

Case studies for the

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Note: Although some of these case studies were inspired by actual events, the scenarios are intended to be educational and hypothetical. Ethics Bowl participants should only consider the information provided in the scenarios below.

## Case 1

Although the town of Naupansi has only recently been recognized as a municipality, residents claim they have long inhabited the area – since time immemorial, according to community leaders. A coastal town, Naupansi relies upon marine as well as terrestrial resources. Archaeologist Carlos has been working with the residents of Naupansi for nearly a decade now, and has recovered evidence that habitation extends back several hundred years, perhaps even more. Carlos enjoys a good relationship with the Naupansii, who involve themselves in the excavation and interpretation of archaeological remains. In recent years, Carlos has begun incorporating their oral traditions into his work, and has found significant indications of cultural continuity, despite early researchers' claims that the region had been thoroughly transformed by modernity.

This year, Carlos began to expand his research into the marine zone. He hopes to find remains evidencing kinds of early coastal exploitation that relate to Naupansi oral traditions of remote and distant times. With his team of marine survey experts, Carlos identifies what appears to be an ancient fish pond out near a submerged reef. Excited about his discovery, Carlos takes Naupansii leaders out to see the partially buried, tumbling stone structure. They confirm that, indeed, there are accounts of keeping fish captive in the earliest stories.

At the next community meeting, Carlos presents his plans to reconstruct the fish pond, which is not so far off the coast that it cannot be put into use. As the only such structure discovered in the region, this fish pond may hold a wealth of information for archaeologists, and the possibilities of an ethnoarchaeological and ecological study of the pond and its use are most promising. Throughout the presentation, the Naupansii demonstrate interest and even excitement; after all matters have been put forth, the community leaders retire to discuss pending issues in a more formal setting.

The following day, Carlos is approached by one of the leaders, who informs him that, although the plan for reconstruction is quite breathtaking, and although they appreciate and even agree with Carlos' interpretive work, they do not desire to proceed with the reconstruction. Rather, they have decided that the submerged fish pond would better serve the community by providing building materials for the church that is under construction. She completes her statement by explaining: "We have had great difficulty finding good materials for our church, and we know our ancestors built with good stone. Also, these stones have a special meaning to us, as they were hewn by our ancestors; their power will bring only good things to our new place of worship."

Carlos is taken aback. The Naupansii have always been for preserving their heritage; why would they choose to destroy it?

## Case 2

Sofia works at the South Newington Archaeological Clearing House (SNACH), the official record center for all of northern Misscalucky. Now in her second year at her post, Sofia finally feels comfortable navigating everything from the catalog systems (both digital and card) as well as the storehouses and dark corridors of the associated storage facilities. Which is why, when a particularly large work order comes in, from an archaeologist requesting all records from the entire Misscalucky Valley region, Sofia is asked to take the lead.

The Misscalucky Valley is one of the oldest known research areas in the state. Rock shelters, scatters, middens, and house sites in the valley have been under investigation for over fifty years, and may well be the reason SNACH was constructed in the first place. Sofia quickly realizes that gathering all the site records and maps from investigations at Misscalucky Valley will test her knowledge of the archival structures built and maintained by SNACH.

The SNACH database, which has only recently caught up with the onslaught of new material, has only the most rudimentary records for its earliest sites. At times, a site record contains little more than coordinates and a reference to an aisle and bin number in a remote storage facility; sometimes, not even that. In fact, she cannot find any records for the entire Northeast portion of the valley – which is strange, since every other part of the valley has clearly been intensively investigated. When she brings this up to her supervisor, she shrugs and says “Some of these investigations happened a long time ago. Areas could have been missed or the information misplaced. It’s probably around here somewhere.”

One day, while searching for records for site MKY-VLY-017, Sofia comes across an entire bookcase full of molding soil samples, miscellaneous artifacts, and unidentified skeletal remains where there was only supposed to be field notes. Sofia is not an osteologist, and the remains are badly moldy, and though they don't look definitively like human remains, she also can't dismiss the possibility that they might be. In a panic, she runs to her supervisor to report her findings: “None of the boxes are labeled and they are not in our records system! I have no idea where the artifacts came from, and they are in bad shape. They may already be useless for study. How can we be preserving this information if we don't even know what we have?!”

Calmly, her supervisor turns to her and says: “This stuff happens all the time. They're probably just faunal remains. If they are not labeled MKY-VLY, they are not your concern.”

