

ANTH 2820 Forensic Anthropology

2024/25 Term 1

Lecture time: Wednesday 12:30 – 14:15 (4/9 – 27/11) UCC_114

Tutorial time: Wednesday 15:30 – 16:15 (4/9 – 27/11) UCC_110

Instructor: Chris Cheung (christina.cheung@cuhk.edu.hk)

TA: *TBC*

Textbook: Byers, SN (2017) Introduction to Forensic Anthropology. Routledge.

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/cuhk-ebooks/detail.action?docID=4694526>

Course description: Interest in the field of forensic anthropology has been heightened in the last decade through the success of forensic-themed television shows and popular novels. This course will introduce students to the field of forensic anthropology – a scientific discipline that involves the application of methods from biological anthropology and archaeology to the identification, recovery, and analysis of skeletal remains from crime scenes, mass disasters, and unexplained death. Through lectures and in-class assignments, students will learn about the methods for recognizing and recovering evidence that allows for the determination of time since death, manner and cause of death, and the identification of individuals.

Learning outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will:

- Have a foundational understanding of basic skeletal biology, and are able to identify the bones and specific features of various skeletal elements of the adult and subadult human skeletons.
- Learn about how osteological methods can be used to create a biological profile, and help identify possible cause and manner of death.
- Gain new perspectives into the strengths and weaknesses of standard forensic anthropology methods.
- Understand the ethical issues that arise when working with human remains from archaeological, humanitarian, and medico-legal contexts.

Course structure and learning activities:

One 1 hour 45 min lecture and one 45-min tutorial per week for one semester. Tutorial will take various forms, including “bone labs” where students will have hands-on experience working with human remains, and an optional field trip to visit the Fu Shan Public Mortuary.

Course assessment and polices:

The final grade for the course is based on:

1) Assignments	10% x 3	30%
2) In-class assessments	15% x3	45%
3) Lab Report	25%	25%

Assignments (10% x 3)

There are three take-home assignments. Each assignment will consist of written exercise based on laboratory methods commonly used in forensic anthropology.

In-class assessments (15% x3)

There are three in-class assessments, these assessments are mostly based on lecture material, and your notes from the lectures will be your primary study materials. Reading the associated chapter(s) from the textbook is expected. More instruction will be given before the assessments.

Lab report (25%)

Students will write a short report (6 – 8 pages) on the activities carried out during the bone lab sessions. More direction will be provided in class and during the lab sessions.

Submission and academic honesty

As required by the university, from Sept. 2008, students must submit a soft copy of their computer-generated text assignments to VeriGuide at a specified URL. The system will issue a receipt containing a declaration of honesty statement. Students should sign the receipt, print a hard copy of their assignment, and submit the hard copy and the receipt to teachers for grading. The university says that assignments without the receipt will not be graded.

Please check the website “Honesty in Academic Works” at: <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/> for more information on plagiarism and on how to submit papers through VeriGuide.

Grade descriptors

Grade	Overall course
A	Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
B	Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
C	Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
D	Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.
F	Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

Weekly schedule (this syllabus is subject to change)

Date	Lecture Topic	Chapters
Sept 4	1. Introduction to Forensic Anthropology	1, 3, 4
	Tutorial: no tutorial	
11	2. Human Osteology	2
	Tutorial: bone lab (with casts)	
18	Mid-autumn festival	
25	3. Estimating Time Since Death	5 and 6
	Tutorial: In-class assessment 1 (close book)	
Oct 2	4. Sex Determination	8
	Tutorial: Assignment – Estimating Sex	
9	5. Age Determination	9
	Tutorial: Assignment – Estimating Age	
16	6. Stature Determination	10
	Tutorial: Assignment – Estimating Stature	
23	7. Ancestry Determination	7
	Tutorial: class discussion – is “race” real?	
30	8. Cause and Manner of Death	11 and 12
	Tutorial: In-class assessment 2 (open book/note, bring a calculator)	
Nov 6	9. Cause and Manner of Death	13 and 14
	Tutorial: bone lab (CUHK medical school)	
13	10. Ante-Mortem Skeletal Conditions	15
	Tutorial: bone lab (CUHK medical school)	
20	11. Post-Mortem Skeletal Conditions	16
	Tutorial: class discussion – the role of FA in HK	
27	12. Overview and summary	19
	Tutorial: In-class assessment (close book)	