

## **The Rocky Road to Inequality: New Insights from Bronze Age Transylvania**

**Speaker:** Colin P. Quinn, Doctoral Candidate, University of Michigan, Department of Anthropology, Museum of Anthropological Archaeology

**Host Department:** Museum of Anthropological Archaeology

**Date:** 11/13/2014

**Time:** 12:00 PM

**Location:** Room 2009 Ruthven

### **Description:**

The development of institutionalized inequality was not a slow march on a linear path of increasing complexity. Instead, the road to inequality was rocky; characterized by fits and starts, cycling, and failed strategies of centralization all within a historical trajectory where people and events mattered. This talk explores how archaeologists approach institutionalized inequality and dynamics of social change using a case study from Bronze Age Transylvania (2700-1200 BC). Prior to the development of stable regional hierarchies during the second half of the Late Bronze Age, the communities in resource-rich southwest Transylvania organized themselves in various different ways. New fieldwork and an extensive dating program have upended previous conceptions of Bronze Age society in southwest Transylvania. By exploring the ways in which political, economic, ideological, and social signaling systems complemented and contradicted each other throughout the Bronze Age, we can gain a better understanding of the social processes that allowed for the successful institutionalization of inequality.