

COMMENTARY

Forensic Anthropology as Practiced in the United States: Qualifications, Standards, and Ethical Practice

Marin A. Pilloud¹  | Nicholas V. Passalacqua²  | Eric J. Bartelink³ 

¹University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada, USA | ²The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, USA | ³California State University, Chico, California, USA

Correspondence: Marin A. Pilloud (mpilloud@unr.edu)

Received: 18 August 2025 | **Revised:** 19 August 2025 | **Accepted:** 20 August 2025

Funding: The authors received no specific funding for this work.

Keywords: certification | competency | diversity | ethics | expertise | professionalism

ABSTRACT

This paper serves as the introduction to the special issue with the same title. This special issue grew from a symposium held at the annual scientific meeting of the American Association of Biological Anthropologists in 2023 in Reno, Nevada. The conference aimed to highlight the various issues of qualifications, standards, and ethics as relevant to the praxis of forensic anthropology. The resulting papers focus on these three main themes, exploring the main topics of discussion within the discipline. We broadly summarize the papers of the special issue and discuss their relevance to these three main themes. We conclude with our thoughts on ethics, standards, and qualifications, namely that we envision a field in which qualifications can be demonstrated through certification and eventually licensure. Additionally, we see standard development as being critically important to the professionalization of the field and encourage participation in this development via the review process. Finally, we advocate for an ethical discipline that not only considers data and skeletal analysis but also how we interact with each other as colleagues to create a discipline that is supportive of diversity and fosters creative thought.

Like all forensic sciences, forensic anthropology can most broadly be considered the application of anthropology to legal matters. Of course, forensic anthropology more specifically focuses on the search and recovery of human remains and associated evidence; the analysis of questioned material to assess its significance and compatibility with the medicolegal death investigation system; the analysis of unknown human remains to facilitate personal identification; the comparison of postmortem records (e.g., radiographs) of unknown individuals to antemortem records of known individuals to make a positive identification; and the analysis of trauma and taphonomy to reconstruct the death event, which contributes to a medicolegal authority's determination of the cause and manner of death (Christensen et al. 2024; Dirkmaat 2012).

Forensic anthropology is unique from other areas of anthropology in that it exists solely because of a societal need for the analysis of human skeletal remains to resolve cases for the medicolegal death investigation system. Forensic anthropology, while still primarily existing within academia (Pilloud et al. 2022), provides a service to law enforcement, the medicolegal death investigation system, and larger-scale human rights and humanitarian contexts. Modern forensic anthropology arose from a confluence of biological anthropologists (e.g., WM Krogman) and anatomists/physicians (e.g., TW Todd, Krogman's mentor) being approached by law enforcement and death investigation professionals in need of assistance with unknown human skeletal remains (Passalacqua and Clever 2024). The need for this expertise persists today, but on a much larger scale. Forensic pathologists receive little education in human

osteology, comparative anatomy, and the analysis of human skeletal remains during their education (Christensen et al. 2015), necessitating the involvement of forensic anthropologists in performing skeletal analyses. Moreover, forensic anthropologists assist with outdoor and fire death scene recovery, including crime scenes, as law enforcement personnel are very rarely trained in this task (Schultz and Dupras 2008; Sonderman 2001). Forensic anthropology as a discipline is still largely rooted in academia; the scholarly pursuits of forensic anthropology often focus on the development, refinement, and validation of methods in support of the primary mission of forensic anthropology, the personal identification of an unknown decedent, and understanding the circumstances of their death and deposition. If there was no societal need for these types of analyses, forensic anthropology would not exist.

The discipline of forensic anthropology was formalized in the 1970s with the creation of the Physical Anthropology (now simply, Anthropology) Section of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) in 1972 and the creation of the American Board of Forensic Anthropology (ABFA) in 1977 (Boyd et al. 2020). The Anthropology Section is one of 12 disciplinary sections of the AAFS and exists as the primary scholarly meeting for forensic anthropologists, occurring within the larger umbrella of the largest national and international meeting for forensic scientists. The ABFA is the certifying body for forensic anthropology in North America and is the only certifying body for forensic anthropology that is accredited to do so; in this case by the Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board (FSAB) (Bartelink et al. 2020; Boyd et al. 2020; Passalacqua and Pilloud 2021). The professionalization of forensic anthropology began in the 1970s as a response to practicing forensic anthropologists realizing that they were developing a unique set of skills (i.e., expertise) that set them apart from other types of biological anthropologists, as well as the idea that having dedicated professional organizations would assist with establishing expertise in court (Snow 1982).

