

Anth 458 (Forensic Anthropology)
T & TR 1:30- 2:45

Prof. Michael Pietrusewsky
Lecture: Saunders 345; Laboratory: Dean 208

Course Description- Spring 2007

Objectives

Forensic anthropology is a specialized field of physical anthropology concerned with the application of the techniques of physical anthropology (and human osteology) to matters dealing with the law and the medico-legal professions. This course will provide an introduction to the method and theory of forensic anthropology. Some of the methods and topics to be discussed include the retrieval of burials and crime scene techniques, determination of the time interval since death, age-at-death, sex, ancestry, stature, traits of individuation, the cause and manner of death, facial reconstruction, testifying as an expert witness, legal responsibilities, ethical issues, case report writing, etc. The assigned reading will come from the required course textbooks and supplementary reading taken from the literature.

Organization

Organization of the course will include classroom discussions, lectures, laboratory assignments, and a field trip. A list of the topics to be discussed will be distributed at the first class meeting along with the assigned readings for the course. Instruction will largely follow an interactive format. Students are expected to have completed all the required assigned reading prior to each class meeting and each is expected to participate in the general discussion. Students will be assigned (at least one class meeting in advance) individual readings from the assigned reading list and each is expected to lead the discussion of these readings/topics when the class meets. Students are urged to prepare a short written abstract of the reading(s) they are assigned each week which will serve to initiate discussion. The frequency of these assignments will be determined by the number of readings assigned that week and class size. Lectures, which will be given sparingly, will serve primarily as an introduction to the week's topic. The instructor will assess the work load periodically throughout the semester and make whatever adjustments might be necessary to adjust the quantity/quality of the assigned reading and laboratory assignments.

Assigned Reading:

A complete list of the assigned reading, taken from the required texts and other sources, will be issued the first day of class. A copy of all of the assigned reading (except assigned reading from the assigned texts) will be made available through Electronic Reserves at Sinclair Library.

Required Texts:

Steven N. Byers (2005) Introduction to Forensic Anthropology 2nd ed. Allyn and Bacon, Boston.

Steven N. Byers & Susan M. T. Myster (2005) Forensic Anthropology Laboratory Manual. Allyn and Bacon, Boston.

Lab assignments:

Approximately eight laboratory assignments will be given throughout the semester. The first two

labs will review basic human osteology. The remaining labs will concentrate on methods (age, sex, stature, race, etc.) and analysis of human remains in a forensic setting. At least one of the lab assignments will involve an actual forensic case which will require extra time to complete. All lab assignments will be turned in for a grade. Unless otherwise indicated, the lab assignments are due one week following the day they are set.

Field trip

A field trip to the Honolulu Medical Examiner's Office and/or the POW/MIA Laboratory at Hickham AFB is planned.

Grade Evaluation

The final grade for this course will be calculated based on the following distribution: Midterm exam (includes written and practical) = 25%; Final exam (includes written and practical) = 25%; 9 Lab assignments (@ 5pts.) = 45%, Discussion/Attendance = 5%.

Prerequisites: Students should have successfully completed a course in human osteology or skeletal biology (Anth 384) before taking this course. Exceptions to this rule can be made through the consent of the instructor. No auditors please.

Lab Monitor Work: In order to facilitate the operation of the lab and to maintain this facility in a clean environment, each student will be required to sign up for one hour (per semester) of lab monitor work. Tasks will be assigned as required throughout the semester. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated and essential for the normal functioning of these labs.

The web pages for this course are at:

<http://www.anthropology.hawaii.edu/courses/anth458/index.htm>

