

Hic locus est ubi mortui viventes docent

ANT 456—Forensic Anthropology F05

MWF 2:30-3:30; Lab: M 3:45-5:45

Dr. Charles Edwards

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Hours: **Hours: MTWF 10:00-12:00;** (other times by appt.)

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1. SYNOPSIS—“Good Cop” Routine: (Note: ANT 456 meets the “second physical anthropology” course requirement of the major in Anthropology.)

“Forensic anthropology is the scientific discipline that applies the methods of physical anthropology and archaeology to the collection and analysis of legal evidence.” (Burns, 1999: 3)

However, as we all know, Anthropology is a holistic discipline, and forensic anthropology is no exception. Far from being the “study of old bones,” forensic anthropology reconstructs the cultural, social, biological, political, economic, historical, legal and environmental aspects of life and death as revealed in the human skeleton and associated materials. Forensic anthropologists have worked with materials as elusive as a tiny piece of cremated bone in an infant murder case, to the Challenger disaster remains, to mass graves recently unearthed in Kosovo and Rwanda. Forensic anthropologists have helped put murderers behind bars, and have helped the innocent go free; they have helped bring closure to the families of Viet Nam MIA’s and to *Las abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo* (more about that later); and they have helped resolve historical controversies surrounding the Little Bighorn, the Battle of Gettysburg, the Donner party, and the assassination of Huey Long.

To do this, forensic anthropology integrates such diverse interests as archaeology, entomology, osteology, molecular genetics, cultural anthropology, archaeology, and Biker behavior.

Themes:

ANT 456 will not train you to be forensic anthropologists (that takes years of post-graduate training and apprenticeship). It will, however, expose you to the techniques of forensic anthropology that may be useful to the recent graduate in anthropology, criminal justice, etc., who may encounter human remains or who may wish to pursue further training in this area. Over the semester we will use case studies to explore these and related themes:

- The rationale for forensic anthropology: Medico-legal aspects of death.
- “You’re not an anthropologist, said the anthropologist to the medical examiner.” What anthropologists can do.
- “But you’re not an MD, said the medical examiner to the anthropologist.” What anthropologists cannot do.
- “You academics and MD’s are a pain in the butt, said the cop.” Anthropology and diplomacy.
- Jurisdiction: Where the anthropologist fits in... and where not.
- The biology of life and death and its osteological implications.
- Age, sex and ancestry.
- “This is the right third metacarpal of a 24 year old male Caucasian of Scottish ancestry.....NOT.” Limits of forensic osteology.
- The man who turned to soap: From death to discovery, taphonomy and the “laws of burial.”
- Leave *no bone turned*: Forensic archaeology and recovery.
- Bears or backpackers: Is it human?
- Wealthy horse set or working class biker gang? Reconstructing lived lives from the skeleton.
- Flies, maggots and other partners in medicolegal investigation: Forensic entomology.



- “Just looking at the body tells me she died of a gunshot wound around 3:30 this morning.....NOT!” Time since death.
- Was a crime committed? How a teenager who was stabbed in the chest, arms, skull, face and abdomen was listed as a drug overdose. Easily missed osteological clues to death.
- The anthropologist gone bad: the search for Josef Mengele, Auschwitz’ Angel of Death.
- “Man’s best friend.” Fido as an investigative agent and Fido as a *taphonomic* agent.
- Attaching a person to the remains: Individual identification.
- Forensic anthropology and mass-disaster reconstruction.
- Forensic anthropology and human rights investigations.
- Forensic anthropology and child abuse.
- NAGPRA, jurisdictions, etc.: The ethical and legal implications of human remains.

2. Labs: Attendance at labs is required. Any missed labs must be made up. Students missing more than two scheduled labs will not receive credit for ANT 456.

It is impossible to read about or even understand forensic anthropology without a solid knowledge of human skeletal and functional anatomy. However, mastery of skeletal anatomy can *only* be developed through hands-on experience. Although some aspects of anatomy will be covered in class, you are also expected to spend time in the lab outside of class. Guidelines for accessing and using the lab will be provided separately.

