

Report on Manila Archaeology Field Trip under Common Core Global Engagement Scheme Kung Kai Sheng

Introduction

This tour is a fieldtrip extending from my Common Core course, ‘All You’ ve Ever Wanted to Know About Humans’ (*CCST9081*). This tour was designed by the course coordinator, Dr Michael Rivera, allowing me to take my classroom knowledge of archaeological science and bioanthropology further in another context. The Philippines was chosen as the destination, as archaeological work is being performed there. I was able to observe how there is a growing community in biological anthropology and archaeological sciences in East and Southeast Asia (of which Hong Kong is a part).

Day 1 - National Museum of Anthropology



I have visited the repository of the National Museum of Anthropology under the guidance of Dr Timothy Vitales. During the visit, Dr Vitales showed me some archaeological collections their museum holds, including prehistoric animal bones and ancient ceramics. I was also shown the conservation and reconstruction work performed on their artifacts. The visit allowed me to learn more about the narratology of a museum, and the process of artifact preservation in the Southeast Asian context. In addition, access to the restricted area allowed me to learn better about the major archaeological sites in the Philippines and their influence in the development of this repository and archaeological science.

Day 2 to 4: School of Archaeology, University of the Philippines Diliman

Day 2 - Zooarchaeology Lab



I was received by Ms Gabrielle Gascon from the University of the Philippines School of Archaeology (UPSA) Zooarchaeology Lab. During my time at the lab, she showed me the reference collection of animal specimens they hold, which was essential for species recognition. I was also invited to partake in their daily operations: I assisted with the exhumation of snake remains, and performed primary sieving of the specimen, as well as a brief inspection of how such remains relate to prehistoric humans. This hands-on experience introduced me to this growing subdiscipline of archaeology, and the importance of examining the interaction between humans and other species in archaeology.

Day 3 - UP Diliman Campus, Human Osteology, Paleopathology and Evolution (HOPE) Lab and Introduction to Lithics



Today I was given a UP Diliman tour by Ms Tran Thi Minh. It was interesting to explore the gigantic campus. After the tour, I was given a demonstration at the HOPE Lab by Dr Kimberly Plomp, in which I was invited to examine the bones myself. A similar examination was conducted as well in Dr Rivera's CCST9081 class. Dr Plomp introduced me to the connection between Osteology and Paleopathology, and how the study of ancient diseases could enlighten us about ancient society's social phenomena. During this practical experience, I understood better the effect of taphonomy on bones, by comparing the condition between Hong Kong and Filipino remains I studied. The later session was instructed by Mr Dante Manipon, and I experienced stone tools knapping, as well as an introduction to hunting techniques. This short experiment session allowed me to reflect on the importance of repositioning lithics as a focus in archaeological science.

Day 4 - Introduction to Ceramics



On this day, I was introduced to ceramics studies in the Philippine setting, and newer techniques in pottery analysis, with thanks to Ms Patricia Panganiban and Mr Jay Rone Acasio. Throughout the day, I was introduced to methods that allow scientists to analyze how ceramics were made, and how they may indicate greater historical trends in pottery production. Understanding these new perspectives added to my previous backgrounds already in technological and historical study, and allowed me to appreciate art and artifacts in new lights.

Day 5&6 - Filipino Historical Tour



Within these two days, I visited Intramuros, the centre of Manila during the Spanish colonial period, and Binondo, one of the oldest Chinatowns in the world. It was interesting to observe great varieties of buildings, street names, markers of culture (food, clothing, languages) and people while walking around these areas. Visiting these sites allowed me to deepen my understanding of the cultural heritage and historical narratives of the Philippines.

This has been an intellectually rich and wonderful trip overall for appreciating some of the concepts introduced in *CCST9081*, and seeing how they appear in lived reality in another country. Thank you to HKU, the Common Core Office and Dr. Rivera for this opportunity.