ANTY 513.01: Seminar in Bioarchaeology and Skeletal Biology

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Anthropology 513  
Bioarchaeology Seminar

Instructor: Dr. Corey Ragsdale  
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Office hours: TR 2:00 to 3:30

Course Description
Bioarchaeology allows us to ‘people’ the past. To do this, bioarchaeologists follow two general rules of  
thumb. First, they contextualize human remains in physical space, cultural milieu, and pre-historic time.  
That is, skeletonized and mummified bodies are never examined without also considering their associated  
arrestedological materials. Second, bioarchaeologists regard ancient bodies as bio-cultural phenomena.  
Human biology is impacted directly by culture, and vice versa. With these two ideas in hand, we will  
explore bioarchaeology’s history, development, major topical concerns, and debates. We will also engage  
critically with categories and assumptions about race, sex/gender, age, ethnicity, disease and disability,  
violence, and body parts. To conclude the semester, we will reflect upon bioarchaeology’s relevance in  
contemporary politics.

Readings
The required text can be purchased at the bookstore. You can access all other assigned and supplemental  
readings online. This course is reading intensive, so be prepared to spend several hours a week outside of  
class preparing for discussion.

  Cambridge University Press  
- All other readings are available online

Course Requirements and Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Readings Summaries (5)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Leader</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Project/Presentation</td>
<td>50%</td>
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</table>
Readings Summaries:
Summaries of the readings are assigned throughout the course to ensure students are keeping up with the reading. These summaries will involve a critique of a few papers from the weeks prior, and should demonstrate and understanding of the topic and evidence of critical thinking. These will be discussed further in class.

Discussion Leaders:
You will lead discussion once between Weeks 3 and 12. As discussion leader, you should summarize the readings’ key points and facilitate class discussion. You can provide your classmates with handouts or show powerpoint slides. Your grade will reflect the quality and clarity of your questions. To further engender discussion, you can also draw on videos, news articles, graphs, tables, supplemental readings, or additional scholarly sources.

Research Project:
Select a topic that piques your interest. Your research proposal is an opportunity to explore this further. The format of this paper will be similar to that of a grant proposal (NSF or NIH format). Details of the format for this paper will be discussed further in class. Additionally, you will be required to do an oral presentation of your research proposal. This presentation accounts for 10% of your total course grade (1/5 of your final paper). Details regarding this presentation will be discussed in class.

Course Reading Schedule

Week 1: Paradigms in Bioarchaeology (1/26-1/28)
- Agarwal and Glencross: Chapters 1-5 (skip Chapter 3)

Week 2: Bioarchaeology of Populations and Individuals (2/2-2/4)

Week 3: Politicization (2/9-2/11)
- Larsen: Chapter 11
- Agarwal and Glencross: Chapter 3

Week 4: Sex and Gender (2/16-2/18)
• Agarwal and Glencross: Chapter 6
• Readings summary 1

Topic discussant:

Week 5: Age (2/23-2/25)
• Larsen: Chapter 10
• Agarwal and Glencross: Chapters 10-13

Topic discussant:
• Readings summary 2

Week 6: Population Affinity (3/1-3/3)
• Larsen: Chapter 9

Topic discussant:

Week 7: Cultural Affiliation and Ethnicity (3/8-3/10)

Topic discussant:
• Readings summary 3

Week 8: Biological Distance Studies (3/15-3/17)
• Larsen: Chapter 7

Topic discussant:

Week 9: Habitual Activity (3/22-3/24)
• Larsen: Chapters 5 and 6
• Agarwal and Glencross: Chapter 8

Topic discussant:
Week 10: Health and Disease (3/29-3/31)

- Larsen: Chapters 2 and 3

Discussion Articles: Instructor


• Readings summary 4

Week 11: SPRING BREAK-NO CLASSES (4/5-4/7)

Week 12: Bioarcheology of Violence (4/12-4/14)

- Larsen: Chapter 4

Week 13: Body Modification (4/19-4/21)


Topic discussant:

• Readings summary 5

Week 14: Biochemistry (4/26-4/28)
Larsen: Chapter 8
Agarwal and Glencross: Chapter 15

**Topic discussant:**

**Week 15: Research Presentations (5/3-5/5)**
- Research Papers Due