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ANTY 512.01: Advanced Forensic Anthropology

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ANTY 512

ADVANCED FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY

W: 10-12:50 SS 250

Dr. Randy Skelton 226 Social Sciences Building Office Hours: MWF 8:00-8:50, TR 10:00-11:00
Email: randall.skelton@umontana.edu

GOALS AND PURPOSE

This is a class for graduate students and advanced seniors. Students should have experience or course preparation in forensic anthropology and osteology. In this class, students will review basic methods and learn new methods of estimating sex, age, race, stature, pathology, etc. from the skeleton. There are no lectures. The class will be based upon the philosophy of "Problem-Based Learning". To implement this we will analyze cases from the forensic collection. Students will work as a team to process each case, and each student will have an opportunity to explore different roles in the analysis.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who complete this course will:

- Build skills in skeletal analysis;
- Gain experience working with cases of a wide variety of ages and ancestries;
- Observe a variety of traumas and pathologies;
- Learn to connect the theory of physical anthropology with the practice of case analysis;
- Grow their skills in working in teams, both as a leader and as a team member;
- Refine their skills in writing case reports;
- Build skills in working with software and apps that are available for forensic anthropology.

HOW THIS CLASS WORKS

Simply, we will analyze several cases as teams. Each week I will break the students up into teams, assign a case coordinator (team leader) for each team, and assign each team a case. The case coordinator will organize the analysis that will occur over the following week. At the next class session each team will present the findings from their case. During this time we will discuss topics in theory and practice that are brought up by the analysis of the case. These findings will be written up into a report due the following week. Then, we do it all again with new teams, case coordinators, and cases. I intend that each of you will be a case coordinator 3 or 4 times over the semester. I expect students to vary their role in the analysis over the semester – e.g. estimate sex one week, estimate age the next week, describe trauma the next week, etc. – in order to gain experience in all areas of skeletal analysis.

ADMINISTRIVIA

- Required Texts: Any serious student of forensic anthropology should have at least the following texts:
 - Bass, William M., 2005. *Human Osteology: A Laboratory and Field Manual*. 5th Edition. Missouri Archaeological Society.
 - White, TA; Black, MT; and Folkens, PA, 2011. *Human Osteology*. 3rd Edition. Academic Press.
 - A textbook about forensic anthropology such as those by Burns, Byers, etc.
 - Also download the course pack from Moodle.

- **Grading:** Grading will be based on participation in analyses, presentations, and writeups of cases. This accounts for 75% of your grade. You should also build a personal notebook of methods copied from those sources you don't own. At the end of the class I will examine your notebook for 10% of your grade. The remaining 15% of your grade will be based on professionalism.
- **Professionalism:** Professionalism includes many things, here are some of them I look for:
 1. Collegiality and teamwork. I expect all students to work together as a team regardless of any personal feelings. Students who know more, or know a method the others don't, should teach their teammates. Students who don't know something should say, "I don't know how to do this, can someone show me?"
 2. Pulling one's weight. Of course, attendance is important. This class demands a lot of time – the Wednesday meeting time is only one aspect of the class. I know that everybody has other demands on their time. Regardless, everybody is expected to make a proportionate contribution to the work of their team.
 3. Security and record keeping. I expect all students to maintain the security of the lab, the availability of the books and instruments in the lab, the integrity of the collection, and the privacy of the work we do. Good record keeping and chain of custody should be practiced.
- **Personal Notebooks.** These days most people have a folder on their computer or smartphone where they store resources that are not in the textbooks for the class. You can simply zip this up and email it to me at the appropriate time.

First Class Meeting Things to Do

1. Go over how the class works.
2. Talk about the room schedule on the door.
3. Get the passcode to the lab and the osteology closet.
4. Look over the lab to find calipers, books, computers, etc.
5. See what software is installed on the lab computers.
6. Exchange phone numbers and email addresses so we can all communicate.
7. Demonstrate use of FORDISC.
8. Divide into teams, designate coordinators, and begin work on first cases: UMFC 77, 78.