

UCL INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

ARCL0117: METHODOLOGY AND ISSUES IN BIOARCHAEOLOGY
AND PALAEOEPIDEMIOLOGY

2023 – 2024, Term 2

MSc module

15 Credits

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING ASSESSMENTS

The **coursework coversheet** is available here: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students> under “Policies, Forms and Guidelines”.

Please enter your **five-digit candidate code** on the coversheet and as the file name when you upload your work in Moodle.

Please refer to <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students/ioa-student-handbook/13-information-assessment>

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students/ioa-study-skills-guide/referencing-effectively-and-ioa-guidelines>

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/academic-integrity> <https://library-guides.ucl.ac.uk/referencing-plagiarism/acknowledging-AI>

for instructions on coursework submission, IoA referencing guidelines and marking criteria, as well as UCL policies on penalties for late submission, over-length work, the use of text generation software (AI) and academic misconduct.

1. MODULE OVERVIEW

Module description

In this half-unit, Term 2 module students will be taught how to analyse archaeological skeletons according to current industry standards and will learn how to demonstrate their findings in a professional osteological report. This will involve the practical application of skills and methods developed in other core modules, including human skeletal anatomy, age and sex estimation, metric and non-metric variation and palaeopathology. It will introduce students to some of the recent and developing topics in the bioarchaeological literature which have used these methods to examine palaeoepidemiological trends.

Module aims

This module is intended to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the methods and standards required to carry out the osteological analysis of an assemblage of archaeological skeletons and to produce a professional report to demonstrate the findings. The application of these methods to the investigation of recent and developing topics in palaeoepidemiology will be explored.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this course, students would be expected to:

- be able to fill out the skeletal recording forms used in British commercial archaeology
- understand the codes used to record information on recording forms and reference databases
- be able to write a commercial report to demonstrate the findings
- have a sound knowledge of the methods used to estimate age and sex, record metric and non-metric information and palaeopathological information
- be able to discuss some of the applications of these methods to investigate current trends in palaeoepidemiological research

Methods of assessment

This module is assessed by means of a professional-style osteological report of approx. 3,000 words (100% of the final module mark).

Communications

- Moodle is the main hub for this module
- Important information will be posted by staff in the announcements section of the Moodle page and you will automatically receive an email notification of these
- Please post any general queries relating to the module content, assessments and administration in the Moodle forum (or via email if you prefer)
- For personal queries, please contact the module co-ordinators by email

Week-by-week summary

Practical sessions will take place on Thursdays in room 308 of the Institute of Archaeology at the following times: **Group A:** 10:00-13:00, **Group B:** 14:00-17:00. You will join ONE practical group, details of which will be announced in advance of the class. Prior to the first session a list will be circulated, asking you to indicate any times that you CANNOT do. The module co-ordinator will then assign you to a group and the list will be circulated via email.

Week	Lecture / Seminar Topic	Practical
1	Lecture: Role of the osteologist in commercial archaeology	The skeletal recording form
2	Seminar: Commercial reports	Physical examination of human remains
3	Seminar: aDNA and disease	Physical examination of human remains
4	Seminar: Methodological advances	Physical examination of human remains
5	Seminar: DOHaD	Physical examination of human remains
6	Reading week	
7	Seminar: Diet	Physical examination of human remains
8	Seminar: Childhood in the past	Physical examination of human remains
9	Seminar: War and conflict	Physical examination of human remains
10	Seminar: Care and treatment	Physical examination of human remains
11	No seminar	Physical examination of human remains

Weekly module plan

The module is taught through practical sessions, which will be supplemented by lectures and seminars. Through these, students will be introduced to various concepts and methods that have been used to enhance aspects of palaeoepidemiological assessment in the current bioarchaeological literature. Each week will consist of a three-hour session in the bone lab, which

includes one hour of lecture / seminar, followed by two hours of skeletal recording. The objective is to guide students through the recording forms used in commercial archaeology, and to develop an understanding of the codes used to record information in reference databases. Over the course of the module students are expected to examine and record a minimum of 14 archaeological skeletons, at least five of which must be non-adults.

Workload

This is a 15 credit module which equates to 150 hours of learning time including session preparation, background reading, and researching and writing your assignments. With that in mind you should expect to organise your time in roughly this way:

33 hours	<i>Staff-led teaching sessions (lectures, practical sessions)</i>
62 hours	<i>Independent practical work (recording, data entry), about 5 hours a week</i>
55 hours	<i>Independent research in preparation for assessed work (reading example reports, analyzing data, finding comparative literature, writing the report)</i>

2. ASSESSMENT

The module is assessed by means of an osteological report which reflects the style used in British commercial osteoarchaeology. The report should be based on skeletons that students have recorded during the practical classes. The assignment will be discussed in class, in advance of the submission deadline. If students are unclear about the nature of an assignment, they should discuss this with the module co-ordinators in advance (via office hours or online forum). You will receive feedback on your written assignments via Moodle, and have the opportunity to discuss your marks and feedback with the co-ordinator in their drop-in hours.

