

Forensic Anthropology



Forensic Anthropology:

THE IDENTIFICATION OF HUMAN REMAINS WITHIN A LEGAL CONTEXT; TELLING THE STORY OF A PERSON'S LIFE AND DEATH FROM THEIR SKELETONIZED REMAINS

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- ◇ Office Hours: Mon 2-3pm or by arrangement

What you'll learn (and what you won't)

If you are interested in identification of human skeletons, and what caused them to require forensic identification, you have picked the right class.

In this class, you will learn techniques for recovery of human remains, how to positively identify an individual based on their

skeletal remains, and how to distinguish the events that lead up to the individual's death.

While this class will be fun and exciting, this IS NOT CSI!!! We will only be covering the amount of crime scene investigative principles that relate to anthropology—those relating to

burials and other modified remains. We DO NOT deal with soft tissue—no blood spatter, fingerprints, body fluids, and only DNA when it is present in the bones. We will discuss how decomposition of the soft tissue tells us how long ago the person died.

I'm very excited to be teaching forensics this semester! My background is in Physical Anthropology, focusing primarily on human skeletal biology. My Master's degree is in Physical Anthropology from CSU Sacramento, where I focused my research on identification of sex from the skeleton of children. I also have a BA in Anthropology and an AA in technical theatre with an emphasis in costuming. This is my seventh year teaching at Sierra College, and I also currently teach at Sac State and Sac City College. I'm really looking forward to having fun in this class and I hope you are too!



Course Description

This course is an introduction to the forensic investigation of death. Emphasis on current techniques used for analysis of human skeletal remains, medico-legal techniques and the role of the anthropologist as an integral member of the investigation process. Topics will include: where forensic anthropology fits in with death investigation; postmortem changes; human osteology/odontology, contemporary and non-contemporary burial situations, methods and techniques to estimate sex, age at death, ancestry, stature and handedness of human remains, causes and manners, mechanisms of death; mass disasters and human rights violations.



Mass Grave in Mexico

Course Requirements

Attendance:

Students are expected to be in class every day. When you miss class, you miss out on classroom discussions (ideas from other students, info that is not in the text, and my perspectives on the material). Your attendance is pivotal to your success in this class! Try determining sex or age from a skull without having learned how to do it first!

If you must miss a class, be sure to get the notes and other relevant material from one of your classmates (NOT ME!) I strongly recommend exchanging email addresses with those sitting near you—we will be working in groups a lot during class, so making friends early on will benefit you greatly.

Before Class Preparation:

It is imperative that you are prepared for class every day! Being prepared means having completed the required reading PRIOR to class, so that we can discuss it; having your books with you in class, so that we can do lab activities; having any homework completed and with you in class, and bringing your positive attitude with you, so that we can have fun!

This class is very interactive and the material is very fun and informative. However, to get the most out of the class, and make the lab activities possible, reading ahead of class is extremely important. To ensure that reading is completed, you will be completing a weekly “Question of the Week” that will be due most Mondays (more on this later).

Required Texts:

Hard Evidence: Case Studies in Forensic Anthropology (2nd Edition)
By Dawnie Wolfe Steadman ISBN 0136050735

Forensic Anthropology Training Manual (2nd Edition)
by Karen Ramey Burns ISBN 0130492930

You will not be able to pass the class without purchasing both texts!
Each person will need their own copy of the books, in class, every day!

When are things due?

Take home assignments are due at the beginning of class the day after they are assigned—IN CLASS! Not via email, not under my door, blackboard will be accepted in *most* cases!

In class assignments may only be completed during the class in which they are assigned and are due at the end of that class period—no exceptions!

Missed assignments cannot be made up for any reason—if you miss class, you miss out!

Late work will not be accepted for any reason!



Skull with syphilis lesions

Course Level Outcomes

1. Identify the role of the forensic anthropologist within the medico-legal community.
2. Determine the best data gathering techniques and the most suitable statistical methods to evaluate forensic data.
3. Identify the bones of the human skeleton and briefly describe the growth process and anatomy of bone.
4. Discriminate between human and nonhuman, contemporary and non-contemporary burial situations.
5. Apply standard methods and techniques to estimate sex using the pelvis and skull and determine the feasibility of other less reliable methods with reference to specific cases.
6. Apply standard methods and techniques to estimate age at death using dentition, pelvis, ribs and sutures and determine the feasibility of other less reliable methods with reference to specific cases.
7. Apply anthroposcopic and metric methods to determine biological affinity of human remains; provide an analysis of the current position of the anthropological community on race.
8. Determine the significance of the role that DNA plays in the identification of human remains.
9. Research a specific legal case using DNA as the paramount piece of evidence toward identification.
10. Compare and contrast the various positive identification techniques (forensic odontology, facial characteristics, and other unique biological features) and determine the appropriate situations in which they should be applied.
11. Discriminate between cause and manner of death and the characteristics of various types of trauma.
12. Document and apply techniques to locate remains, map their position, and conduct a forensic excavation; work on a specific plan to adjust techniques in cases of mass disasters.

