

**ANT 3520-4046/405C**

# **Skeleton Keys: Introduction to Forensic Anthropology**

**Summer B 2023, Online**

**Course Instructor:** Belkis Abufaur

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**Online Office Hours:** Mondays 11am-2pm (available to answer emails and Canvas messages)

**Zoom Office Hours:** By appointment only (please email to set up)

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**Online Office Hours:** TBA

**Zoom Office Hours:** By appointment only (please email to set up)

**Course Objectives:**

**\*\*\*Some lectures will include disturbing and graphic images. Consider your reaction to this material before taking this course. You will be responsible for all course material.\*\*\***

This course provides an introduction to the field of forensic anthropology. Forensic anthropology is an applied area of biological anthropology that focuses on the identification of human skeletal remains in a medicolegal context. This course will introduce you to basic terms and principles of forensic anthropology, focus on concepts and their applications, and present case histories.

This is not intended to be a “how-to” course but a general overview of the discipline. Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Define the field of forensic anthropology and its purview
- Have a general understanding of 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

### **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: 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: 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: 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 Materials:

**Required:** Warren MW et al. 2011 Bare Bones: A Survey of Forensic Anthropology. 2nd edition. Kendall Hunt Publishing.

The first four chapters (1-4) have been uploaded to Canvas to allow you additional time to obtain the textbook, but no subsequent chapters will be uploaded hereafter. You must have obtained a copy of the textbook no later than **July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023** to stay up to date with your assigned readings.

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.

### Course Mechanics:

Because this is an online class, students are expected to be self-motivated. During the six-week period the class is in session there will be sixteen modules to be covered in total. Six (6) assignments, three (3) exams, and one (1) case report must be completed. All graded assignments will be due on a Friday at 11:59p.m. Eastern Time (ET), with the exception of the case report which is due on a Thursday at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time (ET; see Course Schedule 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).

### Course Policies:

**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.

**Grading:** There will be three (3) exams worth 100 points each (300pts total). The exams are not cumulative and contribute equally to your final grade. Six (6) assignments worth 10 points each will be due via Canvas (60 pts total). A case report will be worth 40 points. If you would like to contest a grade, you must do so within one week of that grade being posted. After that time, all grades are final. Final grades will be calculated as a percentage of the total available points (400) and graded using the following scale:

	Points	% of Grade
Exam 1	100	25%
Exam 2	100	25%
Exam 3	100	25%
Assignments	60	15%
Case Report	40	10%

Letter grades are assigned based on the following scale:

A 93% or above	C 73-76.99%
A- 90-92.99%	C- 70-72.99%
B+ 87-89.99%	D+ 67-69.99%
B 83-86.99%	D 63-66.99%
B- 80-82.99%	D- 60-62.99%
C+ 77-79.99%	F below 60%

Further information on current UF grading policies for assigning letter grades can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Cheating on any assignments will not be tolerated. Students found cheating will receive a score of zero (0) points for the assignment. Disciplinary action will follow university policy as outlined by the Dean of Students. See <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/> or more information on student academic honesty, rights, responsibilities, and behavioral consequence.

**Exams:** Exams are to be taken on the scheduled day (see below). Each exam is worth 100 points. Exams will be a combination of matching, true/false, multiple choice, and short answer. Exam material includes lectures, the textbook, and additional required reading materials and/or videos. Study guides for exams will be provided one week before the exam.

**Assignments:** Six short assignments will be due by 11:59 pm ET on days indicated on the Course Schedule (see below). Each assignment is worth 10 points. All assignments should be turned in via Canvas by 11:59 pm EST. The assignments vary and include activities such as interpreting a field map and discussions of the reading that was assigned to be completed on or

before that day. All instructions for the assignments will be clearly stated in the assignment page on Canvas. If there is an error with submitting to Canvas, students should email the assignment to the instructor or grader before the deadline.

**Case Report:** Students must write case report summing up a skeletal analysis using provided analytical documents and images. The paper must be font size 12 Times New Roman, single spaced, and 1-inch margins. This document is due on Canvas no later than **August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023** at 11:59 pm ET. This is worth up to forty (40) points. See Canvas for rubric and instructional pdf for additional details.