Snow (1982: 111) states that the rationale behind the ABFA was: “(a) the regulation of the practice of forensic anthropology, (b) encouraging the acceptance of forensic anthropology by the courts, and (c) excluding the use as forensic anthropology experts individuals not prepared to practice forensic anthropology or testify in court by virtue of training, experience, or research (sic).” İşcan (1988: 204) echoed Snow stating:

It was hoped that official certification would elevate and standardize the credentials of anthropologists who serve as consultants and expert witnesses. However, even now many members of the criminal justice system as a whole do not really understand that all physical anthropologists do not have the proper background or credentials, and are thus not qualified to serve in a forensic capacity. This confusion is further compounded by uncertified anthropologists who “assist” law enforcement agencies instead of referring cases to or at least consulting their more appropriately trained colleagues. This is a very serious problem since their involvement can impede proper identification of unknown remains, or worse yet, affect the outcome of a trial.

Unfortunately, this lack of understanding regarding the utility and importance of forensic anthropology by law enforcement and medicolegal death investigation professionals continues to this day (Christensen et al. 2015), as does the continued practice of forensic anthropology by unqualified anthropologists.

While the discipline of forensic anthropology has increasingly embraced the concepts of accreditation, certification, method validation, evidence handling and chain of custody, quality assurance, standards development, traceability, and transparency, these concepts are less familiar to most biological anthropologists. This lack of intradisciplinary understanding of these concepts and their importance is noteworthy, as dismissing work in support of these areas results in the work and expertise of forensic anthropologists being undervalued and marginalized by their peers (Passalacqua, Mulholland, et al. 2021). For example, in 2020, the authors N.V.P. and M.A.P. received the following comments from an anonymous peer reviewer on a paper on how credentialing and standardization, which has become commonplace in forensic anthropology, could serve as a model for professionalizing other areas of anthropology, such as bioarchaeology: “the argument overall smacks of colonialism and gatekeeping, in that it is an attempt to force a particular structure on the practice of anthropology,” and that “it would make more sense to remove forensic anthropology from anthropology departments entirely and instead place it in forensic science programs.” We feel that our arguments in this rejected paper were more in line with promoting a baseline for qualification to perform bioarchaeological analyses, a standard that is already becoming part of state law across the United States (Carter et al. 2022). Further, bioarchaeology can equally be strengthened by embracing the type of standardization that is being established in forensic anthropology.

While we are not advocating that anthropology broadly needs to shift its focus to increasing standardization of its practices and professionalization of its institutions and practitioners, there is utility in being able to demonstrate expertise or competence via credentialing. Fluehr-Lobban (2013: 2) notes: “lacking any formal means of determining who is or is not an anthropologist, the question remains an open one”; and that “Neither the umbrella organization of the AAA [American Anthropological Association], nor any of the professional cultural, archeological, or biological anthropological associations are licensing associations; thus, alleged misconduct cannot be sanctioned by loss of a license to practice” (Fluehr-Lobban 2013: 19). When it comes to the applied practice of anthropology, we should value our specialized expertises and competencies. Experts are less likely to make mistakes than non-experts (Passalacqua et al. 2023) and credentials, such as certifications or licenses help the public to understand who is qualified to perform different types of specialized labor. Performing forensic work outside of one's expertise is an unethical misrepresentation of someone's qualifications and abilities, and often leads to negative outcomes that could harm individuals, their families and communities, and the reputation of the discipline with its stakeholders, not to mention possible miscarriages of justice (Passalacqua and Pilloud 2022).

While we recognize that forensic anthropology is a unique discipline, at its core forensic anthropology is anthropology. Particularly in that it requires an understanding of the interconnectedness of human biology, culture, and the environment for

the investigation and resolution of its cases. As a largely applied niche discipline, forensic anthropology embodies aspects of all four of the subfields in its service to the medicolegal death investigation system and communities served by this system. Not only does forensic anthropology use validated biological anthropology laboratory methods based on known human skeletal reference samples, it also relies on systematic archeological method and theory for the search and recovery of human remains and associated evidence (Boyd and Boyd 2011). Additionally, forensic anthropology requires the successful communication of complex ideas, approaches, and methodological findings through different forms of written documents and testimony to diverse audiences, as well as engaging and collaborating with stakeholders of diverse cultural backgrounds to successfully perform their applied work (Christensen et al. 2024).

