



Winter 2025
January 10 to March 14, 2025
Room A 100

Afternoons: 12:50 to 2:50 p.m.

Chair: Danielle Morin

Co-chair: Sue Ferguson

Course **Flesh and Bone: An Introduction to Forensic Anthropology**

Course Director **Dr. Myriam Nafte**

As a forensic anthropologist, Dr. Myriam Nafte is an active advisor and consultant for criminal casework across North America. She received a Specialized Honours BA in Medical Anthropology from York University, a BEd degree in Science from Brock University, and completed an MA and PhD in Physical Anthropology [Skeletal Biology] at McMaster University. Currently, Dr. Nafte is an instructor at McMaster University where she teaches upper-level courses on Global Health, Infectious Disease, and Narratives of Health and Illness. Dr. Nafte is the author of numerous articles and books including *Flesh and Bone: An Introduction to Forensic Anthropology*; *Crime and Measurement*; *The Skin of Murder Victims* [Editor], and the forthcoming anthology *Trophies and Talismans: The Traffic of Human Remains*.

This lecture series explores the fascinating world of forensic anthropology and the detailed process of analyzing human remains. Alongside the fast-paced field of criminal investigations, we'll look at the various tools and techniques that allow the human skeleton to reveal its complex layers of history, identity, and culture. Please note: Each lecture may be presented individually or as part of a course package.

Week 1 **January 10**

Crime and Measurement The evolving field of forensics has no difficulty keeping up with increasingly sophisticated crimes. Here we begin with an overview of the specialists tasked with criminal investigations, and the most up to date technology used to process an array of death scenes and physical evidence.

Week 2 **January 17**

Bones are Forever Due to the durability of bone, it can be recovered in various conditions and still offer vital information. Find out how human remains are assessed, and the role of a forensic anthropologist in determining the sequence of events at a death scene.

Week 3 **January 24**

The Time of Your Life In determining the forensic significance of human remains, it is critical to establish the context of time. Were the remains deposited last week or a thousand years ago? Here we explore the many clues and procedures that define the context of a burial and the subsequent direction of all death investigations.

Week 4 January 31

Indigenous Bodies Then Indigenous remains and their associated grave goods were once considered hot commodities that commanded scholarship and hordes of museum visitors until a sudden arrest at the ROM. This lecture discusses what happened at the Royal Ontario Museum that led to dramatic changes in both ethics and laws regarding archaeological practices and the rights of the Indigenous dead.

Week 5 February 7

Indigenous Bodies Now In the province of Saskatchewan a preliminary investigation by Cowessess First Nation led to the discovery of at least 750 unmarked graves near the former Marieval Indian Residential School. As a follow up to the previous lecture, we'll explore the status of these graves along with the many others recently uncovered across the U.S.

Week 6 February 14

Mortui Vivo Docent - The Dead Teach the Living I It is assumed that once a body has decomposed, an identification is no longer possible. However, an individual's biological identity is not altogether lost through skeletonization. Here we delve into the traits and characteristics on bone that reveal one's life long after their death.

Week 7 February 21

Mortui Vivo Docent - The Dead Teach the Living II A skull fracture that occurred years before death may not be pertinent to a homicide investigation. However, if the fracture occurred at, or around the time of death, it becomes crucial evidence. Learn how various forms of trauma are identified on bone along with a 'behind the scenes' look at some of the most high-profile homicide cases.

Week 8 February 28

Let's Face It Facial reconstruction on a human skull is a controversial and complex process that combines knowledge of human anatomy with artistic ability. Though it was often used to recreate famous faces of the past it has since been applied to a number of cold cases. In this lecture, we uncover the method and the madness of facial reconstruction as well as those of several John and Jane Doe cases that have yet to be solved.

Week 9 March 7

Trophies and Talismans I Law enforcement is often at odds with how to proceed when discovering human remains in private collections or displayed as art. Against the backdrop of plundered graves and private auctions, this two-part lecture is a journey into how and why the undisposed dead have become such emblematic features of contemporary culture.

Week 10 March 14

Trophies and Talismans II It has been incorrectly asserted that the early Catholic Church forbid human dissection. However, many of the Church's practices of making relics from human body parts formed the basis of the first autopsies and anatomical treatises. This final lecture explores how a generation of Renaissance artists were inspired by human dissection and subsequently embedded symbols of this practice in their work. See art from a forensic anthropological perspective, as a secret dialogue is revealed between the human body, religion, and an emerging science.