

# Field Schools and Short Courses

*(Note: LSU, the LSU FACES Lab, and Dr. Wilson do not endorse any workshop, short course, or field school. This document is for information purposes only.)*

## Short Courses

These forensic anthropology workshops usually last a few days to a couple weeks (depending on the location and type of workshop). They are all associated with professional forensic anthropologists. These are the organizations/universities associated with short course, but there may be additional opportunities within the US and internationally.

- [HD Forensics](#) (led by Dr. Dennis Dirkmaat Mercyhurst)
- [Texas State Forensic Anthropology Center](#) (multiple TSU faculty)
- [Washburn University Forensic Anthropology Recovery Unit](#) (Dr. Alexandra Klales)
- [University of Tennessee Forensic Anthropology Center](#) (multiple UTK faculty)

## Field Schools

Field schools generally take place during the summer months and last between 1 and 2 months. There are a few options within the US, however, most field schools take place internationally. The list below is only a small number of available field schools. The first link is to a more comprehensive list, but it includes both archaeology and bioarchaeology field schools. If you want to gain experience with excavation and analysis of human skeletal remains, find a bioarchaeology or forensic anthropology field school.

- [American Institute of Archaeology](#) (list of current field schools: both archaeology and bioarchaeology)
- [Archaeotek Field School](#) (various sites in Transylvania)
- [Center for American Archaeology Advanced Field School](#) (Kampsville, Illinois)
- [Forensic Anthropology and Human Identification, Michigan State University](#) (London, England)
- [Forensic Anthropology Field School, University of West Florida](#) (Pensacola, FL)
- [Forensic Anthropology/Bioarchaeology Field School, Utica College](#) (Albania and Greece)
- [Slavia Field School in Archaeology](#) (Poland)
- [Tell Timai Field School](#) (Egypt)

## Frequently Asked Questions

- **Do I need to take short courses?**
  - o No, you do not need to take short courses. These courses are designed to give you extra experience in a structured format. They can be useful for learning a new skill or participating in an activity that LSU does not offer. Many of the short courses focus on “Osteology,” “Fragmented Bone Identification,” “Human vs. Non-human,” “Biological Profile,” etc. These are the types of skills that can be gained in the SDL program hosted by the LSU FACES Lab. Keep in mind that none of the short courses will make you an “expert” in that subject and are only designed to introduce you to the concepts. Choosing to take a course is dependent on your goals.

- **Do I need to take a field school?**
  - o No, you do not need to take a field school, but you should seriously consider it. Field schools are lengthy (and often expensive) experiences with excavation and laboratory analysis of skeletal remains. Because they take place over a month or two and your daily activities are dedicated to this task, students who attend a field school will gain hands on and in-depth experience. Field school is not vacation and you should expect to be working in the field or in the lab all day (like a full-time job). Field schools often offer opportunities to take excursions to surrounding areas on your days off, but the focus of a field school is to excavate and analyze the skeletons (collect data). Most field schools are associated with a university, and they are treated like classes – you must pay tuition and there will be a grade on your transcript.
  - o **Pros:** You will work one-on-one with professional anthropologists where they will teach you practical skills. Graduate schools and CRM (cultural resource management) positions look favorably on students/employees who have completed a field school. If you perform well during field school, you can secure a letter of recommendation from your field director for graduate school or jobs.
  - o **Cons:** You must dedicate a month or two during the summer to the field school. They are often expensive (tuition + field school fees + airfare = expect to pay thousands of dollars for all associated expenses – see below). Some programs do not offer credits (no tuition, but no acknowledgement on your transcript either).
- **When should I attend a field school?**
  - o Field schools are generally offered during the summer months. Plan to apply early in the Spring semester before you would like to attend. Do research on the different field schools and ask questions! Many of the FACES Lab graduate students have attended a field school (or two) and may have recommendations. Dr. Wilson and Dr. Listi are always willing to speak with you one-on-one about your goals.
  - o Some students choose to attend field school during the last half of their undergraduate degree. Some students choose to attend field school after they have graduated (summer after graduation). And others choose to wait until graduate school to attend. You need to consider your goals and needs when deciding when (and if) you want to attend.
- **Can I go to an archaeology field school instead?**
  - o Absolutely! The methods that you learn at an archaeology field school are applicable to use within forensic anthropology and bioarchaeology. If you choose an archaeology field school, remember that you will not be excavating skeletons and there will not be an opportunity to learn osteology lab methods. If you gain experience with skeletal analysis elsewhere (like the FACES Lab SDL program), you can supplement that knowledge with archaeology. One benefit of selecting an archaeology field school is that you can often find them locally or relatively close to home, which can cut down on some of the costs.
- **Field school is expensive, will it get cheaper later?**
  - o Unfortunately, no. The price of field school has been high for a long time. For your reference, Dr. Wilson paid ~\$7000 in 2010 to attend a one month field school in Egypt. This included tuition (12 credit hours) + field school fees (room, board, and excursions) + airfare (\$2500). Some field schools will cost less, and some will cost more. Make sure you look into financial aid and scholarship opportunities.