

LABORATORY TECHNIQUES IN PALEOANTHROPOLOGY
ANTH 6491
SYLLABUS, FALL 2014

(Updated 12 September, 2014)

Most class meetings are scheduled for FRIDAY, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

INSTRUCTOR: Shannon C. McFarlin, Ph.D.
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Office Hours: Wednesday 9:00-11:00am, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Through a series of readings and laboratory visits, students will be introduced to a range of laboratory facilities and research approaches in Palaeoanthropology available in the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan area. The class will meet two hours per week. However, on occasion, off-campus visits may last 4 hours or longer, given travel time to and from sites.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: The following applies for students taking this course for 2 credits

- (1) Students will understand the range of laboratory settings and research opportunities available in the Washington-Baltimore and nearby areas, which are relevant to addressing key research questions in Hominid Paleobiology,
- (2) Students will understand practical constraints and possibilities of major instrumentation available in each laboratory visited, and be able to discuss issues concerning sampling requirements, instrument capabilities and limitations.
- (3) Students will understand the research questions being asked in each laboratory, and be able to contribute to discussions of aims, significance and limitations of the research.
- (4) Students will gain limited hands-on experience and more in depth knowledge (summarized in the form of a written report) of a research protocol used in one of the laboratories visited in the semester.

Note: If you are not taking this course for 2 credits, please inform me on the first day of class.

EVALUATION: The following applies for students taking this course for 2 credits

Attendance to all meetings and your participation in discussion comprises 50% of your final course grade. Students are also expected to complete a practicum (ca. 15 hours) in any one of the labs/techniques explored in the class, and write a report on the research/techniques used (6-9 pages in length). Grades will be calculated as follows:

Class participation	50%
Practicum evaluation (by lab supervisor)	25%
Written report	25%

This written report is an opportunity for you to show us what you've learned during your practicum experience. The best reports are those that weave in motivation and rationale with the methods that you've learned.

READINGS:

Readings will be assigned to introduce you to the research questions and methodological approaches employed in the laboratory to be visited each week. These readings will be distributed one week in advance, and are meant to give you some background understanding of the major research questions addressed and techniques employed by those laboratories. You are expected to complete these readings before the visit, so that you are equipped to contribute to discussions and *ask questions!*

BLACKBOARD:

Once you are registered for this course, you will automatically have access to the Blackboard site associated with it. Go to <https://blackboard.gwu.edu/> and sign in using your email ID and password. We will use Blackboard to communicate announcements, store important documents and external links to web sites of interest that deal with material covered in the course, and provide a way for you to check your grades as the course progresses.

SCHEDULING CONFLICTS:

It is your responsibility to inform faculty during the first week of class (**no later than September 5th**) of any scheduling conflicts that interfere with your ability to attend a class meeting. We will do our best to accommodate your scheduling needs. However, given the number of laboratories participating in this course and scheduling complexities, we cannot make any guarantees.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS:

It is completely acceptable for you to miss class meeting(s) due to observance of a religious holiday, without penalty. However, it is your responsibility to look ahead on the calendar, and notify the instructor no later than the **first week of the semester (no later than September 5th)** of your intention to be absent from class on the day(s) of religious observance.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

I personally support the GW Code of Academic Integrity, and will address breaches of this code accordingly. It states: "Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information." It is your responsibility to read and understand this and other stipulations of GW's Code of Academic Integrity, and complete all class work in accordance with this code. For the remainder of the code, see:

<http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM:

Disability Support Services (DSS). Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information, please refer to <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/>

University Counseling Center (UCC). The Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations; and confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. You can reach the UCC at 202-994-5300. For additional information, please refer to <http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices>

SECURITY:

In the case of emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After the evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.

SCHEDULE OF LABORATORY VISITS:

*NOTE: The following provides a provisional schedule for laboratory visits. Scheduling and travel logistics for these class meetings will be finalized one week in advance. Most laboratory visits on the GW campus will be scheduled for Fridays at 10:00am – 12:00pm. (Where the seminar room is needed, we will meet from 11am-1pm). Off campus visits will require more time, given transportation to and from sites.

WEEK	DATE	LABORATORY	LOCATION: Except where noted, all visits begin at 10am
1	Sept. 5	Course Introduction; Evolutionary Neuroscience (Sherwood)	BB lunch room
2	Sept. 12	Systematics and Comparative Morphology (Wood)	HAH seminar room at 11:00am
3	Sept. 19	SI Conservation Biology Institute Nutrition Lab (O'Malley)	OFF CAMPUS: National Zoo at 9:45 am. Instructions TBD
4	Sept. 26	Stone Age Archaeology Research (Braun)	Lisner Hall 130
5	Oct. 3	Howard University Laboratories (Diogo, Smith, others)	OFF CAMPUS: 11am - 1pm - Instructions TBD
6	Oct. 10	Primate Archaeology: Origins of Technological Behavior (Carvalho)	HAH seminar room at 11:00am
7	Oct. 17	National Museum of Natural History (Pobiner, Tocheri) (DUE: One paragraph summarizing your practicum plan)	OFF CAMPUS, NMNH: 10am - 1pm.
8	Oct. 24	Evolutionary Paleoecology (Bobe)	TBD
9	Oct. 31	Hard Tissue Biology (McFarlin)	Bell Hall B-01C2
10	Nov. 7	Social Cognition (Subiaul)	2115 G Street, NW #204
11	Nov. 14	Primate Behavioral Ecology (Murray)	2147 F Street NW, 3 rd floor
12	Nov. 21	Johns Hopkins University Center for Functional Anatomy and Evolution (Perry, Ruff)	OFF CAMPUS: Instructions TBD
13	Nov. 28	<u>NO MEETING: Thanksgiving Break</u>	
14	Dec. 5	Lab Visit TBD	
Friday	Dec. 12	Written Report Due	