

**BIOARCHAEOLOGY**  
**Anthropology Department; SJSU**

ANTH 156 Section 1 (Class Code: 28173)  
Tuesdays & Thursdays 1330-1445

Spring 2009  
WSQ 004

**Dr. Elizabeth Weiss**

**Office:** CL 404R

**Office Hours:** TR 1500 – 1615; MW 1330-1445 (Or available by appointment via prior arrangement)

**If you have any concerns about your class performance or comprehension, please come by my office during office hours or schedule an appointment. I am always willing to help students and I care about whether students are grasping the material and enjoying the class.**

**Phone:** 408-924-5546

**E-mail:** eweiss@email.sjsu.edu

**COURSE WEB PAGE:** [http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty\\_and\\_staff/course\\_detail.jsp?id=887](http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty_and_staff/course_detail.jsp?id=887)

**Course Description**

Bioarchaeology is the study of human skeletal remains from archaeological sites to aid in reconstructing the biology and culture of past populations. This course is an overview of bioarchaeological theory, methods, and applications with an emphasis the most common methods and their complications. This class will focus on current theoretical and methodological issues in bioarchaeology. There will be an emphasis on the potential of skeletal analyses for the uncovering disease and trauma, subsistence patterns as well as biological relatedness, physical activity and the diverse reactions to stressors. Hands-on labs will be integrated into the regular class sessions.

Course Goals:

Anth 156 has several specific learning objectives. By the completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Think critically about issues regarding skeletal material in the archaeological record;
- Recognize a testable hypothesis;
- Recognize the difficulties in reconstructing past lifestyles;
- Understanding methodologies used in interpreting skeletal remains;
- Understand complexities of separating causes and correlations;
- Understand the biology and culture of human diversity as seen in skeletal materials.

Departmental Learning Objectives and Skills:

The department of anthropology also has key learning objectives and skills that we wish students to obtain. By the completion of this course, students should have an increased:

- 1) Understanding culture as the distinguishing phenomenon of human life, and the relationships of human biology and cultural processes in human behavior and evolution.
- 2) Awareness of human diversity and the ways in which humans categorize diversity.
- 3) Knowledge of the significant findings of archaeology, cultural anthropology, and physical anthropology, and familiarity of the important issues in each sub-discipline.
- 4) Knowledge of the history of anthropological thought and its place in modern intellectual history.
- 5) Comprehension of migration, colonialism, and economic integration as significant phenomena shaping global society.
- 6) Ability to access various forms of anthropological data and literature.
- 7) Awareness of the importance and value of anthropological knowledge in contemporary society, and the ability to apply it to social issues.
- 8) Knowledge of the research methods of the sub-disciplines of anthropology, and ability to apply

- appropriate research methods in at least one sub-discipline.
- 9) Ability to present and communicate anthropological knowledge and the results of anthropological research to different audiences.
  - 10) Knowledge of political and ethical implications of social research.

### Attaining the Course Objectives/Goals

This course is primarily about the use of skeletal materials in order to reconstruct the past and understand human prehistory. The evidence relating to human prehistory is used to illustrate cultural and biological processes. In addressing the fundamental questions relating to the human past, you will be challenged to think critically, apply sound scientific methodologies, understand and assess quantitative data, and communicate your knowledge.

At SJSU, students are encouraged to recognize that education is participatory experience. Thus, each student is expected to contribute to further refining the course objectives (so better to articulate your individual expectations and needs), to give feedback to the instructor regarding the adequacy of your learning and how well the course assessment measures that learning (and how these assessment tools can be improved). Finally, each student is challenged to be engaged in the exploration of the fascinating material covered this semester, to participate in class discussions, and to relate in assignments and exercises how you can apply these concepts to your everyday life.

The most important contribution this course can make to your education is to provide you with greater ability to think critically. As a result, this skill will contribute permanently to your further education, that it, for the remainder of your lifetime.

### **REQUIRED TEXT**

Larsen, CS. Bioarchaeology: Interpreting behavior from the human skeleton. Cambridge University Press, 1997.

### **Course Requirements**

There will be a midterm, an abstract, a writing assignment, a presentation, and a final. The midterm and final include the understanding of the reading assignments and lecture topics. The final will be **comprehensive** and will be given at the **scheduled exam time**. Additionally, there will be in-class and take home assignments to assist in the exams and encourage class discussion and participation.

### **Writing Assignment and Presentation**

Each student will prepare a 5 to 8 page research paper. Papers must be centered around a bioarchaeology topic such as: Growth and Response to Stress, Culture Contact and Migration, Hunting and Gathering and the Agricultural Revolution, Evidence of Infectious Diseases, Bilateral Asymmetry and Culture, etc. using the American Journal of Physical Anthropology Style Guide. An abstract of the paper will be due April 24th. Final papers are due the 10<sup>th</sup> of May (Thursday).

Students will be required to prepare a 5 to 8 minute presentation on their research topic.

