

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **Anthropology 2238B-001 Reading Life and Death through the Human Body**

**Winter 2024**

*Version Date: Jan 24, 2024*

#### **Instructor and course information:**

Instructor: Dr. Andrea Waters-Rist

E-mail: awaters8@uwo.ca

Credit value: 0.5 credit

Prerequisites: None.

Antirequisites: None.

Please note: The following are recommended but not required: Any first year Social Science, Health Sciences, or Science course.

#### **Course Description:**

This course explores the enormous amount of information that becomes stored in our bodily tissues throughout life; information that can then be used to tell a lot about a person's life, and in some cases, their death. Did you know your teeth may contain a record of the diseases you experienced as a child? Or that the sport you play may cause distinctive changes to your bones? Or that chemical markers contained in all of our body tissues can reveal if and where you've moved during your life? DNA further contains a remarkable amount of information about, for example, genetic conditions and biological ancestry. Put this together and we can learn a great deal about a person, whether alive or dead, useful in a range of disciplines such as forensics, archaeology and anthropology, sociology, psychology, history, and the medical sciences.

In order to appeal to all these disciplines this course will explore the information contained in the human body in three contexts: Living Individuals, Recently Deceased Individuals, with a focus on forensic applications, and Long-Ago Deceased Individuals, with a focus on archaeological applications. By beginning with living individuals and moving backwards in time to the fossilized remains of our species, students will see how the loss of various tissues impacts the amount of information we are able to recover. Yet, even with just a lone tooth or small bone fragment, even without DNA, what we can

discern is a testament to decades of rigorous, multidisciplinary, and innovative research that should inspire students to ask questions and develop research that pushes the boundaries of knowledge within their own discipline.

Whether you are training to become a biological anthropologist, sociologist, medical clinician, forensic specialist, historian, or biochemist, this course will teach you to look at the body as a valuable source of information in variety of ways.

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:

- Summarize and critically evaluate literature from academic and popular sources.
- Explain the linkages between modern, forensic, and archaeological research about the human body.
- Apply basic human anatomy in a variety of contexts.
- Describe the applications of different methodological techniques for human identification, individuation, and behaviour reconstruction.
- Understand and discuss the intertwined existence of biology and culture and the value of cross-disciplinary contributions from anthropology, biology, archaeology, sociology, genetics, geology, pathology, kinesiology, and chemistry in understanding the modern or deceased human.

### **Course Materials:**

1. *Flesh and Bone: An Introduction to Forensic Anthropology*, 3rd edition. Myrian Nafté. 2016. Carolina Academic Press: Durham, North Carolina. Available for purchase at Western's Bookstore.

2. Journal articles and book chapters via the course's on-line OWL site Course Readings feature. Registered students will be able to access these course readings before the first day of class.

### **Evaluation:**

Your course grade will be based on five items. Note, make-up tests and assignment deadline extensions will only be offered if the Academic Counselling Office approves special accommodation. There will be no exception to this. The five evaluated items are as follows.

- Human Anatomy, Biology & Growth Quiz: 10%. January 31<sup>st</sup> in class.
- Human Nutrition & Health/Stress Quiz: 10%. February 14<sup>th</sup> in class
- Solve-the-Mystery Assignment #1: 20%. March 8<sup>th</sup> by 11:55pm (submit via OWL 'Assignment' Tab).
- Solve-the-Mystery Assignment #2. 20%. March 29<sup>th</sup> by 11:55pm (submit via OWL 'Assignment' Tab).
- Final Exam: 40%. Date and time to be determined by the Registrar's Office.

The quizzes consist of multiple choice, matching and short answer questions and each is worth 10% of your final grade. You will be given 50 minutes at the beginning of class to write them. This will be followed by a break and then lecture. The quizzes require memorization of the key systems and elements in human anatomy and human growth (quiz 1), and human nutrition and health- stress (quiz 2). Use of electronic devices is not allowed during the quizzes.

The solve-the-mystery assignments are each worth 20% of your final grade. These are to be solved independently (group work is not permitted). The assignments require use of information learned in weeks 1 to 11. Each mystery assignment comes with a suite of information about a set of human remains. Based on the information provided you are then asked to answer a set of questions by and for various stakeholders (e.g., coroner, police, biological kin, larger community/ancestral group, etc.). More information will be made available to students on the course OWL site.

*All assignments 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.*

The final exam is worth 40% of the course grade. It will take place during the designated exam period for this course at a time and place determined by the Registrar's Office. It consists entirely of multiple-choice questions. The final exam will be based upon course content from weeks 1 through 13 and thus is cumulative. Use of electronic devices will not be allowed during the final exam.

## **Course Specific Statements and Policies:**

### Institutional Statements and Policies

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current [Academic Rights and Responsibilities policies in the Academic Calendar](#). Such items include accommodations

for students with disabilities, religious holidays, consideration for medical illness, academic appeals, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and code of student conduct.

Statement on Late or Missed Work:

No accommodations will be granted retroactively more than 5 days after an assignment's due date or a missed quiz or test. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds. Please read the details and instructions on "[What is Academic Consideration](#)".

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. Voice recorders are only allowed with express permission.

Classroom Behaviour:

In this class you will read about and see images and videos of dead bodies, in various states of decay. This will only be done for learning purposes and requires all of us to behave maturely and respectfully. If the idea of seeing images and videos of dead bodies upsets you, this may not be the right course for you. If at any time an image or video is shown that disturbs or upsets you, feel free to look away from the screen and occupy yourself with something else until you feel well enough to reengage with the lecture. You are also free to step out of the room for however long you need. Classroom discussion must be respectful. Students being disrespectful will be asked to leave for the remainder of the class. Repeated disrespectful behaviour will result in the notification to and possible involvement of the Dean of the student's Home Faculty.

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.

End