

Department of Anthropology

ANTHRO 1026F-650

Introduction to Biological Anthropology and Archaeology

BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE

Summer 2026

Date: February 21, 2026

Instructor and course information:

Instructor: Dr. Karyn Olsen (she/her)

Method of delivery: Asynchronous online.

Credit value: 0.5

Antirequisites: None.

Prerequisites: None.

Please ensure you have the correct requisites by checking [the Academic Calendar](#).

Course Description:

This course offers more than just the fundamentals of how biological anthropology and archaeology are used to understand the world around us. You will have the opportunity to engage in disciplinary debates that are still ongoing in the field. For example, we will explore arguments for why humans first started walking upright (there are many!) We will discuss famous archaeological hoaxes and what can be learned from them. We will examine the challenges associated with interpreting past behaviour from archaeological artifacts and ancient human remains. Through the course assignments, you will gain a deeper understanding of our evolutionary history and apply analytical skills to interpreting the "stuff" that humans leave behind that points to their knowledge, beliefs, and activities.

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course's OWL Brightspace site before the first day of class.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Define fundamental terminology, concepts, and methods associated with the study of biological anthropology and archaeology.
- Identify the kinds of questions anthropologists ask about past people and their environments and describe how anthropologists answer those questions using multiple lines of evidence.
- Ask questions relating to common debates in biological anthropology/archaeology and identify answers in the literature using academic research skills.
- Complete the essential first steps of scholarly research, including locating and critically evaluating scholarly and other information sources relevant to anthropological topics.
- Articulate connections between biological anthropology/archaeology, today's society, and your own lives.

Course Materials:

Required textbook: The custom course text, "Archaeology and Biological Anthropology," is published by the University of Toronto Press. The text combines excerpts from *Through the Lens of Anthropology* (by Muckle, Tubelle de González, and Camp) and *Introducing Archaeology* (by Muckle and Camp). Both paper and eBook versions of the textbook are available through the Western Bookstore. The textbook costs approximately \$51.00. Students are welcome to purchase second-hand editions of this textbook if available. Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this textbook.

In addition, required readings will be available through the Course Readings tool on the course site.

Evaluation:

Grades will be based on the following:

- Module Quizzes (10 x 1%) 10%
- Weekly Activities (5 x 3%) 15%
- Assignments (25%, 30%) 55%
- Final Exam 20%

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