MATERIAL WORLDS

- **Course tutor:** Dr Lesley McFadyen

This module provides an option to explore an archaeological understanding of the past through objects. It is a co-taught module, based on the research of the full-time archaeology staff at Birkbeck. It involves objects in archaeological contexts from the prehistoric, classical and medieval worlds.

The purpose of this module is to introduce you to the major object groups, research themes and concepts determining the way modern scholars think and talk about archaeology and material culture. It aims to produce a new kind of professional: one who is theoretically aware whilst grounded in a knowledge and experience of material evidence.

The syllabus adopts a contextual approach to interpreting primary evidence in archives and collections and programmes of excavations. It is designed to develop a research agenda in dealing with archaeological evidence and bring out the intellectual, political and institutional factors determining current academic, developer-funded and curatorial practice.

**INDICATIVE SYLLABUS**

- Objects and intelligence (using a handaxe/biface).
- Time and trade (using a Grand Pressigny flint blade core).
- Neolithic pit architecture (using worked flint and pottery).
- Objects that are a part of buildings (using pottery from Castelo Velho).
- Cultural biographies of objects (using a 'house' as an object from Dura).
- Discrepant objects (using the Head of Augustus at Meroe).
- Religious materiality or ritual agency? Drinking vessels in ancient cults.
- Affective icons: theories of honorific statuary.
- Life and afterlife: the objects in burial mound 1, Sutton Hoo.
- Italian Forum Ware.

**RECOMMENDED READING**


