

ANT3520: Skeleton Keys: Forensic Identification

Introduction to Forensic Anthropology

Fall 2025 | 3 credits

NOTE: This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see UF's "[Academic Policies and Resources](#)" web page.

General Information

Meeting days and times: Asynchronous

Class location: Online

Sections: 10274 (17C1); 10275 (17C2); 10276 (17C3)

Instructor(s):

Teaching Associate (TO): Maria Sellers

Office Building/Number: Turlington B325 or via Zoom (see Canvas for link)

Email: mlocke.sellers@ufl.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday 9:00 AM-12:00 PM or by appointment

Anthropology Office Phone Number: (352) 392-2253

Teaching Assistant (TA): Kalpana Ghimire (she/her)

Office Building/Number: Via Zoom (see Canvas for link)

Email: kalpanaghimire@ufl.edu

Office Hours: Friday 12:00 PM-3:00 PM via email or Canvas

Teaching Assistant (TA): Avirup Sinha

Office Building/Number: Via Zoom (see Canvas for link)

Email: avirupsinha@ufl.edu

Office Hours: Monday 2:00-4:00 PM and Friday 2:00-3:00 PM via email or Canvas

Catalog Description

Survey of forensic anthropology, an applied field of biological anthropology, focusing the wider scope of skeletal biology on problems of medicolegal significance, primarily in determining personal identity and cause of death from human remains.

Prerequisites

Prerequisite: Sophomore standing or higher.

General Education Designation: none.

Course Materials

- Required: Warren MW et al. 2011 *Bare Bones: A Survey of Forensic Anthropology*. 2nd edition. Kendall Hunt Publishing. The book can be purchased from the UF bookstore or similar booksellers. Chapters will be available on Canvas for the first two modules to give students time to purchase the book. Ebooks are perfectly acceptable, but students will need the second edition.

Materials will be available through the following means:

Additional readings will be provided by the instructor and posted on Canvas. Required readings are listed below in the course schedule. All graded assignments will only reference required materials. Optional readings and videos are also provided in each module to give you additional avenues to learn about forensic anthropology and its specific applications but will not be required to complete graded assignments or exams successfully.

Materials Fee: N/A

Course Goals

Course Objectives

In this course we will:

- Define the field of forensic anthropology and its purview
- Have a general understanding of basic human osteology
- Understand the basic concepts underlying determination of the biological profile, including sex, age, ancestry, and stature
- Describe different types of skeletal trauma, and differentiate between antemortem and postmortem trauma

Student Learning Outcomes

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

- Recall important tools and details regarding the recovery of human remains from forensic scenes
- Identify features of human remains relevant to forensic investigations
- Synthesize forensic data in a clear and comprehensive way

Course Topic Structure

To meet the above-stated objectives, the course is structured in a series of 16 modules. Each module is structured to contain lecture video material, requires weekly reading from the *Bare Bones* text, and has graded assignments linked to the module topic. These modules are partitioned into four main sections:

- 1) Introduction to the Course and Forensic Anthropology
- 2) The Biological Profile and Personal Identification
- 3) Skeletal Trauma and Burned Bone
- 4) Applications and the Profession of Forensic Anthropology

Section 1 (Modules 1-5): Introduction to the Course and Forensic Anthropology

The first two modules describe the field of forensic anthropology – historically and the current science – as well as the larger medicolegal system. In this section, the purpose and the place of forensic anthropology within this larger system will be described. The third and fourth modules more specifically describe the duties of the forensic anthropologist in the field and in the laboratory. Module 5 focuses on taphonomy, which discusses the variety of processes that can alter the body after death, such as decomposition.

Section 2 (Modules 6-12): The Biological Profile and Personal Identification

The sixth module (osteology and osteometry) introduces a much more nuanced look into the anatomy of human bones. The sixth module lays the foundation of the remaining modules in this section, as forensic anthropologists analyze the variation of the human skeleton to help identify individuals, which can be done using the biological profile – basically, a list of an individual’s biological demographic descriptors consisting of their sex, age, ancestry, and stature – as well as idiosyncratic skeletal features. Aspects of the biological profile and how we can recognize these aspects in the skeleton are covered in Modules 7 through 10. Idiosyncratic skeletal features and how they are used to personally identify an individual from their skeletal remains are the topic of Module 11, and Module 12 shows how forensic art can aid personal identification efforts. Section 3: Skeletal Trauma and Burned Bone While Section 2 shows how forensic anthropologists can interpret features of the skeleton to assist with the identification of human remains.

