

Forensic Taphonomy

Module Code:	ARC7017-B
Academic Year:	2018-19
Credit Rating:	20
School:	School of Archaeological and Forensic Sciences
Subject Area:	Forensic Science
FHEQ Level:	FHEQ Level 7 (Masters)

Pre-requisites:

Co-requisites:

Contact Hours

Type	Hours
Lectures	24
Seminar	18
Laboratory	8
Directed Study	150

Availability Periods

Occurrence	Location/Period
BDA	University of Bradford / Semester 2 (Feb - May)

Module Aims

This module provides a detailed understanding of the principles and practice relating to forensic taphonomy. This includes the degradation of human bodies and associated materials under a range of terrestrial and underwater environments.

Outline Syllabus

Introduction to depositional environments. Mechanisms of decay, including chemical and microbiological. Morphological and structural degradation of organic and inorganic materials. Complex microenvironments eg inhumation burials. Instrumental methods of characterising depositional environments. Design of taphonomic experiments. Methods of accelerated materials testing. Examination of degraded materials.

Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students will be able to...

- 1 Synthesise evidence of forensic taphonomy, soil biology, chemistry to interpret the degradation of human cadavers and a range of materials in the depositional environment
- 2 Evaluate the problems associated with forensic taphonomy and investigations of degradation mechanisms in both field and laboratory experiments
- 3 Interpret theories of decay processes associated with the human body under a range of different depositional environments and explain the factors that will promote or retard soft tissue decomposition.
- 4 Synthesise the differences between transit graves, secondary burials and 'no body cases' where a body has partially decayed and been subsequently moved.
- 5 Evaluate written source material.
- 6 Set up a series of casework related experiments to aid the interpretation of results.
- 7 Record observations and experimentation, including experimental design, in a logical, comprehensive and contemporaneous manner in keeping with established and accepted codes of good practice.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

Lectures cover the key issues. Workshops and demonstrations explore specific topics of forensic taphonomy, especially a critical approach to experimental design. Practicals and fieldwork introduce both field taphonomic experiments and electrochemical corrosion. Students will use Directed Study for reading of literature detailed in the module documentation and for researching and preparing for coursework.

Mode of Assessment

Type	Method	Description	Length	Weighting	Final Assess'
Summative	Coursework	Critical literature review of a recently published paper in the context of related research & forensic practice	-1500 words	40%	No
Summative	Coursework	Research essay on a student	-2500 words	60%	No

selected/tutor
approved topic

Legacy Code (if applicable)

AR-7141D

Reading List

To view Reading List, please go to [rebus:list](#).