

# ANTH 3FA3



# Forensic Anthropology

McMaster University  
Winter Term 2020



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Office: Chester New Hall Rm 536

Office Hours: Monday 6-6:50pm; Wednesday 1:45-3:20pm



## course description:

Forensic anthropologists are trained in the recovery and analysis of human remains and help investigate modern, suspicious and violent deaths. This course is designed for students with an interest in biological anthropology and examines the role that a forensic anthropologist plays in legal, mass disaster, and human rights cases. An introduction to the human skeleton is provided, and various techniques used in determining the identity of an individual (e.g., sex, age, ancestry, individualizing features) are presented. Methods for the detection and recovery of human remains, and the analysis of events occurring prior to and after death (e.g., trauma and taphonomy) will also be explored.

### Class Schedule &

#### Format:

Lectures:

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday  
3:30-4:20pm

#### Location:

BSB B135

## learning outcomes:

At the end of this course you will be able to:

- 1) **Discuss** the role that a forensic anthropologist plays in legal investigations, mass disasters, and human rights cases.
- 2) **Explain** the methods and techniques used by forensic archaeologists and anthropologists to find, recover, analyze, and document human remains.
- 3) **Describe** the processes that act on a body after death and **illustrate** how this is used by forensic anthropologists to determine time since death.
- 4) **Identify** and **interpret** evidence for trauma in skeletal remains.
- 5) **Define** and **defend** the features used in establishing positive identification.
- 6) **Synthesize** the methods, techniques, and evidence used by forensic anthropologists to establish a biological profile and assess the events prior to and after death.



### Required Texts:

Christensen, A.M., Passalacqua, N.V., Bartelink, E.J. 2019. Forensic Anthropology: Current Methods and Practice. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Academic Press. ISBN: 9780128157343

(There are important differences between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Editions of this book. If you choose to use the 1<sup>st</sup> Ed, it is important that you compare your readings with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed on reserve in Mills Library.)

learning assessments and grade distribution:

submission of assignments & late policy:

An *abbreviated* version of lecture PowerPoints will be posted with case study guidelines and other course materials on A2L.

Due to the sensitive nature of some of the course content, most images can NOT be included on these slides.

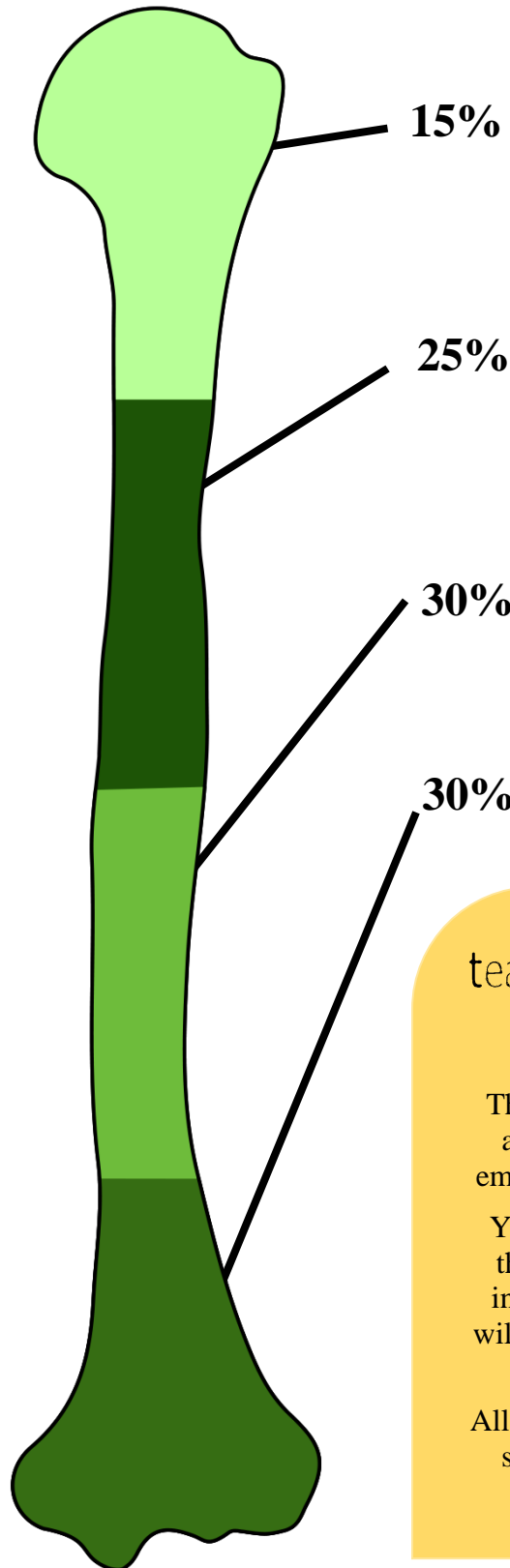
Assignments will be submitted on A2L, and your grades will be posted here as well.

