

**Anthropology 3455 Stable Isotopes in Bioanthropology
Winter 2026**

Professor: Dr. Tamara Varney

Office: 2002C

Phone: 807-343-8204

Email: tvarney@lakeheadu.ca

Office Hours: by appointment

Email is the best way to reach me.

I am not on campus regularly and I cannot guarantee that I will respond in a timely fashion if messages are left on my voice mail rather than email and students should NOT expect less than 24 hour turnaround time to email messages.

Please do NOT assume that your message *has been received unless you receive an acknowledgement*.

USE REGULAR LU EMAIL FOR COMMUNICATION.

Location: Zoom

Class time: Mon & Wed 10 - 11:30 am

Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to the bioanthropological application of stable isotopes and other biochemical, geochemical and ecological techniques. Various stable isotopes (including C, N, O, S, H, Sr) can be used in the assessment of past diet, life history, and migratory patterns, to infer palaeo-ecological contexts, and in forensic applications. The focus of this course will be on various applications of stable isotopes to the reconstruction of past human behaviour. The application of trace element levels (including Pb and Hg) in bioarchaeological contexts will also be covered.

Required Readings: posted weekly on the course MyCourseLinks/D2L site

Evaluation:

Your final grade will be based on:

AIM tutorial	5%	Fri, Jan 23 – not accepted after that date
Class participation	15%	
Discussion Posts	10%	See schedule on D2L
Term Tests (2 @ 15% each)	30%	Wed, Feb 4 & Wed, Mar 4
Take Home Final Exam	25%	During official exam period Apr 10-19

Course Updates & Information:

Students are responsible for checking the Announcements on the D2L page (comes up when you first enter the site of the course).

Academic Integrity Matters Tutorial: The 2025/26 module or refresher module must be completed.

Submission of the certificate and only the certificate with your name on it (not the anonymous confirmation of completion) must be submitted to the appropriate Dropbox on the D2L course site.

Class participation** – This grade will be based on individual contribution to the discussion in class. It is expected that your camera will be on as much as possible and for any discussion during and after the lecture. Classes will be a mix of lecture and discussion, so attendance is key. Students will be required to do these readings in order to prepare for their participation in the seminar discussion. Questions, comments, replies to the questions or comments of others are all examples of participation. Respectful and thoughtful listening and commenting are expected. This is a good time to ask for clarification of any concepts to ensure you have good understanding of them. We can work together as a group until everyone is comfortable with the material.

Discussion Board Posts** – Each week, some questions to consider on the weeks topic(s) including lecture, videos. and reading will be provided for response.

****Grades** will be assigned with quality and preparedness being given more weight than quantity of participation and discussion posts. Questions, comments, replies to the questions or comments of others are all examples of participation. Respectful and thoughtful listening and commenting are expected. This is a good time to ask for clarification of any concepts to ensure you have good understanding of them. We can revisit concepts until everyone is comfortable.

Term tests – Tests will be comprised of questions requiring short written answers (no more than a page at most e) and will be based on the course material covered up to the test dates. Question formats will include True or False with Justification, Matching Terms to Definitions or other relevant descriptions, Matching terms or names to pictures, Crossword puzzle, Definition and Significance - basically a range of short answer question types along with some short answer written questions.

Final Exam – The final exam will be a take home exam comprised of a questions that require some interpretation of data sets and relevant questions. This is an ‘open book’ allowing students to apply the knowledge and skills they have learned throughout the course in an applied and fun way.

***** All written assignments are to be done in 12 point font and double spaced***

NOTE – The reference and citation style of the Society of American Archaeology MUST be adhered to for all written assignments. This can be found online at:

https://documents.saa.org/container/docs/default-source/doc-publications/style-guide/saa-style-guide_english_updated_2021_final08023c15928949dabd02faafb269fb1c.pdf?sfvrsn=c1f41c1b_14&_gl=1*1uxk0sy*_ga*MTcwODgyLjE3Njc2MjQ1MzM.*_ga_6SSR7BY1NJ*cze3Njc2MjQ1MzMkbzEkZzEkdDE3Njc2MjQ1MzkkajU0JGwwJGgw

Please note that **Friday, March 6, 2026** is the last date for withdrawal without academic penalty from this course. Students will have received feedback on at least 30% of the course mark by that date.

Regulations – General Information from the Academic Calendar:

“It is the responsibility of each student registered at Lakehead University to be familiar with, and comply with all the terms, requirements, regulations, policies and conditions in the Lakehead University Academic Calendar. This includes, but is not limited to, Academic Program Requirements, Academic Schedule of Dates, University and Faculty/School Policies and Regulations and the Fees and Refund Policies and Schedules.”

The use of AI is not allowed in this course beyond spelling and grammar checking (use of Grammarly for those uses permitted). See more on AI:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/student-life/student-conduct/academic-integrity/chatgpt-ai-tools>

Students are directed to LU's policy: code of student behaviour, disciplinary, and appeal procedures that can be found at the following links:

[Student Code of Conduct - Academic Integrity](#)

[Student Code of Conduct - Non-Academic](#)

[Student Code of Conduct - Appeal Policy and Judicial Panel Procedures](#)

All students should familiarize themselves with these policies which cover such misconduct as plagiarism, cheating, inappropriate behaviour, and disruption of teaching.

More information on academic integrity can be found at:

<https://teachingcommons.lakeheadu.ca/AcademicIntegrity>

Missed tests will not be made-up unless official documentation of a reasonable excuse is submitted (e.g. student or family illness, death of family member, car accident).

The same policy applies to **missed due dates for assignments**. Please note that that going off on holidays for the STUDY WEEK or leaving early at the end of term does not constitute a reasonable excuse. Please contact me within **48 hrs.** of any missed due date or test. Late assignments without reasonable excuses will be subject to a late penalty of 5% per day.

Submission of written assignments is to be to the appropriate dropboxes on the D2L course site. Any assignment submitted by email will be considered late until a paper copy is received in the dropbox on the course D2L site.

Lakehead's Accommodation & Confidentiality Statements:

Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities/medical conditions. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities/medical conditions to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability/medical condition and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, please email sas@lakeheadu.ca or visit

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/sas>

Confidentiality and Copyright

In the context of remote instruction and participation, video and audio recordings of most class activities will be made to ensure students' and instructors' easy and comprehensive access to those activities. The recordings are confidential and are intended only for the use of the course students and instructors. They may otherwise not be used or disclosed. During recording, to protect others' privacy, each student should ensure that no one else is present in the location where they are being recorded without that non-student's consent. The recordings are made under the authority of sections 3 and 14 of The Lakehead University Act, 1965. Questions about the collection of the images and sounds in the recordings may be directed to Dr. Todd Randall (Dean, Faculty of Science and Environmental Studies), todd.randall@lakeheadu.ca, 807-343-8289.

Academic and Well-being Resources:

Many aspects of university life can present challenges, and student are reminded that there are many resources available to them for both their academic and general well-being:

Academic Zone: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/academic-success/student-success-centre>

Student Health & Well-being: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/wellness-recreation/student-health-and-wellness>