

Anthropology 4R03. Skeletal Biology of Earlier Human Populations

Winter Term

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Lecture: Tuesdays 8.30-11.20

Office: CNH 518

Office Hours: Mon.1.30-2.30pm & Tue.
12.00-1.00pm

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Course Description

This course is designed for students interested in skeletal biology and the analysis of human skeletal and dental remains, looking for skills to strengthen their CV for the job market or graduate study. We will critically discuss the nature of skeletal samples, methods of analysis, information that can be gained in from the human skeleton. Structured and supported independent research projects form a major component of this course and will comprise 60% of the total grade (broken into three manageable chunks with feedback. The only element of independent research with no feedback is a 15% component of the take home paper). This course is designed to develop skills in written and oral communication, skeletal analysis and broad research skills relevant in both academic and professional settings.

There are weekly readings set from journal papers/book chapters, and students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the week's readings and apply them during class.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Discuss and evaluate techniques used to investigate the skeletal biology of past populations. Develop an independent research project, and present the results of the analysis to your peers in a poster conference at the end of the term. Identify major themes in bioarchaeological research.

Required Materials and Texts

- No text will need to be purchased for this course. Weekly readings will be available as articles that can be downloaded through the McMaster library website. Required reading will be limited to a maximum of two papers a week to allow time for readings undertaken as part of individual research projects and work for leading a class. The reading list will be made available at the start of the Winter term through Avenue to Learn.

Class Format

The course is a blend of lecture and seminar formats, and there will be practical laboratory/workshop sessions that form part of the learning experience.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. **Proposal** - 15%, due 11th Feb 9am
2. **Student groups leading discussion** - 25%, due Various TBC
3. **Poster submission** - 30%, due 24th March 9am
4. **Take Home Exam** - 30%, due April 13th 9am

Course Evaluation – Details

Assignment/test 1 Proposal (15%), due 11th Feb 9am

You will be allocated a set of human skeletal/dental material on which you can conduct a short research project. Some guidance will be given on areas your material could be used to investigate. This provides hands-on experience of conducting original research using techniques discussed in class. The proposal is an opportunity to ensure you have a clear plan in place at an early stage of the course. Your proposal should include a title, a brief description of the research you will conduct (max. 500 words), and a list of at least 5 appropriate academic sources that relate to your research (i.e., academic books, articles from peer-reviewed journals, or chapters in edited books).

Assignment/test Student groups leading discussion (25%), due TBC

Students will be randomly assigned to groups. Groups will work together to choose a recent journal article (no earlier than 2012) from a peer-reviewed journal that fits with the topic to be covered in the allocated week. You should ensure that the paper is a useful addition to the suggested chapter for that week and will be available to everyone in the class (i.e. McMaster has a subscription to the journal). Guidance will be provided on selecting an article. The week in which each group should meet with Dr. Brickley to discuss their choice is indicated on the timetable. A full reference for the paper must be sent to the class list one week before the class. The team should prepare a presentation on the selected paper in which the key issues raised are introduced and discussed. All members of the team must contribute at least 5 minutes of material. The presentation should fill 30 minutes of time and the team should then open and lead discussion.

Assignment/test Poster presentation (30%), due 24th March 9am

You will prepare a poster that provides information on your research project. Posters will be submitted on 24th March at 9am Via Avenue to learn. The posters will then be presented as PowerPoint slides in the Poster Conference classes. Speakers will be given an allocated time to present the key information on the project and findings, and answer questions from those attending. Criteria for assessment and breakdown of marks will be circulated at least three weeks prior to the conference. One sixth of the grade (5% of the 30% allocated to this assessment) will come from peer evaluation. You will (anonymously) assess some of your peers' posters using clearly defined criteria.

Assignment/test Take Home Exam (30%), due April 13th 9am

There will be two sections each worth 15% and some element of choice of questions in the second section.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (Jan 7th)

Intro. to course & the nature of skeletal samples -paleodemography and sample representativeness

Week 2 (Jan 14th)

Workshop on writing a research proposal

Notes: [Project material allocated]

Week 3 (Jan 21st)

Sex, gender, and age in bioarchaeology (Guest contributor Creighton Avery)

Notes: [Groups 1 arrange to meet Dr. Brickley]

Week 4 (Jan 28th)

Childhood & adolescence (Guest contributor Madeleine Lamer)

Notes: [Deadline for selection of exact project]

Week 5 (Feb 4th)

Injury and violence

Notes: [Student group 1 present introduction and lead discussion]

Notes: [Group 2 arrange to meet Dr. Brickley]

Week 6 (Feb 11th)

Dental Anthropology (Guest contributor Bonnie Kahlon)

Notes: [Proposal due 9am]

Notes: [Group 3 arrange to meet Dr. Brickley]

Week 7 (Feb 18th)

No class - Midterm break

Week 8 (Feb 25th)

Humans and Disease (Guest contributor Brianne Morgan)

Notes: [Student group 2 present introduction and lead discussion]

Notes: [Group 4 arrange to meet Dr. Brickley]

Week 9 (March 3rd)

Ethics in skeletal biology and bioarchaeology

Notes: [Student group 3 present introduction and lead discussion]

Week 10 (March 10th)

Biochemical analyses

Notes: [[Student group 4 present introduction and lead discussion](#)]

Week 11 (March 17th)

Workshop on effective communication of research findings

Week 12 (March 24th)

POSTER CONFERENCE A

Notes: [[Group A poster presentations](#)]

Notes: [[All Posters submitted 9am 24th March: Group A & B](#)]

Week 13 (March 31st)

POSTER CONFERENCE B

Notes: [[Group B poster presentations](#)]

Week 14 (April 7th)

Information on the Take Home Exam:

Notes: [[Submission 9am April 13th Take Home Exam](#)]

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

[Work submitted will be via Avenue to learn in format specified]

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

Lateness penalty for unapproved lateness: 15% per day including weekend days until a mark of 0 is reached. A deduction of 15% will be made for any part of an assignment that is over the specified length.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

If you miss an assignment, written confirmation, approved by your Faculty office, is required in order to make up the marks. *Students are responsible for contacting the instructor.* Marks allocated to elements of assessment that have a set date on which they have to happen that are missed will be added to weighting given to the final take home examination, so the final take home exam will account for a greater percentage of the final grade.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Turnitin.com

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please to go [Academic Integrity](#).

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at [Academic Integrity](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)

The University recognizes that, on occasion, the timing of a student's religious, Indigenous, or spiritual observances and that of their academic obligations may conflict. In such cases, the University will provide reasonable academic accommodation for students that is consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Please review the [RISO information for students in the Faculty of Social Sciences](#) about how to request accommodation.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Privacy Protection

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. Similarly, grades for assignments for courses may only be posted using the last 5 digits of the student number as the identifying data. The following possibilities exist for return of graded materials:

1. Direct return of materials to students in class;
2. Return of materials to students during office hours;
3. Students attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with assignments for return by mail;
4. Submit/grade/return papers electronically.

Arrangements for the return of assignments from the options above will be finalized during the first class.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.