You can access A2L at: <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>

You are responsible for completing all the learning assessments on the dates for which they are scheduled.

**Late Penalties:** Late assignments will be penalized at 15% per day.

Late assignments will not be accepted after 5 days (including weekends) beyond the original deadline.



## Case Study 1

Due February 14<sup>th</sup> @ 11:59pm

Details to follow

## Midterm Exam

February 25<sup>th</sup>

Details to follow

## Case Study 2

Due April 1<sup>st</sup> @ 11:59pm

Details to follow

## Final Exam

Date TBA

Details to follow

teaching assistants

**TBA**

The TAs will be available to answer your questions via email and during office hours.

You will be assigned one of the two TAs. Their contact information and office hour will be available on Avenue to Learn.

All concerns regarding grading should be directed to your specific TA.

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## Weekly schedule

Week	Theme	Assigned Readings (2 <sup>nd</sup> Edition)
1 (Jan 7-10)	Course Introduction; History of Forensic Anthropology; Intro to Skeleton	Christensen: Ch. 1
2 (Jan 14-17)	Introduction to the Skeleton (cont.) Medico-Legal Significance	Christensen: Ch. 2, 4
3 (Jan 21-24)	Forensic Archaeology	Christensen: Ch. 6
4 (Jan 28-31)	Time Since Death & Taphonomic Processes	Christensen: Ch. 5
5 (Feb 4-7)	Time Since Death & Taphonomic Processes cont. Laboratory Analysis	Christensen: Ch. 7
6 (Feb 11-14)	Sex & Age <b>Case Study #1 Due February 14 (15%)</b>	Christensen: Ch. 3, 8, 10
7 (Feb 17-21)	<i>READING WEEK</i>	-
8 (Feb 24-28)	Stature & Ancestry <b>Midterm February 25 (25%)</b>	Christensen: Ch. 9, 11
9 (March 3-6)	Individual Variation Cause of Death, incl. Trauma	Christensen: Ch. 12, 13 (section 13.5)
10 (March 10-13)	Trauma Continued Altered Remains	Ch. 13 (all)
11 (March 17-20)	Establishing a Positive Identification	Christensen: Ch. 14 Article: Holobinko (2012)
12 (March 24-27)	Mass Disasters & Human Rights Investigations	Christensen: Ch. 15
13 (March 31 – April 3)	Mass Disasters & Human Rights Investigations Cont. <b>Case Study #2 Due April 1 (30%)</b>	TBA
14 (April 7)	<b>Content Overflow and Review</b>	
<i>Exam Period</i>	<b>Final Exam (during exam period – date to be announced) (30%)</b>	

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## note on modification to course materials:

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.

## readings (in addition to the textbook)\*:

Holobinko A. 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* 222:394.e391-394.e313.

\*Available through McMaster libraries (on-line).

## policy on missed exams and assignments:

You are responsible for completing all the learning assessments on the dates for which they are scheduled.

**Late Penalties:** Late assignments will be penalized at 15% per day. Late assignments will not be accepted after 5 days (including weekends) beyond the original deadline.

You are responsible for completing all of the learning assessments on the dates for which they are scheduled.

**In the event of missed course work and/or exam(s) for medical or other reasons**, the student must review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

[http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1698#Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work](http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1698#Requests_for_Relief_for_Missed_Academic_Term_Work)

Rules governing the MSAF are as follows:

- The timeframe within which the MSAF is valid has been reduced from 5 days to 3 days.
- The upper limit for when an MSAF can be submitted has been reduced from ‘less than 30%’ to ‘less than 25%’ of the course weight.
- The ‘one MSAF per term’ limit is retained.
- As per the policy, an automated email will be sent to the course instructor, who will determine the appropriate relief. **Students must immediately follow up with their instructors. Failure to do so may negate their relief.**
- If you submit an MSAF and are granted permission for relief for written work, my **strict policy** is to provide a 48h extension from the time the MSAF is received.

