

**FRSC 498-ST: Forensic
Anthropology
Fall 2025
Mondays and Wednesdays
10:00-11:20 AM
Course Syllabus**

NJIT Academic Integrity Code: Students are asked to practice extra care and attention in regard to academic honesty, with the understanding that all cases of plagiarism, cheating, multiple submission, and unauthorized collaboration are subject to penalty. Students must properly cite and attribute all sources used for papers and assignments. Students may not collaborate on exams or assignments, directly or through virtual consultation, unless the instructor gives specific permission to do so. Posting an exam, assignment, or answers to them on an online forum (before, during, or after the due date), in addition to consulting posted materials, constitutes a violation of the University's Honesty policy. Likewise, unauthorized use of live assistance websites, including seeking "expert" help for specific questions during an exam can be construed as a violation of the honesty policy. All students should be familiar with the [NJIT Academic Integrity Code](#).

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description: Forensic Anthropology is an applied area of biological anthropology that focuses on the identification of human remains and the interpretation of what happened to them in a medicolegal context. This course will provide an overview of forensic anthropology. Students will be introduced to the history of the discipline, key theoretical issues, and standard methods used in each of the major topic areas, as well as, the role of forensic anthropology in different forensic scenarios. This class is mostly lecture-based, however, some practical exercises will be included leading to a better understanding of the complex process of human identification.

Number of Credits: 3

Prerequisites: none

Course-Section and Instructor

| Course-Section | Instructor |
|---|--|
| FRSC 498-ST-001 | Sara C. Zapico |
| Mondays, Wednesdays 10:00-11:20 AM, Tiernan 209 | Office: Tiernan Hall 365 |
| | Office hours: By appointment |
| | Phone: 973-642-4070; email: sc338@njit.edu |

Recommended Textbook:

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Title | Introduction to Forensic Anthropology |
| Author | Steven Byers and Chelsea A. Juarez |
| Edition | Sixth Edition |
| Publisher | Routledge |
| ISBN # | 9781032255590 |

Additional readings will be provided through Canvas.

University-wide Withdrawal Date: The last day to withdraw with a **W** is Tuesday, September 9, 2025. It will be strictly enforced.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify bones and teeth of the human skeleton.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the differences between human versus non-human remains.
- Outline the procedures for the search and recovery of human remains, and the processing of osteological material.
- Identify various techniques used in the determination of sex, age, ancestry, and height of human remains.
- Create a biological profile towards the identification of human remains.
- Assess the value of pathological and occupational markers for the identification of human remains.
- Identify different types of trauma in the skeleton, helping to determine the cause and manner of death.
- Understand the difficulties of time-since-death determination and the impact of taphonomic factors.
- Identify the value of forensic anthropology in different forensic scenarios: medical examiner's offices cases, mass disasters, and humanitarian forensic action.
- Understand the value of teamwork and the integration of different forensic disciplines for the identification of human remains.
- Communicate forensic anthropology findings based on skeletal analysis.

POLICIES

All CES students must familiarize themselves with, and adhere to, all official university-wide student policies. CES takes these policies very seriously and enforces them strictly.

Grading Policy: The final grade in this course will be determined as follows:

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| Class participation | 5% |
| In Class Assignments | 20% |
| Assignments | 10% |
| Midterm | 20% |
| Solving the mystery | 20% |
| Final Exam | 25% |

Your final letter grade in this course will be based on the following:

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|-----------|--------|----------|-------|
| A | 90-100 | C | 70-76 |
| B+ | 87-89 | D | 60-69 |
| B | 80-86 | F | <60 |
| C+ | 77-79 | | |

Attendance Policy: Class attendance is mandatory. Each class is a learning experience that cannot be replicated through simply “getting the notes.” After one unexcused absence, each subsequent absence will result in your class participation score being lowered by one percentage point. (All excused absences need to go through the Dean of Students). You are expected to read the relevant reading assignments prior to the lecture.

Class Assignments: Through the lectures, practical exercises will be introduced to improve the understanding of the material. These assignments will be discussions, case presentations, and laboratory practices with bones.

Assignments: To reinforce the learning and understanding of the material, additional assignments will be included on the Canvas modules. These assignments will be quizzes, online discussions, among others.

