

Course Outline

Human Osteology

Human osteology is the study of human bone from archaeological sites in order to build up a picture of past individuals and populations. The study of human bone can answer questions concerning the demographic profile, mortality and health of past populations. The course will focus on methodological aspects of human bone: excavation techniques, recording and recovery, and methods used in the analysis of human bone (ageing, sexing and the diagnosis of pathological conditions). The course will also cover the legal aspect of digging up bodies and cover new chemical investigations: C14 dating, DNA and isotopic analysis. The participants will have the opportunity to handle archaeological specimens and carry out some basic analysis themselves.

Reading

- Brothwell, D.R. (1981). *Digging Up Bones* (3rd edition). Natural History Museum, Oxford University Press: Oxford.

(Rather old now, but still the basic manual for recording human remains.)

- Brickley M & McKinley JI, eds (2004). *Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains*. IFA Paper No. 7. Institute of Field Archaeologists: Reading.

(An up to date overview of the basic techniques used in osteological recording of human remains. Available as a free download from the IFA website:

<http://www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/inPages/docs/pubs/humanremains.pdf>)

- Mays, S. (1998). *The Archaeology of Human Bones*. Routledge / English Heritage: London.

(An overview of the study of human skeletal remains and what they can tell us about past peoples.)