

## **INSTRUCTOR**

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 9:30AM – 11:00AM and 3:00PM – 5:00PM, Friday 9:30AM – 11:00AM, or by appointment.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

FS 460 Forensic Taphonomy (3)

Processes associated with the decomposition and preservation of organic materials with an emphasis placed on human remains. *Prerequisites: CH 323/L. Concurrent registration in FS 460L required.*

## **STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Each student will finish this class with the ability to:

- Identify and discuss processes of decomposition (Program Learning Objective 3)
- Define and discuss the effect of environmental variables on decomposition (Program Learning Objective 3)
- Discuss the application of taphonomy to medicolegal death investigation (Program Learning Outcome 3)
- Discuss the value of common and recently developed techniques in forensic taphonomy (Program Learning Outcome 4)

## **REQUIRED TEXT**

All reading materials will be provided as a PDF via Canvas or Sullivan Family Library.

**EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE***Oral Presentations*

Each student will be required to deliver three oral presentations on relevant class topics. Each presentation will be a maximum of 20 minutes and will comprise a review of a journal publication in forensic taphonomy since 2015. Publications must be from the peer-reviewed literature and approved by the instructor.

*Carcass Collection*

Each student must submit 10 images of carcasses observed in nature. Carcasses must be animals, e.g. mammals, insects, reptiles, fish. Images can be captured via smartphone and submitted via email.

*Revenge of the Zam*

A small component of Zam Time did not decompose. It was preserved and it has returned because it feels obligated to provide with you with opportunities to demonstrate your knowledge! Each student will be asked two questions related to topics recently covered in lecture and reading. Answers will be graded as correct or incorrect (0 points or 10 points).

Activity	Points
Oral Presentations x 3	300 @ 100 points per presentation
Carcass Collection x 10	100 @ 10 points per carcass
Revenge of the Zam x 10	100 @ 10 points per question
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>

The grading scale is:

100% - 90%	A
89% - 80%	B
79% - 70%	C
69% - 60%	D
≤ 59%	F

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Notes</b>
1	15 Jan 17 Jan 19 Jan	<b>Class Cancelled</b> <b>Class Cancelled</b> <b>Class Cancelled</b>	<b>Carter @ University College London, UK</b>
2	22 Jan 24 Jan 26 Jan	Introduction, Syllabus, and Roster Review What is Taphonomy? Medicolegal Death Investigation	Haglund and Sorg (1997)
3	29 Jan 31 Jan 2 Feb	The Decomposition of Mammal Remains  Revenge of the Zam	Carter et al. (2007)
4	5 Feb 7 Feb 9 Feb	Methods to Measure Decomposition: Mass Loss and Total Body Score	Spicka et al. (2011) Megyesi et al. (2005) Keough et al. (2017)
5	12 Feb 14 Feb 16 Feb	Factors that Influence Decomposition Accumulated Degree Days Revenge of the Zam	Mann et al. (1990)
6	19 Feb 21 Feb 23 Feb	<b>Class Cancelled</b> <b>Class Cancelled</b> <b>Class Cancelled</b>	<b>American Academy of Forensic Sciences Meeting Seattle, WA</b>
7	26 Feb 28 Feb 2 Mar	Carcass Decomposition Presentations	
8	5 Mar 7 Mar 9 Mar	Postmortem Interval Forensic Entomology and Microbiology Revenge of the Zam	Vass (2011) Maile et al. (2017) Metcalf et al. (2013)
9	12 Mar 14 Mar 16 Mar	<b>Class Cancelled</b> Guest Lecturer – Dr. Katelynn Perrault <b>Class Cancelled</b>	<b>Carter @ OSAC Chicago, IL</b>
10	19 Mar 21 Mar 23 Mar	Locating Clandestine Graves Soils, Detector Dogs, et al. Revenge of the Zam	Vass et al. (1992)
11	26 Mar 28 Mar 30 Mar	<b>Class Cancelled</b> <b>Class Cancelled</b> <b>Class Cancelled</b>	<b>Prince Kuhio Day Spring Recess Good Friday</b>
12	2 Apr 4 Apr 6 Apr	Locating Clandestine Grave Presentations	
13	9 Apr 11 Apr	Identification of the Deceased Guest Lecturer – Carlos Gutierrez, MFS	

	13 Apr	Revenge of the Zam	
14	16 Apr 18 Apr 20 Apr	Identification Presentations	
15	23 Apr 25 Apr 27 Apr	Experimental Data Analysis and Review	
16	30 Apr 2 May 4 May	Experimental Data Analysis and Review	
17	8 May	Wednesday, 9 May 11:00AM – 1:00PM	Finals Week

## ADDITIONAL DIVISIONAL AND UNIVERSITY POLICES

### *Academic Integrity*

Students are expected to follow the Forensic Sciences Code of Conduct. In addition, students are expected to read and abide by the Student Rules of Conduct which are available in your copy of the Student Handbook. Academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated.

### *Absences*

- A planned, excused absence must be communicated to the instructor at least one week prior to class. Necessary arrangements will be made to meet student learning objectives.
- Unexcused absences for two consecutive weeks may result in being withdrawn from the course by the instructor.
- An unplanned, excusable absence must be communicated to the instructor within one week of the missed class. Necessary arrangements will be made to meet student learning objectives.
  - Excused absences include but are not limited to
    - Documented illness or illness
    - Documented family emergency – parent or guardian communication required
    - Determination of other valid excuses for missed classes is at the sole discretion of the instructor.

### *ADAA Statement*

Pursuant to several federal and state laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all qualified students with disabilities are protected from discrimination on basis of disability and are eligible for reasonable accommodations or modifications in the academic environment to enable them to enjoy equal access to

academic programs, services, or activities. If a student would like to determine if they meet the criteria for accommodations, they should contact the Counseling Center at 808-735-4845 for further information.

#### *Policy on Communication*

The University provides a Chaminade email address for all students. Official Chaminade communications will be sent to the students' Chaminade email address and instructors will use this email to communicate with students. It is the responsibility of the student to check their email frequently. Report email-related problems to the Helpdesk at 808-735-4855 or [helpdesk@chaminade.edu](mailto:helpdesk@chaminade.edu).

#### *Title IX Declaration*

Chaminade University of Honolulu recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. Sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse will NOT be tolerated at CUH. If you have been the victim of sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse, we encourage you to report this matter promptly. As a faculty member, I am interested in promoting a safe and healthy environment, and should I learn of any sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse, I must report the matter to the Title IX Coordinator. Should you want to speak to a confidential source you may contact the Chaminade Counseling Center at (808) 735-4845.

#### *Electronic Devices*

Use of music devices is prohibited during all Natural Science and Mathematics classes at Chaminade, unless specifically permitted by your instructor. Use of music devices in laboratories is a safety issue. In addition, use of music devices in any class is discourteous and may lead to suspicion of academic misconduct. Students who cannot comply with this rule will be asked to leave class and may be subject to laboratory safety violation fines. You will be asked to leave class and marked absent if you do not comply. This will negatively affect your grade. Please refer any questions to the Dean of Natural Sciences and Mathematics.

The instructor may modify elements of this syllabus according to the operational needs of the class.