### Case 3

Simone has just landed her dream job as curator at the prestigious City Museum, a holistic institution dedicated to making local natural and cultural history accessible to the public. As part of her commitment to working locally, Simone has teamed up with an archaeologist from City Junior College (CJC) to put together a field school for local community members and students.

As she is reviewing museum records Simone learns that the City park next door, which is slated for construction of the new City Museum extension and learning center, was originally the site of a full city block of businesses and residences that was razed in the 1920s. Seeing this as an opportunity, Simone makes plans to propose a field school in conjunction with CJC – it will promote interest in local history, provide a learning experience for students that often miss out on practical archaeological experience, and will be an inexpensive alternative for the City to fulfill their historic preservation obligations. As a bonus, Simone's academic interests lie precisely in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century working-class history that is most likely preserved beneath the park.

However, she soon learns that the circumstances surrounding the establishment of the park decades ago were contentious. Established by the City in the 1920s as a bird sanctuary and exotic plant house, the park fell into disuse during the Great Depression, only to be re-built as a common space by community members in the post-WWII years. In the 1960s, it became the site of student rallies, marches, and protests, some of which turned violent. For some of the local population, the site is a near-sacred space which illustrates the power of the people to unite toward a common cause. The park has housed a community garden and other user-created features, and acts as a long-term encampment for homeless persons and gathering place for activists. However, for other local residents and business owners, the park is a dangerous crime-ridden area that is overdue for proper City stewardship.

Simone had hoped to tell the story of the site's recent history by recording the park's current features, and conducting oral histories with interested park inhabitants and activists as part of the project. However, given the anti-establishment sentiments expressed at recent rallies and echoed everywhere from placards to blogs, she's having difficulty finding common ground with the park's users. At the same time, she really wants this project to include all facets of the local community, since she will be researching and ultimately re-telling their histories.

## Case 4

Phyllis is a graduate student who has been working intensively with a marginalized community that has tenuous ties to an indigenous identity not formally recognized by the government or by community members. Although her initial interest was in investigating local conceptions of indigeneity through the relationship of local communities to archaeological remains, she was encouraged early on to produce a more “traditional” dissertation dealing with settlement patterns and ceramic distributions.

Now in her final year, Phyllis is finishing her stylistic analyses, and has noted distribution patterns that she believes are closely related to community organizational patterns she noticed while working with the community as an archaeologist. Throughout her multiple seasons of field work, Phyllis developed a close relationship with several families, and it is through this work that she began to unravel patterns in social relationships which she now sees as analogous to patterns revealed by her archaeological data.

A few days later, Phyllis, who is in the throes of finishing her dissertation, comments on her impressions to a close friend and colleague. Bertrand, who does tribal recognition work in a neighboring region, expresses to Phyllis that she should include her findings about contemporary organization in her dissertation, as it helps to establish cultural continuity, thus aiding the community with which she is involved in securing recognition from the government.

Toward the end of her next meeting with her advisor, Phyllis hints at this idea, and is chagrined when her advisor summarily dismisses this idea as “thoroughly inappropriate.” Abruptly, Dr. Peacock explains that he is late for a meeting, and he and Phyllis part without further discussion.

## Case 5

Clair loved her new job as a cultural resource manager for the Army. Archaeology was taken very seriously by the officers at the base and the Army had set a goal to completely inventory their lands by 2000. Unfortunately, surveying 250,000 acres of land was more difficult than it sounded; despite completing thousands of acres of survey, the base was only 70% surveyed by the 2000 deadline. Every year thereafter, the General had been reprimanded for the incomplete archaeological survey.

There were a number of reasons for the delays. The army base was remote and access was difficult; summer temperatures could reach into the 100s, making fieldwork hazardous; finally, despite offering good money to do the surveys, qualified crew were often unavailable during the narrow windows proposed by the Army.

Clair had heard that the General inquired about the incomplete surveys annually, and was dreading her first meeting with him. However, she was prepared for the inevitable question: “Why aren’t we finished yet?” She calmly laid out the obstacles the program had encountered – lack of personnel, lack of resources, less-than-ideal infrastructure, etc. When she finished speaking, she was surprised to see a look of excitement on the General’s face.

“Those aren’t problems,” he stated. “I have an abundance of people. We can use the soldiers stationed right here. My soldiers are used to the conditions here and are extremely resourceful at creating and adapting available materials. Just provide training on what you’re looking for, team up my guys with an archaeologist, and let’s get this done!”

“That might work,” she replied, unsure. Then added, “...but they’re not archaeologists. They’ll need some fundamental training.”