It is within this framework that this special issue was conceptualized, based on the symposium held at the annual meeting of the American Association of Biological Anthropologists in 2023 in Reno, Nevada. Part of the rationale for this special issue was to explore the current state of the discipline of forensic anthropology to share with not only practitioners, but also biological anthropologists more broadly. The goals of this special issue are twofold: (1) exploring the current state of the discipline within a broader biological anthropology context; and (2) interrogating the discipline through a lens of current discussions occurring within anthropology. The issue is generally structured in the following three categories of qualifications, standards, and ethical practice, which we discuss further below.

1 | Qualifications

What qualifies someone to practice forensic anthropology has been an ongoing discussion in forensic anthropology for several decades (Galloway and Simmons 1997; Ubelaker 2010). For example, there has been much discussion over the need for certification and the formalization and professionalization of education and training (Langley and Tersigni-Tarrant 2020; Passalacqua and Pilloud 2020, 2021; Passalacqua, Pilloud, and Congram 2021; Pinto et al. 2020). In 2010, the Scientific Working Group for Forensic Anthropology (SWGAnth) published a standard on qualifications (SWGAnth 2010); however, this standard was not published through an accredited Standards Development Organization and therefore had little enforcement. The Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC) proposed a Standard for Qualifications of Forensic Anthropology Practitioners (OSAC 2025). This standard encourages a PhD for practice along with certification and continuing education. The standard also outlines competency areas and encourages ethical practice. This development is particularly important as it becomes increasingly difficult to adequately identify who is an expert in forensic anthropology and who possesses the requisite expertise to perform forensic anthropological analyses and provide expert witness testimony based on those analyses (Passalacqua et al. 2023). It is within this context that the authors of manuscripts within the special issue approach the concept of qualifications in the discipline, in terms of how to achieve the qualifications, how to standardize them, and what happens when there is a failure to adequately define experts.

Pink et al. (2025) propose a model for advanced training and professionalization within forensic anthropology through a postdoctoral fellowship. They argue that training needs standardization within the discipline and could follow a model of core competency somewhat akin to the model followed by forensic pathologists. At the core of this argument is the need to professionalize and distinguish forensic anthropology as a unique discipline with a distinct set of expertises. A clear training path is needed to give practitioners this skill set and provide them with the requisite knowledge and experience to perform forensic anthropological work in an ethical manner and according to published standards. The authors also highlight the need to ensure these postdoctoral opportunities are longer than 1 year, pay a living wage, and aim to recruit underrepresented groups in forensic anthropology.

Boyd (2025) explores the liminal space occupied by forensic anthropology as the discipline grapples to define qualifications and professionalism. Boyd identifies how the lack of a clear definition of what forensic anthropology is and what forensic anthropologists can do—puts the discipline in an ambiguous role—where we may not be asked to do what we are qualified to do and vice versa. Standards development is a way we can work to shape the discipline in terms of practice and qualifications and demonstrate the value of our discipline; although reaching a consensus on these matters can prove difficult with such a diverse group of practitioners and stakeholders. Within this discussion of professionalism, Boyd also focuses on mental health and achieving a work-life balance. Working in an essential but underfunded laboratory contributes to an unhealthy work environment. If we continue to acquiesce because we know our work is necessary, nothing will change. It is important to distinguish, as Boyd points out, between altruism, ethics, and self-care.

Langley et al. (2025) provide an overview of the current state of the discipline in terms of certification and licensure. They also discuss the future of the discipline to include the new tiered certification system developed within the ABFA, the implementation of standards that may govern the qualifications of forensic anthropologists, and the push to move toward licensure. The authors advocate for the formalization of qualifications that can be demonstrated via certification and licensure, as unqualified practitioners may impede the progress and resolution of medicolegal cases. Moreover, unprofessional and flawed work misrepresents the discipline and may ultimately deter the use of forensic anthropologists in medicolegal casework.