Section 3 (Modules 13 and 14): Interpretation of Skeletal Trauma and Burned Bone

The interpretation of skeletal trauma and burned bone can help answer important questions such as, what happened to this individual? When did it happen – before they died, or around the time of death? What sort of implement may have caused the injury to bone?

Section 4 (Modules 15 and 16): Applications and the Profession of Forensic Anthropology

The final section of this course is presented in Modules 15 and 16 with discussions of the application of forensic anthropology in various contexts (such as with responses to mass fatalities, human rights investigations, and recovering/identifying the remains of the war dead) and the potential, various career paths that forensic anthropologists may pursue.

Course Mechanics

Because this is an online class, students are expected to be self-motivated. During the sixteen-week period the class is in session there will be sixteen modules with one a week – excepting the first week, in which you have an introductory module to the course and Canvas along with Module #1.

Assignments from the first week of the course will be due with assignments from the

second week of the course to accommodate those who add the course late during the drop/add period. All other assignments for the modules must be completed during the week they are assigned and will be due each **Friday at 11:59 PM** Eastern Time (ET) except for discussions (see below), **DON'T wait until the last minute to complete the assignments.**

The instructions and materials needed for each assignment can be found under the relevant module. Please make sure you read the syllabus and familiarize yourself with Canvas. Students are responsible for all the material in each module and need to view all required links posted on the course's website (e.g., lecture videos, films, articles).

Graded Work

Graded Components

Discussion Posts (60 points, 18% of grade): There will be six weeks with a discussion topic throughout the course. Students must post a substantive original comment to the discussion by Wednesday at 11:59pm ET (worth 5 points total). They must then make two substantive responses to other individual's comments by Friday at 11:59 pm ET (worth 2.5 points each). This means there are 6 original comments and 12 responses. Online discussion groups will be assigned by the instructor once the Add/Drop period has closed.

Weekly Assignments (79 points, 23% of grade): Students will also need to complete **ten** online activities. This averages about one a week. The activities range from 5 to 10 points. With that in mind, include this skeleton joke on question 11 of the syllabus quiz for a point of extra credit: Why did the skeleton read the syllabus? They wanted *tibia* good student!

Quizzes (160 points, 47% of grade): There is one quiz for each of the **sixteen** modules. This means there will be one quiz per week. Each quiz is multiple choice and worth 10 points (160 points total). Quizzes are due at 11:59pm ET on Fridays of the week they are assigned.

Final Exam (40 points, 12% of grade): There will be a cumulative final exam administered online. You must complete this by the indicated date. This exam covers material from the entirety of the course.

There may be opportunities for extra credit at the purview of the instructor.

TOTAL: 339 points possible

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Number Grade
A	100-93.00
A-	92.99-90.00
B+	89.99-87.00
B	86.99-83.00
B-	82.99-80.00
C+	79.99-77.00

Letter Grade	Number Grade
C	76.99-73.00
C-	72.99-70.00
D+	69.99-67.00
D	66.99-63.00
D-	62.99-60.00
E	59.99-0

Note: A minimum grade of C is required to earn General Education credit.

AI Policy

THE USE OF AI IS NOT PERMITTED IN THIS CLASS. Discussion posts and written assignments are meant to demonstrate your critical thinking and engagement with the topics in this course. Writing assignments will be subject to and in accordance with the student conduct code and academic honesty. Assignments will use the tool Turnitin to assess plagiarism and are subject to ChatGPT/AI detection. Assignments will be checked by the instructional team if more than 20% of the assignment suggests the content did not come from the student or is not properly cited. If there is any evidence of violation of the [Student Honor Code](#), that suggests the student *has not written the majority of the content on their own and is egregiously plagiarized*, the instructor may do one or more of the following: ask the student to redo the assignment, deduct major points from the score, or receive a *grade of zero* for the assignment. The instructor may offer a make-up assignment, but multiple offenses will be reported to the Anthropology department administration for review and could result in a report to the [Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution Office](#).

