TUTORIAL: **Primitive Skills in the Modern World**  
Prof. John Whittaker  

Class: T Th  8:00-10:00  Goodnow 206  
Office: Goodnow 207    Extension 3447  
Office Hours: MWF 8:30-10:00.

Modern popular culture is seeing a revival of interest in primitive skills: traditional technologies such as flintknapping, archery, weaving and basketry, fire-making, and tracking. We will combine practical experience to learn a couple of simple pre-industrial technologies with reading and writing to explore questions raised by the term “primitive skills.” What is our notion of primitive, and why does “the primitive” appeal to people today? What is skill? How are skills learned and differently valued in the context of our culture?

One purpose of the tutorial is of course to help you learn skills: the scholarly skills of finding information, reading critically, writing clearly, and discussing logically. As much as possible, class sessions will focus on discussion of readings, activities, and the written assignments rather than lecture. Accordingly, it is your responsibility to come to class, and to come prepared: do assigned reading and writing before the class for which it is listed, think about it, and arrive with ideas to talk about.

Grading will be based on six short written assignments, an oral presentation, and class participation.

**Texts**
Seton, Earnest Thompson  

Blankenship, Bart, and Robin Blankenship  

McPhee, John  

1 Sunday 8/24  1:00-3:00  
Who are we, what are we doing?  
Sign up for advising  
Assign I: Essay on an artifact

(Monday 8/25 and Tues 8/26)  
Individual advising meetings  
4:00-5:00 Introduction to Atlatls  
Tuesday - communal dinner 5:30 at 1517 Elm St
Thurs 8/28
What is skill? What is primitive? How archaeologists look at technology.
Discuss beginning of Blankenship, Chadwick article
DUE: Assignment I
READ: begin Blankenship

2 Tues 9/2
Technology and meaning.
Assignment I returned for rewrite.
Writing handouts
READ: Matthei, Harry 1997 The Tin Garage. Invention and Technology 13(1): 64.

Thurs 9/4
DUE: Assignment I rewritten
Film: Eskimo or other
READ: “Oops, About Writing an Effective Letter to an Employer”

3 Tues 9/9
Technology and Skill: Discuss film.
Discuss Assignment I.

Thurs 9/11
Atlatl Practice (meet at the Atlatl Range)

FRIDAY 12 leave for Cahokia after classes (4:30)
SATURDAY 13 atlatl event at Cahokia
SUNDAY 14 return from Cahokia

4 Tues 9/16
Discuss Cahokia trip
Academic Honesty exercises
Handout on citations
Assign II: The anthropological witness: description and interpretation of events

**Thurs 9/18**  (JW leave for Ft O after class)
Finish Academic Honesty
Discuss articles

**5 Tues 9/23**
Finish and discuss Blankenship (select some skill to learn)
DUE: Assignment II

**Thurs 9/25**
Discuss Assignment II.
Fire making.
READ: Blankenship pp12-31
READ: Begin Seton, Two Little Savages

**6 Tues 9/30**
Skill, technology, and symbolism – discuss symbols
Fire

**Thurs 10/2**
Discuss Two Little Savages
Assign III: Literary analysis, a character in Two Little Savages

**7 Tues 10/7**
DUE: Assignment III due
Finish discussion of Two Little Savages
Thurs 10/9
Field Trip: Nettle harvest and other gathering

8 Tues 10/14
Discuss Assignment III
Cordage
READ: Blankenship 32-65

Thurs 10/16
Food
READ: Blankenship pp. 126-139

FALL BREAK 10/18-10/26

9 Tues 10/28
LIBRARY: Intro to web and related resources with Jenn Green
Assign IV: Article abstracts
READ: Heizer, Robert F. 1970 The Anthropology of Prehistoric Great Basin
Human Coprolites. In Science in Archaeology, 3rd edition. D.Brothwell and
READ: Madsen, David 1989 A Grasshopper in Every Pot. Natural History
7():22-24.

Thurs 10/30
DUE: Assignment IV
Discuss Madsen, Heizer articles, abstracts, food

10 Tues 11/4
Flintknapping, demonstration
READ: Blankenship 66-89
Austin: University of Texas Press. (Pages 127-166)

Thurs 11/6
Flintknapping

11 Tues 11/11
Discuss knapping, learning
READ:
Assign V: Review a Web Site

Thurs 11/13
DUE: Assignment V
Discuss webs, internets, society
12 Tues 11/18
Discuss Assignment V
READ: McPhee, Survival of the Bark Canoe, pp.1-42
Assign VI: Learn, demonstrate, and describe a primitive skill

Thurs 11/20 NO CLASS AAA meeting

13 Tues 11/25
READ: McPhee pp. 43-83

Thurs 11/27 NO CLASS THANKSGIVING

14 Tues 12/2
READ: McPhee pp. 84- end

Thurs 12/4
Oral Reports

15 Tues 12/9
Oral Reports

Thurs 12/11
Oral Reports
Assignment VI due