

ANTH 479/579 Taphonomy: Bones, Bugs, and Burials

INSTRUCTOR: Jeanne McLaughlin, Ph.D.

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Office: 369/355 Condon

Office Hours: Office Hours: MW 1130-1300 hrs TR 0800-0900 hrs held in Condon 368/369, and
Online office hours MW 1200-1300 hours and TR 1400-1500 or by appt

GE: Aileen Fernandez

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Online office hours TBA on canvas

CLASS HOURS: Online between 6/25 and 7/20/2018

REQUIRED TEXTS: No required text-course material will be made available online

OPTIONAL TEXTS:

Pokines, J, SA Symes, and C Roper (editors) (PSR). 2013. *Manual of Forensic Taphonomy*. CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL

Behrensmeyer, AK, and AP Hill (editors). 1980. *Fossils in the Making: Vertebrate Taphonomy and Paleoecology*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

Lyman, RL. 1994. *Vertebrate Taphonomy*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, U.K.

Shipman, P. 1981. *The Life History of a Fossil: An Introduction to Taphonomy and Paleoecology*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Haglund, WD and MH Sorg (editors)(HS). 1997. *Forensic Taphonomy: The Postmortem Fate of Human Remains*. CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL

Haglund, WD and MH Sorg (editors). 2002. *Advances in Forensic Taphonomy: Method, Theory, and Archaeological Perspectives*. CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Taphonomy is the study of what happens to an organism after its death until its time of recovery. This includes several processes that preserve and destroy the remains, such as; decomposition, postmortem transport, burial, and various other biological and non-biological factors. This course teaches the basic theory and interpretation of remains in the science of taphonomy. The course will include discussion of the application of taphonomic studies in the fields of paleontology, archaeology, and forensic/medico-legal anthropology. There will be discussion of micro and macroscopic modifications to bone caused by a variety of factors including; surface versus burial deposition, weathering, water, human and nonhuman modification, and thermal alteration. Reconstruction and interpretation of scenes or collections of material will be analyzed and critiqued and students will propose research ideas to fill current gaps in our understanding of these processes.

This course is online and all specific course materials will be available on the canvas site. Power point presentations will be available for some topics to provide background for students. Students will also be expected to locate and read peer reviewed articles and use resources not provided by the instructor.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES: After taking this course you will be able to:

- Explain how taphonomic studies in forensics, archaeology, and paleontology overlap and are used across the three disciplines
- Explain how taphonomic studies in forensics, archaeology, and paleontology differ significantly from one another
- Explain the common impacts of different types of taphonomic processes on bone
- Critically evaluate research and interpretations in studies of taphonomy
- Propose novel research in the field of taphonomy

GRADING POLICY:

Assessment Inventory. Grades in ANTH 479 will be determined based on the following assessment inventory:

Weekly questions/scenarios	4 at 30 pts each (120 points)
Participation in discussions	50 points
Total:	170 pts

Grades in ANTH 579 will be determined based on the following assessment inventory:

Weekly Paper	4 papers @ 30 pts (120 pts)
Research final paper	40 points
Online discussions	40 points
	200 points

Grading Rubric – specific rubrics will be available on canvas for each assignment

A+ 97-100%	B+ 87-89%	C+ 77-79%	D+ 67-69%	F <60%
A 93-96%	B 83-86%	C 73-76%	D 63-66%	
A- 90-92%	B- 80-82%	C- 70-72%	D- 60-62%	

This course follows the approved Department of Anthropology Statement on Grades, which is as follows:

A+: Quality of student's performance significantly exceeds all requirements and expectations required for an A grade. Very few, if any, students receive this grade in a given course.

A: Quality of performance is outstanding relative to that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at the highest level.

B: Quality of performance is significantly above that required to meet course requirements; demonstrates mastery of course content at a high level.

C: Quality of performance meets the course requirements in every respect; demonstrates adequate understanding of course content.

D: Quality of performance is at the minimal level necessary to pass the course, but does not fully meet the course requirements; demonstrates a marginal understanding of course content.