For more details see the 'Assessment' section on Moodle. The coursework coversheet is available on the course Moodle page and here: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students> under "Policies, Forms and Guidelines. Please make sure you enter your five-digit candidate code on the coversheet and in the subject line when you upload your work in Moodle.

The [loA marking criteria](#) can be found in the loA Student Handbook (Section 13: Information on assessment) and the [loA Study Skills Guide](#) provides useful guidance on writing different types of assignment.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) is a form of AI that can be used to produce new content including images, audio, video and text. The use of AI software to generate content for your essay is not permitted. You can, however, use AI software to check the grammar, spelling

and punctuation of your writing. Should you choose to use any form of AI software it must be acknowledged in the relevant section of the coursework coversheet. Please note that **late submission, exceeding the maximum word count and academic misconduct (unacknowledged use of text generation software and plagiarism)** will be penalized and can significantly reduce the mark awarded for the assignment and/or overall module result. Serious offences will be punishable by death.

On requirements, please do consult

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/current-students/ia-student-handbook/13-information-assessment> with sections 13.7-8: coursework submission, 13.10: word count, 13.12-14: academic integrity

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/academic-integrity> for UCL's guidance on academic integrity

<https://library-guides.ucl.ac.uk/referencing-plagiarism/acknowledging-AI> for UCL's guidance on how to acknowledge the use of text generation software.

Assessment: Osteological Report

Word length: 3,000 words

Deadline: Friday 26th April

The report will present the results of the osteological analysis and should include; a brief summary of the original excavation, preservation and completeness, age and sex estimation, metric and non-metric variation, and details of any pathology. You should then summarise the findings of your sub-sample and use these to state what inferences could be made about the rest of the Chichester assemblage. Further details and specific guidance will be provided during the term.

3. RESOURCES AND PREPARATION FOR CLASS

Preparation for class

You are expected to become familiar with the reading list over the course of the module. This is essential for your effective preparation in the activities, and will greatly enhance your understanding of the material covered.

Online reading list: <https://rl.talis.com/3/ucl/lists/CC694131-3F2A-F84D-7AF7-4B5436A8E69B.html>

Recommended texts and online resources

- Bass, W.M. 1979. *Human Osteology, a Laboratory and Field Manual of the Human Skeleton*. Columbia: Missouri Archaeological Society. IoA Library BB 2 BAS

- Brickley, M. & McKinley, J.I. 2004. *Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains*. BABAO/IFA Paper no.7. Available on Moodle.
- Buikstra, J.E. & Ubelaker, D.H. 1994. *Standards for Data Collection from Human Skeletal Remains*. Arkansas Archeological Survey Research Series No 44. Fayetteville: Arkansas Archeological Survey. Available in room 308, or IoA Library BB 2 BUI
- Connell, B. & Rauxloh, P. 2003. *A Rapid Method for Recording Human Skeletal Data. Oracle Manual*. Museum of London Archaeology Service/Museum of London. Available on Moodle.
- Ossafreelance. 2005. *A Field Guide to the Excavation of Inhumated Human Remains*. BAJR Practical Guide Series. Guide 14. Available on Moodle.
- Powers, N. 2008. *Human Osteology Method Statement*. Museum of London Archaeology Service/Museum of London. Available on Moodle.
- Scheuer, L. & Black, S. 2000. *Developmental Juvenile Osteology*. San Diego: Academic Press. IoA Library BB 2 SCH <https://www-sciencedirect-com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/book/9780126240009/developmental-juvenile-osteology>
- Waldron, T. 2007. *Palaeoepidemiology*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press. IoA Library JF WAL
- Waldron, T. 2008. *Palaeopathology*. Cambridge Manuals in Archaeology. Cambridge University Press. IoA Library JF WAL <https://www-cambridge-org.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/core/books/palaeopathology/C7A91F13FD03CAC2E13C21324BCB1251>
- White, T.D. & Folkens, P.A. 2005. *The Human Bone Manual*. New York: Academic Press. Institute of Archaeology Library BB 2 WHI <https://www-sciencedirect-com.libproxy.ucl.ac.uk/book/9780120884674/the-human-bone-manual>