**GRADES IN THIS COURSE WILL NOT BE RE-WEIGHTED.**

**Permissions for makeup midterms will not be granted after 1 week following the in-class exam.**



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online elements:

course materials & avenue to learn

**Please familiarize yourself with the Avenue to Learn website.** It can be accessed at: [avenue.mcmaster.ca](http://avenue.mcmaster.ca) . Check Avenue to Learn frequently for course announcements.

Lectures will be delivered using PowerPoint. **Abbreviated** PDF versions of the lecture PowerPoints will be posted on Avenue to Learn after each lecture. Due to the sensitive nature of some of the course content, most images can NOT be included on these slides.

The Avenue to Learn Dropbox will be used to submit your assessments for grading.

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.



student behaviour and responsibilities:

*Your learning* – it is your responsibility to **keep up with the readings** – do not leave them until the night before the exams. Attendance in this class is **essential** if you want to do well in this course. You are expected to think about the readings and integrate them into the information and concepts presented during lecture.

*Classroom behavior* – Please **do not be afraid to ask questions** or provide constructive comments! If you do not understand something, or if I have gone over a concept too fast, stop me and ask a question. Chances are if you do not understand something, other people in the class are in the same position.

**Please ensure that cell phones are turned off** (including text messaging, Twitter, etc...) and **arrive on time for class**. If you have to leave class early, please sit near one of the exits.

**Laptop computers** may be used in class for taking notes, but students using their computers for any other purpose (e.g., checking Facebook) will be asked to turn their computers off.

Please be polite to your neighbours and **keep conversation to a minimum**.

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.**

Email Forwarding in MUGSI: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html>

\*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link (Approved at the Faculty of Social Sciences meeting on Tues. May 25, 2010).

I will check my email throughout the work-week and will strive to respond within approximately **48 hours**. Please put **3FA3 in the subject line** of your email and **include your name and student number** at the end of all correspondence. Please contact your TA first with any course-content or grade-related enquiries.

## academic dishonesty:

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

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and 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 kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, Appendix 3, <https://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/students/index.html>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one’s own for which other credit has been obtained. (Insert specific course information, e.g., style guide)
2. Improper collaboration in group work. (Insert specific course information)
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.



## turnitin (avenue to learn)

For the written assessments 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 go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

## academic accommodation for religious, indigenous or spiritual observances (riso)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

## aoda:

If you require this information in an alternate/accessible format, please contact Marcia Furtado at 905-525-9140 extension 24423 or email [furtam1@mcmaster.ca](mailto:furtam1@mcmaster.ca)

## academic accommodation of students with disabilities:

Academic Skills Counselling and Services for Students with Disabilities are available through the Student Accessibility Services (SAS)

Tel: 905-525-9140 x28652

Email: [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca)

Website: <http://sas.mcmaster.ca>

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](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca). For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

## late withdrawal:

McMaster University provides a Late Withdrawal option to assist students who have become irretrievably behind in a course. Students who have fallen behind with assignments and/or are not prepared to write final examinations (or equivalent) in one or more courses are encouraged to make use of this option and must contact their Academic Advisor in the Faculty/Program Office. Students will work with their Academic Advisor to discuss the situation and what steps they can take to prevent a recurrence.

The maximum number of units for which students may request a Late Withdrawal is 18 units throughout their undergraduate degree.

Students may request a Late Withdrawal, without petition, no later than the last day of classes in the relevant Term. However, it is important to note that:

- Requests for Late Withdrawal cannot be made in courses for which the final exam (or equivalent) has been attempted or completed. This also includes courses where a final grade has been assigned (e.g. clinical courses). **In this 3FA3 course, the final exam is considered the final assessment.**
- Such requests will be cancelled or revoked if it is determined that the student attempted or completed the final exam (or equivalent).
- Students cannot use the Late Withdrawal option for courses in which they are under investigation or for which they have been found guilty of academic dishonesty.

Course(s) approved for Late Withdrawal will be:

- Assigned a non-numeric grade of LWD, in lieu of an alpha/numerical grade
- Excluded from the calculation of the GPA
- Ineligible for tuition refund

Approval of a late withdrawal is final, and requests to be re-enrolled in the withdrawn course(s) will not be considered. A withdrawal will not preclude students from enrolling in the course(s) in a subsequent term.