Carter et al. (2025) explore examples of forensic anthropology expert witness testimony over a period of 10 years. Their results indicate that flawed testimony was introduced as a result of a failure to adequately identify experts within the discipline of forensic anthropology. They also argue for more standardized education and training within forensic anthropology as well as the development of licensure as a requirement to practice.

2 | Standards

The development of professional standards documents within the forensic sciences was largely through various Working Groups that independently developed discipline-specific

standards. Within forensic anthropology, these efforts were started by the SWGAnth, which was a joint effort started in 2008 between the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Department of Defense's Central Identification Laboratory (DOD CIL) (now known as the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency) (Christensen and Crowder 2009). The SWGAnth produced 21 standards documents until 2014 when it went on an indefinite hiatus. With the publication of the report of the National Research Council (2009) as part of the National Academies of Sciences entitled "Strengthening Forensic Science: A Path Forward" there was a larger push toward standards development (Ubelaker 2018). In 2014, the OSAC, administered by the NIST, was developed to work on standards development. The OSAC forensic anthropology subcommittee worked from the standards documents produced by the SWGAnth to further develop proposed standards and best practice documents. These consensus-based documents are then submitted to a Standard Development Organization (SDO). In this case, the SDO that was selected is the American Academy of Forensic Sciences' Academy Standards Board (ASB), accredited by the American National Standards Institute, or ANSI (Passalacqua and Pilloud 2021). The ASB has its own Forensic Anthropology Consensus Body that is responsible for developing and publishing standards as well as updating existing standards, and there is a focus to coordinate efforts of the OSAC and the ASB in terms of the development of standards and best practices.

Bartelink et al. (In press) review the history and current state of the professionalization of the discipline of forensic anthropology, focusing on the development of standards as this is critical in defining the discipline, its practice, and its practitioners. Standard development, beginning with the SWGAnth and now focused on the OSAC and the ASB, forms an integral part of training and practice. In fact, in the future, recertification within the ABFA will require certificants to verify that they have read all relevant standards as published by the ASB within the past 6 months. It is important to note that standards development is a continuous process; thus, standards must be updated at least every 5 years.

Passalacqua et al. (2025) describe the rationale behind standards documents, as well as the history and current standards development processes in forensic anthropology. However, more importantly, it introduces a proposed standard for the ethical use of human skeletal remains in forensic anthropology as well as the primary principles upon which the proposed standard is based (e.g., informed consent, deathcare, and serving the community). This proposed standard is not meant to provide answers to every situation in which human remains are encountered, but rather to provide criteria for how human remains should be used in research, education, and training in forensic anthropology.

3 | Ethical Practice

Ethical practice within forensic anthropology has been discussed in broad terms for decades (e.g., France 2012; Lambert 2018; Thompson 2001; Walsh-Haney and Lieberman 2005); more recently, there has been an expansion of what ethics in forensic anthropology encompasses. That can extend to working with

the living and the families of the deceased (Márquez-Grant et al. 2020), the visual representation of the deceased (Latham et al. 2023), the digital representation of decedents (Smith and Hirst 2019), publication (Passalacqua et al. 2014), and a reimagining of what ethics are in forensic anthropology and the responsibilities of forensic anthropologists (Adams et al. 2022). There are also discussions on moving toward a forensic anthropology of humanitarianism (Goldstein et al. 2022), and advocacy and activism in the face of various social issues (Adams et al. 2024; McCrane et al. 2022; McCrane and Tallman 2022; Tallman and Bird 2022; Tallman, Kincer, et al. 2022; Williams and Ross 2022). Moreover, Passalacqua and Pilloud (2018) expanded in their book on professionalism and ethics within forensic anthropology to focus on various forms of harassment and discrimination as major components of an ethical discipline.

Three contributions in this issue take an extension of these various issues within forensic anthropology and build on work that discusses the difficulties in entering forensic anthropology (Tallman, George, et al. 2022), the need to diversify the discipline (Go 2025; Go et al. 2020; Tallman 2020; Tallman and Bird 2022; Yim et al. 2022), and the use of digital representation of remains (Alves-Cardoso and Campanacho 2022; Bryson and DeLeon 2024).

