

**ANTHROP 3FA3 FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY
Winter 2021**

Course Contacts

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Office: Remote only for Winter 2021

Office Hours: Office hours will be specified on A2L under Course Overview

Lecture: This is a flipped class. Lectures will be pre-recorded and posted by 23:59h on Wednesdays.

Synchronous lab activities, guest lectures, and instructor contact time will be held on Fridays, 4:30PM - 5:20PM Eastern

Email Contact: Emails to the instructor must come from your McMaster email address and include ANTHROP 3FA3 in the subject line. (Otherwise they are likely to get lost!)

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Course Description

Forensic sciences have enjoyed a steady representation in popular television shows, movies, and books for several decades. Professional forensic anthropologists are involved in recovering, identifying, and analyzing human remains that come to light as unexplained deaths, in crime scenes, and in mass disasters. Beginning with a survey of human skeletal anatomy and the death investigation process this course will explore the roles that anthropologists play in forensic and medicolegal investigations, and how they derive evidence from human remains.

***Content warning:** The assigned readings, lecture materials, and laboratory materials all include images of skeletonized and fleshed human remains, some of them with graphic detail. Efforts have been made to exercise discretion in which images are displayed, depending on the pedagogical aims of each lesson. We will discuss principles of ethical practice in forensic anthropology and will observe them throughout the term.

Due to the delayed start of classes provided by the University, some details and deadlines regarding course content and assessments in the published course outline may be changed. Please check Avenue to Learn for the most up-to-date information for this course. The course outline on Avenue to Learn will supersede previously published outlines until published course outlines are updated.

Course Objectives

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

- Recognize basic human skeletal anatomy;
- Identify specific elements of the human skeleton that are important to the process of building a biological profile of an unknown person.
- Describe the steps and explain the rationale of the Forensic Anthropological Protocol
- Describe the evidentiary standards attendant on forensic anthropology and identify how they apply to research and practice.
- Describe fundamental techniques for documenting and recovering human remains, and estimating the post-mortem interval based on their condition.
- Describe and apply fundamental techniques in forensic anthropology to assembling a broad description of an unknown person from their remains
- Distinguish between adult and juvenile, and male-like vs female-like skeletal remains based on key features.

- Identify key features of perimortem trauma distinguish them from characteristic non-traumatic modifications.
- Describe the process of identification and reconciliation
- Describe and give examples of how the concept of “care” for the deceased applies in the context of forensic investigative work.

Required Materials and Texts

Required readings other than the textbook will be posted to the course website

Christensen, Angi M., Nicholas V. Passalacqua, and Eric J. Bartelink, eds. 2019. *Forensic Anthropology* (Second Edition). Academic Press.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780128157343000014>

France, Diane. 2014. Distinguishing Human from Non-Human Bone. In: *Advances in Forensic Human Identification*. Mallett et al., eds. CRC Press, pp. 81–126

Holobinko, Anastasia 2012. Forensic Human Identification in the United States and Canada: A Review of the Law, Admissible Techniques, and the Legal Implications of Their Application in Forensic Cases. *Forensic Science International* 222(1): 394.e1-394.e13.

A number of documentaries will also be provided and will be discussed in lecture and tutorial. These are also testable where indicated.

Class Format & Instructor Availability

Lectures

This is a flipped course. Most lectures will be recorded asynchronously and posted to the course’s MacVideo channel by 23:59h on Wednesdays. Friday’s scheduled class time will be conducted on MS Teams* and will be dedicated to instructor Q&A’s, virtual lab activities, and guest lectures. There are no participation grades attached to synchronous activities. It is expected that you will watch the week’s lectures and do the readings before attending live sessions on Fridays.

This course is designed to be attended in either synchronous or asynchronous formats. It is strongly recommended that you do your best to take advantage of opportunities to connect with your professor, teaching assistant, and classmates.

All recorded activities will be available in the following locations for asynchronous access with an automatically generated transcript:

- Pre-recorded lectures: on our class’s MacVideo channel

- Embedded on A2L (under the Lectures module)

*Alternative videoconferencing platforms, such as Zoom, may be used if appropriate to the class's needs.

Virtual labs and contact time

Practice-based learning is crucial in anthropology, and particularly so in the applied discipline of forensic anthropology. Virtual sessions will be devoted to a number of 'lab' activities, each exploring an aspect of forensic anthropology. Answers will be provided online and discussed during synchronous sessions. **All labs are non-graded formative assessments.**

Virtual sessions (Fridays from 16:30-17:20 Eastern) will also be held on **MS Teams in order to take advantage of its security, web chat, and live captioning features**, although we may use **Zoom** on an ad hoc basis for breakout room use, as needed.

