Forensic Anthropology

(Anthro 5820)

Lecture Location: YIA 503
Lecture Time: H 10:30 AM – 12:15 PM
Tutorial location: UCC 207
Tutorial time: H 1:30 PM – 2:14 PM
Course text: Byers, SN & Juarez CA. Introduction to Forensic Anthropology (6th Edition). Routledge.
ISBN 9781003283935

Instructor: Dr. Judyta (Jude) Olszewski
E-mail: TBD
Office Location: TBD
Office Hours: By appointment

TA:
E-mail:
Office Location:
Office Hours:

Course description and learning outcomes: 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.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Build a foundational understanding of basic skeletal anatomy and methods employed in forensics and forensic anthropology.
2. Analyse historical and contemporary cases and delineate between scientific, narrative, and belief-based conceptual frameworks.
3. Develop an awareness for individual understandings or perspectives when assessing the same material and be able to discuss the diversity of the human condition.
4. Work independently and collaboratively on various assignments that are meant to assess your writing, teamwork, organization and knowledge transferral skills.
5. Professionally and respectfully communicate your informed thoughts or research on an academic, personal or ethical subject, as well as respectfully receive other informed perspectives on a matter.
6. Understand and apply critical assessment skills by demonstrating an ability to critically evaluate content and adapt the communication style to present your understanding accordingly.

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:

All deadlines will be provided on first day of class. 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.

Final paper (20%)

Write a 6 – 8 page 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 expected 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.

In my course, I expect you to:

- Read the required readings before class and complete assessments to the best of your abilities.

- Not hesitate to reach out and seek clarification, direction and guidance to any class assignments, course content, obstacles you may be facing affecting your ability to complete tasks, and university of course policies or procedures which may be unclear or you may be struggling with. If I do not have an answer to a personal or logistic question, then we will find the best path forward together.
- **Please indicate the course name and/or code in the subject line when emailing me about anything related to this course**: e.g., "Forensic anth" or "ANTH5820". Please also ensure you sign off with your full name and student ID so I know who I'm talking to! Also please check your email sometimes in case I must notify you of an urgent update ahead of class or issues around a submission.
- I also encourage you to:
    - Familiarize yourself with and utilize the student and academic support resources CUHK has to offer.
    - Familiarize yourself with the University's Academic Policies and Expectations.
- **It is vitally important that our classroom environment promote the respectful exchange of ideas.** This entails being sensitive to the views and beliefs expressed during discussions whether in class or online. **Please speak with me before recording any class activity.** It is a violation to distribute such recordings without my authorization and the permission of your fellow classmates if recorded.

In this course, you can expect me to:

- Help build and facilitate our learning community.
- Be concerned for the learning experience of each student in the class, be respectful of individual differences, and be encouraging of creativity and individuality.
- Respond to your emails within an appropriate timeframe (but don't hesitate to follow up if its urgent!).
- Provide grades and feedback on assignments within a reasonable timeframe.

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, namely reading readings)

DATE	LECTURE TOPIC & READINGS
SEP 4	Week 1 Introduction to Forensic Anthropology

	Ch 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
SEP 11	Week 2: Human osteology Ch 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)
SEP 25	Week 3: Estimating time since death Ch 5, 6 and Wescott 2018 – Recent Advances in Forensic Anthropology: Decomposition Research. *Forensic Sciences Research* 3(4): 278-293.
	Tutorial: In class assessment 1
OCT 2	Week 4: Sex estimation Ch 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
OCT 9	Week 5: Age estimation Ch 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
OCT 16	Week 6: Stature determination Ch 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
OCT 23	Week 7: Ancestry estimation Ch 7 and Dunn, Spiros, Kamnikar, Plemons, & Hefner 2020 – Ancestry Estimation in Forensic Anthropology: A Review. WIRES Forensic Science 2(4): e1369
	Tutorial: Discussion – "Race", should we assess it?
OCT 30	Week 8: Cause and manner of death 1 Ch 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 2 (open book/note)
NOV 6	Week 9: Cause and manner of death 2 Ch 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
NOV 13	Week 10: Ante-mortem skeletal conditions Ch 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
NOV 20	Week 11: Post-mortem skeletal conditions Ch 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: Discussion: the role of FA in HK
NOV 27	Week 12: Overview and summary Ch 19 and Dirkmaat, Cabo, Ousley, & Symes 2008 – New Perspectives in Forensic Anthropology. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 137 (S47): 33-52
	Tutorial: In-class assessment (close book)

Additional Resources of Interest (not mandatory): The following resources are for fun, should you be interested in expanding your horizons or using any tools to help your understanding of the subject:

1. Roberts, C. and Manchester, K. (2010). The Archaeology of Disease (3rd edition). Stroud: The History Press.
2. White, T. D., Black, M. T. and Folkens, P. A. (2012). Human Osteology (3rd edition). Burlington: Elsevier.

GenAI (e.g., ChatGPT) use statement for my classes:
Acceptable Uses of AI:

1. Brainstorming: AI can help generate ideas during the brainstorming process. Use it as another entity to 'discuss' ideas with (e.g., Perplexity, Elicit).
2. Organising research: GenAI is one thing, Litmaps and Research Rabbit are another. Use the latter to map and visualise your literature. Do not rely on GenAi to effectively and thoroughly organize data.
3. Writing Assistance: Use AI for final grammar checks, syntax advice or as another set of eyes to spell check when yours are tired. Note, the final content of your work must be original and your words.

Prohibited Uses of AI:

1. Completion: Submitting AI-generated work as your own, including discussion posts and projects, is prohibited.
2. Assessments: Using AI to generate answers for quizzes or exams is prohibited.
3. Misrepresentation: Presenting AI-generated ideas or analysis as your own is considered academic dishonesty.

Using AI for any prohibited reasons will be treated as plagiarism. If we suspect you are using AI, we have the right to enquire and ask for proof of it being your own work.

If you are struggling and feel like you cannot get things done without using AI, please come talk to me so we can figure out whether you are overwhelmed or if there are comprehension struggles with the content/task/process, hindering your ability to work independently.

AI can be an assistant but is not your replacement. If you would like information about acceptable resources that condone a smart use of AI, please come talk to me.