Delgado et al. (2025) investigate the monetary cost of attending graduate school to become a forensic anthropologist. They found that not only is funding far below the cost of living, but that white students are overrepresented in the discipline. What are the ethics in accepting students who cannot be funded and will end up with significant student loan debt? What is their quality of life like when they are living in poverty for several years while also undergoing a very stressful academic graduate program, particularly when considering the potential for future employment (Passalacqua 2018)? These data could be very helpful to these graduate programs as they look to improve graduate student funding packages. There is an overall need to reconsider the structures of academia. It is increasingly becoming an unbalanced and unhealthy working environment, with relatively low wages, high demands on productivity, and heavy workloads. Graduate students have been pushing for change for over two decades. It is time for faculty to more broadly support these efforts in redefining excellence in academia and creating environments conducive to creative and diverse research where students and faculty are valued and thrive.

While Delgado et al. (2025) demonstrate that there are barriers to entry to graduate school, Borgelt et al. (2025: 2) work to identify steps to "prioritize[e] equity to reduce legacies and realities of harm". They provide tangible solutions such as (1) revising curricula and syllabi, (2) prioritizing scholars who are pushing the boundaries of the discipline, (3) recruiting diverse scholars, and (4) encouraging reflective practice.

Plemons and Spiros (2025) address the ethical issues of the use of digital copies of human remains; they rightly identify that these data have not received the same attention in terms of ethical treatment as the actual display of human remains or photographs of human remains have elsewhere. In their review of ethical statements from various professional organizations, they identify a need for more robust ethical guidelines.

4 | Conclusions

Our hope is that this special issue has served to highlight various contemporary topics in forensic anthropology that are typically outside of the more traditional methods-based scholarly work. It is also our hope that this special issue generates further discussion on these topics, as many of the themes discussed herein are relevant to biological anthropologists generally. As we (re)imagine the future of forensic anthropology, we have several concluding thoughts for each of these main points.

4.1 | Qualifications

As we define and codify qualifications for forensic anthropologists, it may perhaps make sense to move away from the academic consultation model and push for investment in forensic anthropology staff positions as part of medicolegal death investigations and within medicolegal offices more broadly. Academic institutions can partner with Coroner and Medical Examiner's offices to provide additional experiential training to students, but most academic institutions are often poor fits for the handling and management of evidence, especially long term (Goldstein et al. 2022; Passalacqua et al. 2022). This shift could move the discipline more toward a medical school model of training, aligning it with forensic pathology (Langley and Tersigni-Tarrant 2020), but still maintaining a four-field anthropological basis. Additionally, with the ABFA's creation of its multilevel certification, the creation of licensure for the practice of forensic anthropology becomes more likely, which would also further align the discipline with forensic pathology and forensic odontology.

The issue of qualifications can also be viewed very generally in biological anthropology as there are societal needs for such work. For example, there are already many states that have requirements for demonstrating competency and expertise in order to work as a bioarcheologist (Carter et al. 2022), but not for forensic anthropology. We do not claim that there needs to be stricter control on what is taught in graduate programs, merely that programs could be designed with an eye toward developing competencies in various skills required to be a biological anthropologist, in whichever subdiscipline that may be. Or, if more rigid training models were developed, some of these skills could also be gained in post-doctoral opportunities.

4.2 | Standards

We view the development of standards and best practices within forensic anthropology as critical to its professionalization. Not only is the development of standards routine within the forensic sciences, but the codification of best practices for performing forensic anthropology creates a uniform baseline for its performance by practitioners and its expected outcomes for stakeholders. We encourage practitioners to get involved in standards development and to contribute when documents are sent out for public comment. A large part of making these documents relevant is to gather input from practitioners; this is the only way to make them truly consensus-based.

Input from other biological anthropologists who may not be forensic anthropology practitioners is also welcome and would serve to build a more robust set of standards for the discipline. Further, standards development within forensic anthropology could serve as a model for standardizing the practice of other applied areas of biological anthropology.

