

**ANTHR 494:B1  
Forensic Anthropology\***

Winter Term 2006

O. Beattie

\*or "Everybody has to be somewhere" (Douglas Adams, 1988)

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Class Times/Place: Tuesday 2:00 PM – 4:50 PM Tory 1-33

Office: Tory 13-28

Office Hours: Tuesday 10 AM to noon; or by appointment

**Course prerequisite:** ANTHR 390 or 490 or consent of the Department.

**Important:** Make sure you have the required prerequisite for this course. If you have alternate courses that the Department has assessed as equivalent to the prerequisite (such as courses from another institution), you must complete a special consent form available from the Department of Anthropology. Failure to do so may create difficulties with your Faculty when you apply for graduation.

**Required textbook materials:**

Byers, S.N. *Introduction to Forensic Anthropology: A Textbook*. 2005. Second Edition. Allyn and Bacon.

**Course description:**

This course will provide a broadly based but detailed examination of the role of forensic anthropology in the forensic sciences, and will involve a series of seminars, discussions, and labs in human identification issues, procedures, and problems. Seminars will also include guest speakers on specific forensic topics, films, and one field trip. The field trip will take place mid- to late term (depending on scheduling issues), and will be a tour of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, which will include a lecture by one of the provincial medical examiners. If time and weather permit, we may be able to work in a second field trip to our off-campus facility at the Ellerslie Research Station where University of Alberta decomposition and taphonomy experiments are currently in progress.

**Topics to be discussed in the seminars include (but are not restricted to):**

- the history and integration of the forensic sciences
- the medical examiner and coroner systems in Canada
- forensic anthropology in Canada
- court testimony: the expert witness
- mass disasters
- genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, humanitarian issues
- ethics
- coping; posttraumatic stress disorder
- the recovery scene (including "forensic archaeology"), and
- the recovery of human skeletal materials
- continuity of evidence and evidence collection and handling
- taphonomy
- elapsed time since death
- osteometry and non-metric morphological features
- sex, age, and ancestry determination from the skeleton
- the concept of "race"/ancestry as it applies to forensic anthropology
- individualization and personal uniqueness
- stature reconstruction
- facial approximation and videosuperimposition
- DNA
- forensic odontology

- radiology and medical imaging technology
- computers in the forensic sciences; digital imaging
- blunt and sharp force trauma
- explosive trauma
- cremations
- spousal and child abuse
- suicide
- historical applications
- forensic sciences in modern fiction writing, tv drama series, and documentaries
- professional accreditation
- jobs in forensic anthropology and the forensic sciences

Note: the above list is also a good starting point for selecting a term paper/seminar presentation topic.

### Course requirements:

1. Term paper due on the last class meeting (April 11). (40%)
2. A 10-minute seminar presentation, including a two page condensed version of your presentation plus two suggested readings (annotated) for the presentation. These are to be handed out to the class one week prior to the presentation. (10% for presentation, 15% for handout)
3. Final examination to be held during the exam period (date to be announced early in the term) (may include a take-home assignment component). (35%)

### Notes:

The topic for the term paper and presentation will be the same. As this is a seminar course, students will be responsible for reading the submitted abstracts and preparing questions for discussion for each class. The seminar presentation will take the form of the student leading discussion on a specific topic, or presenting case studies illustrating various aspects of forensic anthropological issues and/or methods. A more detailed template will be provided before Reading Week. The term paper will be an in-depth assessment of the chosen topic. It should be approximately 3,000 to 5,000 words in length (no longer), and be written in a formalized style like that seen in the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* or the *Journal of Forensic Sciences*. The final exam will include a lab analysis of materials and the generation of a report describing and interpreting – from a forensic anthropological perspective – these materials.

### Class schedule (subject to slight changes as the term progresses):

Jan 10	Introductions; issues in forensic anthropology; discussion of topics for term papers and presentations; current events
Jan 17	Issues in forensic anthropology continued: The Big Questions; current events Readings: Chs. 1, 2, and 19; Lab topic: osteology review; fragmentary bone
Jan 24	Forensic science: a multidisciplinary approach; case studies; films (the autopsy); Readings: Ch. 3 Lab topic: bone/non-bone; human/non-human
Jan 31	Case studies and discussion; remains recovery issues; film (forensic entomology) Readings: Chs. 4, 5, 6, 8, and 9 Lab topic: age, sex
Feb 7	Case studies and discussion; identification issues Readings: Chs. 7, 10, 15, 17, and 18

