

Department of Anthropology
Anthropology 3311F-Bioarchaeology - Practice and Theory
and
Anthro 9111A - Advanced Bioarchaeology
COURSE OUTLINE
Fall 2022

Version date: September 7, 2022

Classes:

Lectures: Mondays 1:30-4:30 pm
Classroom: SSC-2257
Credit value: 0.5 credit

Instructor:

Dr. Andrew Nelson
Office: SSC-3323
Office hours: Tuesdays 2:30 to 3:30 and Thursdays 10:00 to 12:00.
Email: anelson@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistant:

Panchala Weerasinghe.
Office: SSC-3308
Office Hours: Wednesday 11-noon
Email: pweerasi@uwo.ca

Requisites:

Prerequisite(s): Anthropology 2226A/B or Anthropology 2229F/G or permission of the instructor.

Antirequisite(s): None.

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the field of *bioarchaeology*. In North America, Bioarchaeology is defined as the study of human remains (skeletal and mummified) from archaeological sites. In the UK and other parts of the world, it is defined as the study of biological remains, plant, animal and human, from archaeological sites. Thus, to begin with, the history of the discipline and the derivation of the term will be explored in detail. Individual lecture topics will include ethics and Bioarchaeology, mortuary analysis, the osteobiography, how identity is expressed on the skeleton, the relationship between Bioarchaeology and forensics, and Bioarchaeology in the public realm. Both empirical and theoretical aspects of Bioarchaeology will be explored in every lecture. The

interdisciplinary nature of the discipline is a key theme in the course, as is the fact that Bioarchaeology is firmly rooted in Anthropology writ large.

The first two hours each week follow a traditional lecture format, while the last hour will turn into a discussion section, there topics can be explored in more detail. Thorough preparation is important for the discussion sections, to ensure an active exchange of ideas.

There is no better way to understand the people of the past than to learn about them from their mortal remains. Bioarchaeology gets to the very essence of life in the past and what it means to be human.

The lectures for this course will contain images of human remains and we will be discussing the detailed analysis of those remains. It is important that, at all times, we remember that these were once living people and as such they deserve our respect.

Weekly Lecture/Discussion Session Topics

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course's OWL site before the first day of class.

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- understand and apply methods from other disciplines to this inherently interdisciplinary science
- integrate methods and theory in the analysis of mortuary archaeological sites
- recognize and articulate the interrelations between biology and culture
- utilize the findings of bioarchaeology in order to inform our understanding of diseases today
- understand the practice of modern bioarchaeology and how it has evolved
- effectively communicate verbally and in writing how to integrate theory and method in bioarchaeological practice and interpretation

Course Materials:

Published papers will supplement the lectures and provide fodder for the discussion sections. These papers will be available through the readings tab on the OWL site.

Course Structure:

The three-hour blocks will consist of a 2 hour lecture, followed by a 1 hour discussion section, during which the class will be broken into smaller groups. The instructor and graduate students will lead the discussion sections, which are based on the readings and lecture topic for that day. Students will be expected to have done the readings beforehand, and to actively participate in the discussions. Participation in these sections is the basis for the participation component of the grade for the course.

Evaluation:

Undergraduate Grading:

Undergraduate student evaluation for this course is based on participation, two annotated bibliography assignments, one 3500-word research paper and a final exam. The annotated bibliographies will be worth 30% of the total grade, the paper will be worth 30% and the final exam will be worth 30% of the course grade. Participation (assessed weekly) will account for 10% of the grade.

Work will be spread throughout the term, with the annotated bibliographies being due on September 26th and October 24th, the paper due November 28th, and the final exam falling in the exam period.

Annotated Bibliographies – 15% of grade each

The two short, annotated readings assignments will require students to find three references that are relevant to the topic outlined below. The references must come from valid academic sources (e.g. not any old web site) and be related to each other in some way. The assignment is to do a short synopsis of the three references and a brief analysis in 2 or 3 double spaced pages. Assignments are to be submitted as hard copy in class and to OWL by 11:55pm on the due date. The hard copy can be submitted to the Department dropbox by 4pm on the next day, as long as the OWL version is submitted on time (it must be the same version).

Assignment #1 is due on September 26th, and its topic is *mortuary analysis*. Find an article that presents a mortuary analysis of an archaeological site. Then identify two articles that outline the most important aspects of mortuary theory that inform the analysis described in the article. Write short descriptions of what is in the three articles, and then describe how the theory shapes the analysis.