13. Document post mortem changes to remains in soft tissue and taphonomic changes to bone.
14. Discriminate between techniques to estimate time since death and apply methods and techniques of forensic entomology.
15. Research recent international forensic investigations and war crimes.
16. Use a variety of documented case studies to apply theoretical techniques and information. .

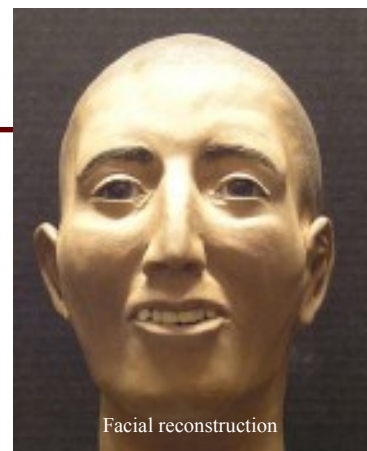
Decided this class isn't for you?

If you are no longer interested in taking this course, it is your responsibility to drop through MySierra. I WILL NOT drop you after the 2nd week of class!

Drop deadlines:

Sept 3 — last day to drop without a notation on transcript

Oct 30 — last day to drop with a "W" notation on transcript



Facial reconstruction



Surface scatter recovery.

Remains that are exposed to the elements can skeletonize very quickly.

Classroom Rules and Expectations

It is very important to me that everyone feel comfortable in class and be able to enjoy the best classroom environment possible. Disrespectful behavior of any kind is not tolerated, whether it's regarding myself, another student, the classroom materials or topics, or simply doing things unrelated to class during class time (texting, discussing outside events, etc).

Once you take your seat cell phones should be put away! Engage with those around you, not your virtual world.



In this class, we are working with expensive and delicate skeletal specimens. While many are reproductions, it is important that you treat the skeletal specimens with respect at all times. They belonged to (or were cast from) individuals that were once **LIVING** and who, lucky for us, provide us with the opportunity to learn from them.

Because our skeletal equipment is precious and expensive, absolutely no eating during class. Let's work together to all have a great experience here!

Grading

There will be approximately 600 points in this class.

Exams (300 points):

There will be three exams worth 100 points each. Each exam will have two components, written and lab practical. The lab practical will be taken in class on the dates listed on the schedule. The written portion will be taken online through the blackboard site. The online exam will be available for 24 HOURS ONLY! Once you log in to take the exam, you will have 1-2 hours to complete it (depending on the exam). Due to the nature of lab exams, it is impossible to make them up — “makeups” will only be granted in extreme medical circumstances and will require an original doctors note (by extreme, I mean quarantine, hospitalization, or something equally severe).

Lab Activities (approx. 150 points):

Much of this class is lab related. As such, you will have lab activities that will often be completed during class, and turned in at the end of the day. These will vary in how many points per lab, though usually they will be worth 10 points. Lab activities cannot be made up for any reason—if you miss class—you miss out!

Question of the Week (approx. 50 points):

Each week there will be a short writing assignment based on the week’s required reading. Responses to the QoW are due at the beginning of class on Mondays (when Monday is a holiday, they will be due Wednesday). They can be typed and turned in within the first 5 minutes of class or they can be submitted on blackboard (preferred). I will not accept them late! Each QoW will be worth 5 points.

Final Project (100 points):

At the end of the semester, you will complete a forensic case study. This will be a culminating lab assignment that will require you to use all the forensic techniques you have learned throughout the semester and write up a forensic report. While I will allow a bit of group discussion on this, it is an individual project—working together will be considered cheating and will result in zero points for all students involved.



Extra Credit:

There is a total of 20 points of Extra Credit available for this class.

Option 1: Locate a primary peer reviewed article on any of the topics that we cover in this class (Google scholar and library databases are good places too look. Articles from the Hard Evidence text do not qualify). Write a summary of the article and how it pertains to forensic anthropology (approx. 2 pages). You may complete 2 summaries for 10 points each.

Option 2: Choose a Trauma or Pathology that leaves evidence in the bone and write a 3-4 page in depth research paper about it. Be sure to include what causes it, how it progresses (if a disease process), and how it is identified in the bone. You must use at least two primary sources and include a works cited page. Worth 20 points.

Things to think about

Individual Work:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. You cheat, you fail! If I observe any actions which lead me to believe you are acting in an academically dishonest manner, you will receive a zero and may consequently receive an 'F' in the course. Cheating includes but is not limited to the following:

- submitting identical (or clearly similar) QoW.
 - giving or receiving information from another student during an exam.
 - using unauthorized sources for answers during and exam.
 - illegally obtaining the questions before and exam.
 - altering the answers on an already graded exam/quiz.
 - any and all forms of plagiarism.
- All written assignments need to be in your own words.