Solving the mystery: From human remains to missing persons investigation. To apply what you have learnt during the course, students will be divided into groups. Each group will have the opportunity to create a biological profile from real human remains towards their identification based on missing persons’ reports. Although the group will carry out the identification, each student must submit a forensic anthropology report, justifying his/her findings. All papers will be run through Turnitin.com to check for plagiarism. (Turnitin.com is a software program that analyzes papers for plagiarism). *For this assignment, you will be working with real human remains. Please, take into account that these remains are from a real person who kindly donated his/her body for you to learn. It is imperative you treat these remains with respect and care.*

Exams: Exams will be open book, giving the students two weeks to complete them. Exams will cover the readings, lecture, and practical exercises. The Final Exam will be comprehensive and will test your knowledge of all the course material taught in the entire course.

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| Midterm | Due November 14 th |
| Final Exam | Due December 20 th |

Makeup Exam Policy: There will normally be **NO MAKE-UP EXAMS** during the semester. In the event that a student has a legitimate reason for missing an exam, the student should contact the Dean of Students office and present written verifiable proof of the reason for missing the exam, e.g., a doctor’s note, police report, court notice, etc. clearly stating the date AND time of the problem. The student must also notify the Instructor that the exam will be missed. A written assignment will be given in place of any missed exam.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Accommodation of Disabilities: Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (*formerly known as Disability Support Services*) offers long term and temporary accommodations for undergraduate, graduate and visiting students at NJIT.

If you are in need of accommodations due to a disability please contact Chantonette Lyles, Associate Director at the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services at 973-596-5417 or via email at lyles@njit.edu. The office is located in Fenster Hall Room 260. A Letter of Accommodation Eligibility from the Office of Accessibility Resources Services office authorizing your accommodations will be required.

For further information regarding self-identification, the submission of medical documentation and additional support services provided please visit the Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) website at:

- <https://www.njit.edu/studentsuccess/accessibility>

Important Dates (See: [Fall 2025 Academic Calendar | Office of The Registrar](#))

| Date | Event |
|--------|-------------------------|
| Sept 2 | First Day of Classes |
| Sept 8 | Last day to add or drop |

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| Nov 27 | Thanksgiving recess begins |
| Nov 30 | Thanksgiving recess ends |
| Dec 11 | Last day of class |
| Dec 12 | Reading Day |
| Dec 14-20 | Final Exams |

Course Outline

| Week | Date | Topic | Reading |
|------|---------------------------------|--|--|
| 1 | September 3rd | No class | No class |
| 2 | September 8 th | Forensic Anthropology: Introduction and History | Chapter 1 |
| | September 10 th | Human Osteology and Odontology | Chapter 2 |
| 2 | September 15 th | Human Osteology and Odontology | Chapter 2 |
| | September 17 th | Skeletal Examination Methods | In class materials and Chapter 2 |
| 3 | September 22 nd | Medicolegal Significance | Chapter 3 |
| | September 24 th | Recovery Scene Methods | Chapter 4 |
| 4 | September 29 th | Initial Treatment and Examination | Chapter 6 |
| | October 1 st | Biological Profile: Sex Estimation | Chapter 8 |
| 5 | October 6 th | Biological Profile: Sex Estimation | Chapter 8 |
| | October 8 th | Biological Profile: Ancestry Estimation | Chapter 7 and in class materials |
| 6 | October 13 th | Biological Profile: Ancestry Estimation | Chapter 7 and in class materials |
| | October 15 th | Biological Profile: Stature Estimation | Chapter 10 |
| 7 | October 20 th | Biological Profile: Stature Estimation | Chapter 10 |
| | October 22 nd | Biological Profile: Age Estimation | Chapter 9 |
| 8 | October 27 th | Biological Profile: Age Estimation | Chapter 9 |
| | October 29 th | Individual Skeletal Variation (Chapter 15) | Midterm-Due November 14th |
| 9 | November 3 rd | Pathology and Skeletal Trauma | Chapters 11, 12, 13, 14 |
| | November 5 th | Pathology and Skeletal Trauma | Chapters 11, 12, 13, 14 |
| 10 | November 10 th | Taphonomy | Chapters 16, 5 |
| | November 12 th | Postmortem Interval Estimation | Chapters 16, 5 |
| 11 | November 17 th | Methods of Personal Identification | Chapter 18 |
| | November 19 th | Report Writing and Expert Witness Testimony | In class materials |
| 12 | November 24 th | Role in Medical Examiner's Offices | In class materials |
| | November 26th | Thanksgiving | No class |
| 13 | December 1 st | Role in Mass Disasters | In class materials |
| | December 3 rd | Role in Humanitarian Forensic Action | In class materials |
| 14 | December 8 th | Solving the mystery: from human remains to missing persons investigations | Final Exam-Due December 20th |
| | December 10 th | | |