Because of the peculiarities of the College calendar and because some labs may require more than the allotted two hours, there will be occasions where: (1) lectures will spill over into the lab period and/or (2) classes will be devoted to labs. Be sure to bring your lab manual to class every Monday. You may also be advised (via email) to bring your manual to class on other days, as well.

- Note: Forensic anthropology and osteology require practice and skills. The labs will introduce to the techniques and analytical methods of forensic anthropology. However, you will also require additional practice on your own. Appropriate materials will be made available in the Anthropology research lab (C-1 Cooper).
- Note: The lab is competency-based. There will be seven (7) periodic lab practicals (hands-on exams) scheduled throughout the course. These are graded on a Pass/Fail basis, with the cutoff for passing determined by the topic covered. You must pass every lab practical to receive credit.

3. Readings:

- Byers, Steven—*Introduction to Forensic Anthropology: A Textbook, 2nd Edition*
- Byers, Steven—*Introduction to Forensic Anthropology Laboratory Manual*
- Additional articles, etc. will also be assigned.
- *Your Right to Know & Academic Policies Handbook*. Don’t end up flunking this course or getting tossed out of school because you “didn’t know...” Look for questions on the handbook on the exams. You can download it at <http://www.brockport.edu/publications/yrtk/index.html>.

4. Exam/Projects:

- Course progress will be based on
- (75%) Four content exams covering course concepts, definitions, readings, lab content, etc.
- (25%) a course project based on a real or simulated (but data based) laboratory project. The project will be completed in steps throughout the course, starting the second week of class.
- Periodic oral presentations on various aspects of your course project.

5. ANGEL: Assignments, handouts, study guides.

- **Assignments:** Each week a set of assignments will be posted on ANGEL. Exams will be based on large part on these assignments. You can log onto ANGEL directly at <http://angel.brockport.edu> (which will redirect you to the ANGEL page).
- **IMPORTANT. Enable COOKIES first:** Your web browser must be set to accept cookies for ANGEL to work. If you are not familiar with cookies, go to the Help menu on your browser for instructions on enabling cookies.
- **Study guides:** Each week a study guide covering the relevant readings and class materials will be posted. These will help you focus your readings and link them with the class content.
- **Handouts:** Periodically, handouts will be posted. These handouts relate to the materials covered in class. They may include (1) illustrations, diagrams, charts, etc, referred to in class, (2) in-class exercises that we will be working on in class, (3) guides to movies

and videos covered in class, and (3) preparatory exercises. **Important: You must download and print these handouts and bring them to class on the assigned dates.**

- **CHECK YOUR BROCKPORT EMAIL AND ANGEL ACCOUNTS REGULARLY.** I will be posting assignments, guides, updates, etc. on a regular basis. You are responsible for anything posted on your ANGEL or email account.

6. Policies: Warning—Bad cop zone ahead!



1. **Attendance:** College is preparation for the real world. Employers don't look kindly on employees who don't show up. Nor do I. Your grade in this course is a certificate that you have met the course requirements, of which attendance is a part. Also, lectures are based on case studies that cannot be looked up elsewhere.
 - You are thus allowed five (5) *personal days* from non-lab classes without penalty (See Lab guidelines, above for lab attendance)
 - To qualify for a personal day you must notify me ahead of time (or in the event of an extreme emergency, as soon as possible after the absence). Failure to notify me will result in your being charged with an unexcused absence.
 - One third of a quality point will be deducted from the final grade for each unexcused absence beyond five,
 - Absences will be excused *only* for documented major emergencies beyond your control—the validity of which will be determined by me—or for pre-approved college business (College sponsored Athletic team, etc.). For more details see *Your Right to Know*.
 - You are expected to notify me immediately of any anticipated absence (Just like you notify your boss at work).
 - You are responsible for tracking your absences to make sure you don't exceed the limit.
 - If you anticipate difficulty attending classes or labs on a regular basis, don't take this course.