Online attendance and Late Policy:

Late work will not be accepted without official documentation. It is the student's responsibility to provide the instructor with the appropriate documentation and meet with the instructor to devise a schedule for completing the missed work. If possible, the student must notify the instructor that they will miss an exam before the examination period begins. No make-ups will be accepted after two weeks past the original exam/assignment/quiz if practicable. If a student misses an exam, quiz, or assignment without making the appropriate arrangements with the instructor, they will be assigned a grade of E (0 points). Note that the format of the make-up exam(s) may differ from that of regularly scheduled exams (e.g., primarily composed of essay questions). **Documentation for late or missed work, including exams, should be provided within 48 hours of the excused period of absence.**

Calendar

Date	Topic	Readings/Lectures	Work Due
August 21- August 23	"Start Here" Module: Introduction to the Course and Canvas	1) Syllabus "Start Here" module 2) Canvas Overview Video	Due August 29 at 11:59 PM EST 1) Syllabus Quiz
August 25- August 29	Module 1: The History of Forensic Science	1) Bare Bones Ch. 2 (15 pages) 2) Lecture: What is Forensic Anthropology 3) Lecture: History of Forensic Anthropology at UF	Due August 29 at 11:59 PM EST: 1) Discussion Post 1 2) Module 1 Quiz
September 1- September 5 (Sept 1 st is Labor Day)	Module 2: The Medicolegal System	1) Bare Bones Ch. 1 (12 pages) 2) Lecture: Medicolegal Aspects of Death	Due September 5 at 11:59 PM EST: 1) Module 2 Quiz 2) Activity 1: Medicolegal Matching Exercise
September 8- September 12	Modules 3/4: Forensic Anthropology in the Field and Lab	1) Bare Bones Ch. 3 (18 pages) 2) Articles on CSI effect (online) 3) Supplementary Lab SOP (online) 4) Lecture: Recovery of Human Remains I 5) Lecture: Recovery of Human Remains II 6) Lecture: Processing Remains into Evidence 7) Lecture: Laboratory Protocols	Due September 12 at 11:59 PM EST: 1) Discussion Post 2 2) Module 3 Quiz 3) Activity 2: Recovery Scene Activity 4) Module 4 Quiz
September 15- September 19	Module 5: Taphonomy	1) Bare Bones Ch. 4 (16 pages) 2) Article: Stock et al. 2017 (8 pages) 3) Practice Activity (online) 4) Lecture: What Happens After Death? Part I 5) Lecture: What Happens After Death? Part II	Due September 19 at 11:59 PM EST: 1) Module 5 Quiz 2) Activity 3: Taphonomy 3) Discussion Post 3 Taphonomy and Forensics

Date	Topic	Readings/Lectures	Work Due
September 22- September 26	Module 6: Anatomy, Osteology, Measurement, and Statistics	1) Bare Bones Ch. 5 (26 pages) 2) Practice activity (online) 3) Lecture: Skeletal Anatomy and Osteology 4) Lecture: Osteometry	Due September 26 at 11:59 PM EST: 1) Module 6 Quiz 2) Activity 4: Osteology Matching Exercise
September 29- October 3	Module 7: Group Characteristics I: Biological Sex	1) Bare Bones Ch. 6 (18 pages) 2) Lecture: Sexual Dimorphism, Birth and Locomotion 3) Lecture: Methods of Sex Determination	Due October 3 at 11:59 PM EST: 1) Module 7 Quiz
October 6- October 10	Modules 8/9: Group Characteristics II/III: Age-at-death and Stature	1) Bare Bones Ch. 8 (16 pages) 2) Bare Bones Ch. 9 (24 pages) 3) Article: Ousley 1995 (4 pages) 4) Article: Jantz et al 1995 (6 pages) 5) Lecture: Estimating Age in Children 6) Lecture: Estimating Age in Adults 7) Lecture: Methods of Age Estimation 8) Lecture: Stature	Due October 10 at 11:59 PM EST: 1) Module 8 Quiz 2) Activity 5: Age Matching Exercise 3) Module 9 Quiz 4) Activity 6: Stature Exercise
October 13- October 17 (Homecoming is Oct 17 th and Oct 18 th but you will still have access to the module on those dates- - assignments will be due Monday October 20, at 11:59 PM EST))	Module 10: Group Characteristics IV: "Race"... Fact or Fiction?	1) Bare Bones Ch. 7 (18 pages) 2) Documentary Website 3) Article: Sauer 1992 (5 pages) 4) Lecture: "Race"... Fact or Fiction 5) Lecture: Clinal Variation 6) Lecture: Determination of Ancestry	Due October 20 at 11:59 PM EST: 1) Module 10 Quiz 2) Activity 7: Sorting People Exercise 3) Discussion Post 4

