



UTC's Department of History and Department of Social, Cultural, and Justice Studies
join the UTC College of Arts and Sciences to Present

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The University of Colorado at Boulder

WEAPON TECHNOLOGY, HUNTING SUCCESS, AND THE SEARCH FOR MODERN BEHAVIOR IN OUR SPECIES

Friday, October 15, 2021
at 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time
Signal Mountain Room at the
UTC University Center or

Zoom: <https://tennessee.zoom.us/j/91973879336>

This Lecture is Free and Open to the Public!

Email Dr. Carey McCormack at carey-mccormack@utc.edu or
Dr. Brooke Persons at brooke-persons@utc.edu with questions.



About the Speaker

From a young age I have replicated and practiced with old hunting tools like the atlatl and dart (spear thrower). As an archaeologist, I test the ballistics of atlatl and dart and bow and arrow weapon systems through realistic and laboratory experiments. These experiments produce data on weapon efficacy along with samples of damaged stone armatures and animal bone with known histories of impact for comparison with the archaeological record. Using experimental and ethnographic evidence, I seek to understand the decisions made by ancient hunters, how they articulated with their prey and their environment, and how they achieved success.

About the Talk

Archaeologists include the development of sophisticated hunting and defense weapons as one of the material signatures of modern behavior as our species left Africa and colonized other parts of the globe. Composite, compound projectile weapons like the atlatl and dart (spear thrower) and bow and arrow are thought to have allowed modern humans to hunt dangerous prey more effectively, to ward off big predators, and to outcompete Indigenous populations of archaic humans in Europe and Asia, such as Neanderthals. But identifying complex weapons in the archaeological record is not without challenges. Recent research suggests that the material signatures previously thought to have set our species apart from Neanderthals may fail to materialize. In light of recent evidence, we can also question the extent to which new weapons really gave us an edge in any particular context, or are they adaptations to changes in human-prey interactions? These questions can be explored through experiments with old weapons and ethno-historic analogs of Indigenous hunters.