2. **Writing:** As college students you should use appropriate conventions of writing. If you lack these skills you should get outside help from the Center for Excellence in Learning in B-10 Cooper.
3. **Study time:** This is a demanding course. Devote at least six hours/week to course work outside of class, plus additional time before examinations and in completing written projects.
4. **Getting help when you need it:** Small problems can be kept small if caught in time. If you have any difficulty please call me, e-mail me or drop by my office (B-4 Cooper) before you fall behind.
5. **Withdrawals/Incompletes:** See attached Grading Standards and *Your Right to Know*.
6. **Academic honesty:** Familiarize yourself with College policies on academic honesty/dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is fraud and will be treated accordingly. Any student engaging in academic dishonesty while conducting course-related business risk failing the course and will be referred to the College for further disciplinary action. See *Your Right to Know*.
7. **Behavior:** This course is for mature adults only. If you don't fit that description drop the course now. *The following will not be tolerated and may result in your being removed from the course with a grade of E and additional disciplinary action by the college:* (1) disturbing other members of the class; (2) damaging or illegally removing college or public property (including library materials) while conducting course business; (3) failing to follow laboratory guidelines regarding handling of laboratory materials; (4) violations of other college policies relating to academic honesty outlined in *Your Right to Know*.



ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENT GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT EVALUATION ver 12/30/04

The following standards provide students with clearly defined expectations regarding course performance as well as potential evaluators (graduate schools, employers, etc.) with a basis for interpreting student grades in Anthropology courses at SUNY Brockport. Students may request copies be sent to prospective employers and/or graduate admissions committees.

[Note: The College recognizes +/- grades. The award of + or - within a grade range will reflect the degree to which the student meets the standards within that grade range.]

GUIDELINES FOR THE GRADE OF A: A grade of A represents the highest level of performance. The A student masters virtually all of the concepts and data of the course, is able to integrate these data and concepts and develop new insights (at least for the student) from them. An A paper is virtually flawless in organization, grammar and style. Consistent performance at the A level in different courses indicates that the student should perform well in a variety of demanding situations, such as graduate school, executive positions, professional training programs, etc. (Allowable grades: A, A-)

GUIDELINES FOR THE GRADE OF B: A grade of B represents solid comprehension of course materials and concepts. The B student understands virtually all of the concepts and data of the course and is able to integrate them in a meaningful whole. B papers are soundly and clearly organized with few stylistic or grammatical errors. Consistent performance at the B level reflects the ability to work toward thorough mastery of the subject matter and is a sign of academic reliability. The B student should be able to handle graduate level work and perform effectively in many post-graduate occupations. (Allowable grades: B+, B, B-)

GUIDELINES FOR THE GRADE OF C: A grade of C represents very basic comprehension of the main concepts of the course and their implications. A C level student is able to keep up with the basic requirements of the course. C level papers are reasonably organized, although grammatical and stylistic errors may interfere with communication. Consistent C or C+ level performance indicates the ability to obtain a respectable liberal arts education and handle the basic expectations of the college graduate. (Allowable grades: C+, C, C-). [Note: Some programs accept only courses that have a minimum grade of C. The grade of C- may not count in such programs.]

GUIDELINES FOR THE GRADE OF D: A grade of D represents passing, but unacceptable work. A D student minimally understands the most basic concepts of the course and uses them correctly, but may not demonstrate sufficient understanding of their implications. Nonetheless, the D student must demonstrate a passing knowledge of the course materials. D level papers demonstrate a basic knowledge of the topic under investigation, although they are marred by one or more of the following: poor writing style, grammatical errors, and ineffective organization. (Allowable grades: D+, D, D-)

GUIDELINES FOR THE GRADE OF E: The grade of E represents an inability to meet minimal criteria for D. No credit is awarded. (Allowable grade: E)

POLICIES REGARDING ACADEMIC HONESTY, INCOMPLETE GRADES, AND WITHDRAWAL FROM A COURSE: These are detailed in *Your Right to Know and Academic Policies Handbook*, available online at www.brockport.edu/publications/ Please familiarize yourself with these policies

EXPECTATIONS REGARDING WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS, PAPERS: Students taking courses at all levels should demonstrate writing competency comparable to successful completion of ENL 112—*College Composition* or the equivalent. Students lacking this competency should be concurrently enrolled in *College Composition* or in a remedial course recommended by the College. Students in upper division courses should be able to formulate problems, utilize available library resources to research them, and write standard term papers. Students experiencing difficulties in these skills are advised to consult with their instructor for assistance and guidance.