### **Grading**

In-class or Take Home Assignments	10%
Abstract of Research Paper	05%
Research Paper	15%
Presentation	10%
Midterm	25%
Final	35%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Grading is as followed:

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>F</b>
97% - 100% = A+ 91-96% = A 90% = A-	87-89% = B+ 81-86% = B 80% = B-	77-79% = C+ 71-76% = C 70% = C-	67-69% = D+ 61-66% = D 60% = D-	59% and Below = F

By filling out the below table students should be able to determine their progress in the course.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Assignment Grade</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Weighted Grade</b>	<b>Grade<sup>1</sup></b>
In-class/Take home work		X 0.10 =		
Abstract		X 0.05 =		
Research Paper		X 0.15 =		
Presentation		X 0.10		
Midterm		X 0.25 =		
Final		X 0.35 =		
<b>GRADE<sup>1</sup></b>				

<sup>1</sup> Add all the weighted grade numbers together to get your grade.

### Make-up Work

If you know in advance that you should be unable to attend an exam, it is your responsibility to contact me immediately by either e-mailing or telephoning me, leaving a message for me at the main department office, or coming by during my office hours.

Only students with a valid documented excuse will be able to take a make-up exam or hand in a late assignment. Late assignments will not be accepted otherwise.

### LATE PAPERS

- Papers are due at the beginning of class.
- No late papers without a documented valid excuse will be accepted.
  - Documents need to be official and verifiable, such as hospital receipts, police records, etc.
  - Events that occur the night before the paper is due will not be accepted as an excuse since your paper should be done or nearly done by that time.
- No emailed papers, papers slid under my office door, or put in my office box will be accepted without prior permission.
- Occurrences that involve family members or friends will be considered only with documentation and collaborative evidence of relationships and the necessity of your attendance.
- EACH EXCUSE WILL BE EVALUATED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS AND ALL DECISIONS ARE FINAL.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

- E-mails will only be answered in order to make appointments to see me in my office.
  - I will not answer questions about what occurred in class due to an absence, paper topics, research, or missing assignments.
- You must sign up with the Disability Resource Center to get any special consideration regarding any disability.
- Students are responsible for understanding policies about adding, dropping, academic renewal, and incompletes.
- Students are responsible for being aware of assignment due dates, midterm date, and the final exam schedule.
- Students who miss classes should keep up with course readings and obtain notes from a classmate.
- If you have any concerns about your class performance or comprehension, come by my office during office hours or schedule an appointment. I am always willing to help students and I care about whether students are grasping the material and enjoying the class.
- Library Liaison For Anthropology: Bernice Redfern; Librarian; (408) 808-2038; [Bernice.Redfern@sjsu.edu](mailto:Bernice.Redfern@sjsu.edu)

#### **UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE, OR DEPARTMENTAL POLICY INFORMATION**

##### Academic integrity statement (from Office of Judicial Affairs):

"Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San José State University and the University's Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty are required to report all infractions to the Office of Judicial Affairs. The policy on academic integrity can be found at <http://www2.sjsu.edu/senate/S04-12.pdf>"

##### Campus policy in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act:

"If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with DRC to establish a record of their disability."

**COURSE OUTLINE**

Date	Topic	Assigned Readings
Jan. 22	Introduction	Chapter 1: 1-5
27	Growth and Development	Chapter 2: 6-29
29	Childhood Stress	Chapter 2: 29-56
Feb. 03	Adult Stress	Chapter 2: 56-63
05	Infectious Pathogens: Teeth and Gums	Chapter 3: 64-81
10	Infectious Pathogens: Nonspecific	Chapter 3: 81-92
12	Infectious Pathogens: Specific	
17	Injury and Violent Death: Case Studies	Chapter 3: 93-108
19	Injury and Violent Death: Interpretations	Chapter 4: 109-151
24	Activity Patterns: Osteoarthritis	Chapter 4: 152-160
26	Activity Patterns: Muscle Markers	Chapter 5: 161-185
Mar. 03	Activity Patterns: Stress Fractures	Chapter 5: 185-190
05	Activity Patterns: Cross-sections	Chapter 5: 190-194
10	Activity Patterns: Bone Health	Chapter 6: 195-219
11	Activity Patterns: Complications	
17	Midterm Review	Chapter 6: 219-225
19	MIDTERM	
24	SPRING BREAK	
26	SPRING BREAK	
31	Cesar Chavez Day – No Class	Chapter 7: 226-
Apr. 02	Craniofacial Morphology	
242		
07	Dental Wear	Chapter 7: 242-269
09	Isotope Analyses and Diet	Chapter 8: 270-301
14	Isotope Analyses and Diet	
16	Discussion of Paper	
21	Genetic Relationships: Skeletal Methods	Chapter 9: 302-
310 23	Genetic relationship case studies (Abstracts Due)	Chapter 9: 310-332
28	New Methods of Genetic testing	Chapter 10: 333-342
30	The Future of Bioarchaeology	
May 05	Presentations Begins	
07	Presentations Continue (Writing Assignment Due)	
12	Final Review	

Last day to Drop – Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>

Last day to Add – Feb. 10<sup>TH</sup>

**FINAL EXAM: Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 1215-1430**