4.3 | Ethics

Moving forward, we need to reframe how we view the disciplines and the practitioners of anthropology, biological anthropology, and forensic anthropology. We need to create space for interrogation of the discipline more broadly and to cultivate thought-leaders who expand the discipline and do not contract it. Being a forensic anthropologist and scientist is more than just collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. It should also incorporate the creation of connections and evaluating the discipline to identify ways that we can improve and evolve as a discipline. Ethical considerations go beyond the accurate presentation of data and the proper representation of one's credentials. We must also be aware of how we treat each other, how we actively work to support diversity and growth of the discipline, and how best to mold a discipline that assists and represents the communities it serves. As we recognize the colonial systems that dominate our societies, we need to recreate how, as scientists, we view and participate in science. Such an approach allows for creativity in research projects that move beyond simple frequencies and statistics and work toward an inclusive discipline. Overall, these three components can work together to create a forensic anthropology that is able to work within a medicolegal framework and best serves the community and those within the discipline, while also emphasizing the humanitarian nature of forensic anthropology's mission.

Finally, the organizers and participants felt the subjects presented herein were particularly important to discuss within the broader discipline of biological anthropology. As forensic anthropology has continued to evolve and diverge from its beginnings, no longer is it acceptable to consider forensic anthropology as a small, applied offshoot of biological anthropology. The methods, theory, and expertise within forensic anthropology are unique and not to be lumped in with bioarcheology or other areas of biological anthropology. Students seeking to be forensic anthropologists must be trained by forensic anthropologists. Anthropologists lacking expertise and training in forensic anthropology must not perform this applied work, but instead should refer law enforcement or the medicolegal authority to other qualified individuals, who ideally have demonstrated their qualifications through certification.

We view these issues as critical to the future growth of forensic anthropology to ensure an ethical practice that is trusted and valued by relevant stakeholders. While we view forensic anthropology as a diverging discipline with unique expertises, qualifications, and ethical considerations, we still see the discipline as firmly rooted within anthropology. Therefore, the issues discussed in this special issue we see as still relevant to biological anthropology in general and welcome broad discussion as we move forward to professionalize and define this discipline.

Author Contributions

Marin A. Pilloud: conceptualization, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing. **Nicholas V. Passalacqua:** conceptualization, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing. **Eric J. Bartelink:** conceptualization, writing – review and editing.

Ethics Statement

The authors have nothing to report.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

