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.

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
• Grading: Grading will be based on participation in analyses, presentations, writeups of cases, and overall professionalism. This accounts for 60% 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. This semester we will work on updating the forensic anthropology bibliography (see below) and this will count for 15% 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.

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.

Bibliography Project

Over the years we have been building a bibliography of resources in forensic anthropology for us all to use. For several reasons this bibliography hasn’t been updated since 2008, though I’ve been collecting interesting things that students have found.

There are 10 categories in the existing bibliography: age, ancestry, bioarchaeology, carnivore/rodent damage, miscellaneous, pathology/trauma, search/excavation, sex, stature/weight, taphonomy/entomology. For this project we will divide up these categories and do online searches for new (since 2007) resources using Web of Science and JSTOR. I will integrate your efforts with the existing bibliography and we can all have copies of everything.