Experimental archaeology began as a relatively tightly defined sub-field of archaeology, whereby laboratory type experiments tested precise sets of circumstances which were set in place to test and / or observe phenomena. The objective was to explore material dynamics broadly defined, particularly to assess strengths, weaknesses, durability etc. of physical media. The core feature of such tests was their base materialism – we were testing things. In this environment, the scientist was to be very much an external and therefore passive observer. In recent years, the definition and applications of experimental archaeology have diverged considerably from these constraints to explicitly include, even rely upon, the input of the archaeologist. Despite this, the theoretical infrastructure that should accompany and qualify such developments has been less coherently developed in tandem. Indeed there is no core body of theory and no uniformity to the regulations of practice in experimental archaeology that would be considered conventions or be widely agreed upon. The terms of any such framework in themselves are as yet underdeveloped.

Within this evolving and diversifying milieu, a range of experimental approaches have evolved that overtly include the learning experiences and opinions of the investigator, which are often termed experiential archaeology, kinaesthetic approaches, embodied learning and a range of associated terms such as muscle memory, habitus or motor habit patterns have been applied. These positions are often informed by ethnographic and philosophic (read interpretive archaeology) perspectives and have broadened the range of thinking brought to bear in experimental archaeology. At its extreme definition, these approaches could be considered absolutely anathema to the regulatory framework within which the sub-discipline was originally founded. Classic to the New Archaeology / 'Processual' archaeology was the principle that to observe phenomena scientifically, the investigator *in corpore* and in terms of their subjective opinions should be extricated from the experiment to achieve scientific objectivity.

While we generally welcome the new range of approaches in experimental archaeology, they directly relate to debates surrounding phenomenology, material engagement, embodied cognition and archaeologies of the body in ways that are under-explored from the experimental archaeologist's perspective. The core question of this seminar therefore is have we developed a framework where unbridled subjectivity is permissible and "anything goes" should a range of theoretical positions be invoked or do these approaches broaden and enrich the ways in which we can link past and present material worlds? Some specific questions we would like to address are:

1) Should we include the experiences of the investigator and are her/his learning experiences relevant?
2) How can experiences be effectively measured and / or documented? Should they be documented by the participant or an external observer, or both?
3) Are we trying to replicate past material conditions or materialities (including aspects of experience and knowhow)?
4) Should approaches that do not involve material culture in specific actions or processes be included within the umbrella of experimental archaeology – i.e. can the body be considered material culture?
5) How 'scientific' is experimental archaeology today?
6) Is each stage in a learning curve valid or should we be aiming at mastery of skill sets?
7) How do we ensure that we do not become "better" at crafts than ancient craftspeople on the basis of our scientific knowledge and our concepts of quality, expediency etc.?
8) Can experience enable us to better take account of cumulative actions that amount to processes and does this complement or conflict with tests that analyse actions or steps in a somewhat predicable sequence (e.g. a house collapsing)? Does this bring us closer to charting object biographies or over-complicate matters?
9) How do we differentiate and potentially measure skill, knowhow, understanding, expertise, ability, expediency etc.?
10) Do these broadly 'experiential' approaches improve or damage dialogue between artefact studies (humanities), analytic studies ('hard science'), fieldwork results (e.g. excavation) and digital modelling (visualisation)? Can they enhance studies of the *chaîne opératoire*?