**Accommodations:** Students requesting classroom accommodation should first register with the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/>), who will then provide the necessary documentation for the course instructor. It is the student's responsibility to provide the necessary documentation to the instructor. Accommodations cannot be applied retroactively, so be sure to submit documentation to the instructor as soon as possible. Allow for 3 (three) business days of processing time before the accommodations will begin. If you are experiencing personal problems that are interfering with your studies, you are encouraged to take advantage of the available university resources:

- UF Counseling and Wellness Center: 3190 Radio Road, (352) 392-1575
- Student Mental Health: Student Health Care Center, (352) 392-1171
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services: Student Health Care Center, (352) 392-1161

**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](mailto: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.

**Honor Code:** Students are expected to uphold the UF student Honor Code. Plagiarism and/or cheating on any exam, assignment, or quiz will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is representing the work of another as all or any portion of student's own work. This includes quoting published or unpublished work without proper attribution. Students found to be engaging in these behaviors will receive zero (0) points for that exam, assignment, or case report. Plagiarism will result in zero (0) credit regardless of the student's intent. Disciplinary action will follow university policy outlined by the Dean of Students. See <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/>.

**Summer B 2023 Topics and Readings Schedule:** Below is a tentative schedule of topics to be discussed over the course of the semester. Dates and topics are subject to change; however, the instructor will make all attempts to notify the class of any changes as they arise. Due dates for assignments and exams will not change except for university wide cancellation of courses. Additional readings and study guides will be assigned and announced on the Canvas site.

Date	Day	Topic	Assigned Reading	Assignment
3-Jul	Monday	Syllabus introduction	Syllabus	
4-Jul	Tuesday	No class		
5-Jul	Wednesday	Module 1- What is forensic anthropology & its history	Chapter 2	
6-Jul	Thursday	Module 2-The Medicolegal System	Chapter 1	
7-Jul	Friday	Module 3-Forensic Anthropology in the Field	Chapter 3	Assignment #1: Syllabus quiz
10-Jul	Monday	Module 4- Forensic Anthropology in the Laboratory	Chapter 3	
11-Jul	Tuesday	Module 4- Forensic Anthropology in the Laboratory	Chapter 3	
12-Jul	Wednesday	Module 5- Taphonomy: From Biosphere to Lithosphere	Chapter 4, Stock <i>et al.</i> 2017	
13-Jul	Thursday	Module 6- Anatomy, Osteology, Measurement, & Statistics	Chapter 5, Human vs. Nonhuman Guide	
14-Jul	Friday	<b>Exam #1 (Covers 4 July-13 July)</b>	Study Guide	Assignment #2 Exam #1
17-Jul	Monday	Module 6- Anatomy, Osteology, Measurement, & Statistics	Chapter 5, Human vs. Nonhuman Guide	
18-Jul	Tuesday	Module 7- Group Characteristics I: Sex	Chapter 6, Spradley and Jantz 2011	
19-Jul	Wednesday	Module 8- Group Characteristics II: Age	Chapter 8	
20-Jul	Thursday	Module 8- Group Characteristics II: Age	Chapter 8	
21-Jul	Friday	Module 9- Group Characteristics III: Stature	Chapter 9	Assignment #3
24-Jul	Monday	Module 10- Group Characteristics IV: Race, Fact or Fiction?	Chapter 7, Sauer 1992, Bethard and DiGangi 2020	
25-Jul	Tuesday	Module 10- Group Characteristics IV: Race, Fact or Fiction?	Chapter 7, Sauer 1992, Bethard and DiGangi 2020	**Extra Credit Assignment**

26-Jul	Wednesday	Module 11- Individual Characteristics and Personal Identification	Chapter 10	
27-Jul	Thursday	Module 11- Individual Characteristics and Personal Identification	Chapter 10	
28-Jul	Friday	<b>Exam #2 (Covers 17 July-27 July)</b>	Study Guide	Assignment #4 Exam #2
31-Jul	Monday	Module 12- Forensic Art	Chapter 11	
1-Aug	Tuesday	Module 13- Trauma & Causes of Death	Chapter 12	
2-Aug	Wednesday	Module 13- Trauma & Causes of Death	Chapter 12	
3-Aug	Thursday	Module 14- Burned Bodies & Cremation	Chapter 13	
4-Aug	Friday	Module 14- Burned Bodies & Cremation	Chapter 13	Assignment #5
7-Aug	Monday	Module 15- Mass Fatalities	Chapter 14	
8-Aug	Tuesday	Module 15- Mass Fatalities	Chapter 14	
9-Aug	Wednesday	Module 16- Career Paths & Applications of Forensic Anthropology	Chapter 15 & 16	
10-Aug	Thursday	Finalize & Submit Case Report		Case report
11-Aug	Friday	<b>Exam #3 (Covers 31 July-10 August)</b>	Study Guide	Assignment #6 Exam #3