That night Clair wakes up worrying about her decision. Can she really depend on people with little to no background in archaeology to do archaeological fieldwork? Will the survey be considered adequate for future work on the base? What if they miss archaeological sites? It seemed like a reasonable idea in the General’s office, but now Clair wonders if she’s made a mistake.

## Case 6

An ancient city with a nebulous history of colonization, subjugation, and resistance, the Principality of Gebrovnia has until recently flown under the radar of most outside communities. In the last decade, the Principality has created incentives to generate a tourist trade in the remote and idyllic town. It is through one of these early tours that archaeologist Casey Atthabat stumbled upon Gebrovnia and a material record so rich that it is positively spilling out of the earth. Recent monsoon-like summers brought about by climate change have no doubt contributed to the precarious situation of the ancient material remains that underlie the dissected Gebrovniese landscape.

When she was invited on board as consultant to Gebrovnia's Ministry of Culture, Casey jumped at the chance to work with the community. As someone who specialized in community-based cultural resource management, Casey saw Gebrovnia as an ideal case study – a multi-ethnic community with a vested interest in preserving the local cultural heritage, in all its diversity and polymorphism. Through community meetings and formal presentations to the Royal Court and its Ministries, Casey has succeeded in raising local awareness of the more remote past that lies preserved beneath the town.

When Casey first arrived, residents reported that they had always noticed this material “coming up” out of the ground as they planted their orchards, laid out new foundations, or installed Royal Public Works Projects. However, it is only recently that the residents have begun to collect their “finds” in their homes. Casey has attempted to ameliorate the situation by setting up an informal museum at a community meeting hall, but at her most recent visit, multiple families have substantial quantities of material to “contribute” to the museum, which in turn is already bursting at the seams with material remains.

Finally, the “melting” soilscape has Casey in something of a pickle. She wants to discourage excavation of the remains by residents, but feels that some sort of “rescue” operation is in order to preserve an eroding ancient cemetery at the Gebrovniese headlands.

## Case 7

One of several valleys nestled among expansive plateaus, the Emerald River Valley supports a biologically diverse native forest as well as a number of small, relatively self-sustaining hamlets. The local inhabitants pride themselves in their deep, rich, and diverse culture history. Because of its relative isolation, life in the Emerald River Valley has remained largely traditional in its technological aspects, with the exception of the introduction of motorized engines and electricity in recent decades.

Elemental Energy, a multinational corporation known for its diversified approach to energy production, has recently closed a deal with the national government to install 3 new dams in the fifteen-river region. EE elected the lower rapids of the Emerald River as one of its ideal development sites, citing the excellent access to the larger port cities. According to the company executives, the dams have been designed as to produce maximal energy with minimal environmental disturbance.

The dispersed populations of the Emerald River Valley positively balked when the plans were made public. The lower rapids, though sparsely populated, are essential for the lifecycle of keystone species within the river, as well as for the growth of specific, culturally important and ecologically sensitive flora. The newly-formed Citizen's Coalition for the Preservation of the Emerald River Valley (CCPERV), composed of local community members and activists from nearby and distant communities, has paid for an independent environmental assessment that shows a much larger area of impact for the dam, including sensitive cultural sites. Through new social media channels, CCPERV has publicized these findings, which has resulted in a very vocal global force of resistance.

Distressed, the spokesperson for EE has asked EE's cultural and environmental resources contractors to produce clear, concise, and widely distributable materials on their assessment of environmental impact. Pablo, previously field director for the EE CRM assessment, has just recently been promoted to PI, and is now charged by EE with the task of explaining why the Emerald River Dam is a good thing. In a charged meeting, the EE spokesperson expresses her frustration over the residents' reaction, closing with the exasperated question: "Who do they think provides them with electricity? With appliances, motors, clothes and Tupperware? Where do they think the energy to produce all these things comes from?!"



## Case 8

The republic of Zandima is in the midst of a great economic boom. Recently discovered ore resources have prompted foreign investment in the country's mining industry, and citizens are reaping the benefits. Unemployment has hit an all-time low, while dozens of technical and professional degree courses have sprung up around the country to satisfy demand at new or future facilities.

Last week, a press release revealed that the Zandimian government has changed designations for a half-dozen protected areas in the mountains. Previously part of a National Park, six newly-demarcated regions have been downgraded to Sustainable Use Preserves – all areas within the geological “sweet-spot” most likely to provide the best access to valuable ores. The state-owned mining company ZandiMine has been granted exclusive permission to exploit the patchwork of preserves. Though controversial, the move promises great revenue for the state, putting in the hands of the current administration the means to fund desperately needed public health and sanitation projects.

