ANTH 5322 Topics in Anthropology: Forensic Anthropology

2023/24 Term 1

Lecture time: Wednesdays 12:30 – 14:15 (6/9 – 29/11) UCA312

Tutorial time: Wednesdays 14:30 – 15:15 (6/9 – 29/11) UCA312

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

TA: ??

Office hours: Mondays 15:00 – 16:00 NAH 322 (CC);

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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) In-class assignments		10% x 3	30%
2) Seminar discussion		15%	15%
3) Lab Report		25%	25%
4) Research paper		30%	30%

In-class assignments (10% x 3)

There are three in-class assignments. Each assignment will consist of written exercise to be completed during tutorial and will be based on laboratory methods commonly used in forensic anthropology. Students may work together.

Seminar discussion (15%)

During the second tutorial, students will be asked to form groups of two (or no more than three, depending on the number of total enrolled students). Each group will be in charge of leading discussion of one seminar (between week 7 and 11).

Lab report (25%)

Students will write a short report (4 – 5 pages) on the activities carried out during the lab session. More direction will be provided in class and during the lab session.

Research Paper (30%)

Write an 8 – 10 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)

Week	Date	Lecture Topics and readings
1	Sept 6	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
2	13	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.
3	20	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.
4	27	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
5	Oct 4	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
6	11	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.
7	18	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
8	25	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
9	Nov 1	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.
10	08	**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
11	15	**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.
12	22	**12. Lab Day (field trip date TBA)** Textbook chapters 17, 18, and Quatrehomme, Fronty, Sapanet, Grévin, Bailet, Ollier 1996 – Identification by Frontal Sinus Pattern in Forensic Anthropology 83(2): 147 – 153. Christensen 2005 – Testing the reliability of frontal sinuses in positive identification. Journal of Forensic Sciences 50(1): 1 – 5.
13	29	**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

Topics for tutorials:

Week 1: General introduction

Week 2: Bone lab (with casts)

Week 3: *No tutorial*

Week 4 Assignment – Estimating Sex

Week 5: Assignment – Estimating Age

Week 6: Assignment – Estimating Stature

Week 7: Student-led seminar

Week 8: Student-led seminar

Week 9: Student-led seminar

Week 10: Student-led seminar

Week 11: Student-led seminar

Week 12: Bone lab (field trip)

Week 13: Overview