

Fall 2009

Glendale Community College presents

**ASM 275: Introduction to
Forensic Anthropology
Section 57780**

MW 1-2:15 pm

Location: HU-103

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Lillian Spencer
Office: 5-130
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Office hours: M 11-12; by appt.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Forensic anthropology is an applied subfield of biological anthropology that seeks to recover, identify, and evaluate human skeletal remains within a medico-legal context. This course provides a broad overview of forensic anthropology. Students will learn: to identify bones and teeth of the human skeleton; recovery techniques and initial treatment of forensic material; the techniques used by forensic anthropologists to determine such factors as age, sex, ancestry, and stature from the skeleton; how pathological and occupational markers can help identify skeletal remains; how to estimate time since death; and how forensic anthropologists interpret skeletal information to determine cause of death. Students will also become familiar with the application of forensic anthropology to issues of human rights, mass fatalities, and military identifications. Course consists of lectures and labs. Grade will be based on lab grades, a term paper, and three exams.

*****This course will not make students competent to carry out forensic anthropological investigations but it will engender an appreciation for the field of forensic anthropology *****

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK:

Dead Men Do Tell Tales (1994) by William Maples and Michael Browning.
Broadway Publishing.

For further reading:

Bone Voyage (1998) by Stanley Rhine

Hard Evidence: Case Studies in Forensic Anthropology (2008) by Dawnie Steadman

COURSE COMPETENCIES

1. Define terminology related to forensic anthropology
2. Identify ethical issues related to forensic anthropology
3. Describe the connection between anthropological method and theory and interpreting forensic data
4. Explain the basic objectives of a forensic anthropology investigation
5. Identify the stages of a forensic investigation
6. Describe how human osteology can help identify the life history of an individual
7. Explain how forensic anthropology can add to our knowledge of the past
8. Describe how forensic knowledge can be used in special cases, such as mass disasters, historical mysteries, etc.

COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE POLICY: The best way to know what material is covered in class is to attend class. I will take roll each class and I will be paying attention to who attends class and this could be important for your grade! Please let me know ahead of time if you know you will need to miss class. Please make every effort to be ready to pay attention when class starts- coming in late is distracting for everyone.

AUDIO TAPING POLICY: You are allowed to tape lectures.

REQUIREMENTS and GRADING: Each student is responsible for the material covered in lecture, labs, and for assigned readings (to be read before each class period). Readings come from the required book, *Dead Men Do Tell Tales*, and are listed on the course schedule.

Class meetings will consist primarily of lecture. However, several classes will incorporate lab activities or videos. Class discussion of current events relating to forensic anthropology is encouraged: a small amount of **extra credit** is available for bringing in relevant articles and fostering discussion about them!

Course materials will be available on **Blackboard**, including labs, lectures, and study guides. Announcements relevant to the course will be made here as well.

Grades will be assigned on the basis of three equally-weighted exams, a lab grade averaged from all the labs done in class, and a term paper. No exams are cumulative, except concerning material that is relevant throughout the course. Exams are a combination of multiple choice questions and short essays. Each exam is worth 20% of your grade; the lab assignments are worth 10%. **Regarding Missed Exams:** Few excuses are acceptable for missing an exam, and **permission must be obtained from me prior to the listed exam date to be considered for taking a make-up exam.** No make-up is allowed for the last exam.

Term paper: You will write a 3-4 page report discussing the circumstances, background, specific methods used, and results of a particular forensic anthropology investigation. A list of suitable topics will be provided to you but you are encouraged to do some research and pick your own topic. If you do this, be sure to clear it with me (you should not choose a case that is covered

in detail in class). Formatting instructions will also be provided to you. Note the due date of **November 23**: late papers will not be accepted! This paper will be worth 30% of your final grade.

A standard formula for determining final grades is used: A: 90-100%; B: 80-89%; C: 70-79%; D: 60-69%; F: below 60%.

This syllabus may be modified during the course of the semester to fit the particular circumstances of this class.

Conduct in course: I take issues related to academic honesty very seriously. Acts of academic dishonesty on the part of any student will result in failure of the course. Such acts are defined in the current catalog, and include plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and falsification, multiple submission and misuse of academic materials. Make sure you understand and avoid these behaviors. I also expect that you will conduct yourself with courtesy: no talking during lecture, no use of cell phones during class, and exhibiting respect toward me and your classmates at all times.

Student Responsibilities: Please be advised that your continued enrollment and participation in this class implies that you have read and accepted the terms and conditions of this syllabus. Also please be advised that you are responsible for being aware of and in compliance with the college policies included in the college catalog and the student handbook.

Disabilities: I will make any reasonable accommodations for limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities. Please see me personally before or after class or during my office hours to discuss any special needs you might have. If you have a documented disability and require specific accommodations, you will need to contact the Disability Resources and Services Office at 623-845-3080.