record all excavation processes and data
Excavations/General Principles	Know how to excavate in cultural or arbitrary layers, document and record all excavation activity
Recording sheets	Ability to understand and properly record the excavation process, stratigraphy sections and artifact documentation
Photography	Ability to take clear images of various features, artifact & soil colors at various light and field depth conditions
Photogrammetry	Ability to create and interpret photographic and electromagnetic radiant imagery & patterns
Soil identification	Ability to identify, describe and record different types of soil and depositions
GPS Survey	Know how to properly set a differential GPS, take points, and collect geospatial data/points that can be used to generate digital topographic maps
Artifact recovery	Ability to record, safely excavate and properly store artifacts and ecofacts made of different types of materials (ceramics, metal, lithics, etc.) and various levels of fragility
Artifact washing	Ability to wash different artifact types while maintaining their material

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Activity
1 st week	Introduction to the site and to the methods of excavations, fieldwork, washing and sorting findings, lecture, visit to the Archaeological museum in Split.
2 nd week	Field work, washing and sorting findings, learning GPS, Total station and Photogrammetry, a lecture.
3 rd week	Fieldwork, washing and sorting findings, a lecture.
4 th week	Fieldwork, washing and sorting findings, a lecture, and finishing the final report on the site.

Course structure may be subject to change upon directors' discretion

TYPICAL WORK DAY

Time	Activity
8:00 – 10:00 am	Fieldwork
10:00 – 10:20 am	Coffee/tea break
10:20 – 12:20 am	Fieldwork
12:30 – 1:30 pm	Lunch break
1:30 – 4:00 pm	Fieldwork

In case of rainy days, lab work will be performed.

One Saturday (or a rainy day) will be dedicated to a museum visit.

Sundays are days off.

ACADEMIC GRADING MATRIX

Students will be graded based on their work as follows.

❖ **35% Fieldwork:** Excavation – use of tools and documentation on site.

- ❖ **25% Lab work:** Washing, processing, and storage of artifacts.
- ❖ **15% Final report:** Write a report on your archaeological experience and what you have learned.
- ❖ **25% Team Interaction:** Ability to interact and work among other team members in everyday fieldwork tasks.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The required minimum attendance for the successful completion of the field school 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

None. This is hands-on, experiential learning and students will study on-site how to conduct archaeological research. Fieldwork involves physical work and exposure to the elements and thus requires a measure of understanding that this will not be the typical university learning environment. You will have to work outdoors and will get sweaty and tired. Students are required to come equipped with sufficient excitement and adequate understanding that field work requires real, hard work, in the sun and wind. The work requires patience, discipline, and attention to detail.

PROGRAM ETIQUETTE

Croatians are Mediterranean people, which means they are cheerful, enjoy life, good company, food and the sea. Croatians are also quite traditional and proud of their identity and heritage. We ask that you respect local customs and history, even if you feel views do not match your own. You will be staying in the apartments that the project regularly rent for our students during the excavations. We take care to ensure we are good tenants and are allowed to return each year to the same units. That means that we must maintain the apartment clean and operational at all times, and that we thoroughly clean the apartments on the last day of the program.

Please note that the following rules apply to all visitors to the City of Split, a major tourist destination with daily, sometimes multiple cruise ship visitation.

- Any public alcohol consumption within the historical center and less than 100 meters from schools and kindergartens will be fined €300.
- Urinating in public, food and drink consumption in public spaces when it can leave dirty traces, and staying in bars and other venues after working hours will be fined €300.
- Climbing and sitting on historical and other monuments and landmarks, bathing and climbing on public fountains will be fined €300. Vomiting in public places will be fined €300.
- Sleeping in public parks, squares, parking lots and other public spaces will be fined €150.
- Yes, these rules are in place because tourists visiting the city in the past were not in their best behavior. Make sure you are not one of these 'unpleasant' tourists, as the Croatian authorities will give you a ticket if you misbehave and are strict about preserving their city and their heritage.

It is traditional and respectful to cover your shoulders and knees when visiting churches. About 90% of all Croatians are Catholics and many are devout and care deeply about their houses of worship.

If you plan to rent a car and travel along the Croatian coast or mountains, make sure to read about Croatian traffic rules and regulations. Do not drink and drive. Always use a seat belt. Remember to always check the speed limit and prohibited parking areas.

Smoking is prohibited in most indoor public spaces.

Do not throw waste at the site or anywhere. Join our efforts to recycle plastic, paper and other types of waste in the already-prepared trash bins.

Respect is a vital factor on and off the site. Remember that students always represent the project, while working at Salona and off-site, while relaxing and visiting the city and countryside.

TRAVEL & MEETING POINT/TIME

We suggest you hold purchasing your airline ticket until six (6) weeks prior to the departure date. Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and a range of other factors may require the cancellation of a program. The ARC typically takes a close look at local conditions 6-7 weeks prior to the beginning of the program and makes a Go/No Go decision by then. Such a time frame still allows for the purchase of deeply discounted airline tickets while protecting students from potential loss of airline ticket costs if ARC is forced to cancel a program.

Students will be met at the main entrance of the Salona site on Sunday, the first day of this field school at 5:00 pm. If you arrive at the Split International Airport (SPU), take a taxi to the main Salona site entrance at Solin. The cost is around €20. For all the details about the landing time and meeting point, you will be in contact with the project director. If you come a day or a few days earlier and are situated in Split, you can reach the meeting point by a local bus (line nr. 1 – you enter at the National theatre station in Split and you get out at Starine station in Solin. That station is near the main entrance to the site).

