

INSTRUCTOR

David O. Carter, PhD

Director and Associate Professor of Forensic Sciences

Office: 5 Henry Hall
Mailbox: 115 Wesselkamper Science Center
Telephone: + 1 (808) 739 8352
email: david.carter@chaminade.edu



Office Hours Mondays, 3:00PM – 4:30PM
Tuesdays, 10:00AM – 1:00PM
Fridays, 3:00PM – 4:30PM

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)

MARIANIST CHARACTERISTICS

This class represents one component of your education at Chaminade University of Honolulu. An education in the Marianist Tradition is marked by five principles and you should take every opportunity possible to reflect upon the role of these characteristics in your education and development:

1. Education for formation in faith
2. Provide an integral, quality education
3. Educate in family spirit
4. Educate for service, justice and peace
5. Educate for adaptation and change

REQUIRED TEXT

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

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE*Writing Workshops*

This class requires you to complete 3 essay exams. However, we will take the exams in class over 2 – 3 class periods. The primary goal is to develop professional scientific writing skills. The ideal answer is a concise paragraph that references relevant scientific literature. Each exam is worth 100 points and your grade will be based on content, citations, and formatting.

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.

Oral Presentations

Each student will be required to deliver an oral presentation on a relevant class topic. Each presentation will be 10 – 15 minutes and will comprise a review of a journal publication in forensic taphonomy since 2000. Publications must be from the peer-reviewed literature and approved by the instructor.

Activity	Points
Writing Workshop x 3	300 @ 100 points per workshop
Carcass Collection x 10	100 @ 10 points per carcass
Oral Presentation	100
Total	500

The grading scale is:

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

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Week	Monday	Subject	Notes
1	14 Jan	Introduction, Syllabus, and Roster Review Intro to Medicolegal Death Investigation	
2	21 Jan	Intro to Taphonomy What is decomposition?	Martin Luther King Day Marianist Founders Day
3	28 Jan	What is decomposition?	
4	4 Feb	Factors that regulate decomposition	
5	11 Feb	Writing Workshop	
6	18 Feb	Class Cancelled	AAFS – Baltimore, MD Presidents' Day
7	25 Feb	Measuring decomposition: Total Body Score and Mass Loss (Chun, Keough, Megyesi, Dibner)	
8	4 Mar	Identification of the deceased	
9	11 Mar	Cause and Manner of death	
10	18 Mar	Writing Workshop	
11	25 Mar	Class Cancelled	Spring Break Prince Kuhio Day
12	1 Apr	Forensic Entomology and Microbiology	
13	8 Apr	Estimating postmortem interval (PMI) Forensic Geosciences – Soil analysis	
14	15 Apr	Locating clandestine graves Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)	Good Friday
15	22 Apr	Writing Workshop	
16	29 Apr	Student Presentations	
17	6 May	Student Presentations: Wednesday, 8 May, 11:00AM	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.

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.