ANTH 5820 Forensic Anthropology

2024/25 Term 1

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

Tutorial time: Wednesdays 14:30 – 15:15 (4/9 – 27/11) UCC_110

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

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 a bone lab where students will have hands-on experience working with (archaeological) 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 assessment		15%
3)	Lab Report		35%
4)	Final Essay		20%

In-class 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 assessment (15%)

There is one open book/note in-class assessment. Please bring a calculator to class. More instruction will be given before the assessment.

Lab report (35%)

Students will write a short report (8 – 10 pages) on the activities carried out during the lab sessions. More direction will be provided in class and during the lab sessions. This is due **27 Nov** before class.

Final paper (20%)

Write a 6 – 8 pages research paper on the topic "Potentials and Limits of Forensic Anthropology". Students will choose from at least three of the weekly topics discussed in class, and use the assigned readings for discussion. Students are also highly encouraged to draw from readings and examples/case studies not mentioned in class to support their discussion. Feel free to draw upon your own research interests (if relevant).

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. Motivated and engaging in outside readings, able to draw meaningful connections between lecture materials and all readings.
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. Able to draw meaningful connections between lecture materials and required readings.
C	Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses. Comprehends some connections between lecture materials and required readings.
D	Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes. Mostly fails to comprehend the connections between lecture material and required readings.
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 Topics and readings
Sept 4	**1. Introduction to Forensic Anthropology** Textbook chapters 1, 3, 4, and Cattaneo 2007 – Forensic Anthropology: Developments of a Classical Discipline in the New Millennium. *Forensic Science International* 165(2-3): 185-193
	Tutorial: no tutorial
11	**2. Human Osteology** Textbook chapter 2, and Rissech 2021 – The Importance of Human Anatomy in Forensic Anthropology. *European Journal of Anatomy* 25(S2): 1-18.
	Tutorial: bone lab (with casts)
18	**Mid-autumn festival**
25	**3. Estimating Time Since Death** Textbook chapters 5,6, and Wescott 2018 – Recent Advances in Forensic Anthropology: Decomposition Research. *Forensic Sciences Research* 3(4): 278-293.
	Tutorial:
Oct 2	**4. Sex Determination** Textbook chapter 8, and Krishan, Chatterjee, Kanchan, Kaur, Baryah, & Singh 2016 – A Review of Sex Estimation Techniques during Examination of Skeletal Remains in Forensic Anthropology Casework. *Forensic Science International* 261:162.e1-165.e8
	Tutorial: Assignment – Estimating Sex
9	**5. Age Determination** Textbook chapter 9, and Ubelaker & Khosrowshahi 2019 – Estimation of Age in Forensic Anthropology: Historical Perspective and Recent Methodological Advances. *Forensic Sciences Research* 4(1): 1-9
	Tutorial: Assignment – Estimating Age
16	**6. Stature Determination** Textbook chapter 10, and Krishan, Kanchan, Menezes, & Ghosh 2012 – Forensic Anthropology Casework – Essential Methodological Considerations in Stature Estimation. *Journal of Forensic Nursing* 8(1): 45-50.
	Tutorial: Assignment – Estimating Stature
23	**7. Ancestry Determination** Textbook chapter 7, and Dunn, Spiros, Kamnikar, Plemons, & Hefner 2020 – Ancestry Estimation in Forensic Anthropology: A Review. WIRES Forensic Science 2(4): e1369
	Tutorial: class discussion – is "race" real?

30	**8. Cause and Manner of Death** Textbook chapters 11, 12, and Baraybar & Gasior 2006 - Forensic Anthropology and the Most Probable Cause of Death in Cases of Violations Against International Humanitarian Law: An Example from Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 51(1): 103-108
	Tutorial: In-class assessment (open book/note, bring a calculator)
Nov 6	**9. Cause and Manner of Death** Textbook chapters 13, 14, and Pinheiro, Cunha, Symes 2015 – Over-interpretation of Bone Injuries and Implications for Cause and Manner of Death. *In:* Skeletal Trauma Analysis: Case Studies in Context. Passalacqua, Rainwater (eds.) Wiley Pp. 27 – 41.
	Tutorial: bone lab (CUHK medical school)
13	**10. Ante-Mortem Skeletal Conditions** Textbook chapter 15, and Cunha 2006 – Pathology as a Factor of Personal Identity in Forensic Anthropology. *In:* Forensic Anthropology and Medicine: Complementary Sciences from Recovery to Cause of Death. Schmitt, Cunha, and Pinheiro (eds.) Totowa: Humana Press Inc. Pp. 333 – 358
	Tutorial: bone lab (CUHK medical school)
20	**11. Post-Mortem Skeletal Conditions** Textbook chapter 16, and Blau 2016 – How Traumatic: A Review of the Role of the Forensic Anthropologist in the Examination and Interpretation of Skeletal Trauma. Australian Journal of Forensic Sciences 49 (3): 261-280.
	Tutorial: bone lab (CUHK Archaeology Lab)
27	**12. Overview and summary** Textbook chapter 19, and Dirkmaat, Cabo, Ousley, & Symes 2008 – New Perspectives in Forensic Anthropology. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 137 (S47): 33-52
	Tutorial: class discussion – the role and future of FA in HK