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

VISA REQUIREMENTS

Croatia is a party to the Schengen Visa Agreement within the EU. Citizens of the U.S. may enter Croatia without a visa for stays of up to 90 days for tourism or business purposes. EU regulations require that U.S. passport holders have no less than three months' validity when they depart Croatia.

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

MEALS & ACCOMMODATION

This program provides full accommodation. Lunch & snacks are provided for days working at the site. Students are responsible for their own breakfast and dinner during days of excavation and all meals for days off (weekends). Some diets (vegan, vegetarian, etc.) may be accommodated at this program but must be communicated with and approved by the project director. There are numerous well-supplied supermarkets in Solin for all types of diets, and these are open every day (some don't work on Sundays).

All students will reside in apartments in Solin (pop. 25.000), 2-3 students per apartment, depending on size and number of rooms (some rooms are with double bed). The apartments are within walking distance of the site (max 15 mins). All apartments are air-conditioned and have Wi-Fi. Linens and towels are provided.

EQUIPMENT LIST

- Passport or ID card. European citizens should bring their health card, or health insurance card, if applicable
- Student/University ID and/or European Youth Card
- Sunscreen
- Hat or a cap
- Light and comfortable clothing, a minimum of 2 changes of work clothes
- Jacket or windbreaker
- Water bottle
- Mosquito repellent and after-bite cream
- If you take any medication, remember to bring it
- Working shoes or sneakers with ankle/toe protection
- Appropriate adapter for electronic devices (see below)
- Notebook and a pen

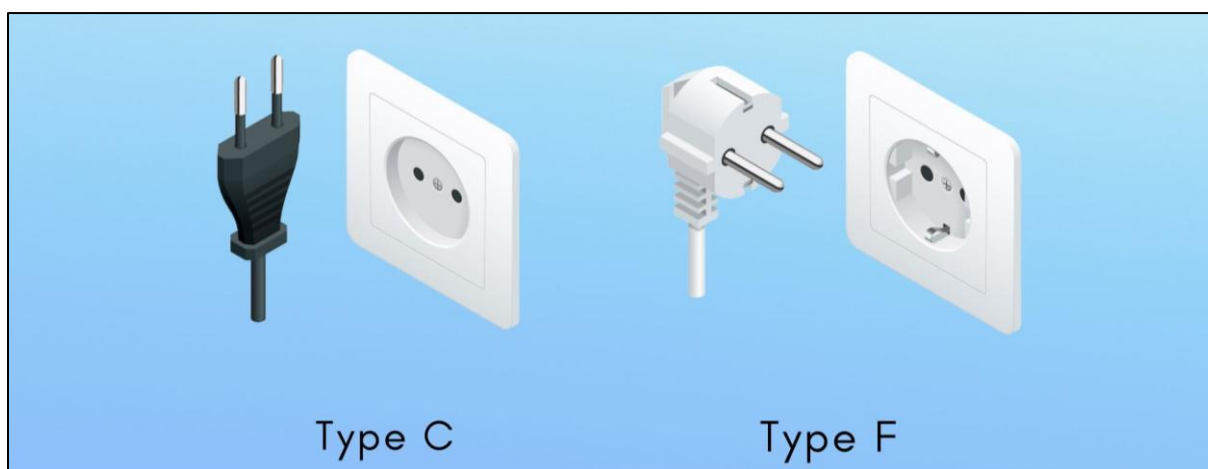


Figure 1: Croatia typical electrical outlet, 220v

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

International dialing code: +385

Money/Banks/Credit Cards: The currency in Croatia is the Euro. There are several banks in Solin, some of them ca. 10-15 minute walking distance from the site or accommodation. Most shops/supermarkets accept major credit cards (also on your mobile phone). Still, credit cards are not commonly used for small purchases in Croatia (for example, at a café).

ATM Availability: ATMs are available in the center of Solin.

Local Language: The local language is Croatian. The field work will be in English, although we will occasionally speak Croatian among the staff as well.

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

ACADEMIC CREDITS & TRANSCRIPT

Attending students will be awarded 8 semester credit units (equivalent to 12 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 (at <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

Demicheli, Dino. 2024. Dalmatia. In: A Companion to the Archaeology of the Roman Empire, 2 Volume Set. Burrell, Barbara (editor). John Wiley & Sons

Jeličić-Radonić, Jasna. 2015. Salona - Metropolis of the Roman Province and its Cultural environment in the light of Recent Research. In *Neue Forschungen zum Frühen Christentum in den Balkanländern*. Lässig, Elisabeth & Siana Ivova Pressler (editors). Pp. 73-82.

https://www.academia.edu/33076468/Salona_Metropolis_of_the_Roman_Province_and_its_Cultural_environment_in_the_light_of_Recent_Research_pdf

R. Matijašić, Matijašić, Robert. 2018. "Res gestae (28, 1) and the establishment of Roman colonies on the Eastern Adriatic." In *The Century of the Brave: Roman Conquest and Indigenous Resistance in Illyricum during the Time of Augustus and His Heirs*. Marina Milićević Bradač and Dino Demicheli (editors). Pp. 69–76.

https://www.academia.edu/43477825/Res_Gestae_28_1_and_the_establishment_of_Roman_colonies_on_the_Eastern_Adriatic

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Wilkes, J. J. 1969. *Dalmatia*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Mardešić, J. 2006. "Excavations at Salona between 1970 and 2000." In *Dalmatia, Research in the Roman Province 1970–2001. Papers in Honour of J. J. Wilkes*. Davison, David, Vincent Gaffney, and Emilio Marin (editors). Oxford: British Archaeological Reports International Series. Pp.81–88.