	Lab topic: radiographic anatomy; ancestry, personal uniqueness
Feb 14/15	Focus issues: mass disasters; genocide, crimes against humanity; mass graves; film Readings: web resources Midterm exam
Feb 20 (week of)	Reading Week, no classes
Feb 28	Focus issues continued; the United Nations Tribunals; NGO's; PTSD; film; current events; Readings: Chs. 11, 12, 13, and 14 Lab topic: estimating victim numbers
Mar 7	Case studies and discussion; skeletal injury; taphonomy Readings: further discussion of Chs. 11, 12, 13, and 14; Ch. 16 Lab topic: taphonomy
Mar 14	Forensic anthropology and jobs, the media, court testimony, ethics, modern fiction, and beyond; Readings: Ch. 19 revisited Lab topic: burned bone and other contexts
Mar 21	Student presentations
Mar 28	Student presentations
Apr 4	Student presentations/final business
Apr 11	"Flex day"; papers due

Note: A missed exam due to illness must be supported by an University of Alberta Medical Statement form signed by the University Health Centre, which you give to the course instructor or your teaching assistant within two working days following the missed exam. Absence due to other circumstances (e.g. family emergency, etc.) must be supported by documentation given to the course instructor or teaching assistant within two working days following the missed exam, and can take the form of an absence slip notarized by the Records Division/Examinations and Timetabling, Office of the Registrar. See the University Calendar section 23.5 for more information on these regulations. Unsupported absence from an exam will result in a raw score of zero for that exam. Students who miss an exam due to documented medical or other reasons will be given a waiver and the percentage weight for the missed exam will be added to the percentage weight for the next exam.

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Each academic year the grading system is explained to staff so that their use of it will be in accord with general practices and can be made known to students....

These guidelines, which appear in section 61.6 of GFC Policy Manual, are incorporated in the following statement of University and Faculty assessment practices and procedures....

### 1. Communication to Students in Classes

Instructors **MUST** include the following information in their course outlines. (Announcements at the beginning of class are also recommended, but since many students do not attend the first class, it is important this information appears in writing on the course syllabus.)

(i) **Prerequisite and/or co-requisite enforcement** □

Where these are being enforced, and the Department intends to cancel registrations where the pre- and/or co-requisites are lacking, students should be notified to drop the class immediately. If the Department chooses not to or fails to enforce pre- or co-requisites, students will retain credit for courses successfully completed. Please note that the current University registration system does not accommodate pre-requisite checking.

(ii) **Renumbered courses** □

Students should be advised of the previous course numbers for those courses that have been renumbered and advised that they cannot repeat the same course if it has been taken previously.

(iii) **Course Requirement, Examinations, Evaluation Procedures and Grading** □

*Note: Changes have been made so that parts of the following will be presented in the 2004-05 University Calendar (23.4); however, changes were made too late to appear in the 2003-04 Calendar.*

The policies set out below are intended to provide instructors and their students with general course information. GFC, in approving these guidelines, expects that there will be a common sense approach to their application and understood that circumstances might develop, during a term, where a change to the course outline as set out in Section 61.6(a) of the GFC Policy Manual, made sense to all concerned. Such changes shall only occur with fair warning or general class consent. (GFC 29 SEP 2003)

Students concerned about the application of these guidelines should consult, in turn, the instructor, the chair of the department by which the course is offered, and the dean of the Faculty in which the course is offered.

- a. At the beginning of each course, instructors are required by GFC to provide a course outline which must include the following:
  - i. a statement of the course objectives and general content.
  - ii. a list of the required textbooks and other major course materials.
  - iii. an indication of how and when students have access to the instructor.
  - iv. the distribution of weight between term work and final examination.
  - v. identification of all course activities worth 10% or more of the overall course mark.
  - vi. whether marks are given for class participation and other in-class activities as well as the weight of such participation.
  - vii. dates of any examination and course assignments with a weight of 10% or more of the overall course mark.
  - viii. the manner in which the official University grading system is to be implemented in that particular course or section, i.e., whether a particular distribution is to be used to determine grades, or whether there are absolute measures or marks which will determine them, or whether a combination of the two will be used. (GFC 29 SEP 2003)
- b. Every course outline should contain the following statement:  
 "Policy about course outlines can be found in '23.4(2) of the University *Calendar*." (GFC 29 SEP 2003). However, as stated above, the 2003-04 Calendar will not reflect these particular regulations.
- c. Every course outline should contain the following statement:  
 "The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at [www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm](http://www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm)) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University." (GFC 29 SEP 2003)
- d. Nothing in any course outline, syllabus or course web-site may override or contravene any Calendar regulation or GFC policy. In resolving any discrepancy, GFC policy and Calendar regulations will take precedence. (GFC 29 SEP 2003)

- e. Instructors may indicate in the course outline the date, time and place on which the deferred examination for the course will occur, should one be required. See §23.5.6 (GFC 29 SEP 2003)
- f. Instructors should discuss with the class their expectations with respect to academic honesty issues and outline both permitted and prohibited behaviour. (GFC 29 SEP 2003)
- g. Instructors must follow copyright regulations as established by the University from time to time in the duplication of course material. (GFC 29 SEP 2003)
- h. Instructors should allow students a reasonable time in which to complete an assignment, bearing in mind its weight.
- i. Instructors should mark and return to students with reasonable dispatch all term examinations and, provided the students submit them by the due date, all course projects, assignments, essays, etc.
- j. All projects, assignments, essays, etc. should be returned on or by the last day of classes in the course, with the exception of a final major assignment (which may be due on the last day of classes), which should be returned by the date of the scheduled final examination or, in non-examination courses, by the last day of the examination period.
- k. Upon request, instructors are required to provide the method which was used to translate final and, where appropriate, term marks into grades.

