EXCAVATIONS AT SALONA, CROATIA: THE ROMAN CAPITAL OF THE EASTERN ADRIATIC (SPRING Session)

Course ID: HIS 489

May 9-June 6, 2027

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:

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Salona was the capital of the Roman province of Dalmatia and the most important Roman site on the eastern Adriatic. Established as a Roman colony in the 1st century BCE, the city endured into Late Antiquity. Unlike many major Roman cities, Salona did not develop into a medieval and modern city on the same footprint. Its extensive ruins survive in the landscape of present-day Solin, close to Split and the Adriatic coast.

Archaeologists have explored Salona for more than two centuries, yet approximately 80% of the ancient city remains unexcavated and unknown. Fundamental questions about its building sequence, population, economy, political organization and institutions therefore remain open. Students joining the Salona Field School become participants in an active research project addressing the history and transformation of this exceptional Roman urban landscape.

The Spring 2027 field school will focus on Salona's city walls and defensive towers, dated to the 2nd–4th centuries CE. Rather than excavating an isolated structure, students will investigate part of the defensive system of one of the principal Roman cities of the eastern Adriatic and learn how its architecture, stratigraphy and finds can be used to reconstruct changes in the city over time.

Previous excavation of the towers has revealed an especially unusual archaeological context. When floors inside some towers were raised, large quantities of soil rich in ceramics and other archaeological material were deliberately deposited beneath them. This material was brought from elsewhere in Salona, probably in part from the nearby cemetery, creating a densely packed deposit that preserves evidence of earlier activity in the city.

These deposits are exceptionally rich in archaeological material. In addition to pottery, bones and shells, excavation can recover small finds and objects that can be interpreted as personal belongings or grave goods. Because of the richness of the fill, all excavated soil from these contexts is screened. As new towers are opened, students will also encounter the methodological challenge of reaching and identifying the original floor levels before the rich fill deposits can be investigated.

The wider Salona research program also investigates a Late Antique building complex in the eastern part of the city, where excavations have identified a large olive-oil production facility with several rooms representing different stages of production and storage. This work forms the focus of the fall field school and provides a complementary perspective on the economy and transformation of Late Antique Salona.

Finds recovered during excavation are washed, sorted, documented and discussed with project staff, connecting field observations with the interpretation of Roman material culture and the history of Salona. Field and lab work are complemented by weekly lectures and a visit to the Archaeological Museum in Split. By the end of four weeks, participants will have experienced the full rhythm of an archaeological research project: excavation, stratigraphic interpretation, artifact recovery and processing, documentation, spatial recording, teamwork and archaeological reporting.

Students work as members of the archaeological team, not as archaeological tourists.International participants work side-by-side with archaeology students from the University of Zagreb and take part in the everyday work of the research project. No previous archaeological experience is required. Training begins with the fundamentals and introduces students to stratigraphic excavation, archaeological recording, the use of hand tools, screening, artifact recovery and processing, field photography, and photogrammetry. Students learn not only how excavation is conducted, but why particular excavation and recording decisions are made.

By participating in the excavation of Salona's defensive towers, students will contribute to an ongoing research project investigating the construction, modification, and use of the city's fortifications from the Roman Imperial period through Late Antiquity. Particular attention will be given to establishing the chronology of architectural interventions, understanding the origin and composition of the archaeological deposits within the towers, and examining the relationship between the fortifications and the nearby necropolis. Through stratigraphic excavation and the analysis of recovered finds, students will help reconstruct how Salona's defensive system evolved in response to changing urban, social, and military circumstances.

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, Squaremouth.com or 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: Lab Work: This is an essential part of archaeological research, during which artifacts recovered in the field are cleaned when appropriate, documented, classified according to material, typology, function, and chronology, and interpreted within their archaeological contexts. Project staff will train participants in the identification, handling, recording, and preliminary analysis of archaeological finds. Daily discussions will focus on the results obtained, their significance for the ongoing research, and the planning of subsequent fieldwork and laboratory activities.

Lectures: Field and lab work will be complemented with occasional lectures (at least 3). Lectures will be 45-60 minutes each and presented by staff members and guest lecturers.