Laboratories may additionally make use of the following free web-accessible platforms:

- Sketchfab: <https://sketchfab.com/> (for 3D models)
- Google Drive: Google Docs, Sheets, Slides, and Jamboard

Accessibility

- MS Teams provides live automatic captioning.
- MS Stream also provides an automatically generated transcript.
- Additional accommodations will be arranged as needed with SAS.
- You can also individually arrange live transcription of lab and lecture meetings by setting up a free account with Otter.ai

Instructor and TA Contact

Dr Doyle and your TAs are available through the following avenues:

- Via the course's MS Teams channel or direct chat. Tag us using @username for direct notification.
- Via email (please see rules for email contact, below - these will be adhered to strictly).
- Individual video conference: by appointment. Please use email to request a time.

Teaching Assistants and Tutorials

This course has 2 teaching assistants who will assist with grading and course management. You will be assigned a TA to help guide you through this course.

Who is my TA? TA names and contact information will be posted on Avenue. Please visit your TA with any questions about assignments/grading of assignments.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Case Study 1 (25%), due 23:59h Eastern on Wednesday, Feb 10
2. Midterm Quiz (25%), held asynchronously on Friday, March 5th
3. Case Study 2 (25%), due 23:59h Eastern on Wednesday, April 7
4. Final Exam (25%), held asynchronously during exam period.

Course Evaluation – Details

Laboratory Activities (Ungraded): Practice-based learning is crucial in anthropology, and particularly so in the applied discipline of forensic anthropology. You will complete a number of virtual 'lab' activities, each exploring an aspect of forensic anthropology. Answers will be provided and discussed during synchronous sessions. **All activities are non-graded formative assessments.**

Case Studies (2 x 25% = 50%): You will complete two online case study assignments, one on location, recovery, and documentation of human remains in the field, and the other on human remains analysis in the lab. You will be given a case scenario and then answer a series of written questions about how you would go about investigating that case and interpreting the evidence. **Citations and bibliography in Chicago Author-Date style are expected.** To be submitted through A2L.

Midterm Quiz (1 x 25%): The midterm test will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. The test will be held asynchronously on Friday March 5th. It will be open for 24h, but must be completed in one 1h time block from the time you begin the test. Questions will be offered one at a time with no backtracking allowed. The exam will be limited open-book, with slides, textbook, and notes as permitted aids. This is an individual assessment, to be completed by yourself.

Final Exam (1 x 25%): The final exam will consist of multiple choice and short-answer questions with 150 minutes to complete. The exam will be cumulative, but more heavily weighted towards material covered after the midterm. It will be held asynchronously, on the scheduled exam date. Questions will be offered one at a time with no backtracking allowed. The exam will be open-book,

with permitted aids being your textbook, slides, and notes. This is an individual assessment, to be completed by yourself.

Email and Tech Support Contact

Dr Doyle's Email Commitment

I will do my best to provide a timely response to email communications. During the week, I will generally get back to you within 48h. Emails sent during weekends or after 5pm will generally not receive a response until at least the next business day.

Rules for Email Contact

ANTHROP 3FA3 can have up to 180 students enrolled at once. Please help me provide timely responses to email communications by **reserving email for real emergencies**. Questions about course content, deadlines, assignments, and so on, should be addressed through your **Teams channel, in office hours, or in class**.

Email that does not follow these rules may not receive a timely response.

- Use your **McMaster email address** for all course-related communications. (This will avoid your message being caught in a spam filter.)
- ALWAYS put ANTHROP 3FA3 in the subject line. (Seriously, this is critical.)
- Reserve direct email for personal concerns ONLY (that is: personal emergencies).
- Show that you have tried to troubleshoot first! Troubleshooting is an incredibly valuable professional skill - don't underestimate it! (See below under "Tech Support and Other Matters")
- For all questions about course material /exams/etc, avenues of communication are:
 - ANTHROP 3FA3 Teams channel (accessible through the A2L course website). This monitored by teaching staff.
 - Tune in to a live session on Friday with Dr Doyle!
 - Talk to your TA during their office hours!