**(iv) Academic Offences** □

Because of the seriousness of plagiarism and cheating, at the beginning of each term instructors are required to review with their students the definitions of cheating and plagiarism and the related penalties. Students *must* be advised that the Code of Student Behaviour is published in the *Calendar* (pages 638-657) and should be reviewed since ignorance is not acceptable as a defense in cases of academic offences. Students should be informed that when cheating and/or plagiarism occurs, a number of penalties can be imposed, such as lowering a grade or expulsion from the University (outlined in Section 30.4.2 of the Code). Instructors should take care both to instill in their students the importance of academic integrity and to devise assignments that do not invite plagiarism. Vigilance in proctoring examinations is particularly important, as is ensuring that texts and notes are not permitted in places that might promote cheating.

In addition to the statement in iii (c) above, it is recommended that a reference or excerpt from Section 30.3.2 in "Extract from the Code of Student Behavior" from the GFC Policy Manual and a copy of "Notice to Instructors regarding Plagiarism and Cheating ( Cheatsheet)" (available from your department office and <http://www.ualberta.ca/~unisecr/appeals.htm>) are included with each syllabus. A copy of the Code of Student Behavior may be obtained from the University Secretariat web site: <http://www.ualberta.ca/~unisecr/policy/sec30.html>.

In particular, please note: No student shall represent another's substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as their own. No student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has been obtained by the Student or which has been or is being submitted by the Student in another course or program of student in the University or elsewhere.

**2. Formulation of Weight Distributions**

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- (b) All decisions regarding final testing in senior courses are under the jurisdiction of departments, provided that they are in accord with the regulations.

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- (e) The University Academic Schedule designates one week of each term--a week which always precedes the deadline for withdrawing from Fall/Winter term courses--mid-term Test Week. Although there is no University requirement to assign term tests or to schedule such tests during this period, instructors are advised to use evaluation procedures that give students the opportunity to assess their performance in the course prior to the withdrawal deadline.

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**5. Re-examination**

A re-examination is not permitted in a course in which a passing grade was achieved; the final examination must be worth a minimum of 40% for the class as a whole.

The student's overall GPA for the term must be 2.0 or greater, including the failed course, if the student is to be eligible for consideration for a re-examination. Please refer to §23.5.5 of the *Calendar* for other requirements. Please note that regulations regarding Applications for Re-examination require students to apply for re-examination within ten days of posting of final results. Since the Undergraduate Student Services Office has no way of knowing when results are posted, the last date for students to apply for re-examination will be May 14, 2004 for Winter and Fall/Winter courses.

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**7. Attendance and Debarment**

**Students who choose not to attend lectures must assume whatever risks are involved (see *Calendar* §23.3 and 23.5.6).**

Where a final examination has been scheduled, students registered in the course may not be debarred from writing that final examination.

**8. The Grading System**

The University's grading system is officially described on the covers of Class Record books and will therefore be readily available to staff. Under the letter grading system, even though a mathematical distribution of weight between term and final examination is required, the instructor is free to make a subjective assessment of the total worth of a student that, as it were, rises above mathematics, provided that students have been told what is expected of them and what will be taken into account (i.e., if the mathematical distribution has not misled them into thinking that they are required simply to accumulate points). Instructors may therefore take into account class participation, completion of assignments, improving or deteriorating performance, etc., provided that their students are aware in advance of what is involved. Council has resolved that members of the Faculty are to take into consideration the quality of expression assessing the written work of students and to refuse to accept work that is markedly deficient in the mechanics of composition.

**9. Physical Requirements for University Courses**

GFC has endorsed the following statement: The University has a commitment to the education of all academically qualified students and special services are regularly provided on campus to assist disabled students.

Nevertheless, some courses make certain unavoidable demands on students with respect to the possession of a certain level of physical skill or ability, if the academic objectives of the course are to be realized. In cases of doubt, students are advised to contact the department concerned and the Specialized Support and Disability Services, Office of the Dean of Student Services (phone 492-3381). Even students with short term disabilities (e.g. broken hand) are welcome to seek assistance from this office.

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**Notes:**