This assignment addresses the first, second and sixth learning outcomes.

Assignment #2 is due on October 24th, and its topic is *diet and bioarchaeology*. Find an article that presents an analysis of the diet at an archaeological site. Find two more articles that utilize that method of analysis. Write a short description of each article, and then discuss whether there are common themes/approaches in the three articles.

See the Assignments tab on OWL for more information on these assignments.

This assignment addresses the first, third and sixth learning outcomes.

Research Paper – 30% of grade

Topics for the research paper must be related to one of the lecture themes and will be selected in consultation with the instructor (in office hours or by email) before reading week. The paper will be formatted as a manuscript to be submitted to the *American Journal of Biological Anthropology*. See the Assignments tab on OWL for specific instructions and further details.

The paper is due November 28th. Papers are to be submitted to OWL by 11:55pm on the 28th. A hard copy must also be submitted. As long as the paper is in by the due date to OWL, the hard copy can be submitted to the Anthropology Department dropbox by 4pm on the 29th (it must be the same version).

This assignment can address any and/or all of the course's learning outcomes.

In order to pass this essay course, students must submit and receive a passing grade on their final essay.

The Final Exam – 30% of grade

The final exam will consist of a series of 3 essay questions that will be distributed to students on the last day of classes. Students will be able to prepare their answers at home, but will not be able to bring notes on the day of the exam. Two of the questions will be chosen on the day of the exam. The final exam will take place during the designated exam period for this course. The use of electronic devices will not be allowed during the final exam.

This exam will address all of the course's learning outcomes.

Participation/Attendance – 10% of grade

The discussion sections held in the third hour of class will explore the lecture topic of that day in detail, guided by questions. Students will be expected to have done the readings and to be prepared to critically discuss the material. The class participation grade will be assigned on attendance and thoughtful participation in classroom discussions.

Each discussion section will be scored out of 10 points. If you are highly engaged and incorporate discussion of the lecture and reading, you will get 10 points. If you participate and have some thoughtful contributions, you will get 8 points. If you attend and say nothing, you will get 6 points. If you do not attend, you will get 0 points. The lowest 2 scores will be dropped and the remaining 9 will be averaged to calculate your participation grade.

This assignment will address all of the course's learning outcomes, but particularly the verbal aspect of the sixth outcome.

Evaluation Methods

The assignments outlined here allow the students to demonstrate their ability to access and critically evaluate the bioarchaeological literature, to integrate methods and theory in the field of bioarchaeology and to communicate their understanding of key concepts in written and verbal (in the discussion sections) form. As such, they are essential to achieving the course's desired learning outcomes.

Graduate Grading:

Graduate Annotated Bibliography – 20% of grade

The graduate students will prepare an annotated bibliography of 20 references that are relevant to one of the topics in the second half of the course. This should include an introduction that states the topic and its relevance, short summaries of the references and a synthesis.

This assignment is due November 7th.

Graduate In-Class Presentation – 20% of grade

The graduate students will present a 50 minute presentation to the class on the topic covered for their annotated bibliography. The topic will be determined by discussions with the instructor. The presentation will take place on the appropriate date as outlined in the weekly topic grid.

Graduate Research Paper – 40% of grade

The graduate students will prepare a 5000 word research paper on a bioarchaeological topic that is relevant to their thesis research and is different from the topic covered in the annotated bibliography/presentation. Due date to be determined.

Graduate Participation – 20% of grade

The graduate students will assist the instructor by leading the in-class discussions in the third hour of the weekly class sessions.

Course Specific Statements and Policies:

Statement on Seeking Special Accommodations:

No accommodations will be granted retroactively more than 10 days after an assignment's due date. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

Unless a student receives accommodation for illness through Academic Counselling, late assignments will be penalized at the rate of 5%/day late for up to a total of 5 days (including weekends) following the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted after 5 days.

Statement on Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence. Please visit Western Libraries to read about [What is Plagiarism?](#)

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Policy on Laptops and Cellphones in Class:

Laptops are permitted for note-taking in class but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites, they will be asked to close the laptop and will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cellphones are turned off at the beginning of class.

Institutional Statements and Policies

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current academic policies regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation. These policies are outlined in Western's academic policies by clicking on this link:

[Western's academic policies](#).