CANNIBALS OF THE CANYON: 
ANALYSES OF CANNIBALISM AMONG THE ANCESTRAL PUEBLO 
Rebecca Forsman, B.A. Candidate in Anthropology, CSU Stanislaus 

INTRODUCTION
The Ancestral Pueblo were a tribe of Native Americans that resided in New Mexico in the Four Corners region of the United States.

They were a very well-functioning society that had a very organized way of living. They lived, primarily, in Chaco Canyon. Chaco Canyon is an archaeological site in New Mexico.

They lived in a very well designed site that seemed to be able to aid in the seemingly unified society, which was very influential to all the other groups around them.

The Ancestral Pueblo are believed to have settled in the area between AD 750 and 900, and the group quickly grew to be a huge, coercive society.

CONTACT INFORMATION
Rebecca Forsman 
CSU, Stanislaus 
Email: rforsman@yahoo.com

RESEARCH QUESTION
Were the people of the Ancestral Pueblo practicing cannibalism as part of their culture, or did certain events, such as crop failure, force them to turn to cannibalism?

DEFINITIONS
Cannibalism: the—usually ritualistic—eating of human flesh by a human being
Coprolite: fossilized excrement

BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW
Articles have been written about the cannibalistic activities that are evident in the archaeological record.

I am looking at the background of the culture to compare the different—and, at times, conflicting—findings reported by many archaeologists.

This society is said to have been a very well-functioning agricultural society.

I would like to know what caused the cannibalistic behaviors.

METHODS
I am doing my research almost solely through library research. In addition to books, I am looking at published, scholarly articles. I would also like to take a trip to the Four Corners region to get a better picture of the area, and how life might have been for the Ancestral Pueblo. I hope to gain knowledge that might not be available here in California.

I plan to look at many different articles published by different archaeologists specializing in the Ancestral Pueblo. I plan to compare and contrast the many theories already out there, in order to produce a well-grounded theory of my own.

I also plan to define and discuss the different categories of cannibalistic practices and the different cultures who practice each category. These include religious practices, to demonstrate power, or purely out of necessity.

EXPECTED RESULTS
I expect to find a very controversial dialogue around this topic. Because cannibalism is taboo in most cultures, people tend to get uncomfortable with the subject. This is especially true when it is one’s ancestors in question.

REFERENCES
5. www.wikiwand.com/en/Chaco_Culture_National_Historical_Park (Picture in background)

LOCATION

SIGNIFICANCE
I am doing this research because I think it is fascinating that a society could go from functioning so well to a society that was either forced to turn to cannibalism or chose to turn to cannibalism.

COPROLITE