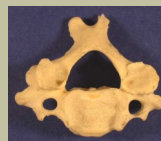


It is your responsibility to guard yourselves from innocent activity that may appear questionable or unknowingly tempting another student to share your

work. Additionally, with EVERY assignment, you must turn in original work, different from those with whom you work—on worksheets, papers, etc...—duplicate work will be returned without credit and MAY NOT

be made up.

The college has a very strict policy with regard to plagiarism and cheating that may result in course failure, transcript notation, and/or expulsion (Board Policy 5510). If you are caught cheating you will be asked to leave the exam and will be given a zero. This exam may not be made up.



General Email Etiquette:

- ♦ Emails should always include YOUR NAME, the class name and time class meets!
- ♦ Don't forget manners—emails are not text messages, and I am not you BFF—be professional and courteous.
- ♦ Emails are public! Don't write anything in an email that you are not willing to say in person and expect that they may be forwarded.
- ♦ Email should not replace personal conversations for personal matters. I am happy to meet with you to discuss just about anything.
- ♦ I answer emails received during the week within 24 hours and on the weekends on Monday—Just because you sent it, doesn't mean I have read it yet! I WILL get back to you!



Some Fun Facts about your instructor:

- ♦ In addition to teaching Anthropology, I teach country dancing
- ♦ Reading is my passion! I read anywhere and everywhere! I always have at least one book in progress, usually several. My favorite genre is Fantasy, though I read everything!
- ♦ I currently have 8 cats in my house - but I've had up to 17 once. I am a foster mom for abandoned kitties
- ♦ I am a techno junkie. Computers, Smart phones, eReaders, tablets, whatever the newest and coolest is, I want one and will usually figure out a way to use it in or for my classes!
- ♦ I love to travel—anywhere, anytime, I'm ready to go!
- ♦ Biggest pet peeves: People who call an ape a monkey; Non-recyclers (its usually only a few extra steps!); misuse of the word gender (sex is genetic, you choose your gender!)



Date	Topic	Readings must be completed before coming to class!
8/20	Introduction to class	
8/22	Dead Men DO tell Tales!	Steadman: Chapter 21 (Available online)
8/27	What is Forensic Anthropology? History of American Forensic Anth	Burns: Chapter 1 and Chapter 12 Steadman: Chapter 1
8/29	Intro to Osteology: bone morphology, anatomical directions, and dentition	Burns: Chapter 2 and 11 (through page 168) Steadman: Chapter 19
9/3	LABOR DAY— NO CLASS	
9/5	Osteology: the skull	Burns: Chapter 3 (sections titled <i>Description, Location, Articulation</i>)
9/10	Osteology: Axial skeleton	Burns: pages 69-86 and 117-120
9/12	Osteology: Appendicular skeleton	Burns: Chapter 6, 7, 9, 10 (sections titled <i>Description, Location, Articulation</i> and <i>Left/Right Recognition</i>) and pages 61-68
9/17	Review: Osteology and History	
9/19	Exam 1: Osteology and History	
9/24	Sex Estimation	Burns: Sections titled <i>Sexual Differences</i> in chapters 3 and 8 Steadman: Chapter 3
9/26	Sex Estimation	Burns: Sections titled <i>Sexual Differences</i> in chapters 3 and 8
10/1	Stature and Age Estimation	Burns: pages 44, 73-76, 123-128, 205-208
10/3	Subadult Age Estimation	Burns: sections on <i>Origin and Growth</i> in chapters 3, 6, and 9, 169-172 Steadman: Chapter 10 and review pages 15-19

10/8	Adult Age Estimation	Burns: pages 44, 73-76, 87-90, 123-128, 174-176
10/10	Ancestry Estimation	Burns: 47-50, 203-204 Steadman: Chapter 4
10/15	Review: Identification Methods	
10/17	Exam 2: Identification Methods	
10/22	Taphonomy, Decomposition, and Post-Mortem Interval	Burns: pages 249-255 Steadman: Chapters 12 and 13
10/24	Pathology	Burns: pages 177-182, 220-224
10/29	Trauma	Burns: pages 208-220 Steadman: Chapters 15 and 17
10/31	Positive Identification methods	Burns: pages 225-231 Steadman: Chapters 4 and 20
11/5	Recovery of remains	Burns: pages 232-248 Steadman: Chapters 9 and 11
11/7	Surface Scatter and Excavation	Steadman: Chapter 5
11/12	Veteran's Day — NO CLASS	
11/14	Instructor at a Conference— NO CLASS	Steadman: Chapters 22 and 23
11/19	Mass Disasters and Human Rights	Burns: Chapter 16 Steadman: Chapter 24
11/21	Review	
11/26	Exam 3	
11/28	Work on Final Projects	
12/3	Work on Final Projects	
12/5	Discussion of Final Projects	Final Projects Due