“Geoarchaeological Perspectives on Pottery Production in Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age China”

Using preliminary chemical and mineralogical data collected on both clay raw material resources and Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age ceramics from Northern China’s Yiluo basin, this talk will explore the potential ways in which geoarchaeological research methodologies can contribute to an understanding of ceramic production dynamics during the early Chinese state formation period. Examination of the Yiluo data, within the framework of pre-existing theories and models linking notions of standardization with variable modes of craft production systems and degrees of social complexity, will serve as a basis for assessing the interpretive benefits, and limitations, afforded by such an approach.

Michael Bonomo is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Geological & Environmental Sciences at Stanford University, where his dissertation research focuses on the application of petrography, X-ray fluorescence and diffraction analysis, and multivariate statistics to the geoarchaeological study of ceramic production in Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age China. In addition to his current work on Chinese ceramics, he has analyzed a variety of other geologically-derived materials from archaeological contexts, including jade and bronze alloys from Northern China, and greenstone and muscovite mica from the Southeastern United States. He received his B.S. in Geology from the University of Miami, and an M.S. in Geology from the University of Georgia.