F: Quality of performance in the course is unacceptable and does not meet the course requirements; demonstrates an inadequate understanding of course content.

Online Discussion Participation: Each week a question/topic about the assigned reading will be posed, this question or prompt will appear on Tuesday each week. Each student will be expected to respond and/or pose additional questions by Thursday each week. Each student will also be expected to respond to two other student posts between Thursday and Saturday each week (10pts each week).

Graduate students will also pose their own questions to the class and participate in the discussion online. Week 1 will have an additional discussion post requirement that introduces you to the class and chooses a time period (forensic, archaeology, paleontology) which you will be discussing each week. This post will open Monday and is due by Tuesday of the first week (5pts). The final week of class will also have an additional post that will close the course (5pts). Specific guidelines will be posted on canvas (refer to tips and guidelines document as well)

Weekly papers: Each week you will be given a scenario/topic/or assignment. Each student will formulate a paper that answers the question or discusses the topic using course material and additional resources (all cited properly) to support their answers. These will be posed to the students on Wednesday each week and the responses will be due by Sunday 10pm. Specific guidelines will be posted on canvas each week (refer to tips and guidelines document as well)

Final paper: Graduate students will produce a final paper, which will summarize a research proposal to examine or conduct fieldwork/research in the field of taphonomy. The proposed work can be actual or theoretical, and will include what the research would consist of in general terms, legalities of work, who would issue permits, etc. Specific guidelines will be posted on canvas.

COURSE POLICIES:

Participation Policy. Participation in online discussion is mandatory for successful completion of the class. As many of the points come from group discussion the whole class depends on each student's participation.

Academic Integrity. Work submitted in this course must be your own. Violations of any form of academic dishonesty or the appearance of (cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, etc.) are taken seriously. We follow all of the principles of the University of Oregon's student code of conduct. For more information see: <http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode.aspx>

Students with disabilities: If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with the instructor soon. Also please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter outlining your approved accommodations. [Disability Services: disabsrv@darkwing.uoregon.edu, 346-1155; <http://ds.uoregon.edu/>

Incompletes: In this course, an incomplete grade will be used in accordance with the official university grading policy, which can be found at http://registrar.uoregon.edu/incomplete_policy

Open Learning Environment: The intention and structure of university level courses are to provide open, thoughtful forums for a wide variety of topics. While discussing these topics, note that "The University of Oregon affirms and actively promotes the right of all individuals to equal opportunity in education and employment at this institution without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, marital status, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other consideration not directly and substantively related to effective performance. This policy implements all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and executive orders" as outlined in the handbook on the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. <http://aaeo.uoregon.edu/AEEO%20Booklet%20Color.pdf>

Accessible Education: The University of Oregon is dedicated to the principles of equal opportunity in education and accepts diversity as an affirmation of individual identity within a welcoming community. Disability is recognized as an aspect of diversity integral to the university and to society. Please see the following link for more information: <http://aec.uoregon.edu/>

University Career Center: The Career Center exists to provide career and job search services and resources to UO students and alumni. Our mission is to help you develop long-term career goals and strategies, facilitate self-exploration and discovery, connect with potential employers, and empower and challenge you to fulfill your potential. We look forward to serving as your advocate as you pursue an inspired and fulfilling future. The UO Career Center is a part of the Division of Student Affairs and has offices in Hendricks Hall on the UO campus and in the White Stag Block at the University of Oregon in Portland. Please see the following link for more information: <http://career.uoregon.edu/>

COURSE SCHEDULE: is tentative and subject to change and it is your responsibility to make sure you have the most up to date information

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	Introduction/What is taphonomy Time perspectives: Forensic, Archaeology, Paleontology Early decomposition processes
2	Biological Agents: Dispersal and Accumulation Microbial Entomological Flora Fauna (scavengers (water and land) and avian)
3	Abiotic Agents Weathering Wind Water Fire Soil/Burial
4	Humans as agents: Deposition and Dispersal Fracture timing and Recovery- interpretation of remains Reconstruction from other materials- plants, pollen, wood, cloth, etc
