MASTER SYLLABUS

COURSE NUMBER – COURSE NAME
JUST 370 – Forensic Taphonomy

Created by: Carrie LeGarde
Updated by: Carrie LeGarde

School of Science, Health, and Criminal Justice
Department: Criminal Justice
Semester/Year: Fall 2021
A. **TITLE:** Forensic Taphonomy

B. **COURSE NUMBER:** JUST 370

C. **CREDIT HOURS:** (Hours of Lecture, Laboratory, Recitation, Tutorial, Activity)

   # Credit Hours: 3
   # Lecture Hours: 3 per week
   # Lab Hours: per week
   Other: per week

   Course Length: 15 Weeks

D. **WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE:** Yes ☐ No ☒

E. **GER CATEGORY:** None: ☐ Yes: GER

   *If course satisfies more than one:* GER

F. **SEMESTER(S) OFFERED:** Fall ☒ Spring ☐ Fall & Spring ☐

G. **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

   This course is an introduction to forensic taphonomy, including an overview of forensic anthropology and archaeology. The course provides a history of forensic anthropology, archaeology, and taphonomy, as well as current challenges and future directions. Specific topics to be covered include the depositional environment, postmortem modifications affecting human remains, and estimating the postmortem interval.

H. **PRE-REQUISITES:** None ☐ Yes ☒ If yes, list below:

   45 credit hours or permission of the instructor.

   **CO-REQUISITES:** None ☐ Yes ☐ If yes, list below:
### I. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: *(see key below)*

By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Student Learning Outcome [SLO]</th>
<th>Program Student Learning Outcome [PSLO]</th>
<th>GER [If Applicable]</th>
<th>ISLO &amp; SUBSETS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Define forensic anthropology, archaeology, and taphonomy.</td>
<td>2-Crit Think ISLO ISLO</td>
<td>CA Subsets Subsets Subsets</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Understand general postmortem processes.</td>
<td>2-Crit Think ISLO ISLO</td>
<td>CA Subsets Subsets Subsets</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. Describe postmortem processes.</td>
<td>2-Crit Think ISLO ISLO</td>
<td>CA Subsets Subsets Subsets</td>
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<td>d. Demonstrate an understanding of the depositional environment.</td>
<td>2-Crit Think ISLO ISLO</td>
<td>CA Subsets Subsets Subsets</td>
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<td>e. Understand and apply the postmortem interval.</td>
<td>2-Crit Think ISLO ISLO</td>
<td>CA Subsets Subsets Subsets</td>
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<tr>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Institutional Student Learning Outcomes [ISLO 1 – 5]</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISLO #</td>
<td>ISLO &amp; Subsets</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 1 | Communication Skills  
Oral [O], Written [W] |
| 2 | Critical Thinking  
Critical Analysis [CA], Inquiry & Analysis [IA], Problem Solving [PS] |
| 3 | Foundational Skills  
Information Management [IM], Quantitative Lit./Reasoning [QTR] |
| 4 | Social Responsibility  
Ethical Reasoning [ER], Global Learning [GL], Intercultural Knowledge [IK], Teamwork [T] |
| 5 | Industry, Professional, Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills |

*Include program objectives if applicable. Please consult with Program Coordinator*
J. **APPLIED LEARNING COMPONENT:** Yes ☐ No ☒

If YES, select one or more of the following categories:

- Classroom/Lab
- Internship
- Clinical Placement
- Practicum
- Service Learning
- Community Service
- Civic Engagement
- Creative Works/Senior Project
- Research
- Entrepreneurship
  (program, class, project)

K. **TEXTS:**


L. **REFERENCES:**


M. **EQUIPMENT:** None ☒ Needed:

N. **GRADING METHOD:** A-F

O. **SUGGESTED MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS:**

Quizzes, exams, papers, assignments/discussion boards

P. **DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE:**

I. Introduction to taphonomy
   a. Definitions of taphonomy
   b. History of forensic archaeology and taphonomy
   c. Link between forensic anthropology and taphonomy
II. History of forensic anthropology
   a. Development of the field of forensic anthropology
   b. Forensic anthropology research facilities
III. General postmortem processes
a. Postmortem changes in the human body
b. Taphonomic alterations to hair, nails, and teeth

IV. The depositional environment
a. Bone weathering
b. Aquatic environments
c. Animal scavenging
d. Forensic entomology and botany

V. Postmortem modifications to the body
a. Chemical changes
b. Thermal alterations
c. Peri- vs post-mortem trauma
d. Effects of recovery methods

VI. The postmortem interval
a. Estimating time and circumstances since death
b. Confounding variables

Q. LABORATORY OUTLINE: None ☐ Yes ☑