

Module Details	
Module Title	Forensic Taphonomy
Module Code	ARC7017-B
Academic Year	2024/5
Credits	20
School	School of Archaeological and Forensic Sciences
FHEQ Level	FHEQ Level 7

Contact Hours	
Type	Hours
Online Lecture (Synchronous)	24
Online Seminar (Synchronous)	18
Laboratories	8
Directed Study	150

Availability	
Occurrence	Location / Period
BDA	University of Bradford / Semester 2

Module Aims
<p>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.</p>

Outline Syllabus
<p>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.</p>

Learning Outcomes	
Outcome Number	Description
01	Synthesise evidence of forensic taphonomy, soil biology, chemistry to interpret the degradation of human cadavers and a range of materials in the depositional environment
02	Evaluate the problems associated with forensic taphonomy and investigations of degradation mechanisms in both field and laboratory experiments
03	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.
04	Synthesise the differences between transit graves, secondary burials and 'no body cases' where a body has partially decayed and been subsequently moved.
05	Evaluate written source material.
06	Set up a series of casework related experiments to aid the interpretation of results.
07	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	Weighting
Summative	Coursework - Written	Critical literature review of a recently published paper in the context of related research & forensic practice 0-1500 w	40%
Summative	Coursework - Written	Research essay on a student selected/tutor approved topic 0-2500 words	60%

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.