Date	Topic	Readings/Lectures	Work Due
October 20- October 24	Module 11: Individual Characteristics and Personal Identification	1) Bare Bones Ch. 10 (18 pages) 2) Practice Activity 3) Lecture: Individualizing Skeletal Characteristics 4) Lecture: Antemortem and Postmortem 5) Video: Finding Anastasia	Due October 24 at 11:59 PM EST: 1) Module 11 Quiz 2) Activity 8: Radiographic Comparison Matching Exercise
October 27- October 31	Module 12: Forensic Art	1) Bare Bones Ch. 11 (16 pages) 2) Lecture: Forensic Reconstructions 3) Video: Forensic Files Saving Face	Due October 31 at 11:59 PM EST: 1) Module 12 Quiz 2) Discussion Post 5
November 3- November 7	Module 13: Trauma	1) Bare Bones Ch. 12 (24 pages) 2) Article: Langley 2007 (6 pages) 3) Lecture: Trauma and Cause of Death I 4) Lecture: Trauma and Cause of Death II 5) Lecture: Trauma and Cause of Death III	Due November 7 at 11:59 PM EST: 1) Module 13 Quiz 2) Activity 9: Trauma Matching Exercise
November 10- November 14 (Tues, Nov 11 th is Veterans Day)	Module 14: Cremation	1) Bare Bones Ch. 13 (18 pages) 2) Lecture: Burned Bodies and Cremated Remains 3) Lecture: What Survives Cremation	Due November 14 at 11:59 PM EST: 1) Module 14 Quiz 2) Activity 10: Cremation Artifact Identification Exercise
November 17- November 21	Module 15: Mass Fatalities	1) Bare Bones Ch. 14 (16 pages) 2) Lecture: Mass Fatality Case History I 3) Lecture: Mass Fatality Case History II 4) Lecture: Mass Fatality Case History III	Due November 21 at 11:59 PM EST: 1) Module 15 Quiz 2) Discussion Post 6

Date	Topic	Readings/Lectures	Work Due
November 24- November 28	Thanksgiving Break	Enjoy your break!	:)
December 1- December 3 (December 4 th and 5 th are reading days, but you will still have access to modules- - assignments will be due Wednesday December 3, at 11:59 PM EST)	Module 16: Career Paths and Applications of Forensic Anthropology	1) Bare Bones Ch. 15 (12 pages) 2) Bare Bones Ch. 16 (14 pages) 3) Lecture: Human Rights Missions 4) JPAC Video Links	Due December 3 at 11:59 PM EST: 1) Module 16 Quiz
December 8- December 12	Finals Week	The final exam may be completed any time between December 8th at 8 AM to December 12th at 11:59 PM, but the December 12th 11:59 PM (ET) deadline is firm and absolutely no late work will be accepted beyond this deadline.	Final Exam due 12/12 at 11:59 PM

COURSE POLICIES

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](#).

Religious observances

Students seeking modification of due dates for class participation, assignments, and exams for religious reasons should contact the instructor well in advance to request this modification, which will then be granted.

Procedure for Conflict Resolution

Any issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first between the instructor and the student. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact Prof. John Krigbaum (krigbaum@ufl.edu, (352) 294-7540), Chair of Anthropology. Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>Links to an external site.; 352-392-1308) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>Links to an external site.; 352-392-1261).

Communication Practices for the Course

- You are responsible for materials posted on E-Learning (Canvas) at <https://elearning.ufl.edu/>, including required readings, announcements, details on assignments, and other supplementary material. Canvas technical support available at <https://elearning.ufl.edu/student-help-faqs/>.
- The instructor and the TAs may use email to make general class announcements or to contact you directly about your work. You are responsible for checking your official UF email regularly to be aware of communication from your instructors. There are no allowances for students who fail to read their email announcements or whose inboxes are full at the time an announcement is sent.
- Canvas Notifications: In your Canvas “Account,” click on “Notifications.” Set the notification for “Submission Comment” to either “Notify Immediately” or “Daily Summary.” The instructors communicate with you regarding your assignments through Submission Comments more so than e-mail. We expect every student to read their submission comments within 24 hours. Many of them may require immediate action on your part.

Library Resources

The **UF Libraries** provide access to numerous resources and services that will help you succeed in this course. Access thousands of **online databases, books, and articles** or visit one of the **branch locations** for additional **resources, services, and study spaces**. Can’t find what you are looking for? You can **Ask A Librarian** for help by email, chat, text, or phone.

Campus Resources

U Matter We Care:

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

Other resources include:

- *Counseling and Wellness Center*: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352- 392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services. <https://counseling.ufl.edu>
- *Student Health Care Center*: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.
- *University Police Department*: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center*: For immediate medical care call 352- 733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road,

Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

- *GatorWell Health Promotion Services*: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352- 273-4450.