ACQUIRED SKILLS

You will leave Salona with documented field skills, not simply four weeks of excavation experience. We strongly support students seeking future employment in Cultural Resource Management (CRM), whether with private CRM companies or government compliance agencies. Employers need to understand the practical skills acquired at field school, so the program explicitly records the competencies students develop. At the end of the field school, each student will receive a Certificate of Completion in which every listed skill is 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 acquire and process overlapping photographs to create accurate three-dimensional models, orthophotographs, and spatial documentation of archaeological structures, features, and excavation contexts.
Soil identification	Ability to identify, describe and record different types of soil and depositions
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 identify appropriate cleaning methods for different archaeological materials, safely wash and handle suitable artifacts, and recognize finds that require special treatment or should not be washed.
Artifact processing	Ability to identify, sort, classify, record, label, and properly store archaeological finds according to their material, typology, preservation condition, and archaeological context.

COURSE SCHEDULE

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

- **40% Fieldwork**: Excavation – use of tools and documentation on site.
- **20% 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 90% 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. No previous excavation experience is required. What is required is curiosity, patience, attention to detail, and readiness for real fieldwork. This is hands-on, experiential learning: students learn on site how archaeological research is actually conducted. Fieldwork is physical and takes place outdoors. You will use hand tools, move soil, screen deposits, and spend much of the working day on your feet in sun and wind. You should expect to finish some days dusty and tired — and with a much better understanding of how archaeological knowledge is produced. Discipline, teamwork and careful observation are essential parts of the experience.

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 80% 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 (May 9), 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.

EES & ETIAS

Non-EU students should be aware that the European Union has introduced the Entry/Exit System (EES), which electronically records border crossings and biometric data. In addition, visa-exempt travelers, including U.S. citizens, may be required to obtain an ETIAS travel authorization before departure, depending on its implementation date and applicable transitional rules. Students are strongly advised to check the latest entry requirements at https://travel-europe.europa.eu before traveling to Croatia.

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 (all students will have a separate room). 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
- Check the EES and ETIAS requirements
- 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

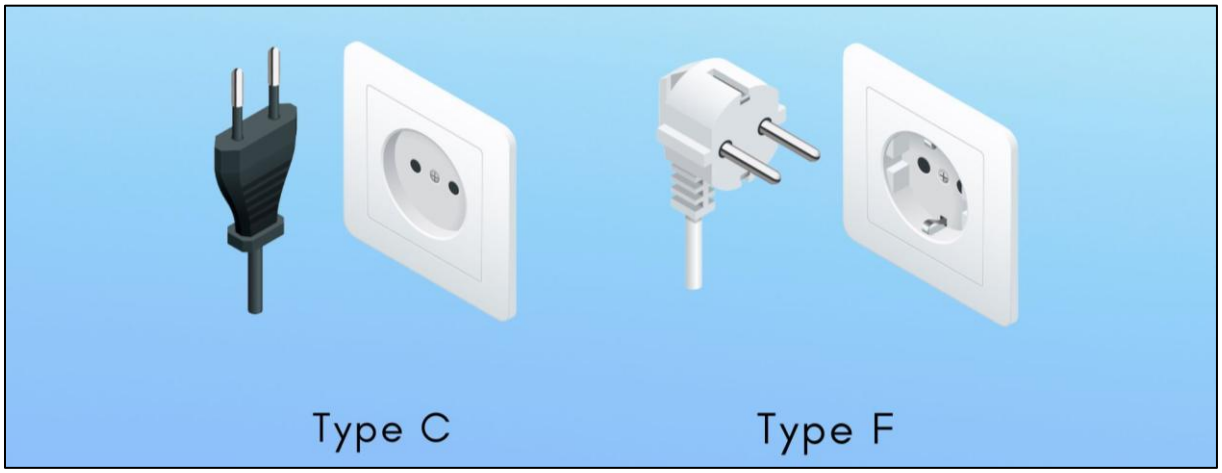


Figure 1: Croatian typical electrical outlet, 230v, 50Hz

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).

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 (ºC), 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 160 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

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.