A remote and ancient landscape dotted by shrines, the Zandimian Mountains have attracted pilgrims from all over the world for many years. Scholars and spiritual guides worldwide have also studied the mountains, as an example of one of the world's oldest systems of trails and temples. As any Zandimian scholar will aver, the entire Zandimian Mountain range was once considered sacred, as it is the birthplace of all five elemental deities that made the world habitable. Many scholars believe the ancient Zandimian cosmology, most of which was lost or destroyed during the fabled fifty-five-year war, is encoded upon the landscape.

Now, a number of academic and spiritual groups and institutions are calling for international intervention. They argue that the checker-boarding of the protected area will result in the desecration of an already greatly reduced sacred landscape and world heritage site. For its part, the government has assured the public that careful archaeological surveys and their “sustainable extraction” plan have guaranteed that no known structures will be adversely affected.

## Case 9

Josh is a first-year MA student at State University, and gets on fairly well with his advisor, Dr. Joan. In fact, he hopes to gain a teaching position on her field school next summer, so that he can take on part of the research project as his MA subject and hopefully continue this work in his PhD. At an advising meeting, Dr. Joan mentions to Josh that there is a prestigious faculty teaching award at the University that comes with a sizable cash award for research funds. She jokingly adds, "Nominate me for this, and you're sure to have a spot on the research project!" Josh agrees, laughing, and says that he'd be happy to do it. Dr. Joan promptly emails him with information on the teaching award, and highlights the fact that it is due in two weeks.

Later that afternoon, Josh mentions this exchange to several of his friends also in the program. They are aghast at Dr. Joan's suggestion, and Josh's acceptance. Seeing their reactions, Josh begins to rethink his first read of the situation. What if Dr. Joan wasn't just joking about adding him to her research project in exchange for the award nomination? And now that he has stopped to think, he realizes he doesn't actually know very much about her teaching first-hand. In fact, he hasn't yet taken a class she taught, although she did give a guest lecture in one of his classes that semester, which seemed fairly well thought-out.

In the departmental common room, Josh overhears some undergraduates commenting on Dr. Joan's lectures, complaining that they are difficult to follow. "Her exams don't even seem to relate to the material," one particularly unhappy student comments, "how are we supposed become archaeologists if we don't even know what we are supposed to be learning?" A third confabulator admits that he found her irreverent treatment of certain populations somewhat insulting, but is quickly silenced by a classmate who says her friend is being overly sensitive. Josh does not recall his advisor behaving offensively, but then again, most of their meetings have been focused strictly on getting through his reading lists.

Now he is really beginning to question his agreement to nominate Dr. Joan for the award. Josh's reason for choosing this school for graduate work was to work with Dr. Joan, and he believes her work is truly valuable. Not to mention the fact that her research project could be his ticket to long-term funding and publishing opportunities.

## Case 10

Although the history of rapid transit dates back to the 1890s, many of the smaller European cities acquired their equivalent of a “metro-rail” system in the 1960s. Reconnaissance archaeological surveys were conducted for many of the routes prior to construction. As a rule, the most interesting sites were chosen for excavation, but in many cases, these had to be rushed in order to stay ahead of construction.

Similarly, there were often more “interesting” sites than could be excavated by the professionals available, and local archaeological societies consisting mostly of avocational archaeologists were employed to assist in excavations. To keep collections local, a number of societies were allowed to keep a portion of the artifacts for their museums, although the artifacts remained governmental property. These agreements also served to alleviate curation problems then faced by a number of governments.

Fifty years later, archaeologist Frank is attempting to trace the final resting places for collections from sites in a particular country. He learns that most are still housed in local museum storage, but is surprised to find artifacts from some of the more well known sites for sale on the internet. Digging deeper, he learns that some artifacts are currently in private collections. One particular individual has amassed a large private collection consisting chiefly of artifacts from sites excavated in conjunction with avocational archaeologists.

Frank has had numerous discussions with the individual in attempts to ascertain the exact facts regarding his acquisition of the artifacts, and also pushing for their amicable return. The individual refuses to cooperate, claiming the artifacts are much more accessible in his collection than they would have been in the musty basements from which they were “rescued.” Frank suspects that this individual's activities might be illicit, in which case he can appeal to authorities to bring these artifacts home. But things may not be so cut and dry. What if the movement of artifacts was legal? What if no money changed hands? How are the rights and duties of an individual different from those of an avocational archaeological society?