Tech Support and Other Matters

Learning online can be challenging - plan ahead for technical issues! You may be learning new technologies or working with technological barriers like a spotty internet connection. This course has been designed with that in mind: Dr Doyle has worked to streamline the technology as much as possible, and to design assessments with the possibility of poor Internet connections in mind. Although

Avenue 2 Learn is a robust platform with a dedicated support team, **it is normal to encounter the occasional technological problem. This is an opportunity for you to practice the valuable professional skill of troubleshooting!**

What To Do if You Encounter Technical Problems

Do not panic! Follow the below steps to troubleshoot:

1. **Document the problem:** ESPECIALLY if you are attempting to submit an assignment on deadline. Describe it in detail and **take screenshots that include your desktop clock as a time-stamp.**
2. Check the **Avenue To Learn Support Wiki:**
<https://wiki.mcmaster.ca/avenue/>
3. Check the manufacturer's help documents!
<https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/learners/learners.htm> A2L is McMaster's local version of Brightspace Desire2Learn (D2L), therefore many of its functions and quirks will be the same.
4. Contact the Avenue2Learn help desk directly (during business hours):
<https://avenue.mcmaster.ca/support.html>
5. If all else has failed ... proceed to contact your professor or TA!

After Troubleshooting: contact your TA or prof

If you decide to contact Dr Doyle or your TA directly for help with resolving a problem (e.g. clarification on a course component, or help with a tech problem you have encountered), demonstrate that you have attempted to trouble-shoot first:

- **Describe at least 3 things that you have already tried, and why they didn't work.** (E.g., you checked the syllabus for the answer; you read the assignment guide; you posted your question to the appropriate discussion board; you searched the University website for more information; you reviewed the A2L help pages and Googled the problem; you contacted the A2L help desk).
- **Describe the problem in precise terms.** Include screenshots to show your screen if it is a tech problem.
- If you cannot do either of the above, your TA and/or Dr Doyle will ask you to do so.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1: (2021-01-11 to 15)

TOPIC: Introductions and Getting Oriented ; Intro to Death Investigations and the The Forensic Anthropology Protocol

READINGS: No readings

FRIDAY: Live session meet & greet

Week 2 (2021-01-18 to 22)

TOPIC: Human Osteology and Odontology

READINGS: Chapter 2, Human Osteology and Odontology

Note: Jan 19th is Add/Drop Deadline

Week 3 (2021-01-25 to 29)

TOPIC: Assessing Medicolegal Significance: Is It Human? Is it Recent?

READINGS: France 2014; Christensen et al. Chapt 4 - Assessing Medicolegal Significance

Week 4 (2021-02-01 to 5)

TOPIC: Forensic Taphonomy and Estimating the Post-Mortem Interval (PMI)

READINGS: Christensen et al. Chapter 5. Forensic Taphonomy

CASE STUDY 1 GOES LIVE Monday Feb 1

Week 5 (2021-02-08 to 12)

TOPIC: Forensic Archaeology - search, documentation, and recovery of remains

READINGS: Christensen et al. Chapter 6: Forensic Archaeology

DEADLINE: Case Study 1 (25%), due 23:59h Eastern on Friday, Feb 12

Week 6 (2021-02-15 to 19)

READING WEEK - No Class

Week 7 (2021-02-22 to 26)

TOPIC: Evidentiary Standards in Forensic Anthropology; Skeletal Documentation Methods and Technology

READINGS: Chapter 3, Skeletal Examination and Documentation Methods ; Holobinko, 2012

Week 8 (2021-03-01 to 05)

TOPIC: No new material. Review for midterm

READINGS: None

Midterm Quiz (25%) held asynchronously over 24h on Friday March 5th

Week 9 (2021-03-08 to 12)

TOPIC: Human Variation in Size and Shape (1: Body Size and Robustness)

READINGS: Christensen et al. 2019. Chapter 11. Stature estimation

Week 10 (2021-03-15 to 19)

TOPIC: Human Variation in Size and Shape (2: Sex*)

READINGS: Christensen Chapter 8, Sex Estimation

Notes: Mar 19 (Fri) is Last Day To Withdraw From Class without penalty

*Sex estimation methods pertain to sex as assigned at birth, generally in people who are cis, or whose bodies did not transition until after puberty. We will also discuss the complexities involved in inferring gender from skeletal remains, particularly for people whose gender identity does not conform to a traditional binary cis model.

