

Module Details	
Module Title:	Forensic Taphonomy: the degradation of human remains and death-scene materials
Module Code:	ARC6013-B
Academic Year:	2019-20
Credit Rating:	20
School:	School of Archaeological and Forensic Sciences
Subject Area:	Forensic Science
FHEQ Level:	FHEQ Level 6
Pre-requisites:	
Co-requisites:	

Contact Hours	
Type	Hours
Lectures	24
Seminar	18
Laboratory	8
Directed Study	150

Availability	
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.

Learning Outcomes

1	Synthesize 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	Synthesize 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. A formal class-based feedback and revision session will help students to prepare for the exam. 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
Summative	Examination - closed book	Exam	1.5 hours	50%
Summative	Coursework	Critical literature review of a recently published paper in the context of related research & forensic practice	-2000 words	50%

Reading List

To access the reading list for this module, please visit <https://bradford.rl.talis.com/index.html>.

Please note:

This module descriptor has been published in advance of the academic year to which it applies. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate at the time of publication, but minor changes may occur given the interval between publishing and commencement of teaching. Upon commencement of the module, students will receive a handbook with further detail about the module and any changes will be discussed and/or communicated at this point.