Week 11 (2021-03-22 to 26)

TOPIC: Age Estimation

READINGS: Christensen et al. Chapter 10, Age Estimation

Week 12 (2021-03-29 to 2021-04-02)

TOPIC: Trauma vs Taphonomy (Guest Lecture on Wednesday)

READINGS: Christensen et al. Chapter 13, Analysis of Skeletal Trauma

CASE STUDY 2 GOES LIVE, Weds March 31

Week 13 (2021-04-05 to 09)

TOPIC: Identification: Reconciliation of Antemortem and Postmortem Files

READINGS: Christensen et al. Chapters 12 and 14 (Individual Skeletal Variation and Personal Identification)

Notes: pre-final exam restriction

DEADLINE: Case Study 2 (25%) due 23:59h Eastern on Wednesday, April 7

Week 14 (2021-04-12 to 14 * last class on Wednesday)

TOPIC: Course Review / Guest Lecture

READINGS: None

EXAM PERIOD: Thursday April 15 to Friday April 30

Final Exam (25%); held asynchronously on Registrar's date during exam period.

Course Policies

Assignment Submissions

It is expected that all assignments will be submitted as PDF files to that assignment's dropbox on Avenue to Learn (A2L) **Assignments submitted by e-mail will not be accepted.**

If you run into technical problems when submitting an assignment or exam, take a screenshot that shows your submission screen and desktop clock as a timestamp! Then visit the Avenue to Learn Support page for help.

Late Submissions

For winter 2021 there will be a 48h grace period before late penalties are applied for written assignments only (does not apply to tests or exams). This means that you can submit your assignment up to 48h after a deadline, without losing points.

A late penalty of 2 points (2% of the total course grade) will be deducted from an assignment's total per 24-hour period (or part thereof late) for assignments, up to 72 hours (including weekends). After 72 hours, a grade of 0 is allocated.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

It is your responsibility to complete all work by the deadline at which it is to be handed in. Extensions will not be available without one of: a McMaster Student Absence Forms (MSAF) if applicable; OR written certification approved by your Faculty office. If you experience an interruption to your attendance that warrants relief, please try to alert Dr Doyle as soon as possible to arrange make-up work.

Please note that policies concerning the use of MSAFs (McMaster Student Absence Forms) have changed (see <https://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>).

Note that MSAF's cannot be used for:

- **Any coursework worth 25% or more.**
- Absences lasting longer than 3 days

If you require relief for an assessment worth 25%+ or for longer than 3 days, you must contact your faculty office, with documentation, if you wish to apply for a faculty-issued MSAF.

Please note – **all deferred and makeup exams will be in essay format.**

Assignment Reappraisal

Your assignments are marked by TAs using a grading rubric provided by the instructor, which is based on the criteria outlined in each assignment guide.

Grades are not awarded based on demonstrated effort, but on demonstrated achievement. It is normal for a student's average grade in university classes to be somewhat lower than their average grade in high school.

If you disagree with a grade that you have received, please follow the below steps:

1. **Wait 24h after viewing your mark.** Re-read your assignment with a cooler head and consider the rubric, your TA's feedback, and grading criteria outlined in the assignment guide.
2. **Seek more feedback:** If you require more information about your grade, contact the grading TA and ask for further feedback.
3. **Formally request a re-appraisal:** Write a 300-word (max) statement, explaining why you believe the grader's assessment was mistaken, and submit it to Dr Doyle along with the original assignment (with TA feedback). **Your statement must directly reference the rubric.** We assess your work based on its demonstrated quality, not based on effort expended. Thus,

we need you to engage directly with the feedback you have been given in order to show that the original grading was incorrect.

4. Dr Doyle will re-assess your work using the same rubric as the TA grader.

Please note that requesting a re-appraisal does not guarantee that your mark will go up. Most re-appraisals do not produce a different mark than the original assessment, and some produce a lower mark.

If, after reappraisal by the instructor, you still disagree with an assessment, you may apply for a **re-read** via the McMaster Secretariat website:
<https://registrar.mcmaster.ca/re-read/>

Grades

Marking rubrics and final grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE	Qualitative Scale (Unofficial)
90-100	A+	In general, quantitative & categorical grade ranges reflect the following qualitative scale: 80% to 100% (A- to A+): Exceptional performance: strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
85-90	A	
80-84	A-	68% to 79% (B- to B+): Competent performance: evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.
77-79	B+	
73-76	B	50% to 67% (D to C+): Adequate performance: understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material; acceptable but uninspired work, not seriously faulty but lacking style and vigour.
70-72	B-	
67-69	C+	00% to 49% (F): Inadequate performance: little or no evidence of understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.
63-66	C	
60-62	C-	
57-59	D+	
53-56	D	
50-52	D-	
0-49	F	

Avenue to Learn & Lecture Recording

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Some real-time lecture sessions may be recorded. Attendees will be warned prior to recording.

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 in written work. 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 visit: www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

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 www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

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.

Online Elements

This course includes on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, 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 a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, including lectures by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

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 their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be

investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