References

- Adams, D. M., J. R. Bedard, S. H. Blatt, et al. 2024. "Speaking Truth to Power: Toward a Forensic Anthropology of Advocacy and Activism." *Humans* 4, no. 1: 66–90.
- Adams, D. M., J. Z. Goldstein, M. Isa, et al. 2022. "A Conversation on Redefining Ethical Considerations in Forensic Anthropology." *American Anthropologist* 124, no. 3: 597–612.
- Alves-Cardoso, F., and V. Campanacho. 2022. "To Replicate, or Not to Replicate? The Creation, Use, and Dissemination of 3D Models of Human Remains: A Case Study From Portugal." *Heritage* 5, no. 3: 1637–1658.
- Bartelink, E. J., D. L. France, J. T. Pokines, and D. A. Prince-Zinni. 2020. "The American Board of Forensic Anthropology Turns 40: Historical Perspectives and Current Trends in Certification for Forensic Anthropology." *Forensic Anthropology* 3, no. 2: 103–111.
- Bartelink, E. J., N. V. Passalacqua, and W. McQuade. In press. "The Development of Professional Standards in Forensic Anthropology." *American Journal of Biological Anthropology*.
- Borgelt, T. S., J. R. Goliath, and E. B. Waxenbaum. 2025. "Overcoming Systemic Barriers in US Forensic Anthropology Education: Considering Underlying Barriers to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in Forensic Anthropology." *American Journal of Biological Anthropology* 187, no. 2: e70069.
- Boyd, C., and D. C. Boyd. 2011. "Theory and the Scientific Basis for Forensic Anthropology*." *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 56, no. 6: 1407–1415.
- Boyd, D., E. Bartelink, N. Passalacqua, J. Pokines, and M. Tersigni-Tarrant. 2020. "The American Board of Forensic Anthropology's Certification Program." *Forensic Anthropology* 3, no. 2: 112–119.
- Boyd, D. C. 2025. "Navigating Liminality in Evolving Forensic Anthropology Professionalism." *American Journal of Biological Anthropology* 186, no. 1: e25054.
- Bryson, E. R., and V. B. DeLeon. 2024. "A Biodigital Dilemma: Creating and Sharing 3D Models of Unethically Collected Human Remains in the United States." In *Coming of Age: Ethics and Biological Anthropology in the 21st Century*, edited by V. Campanacho and F. Alves Cardoso, 86–100. Archaeopress.
- Carter, M. L., J. L. Newman, R. M. Seidemann, and E. A. Reedy. 2022. "Review of United States Laws Pertaining to the Recovery and Analysis of Human Skeletal Remains." *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 67, no. 5: 1876–1889.
- Carter, M. L., R. M. Seidemann, J. L. Newman, E. A. Reedy, and C. L. Halling. 2025. "Applied Expertise in Human Osteology: Legal and Educational Considerations in the United States." *American Journal of Biological Anthropology* 187, no. 3: e70091.
- Christensen, A. M., and C. M. Crowder. 2009. "Evidentiary Standards for Forensic Anthropology." *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 54, no. 6: 1211–1216.
- Christensen, A. M., N. V. Passalacqua, and E. J. Bartelink. 2024. *Forensic Anthropology: Current Methods and Practice*. 3rd ed. Cognella.
- Christensen, A. M., N. V. Passalacqua, G. A. Schmunk, et al. 2015. "The Value and Availability of Forensic Anthropological Consultation in Medicolegal Death Investigations." *Forensic Science, Medicine, and Pathology* 11, no. 3: 438–441.
- Delgado, T. A., R. M. Depp, R. M. Meloro, and K. M. Lane. 2025. "The Cost of Being Qualified: Current Barriers Faced by Graduate Students in Forensic Anthropology." *American Journal of Biological Anthropology* 186, no. 1: e25005.
- Dirkmaat, D. C., ed. 2012. *A Companion to Forensic Anthropology*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Fluehr-Lobban, C. 2013. *Ethics and Anthropology: Ideas and Practice*. AltaMira Press.
- France, D. L. 2012. "Ethics in Forensic Anthropology." In *A Companion to Forensic Anthropology*, edited by D. Dirkmaat, 666–682. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Galloway, A., and T. Simmons. 1997. "Education in Forensic Anthropology: Appraisal and Outlook." *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 42, no. 5: 796–801.
- Go, M. C. 2025. "The Decolonial Turn in Forensic Anthropology." *American Journal of Biological Anthropology* 186, no. 2: e70003.
- Go, M. C., E. Chu, and N. Yukyi. 2020. "On WEIRD Anthropologists and Their White Skeletons." *Forensic Anthropology* 4, no. 4: 145–160.
- Goldstein, J. Z., M. E. Moe, E. L. Wiedenmeyer, P. M. Banks, S. R. Mavroudas, and M. D. Hamilton. 2022. "Humanitarian Action in Academic Institutions: A Case Study in the Ethical Stewardship of Unidentified Forensic Cases." *Forensic Sciences Research* 7, no. 3: 358–365.
- İşcan, M. Y. 1988. "Rise of Forensic Anthropology." *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology* 31: 203–230.
- Lambert, P. M. 2018. "Ethics in Bioarchaeology and Forensics." In *The International Encyclopedia of Biological Anthropology*, edited by W. Trevathan, M. Cartmill, D. L. Dufour, et al., 1–2. John Wiley & Sons.
- Langley, N., and M. Tersigni-Tarrant. 2020. "Core Competencies in Forensic Anthropology: A Framework for Education, Training, and Practice." *Forensic Anthropology* 3, no. 2: 75–80.
- Langley, N. R., M. A. Tersigni-Tarrant, N. V. Passalacqua, et al. 2025. "The Future of Forensic Anthropology Practice and Education: Competencies, Certification, and Licensure." *American Journal of Biological Anthropology* 186, no. 3: e70034.
- Latham, K. E., A. J. O'Daniel, and T. Ramos. 2023. "Migrant Death and the Ethics of Visual Documentation in Forensic Anthropology." In *Anthropology of Violent Death*, edited by R. C. Parra and D. H. Ubelaker, 303–326. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- Márquez-Grant, N., N. V. Passalacqua, M. A. Pilloud, N. Lester, S. Decker, and J. Ford. 2020. "Ethical Concerns in Forensic Anthropology." In *Ethical Approaches to Human Remains: A Global Challenge in Bioarchaeology and Forensic Anthropology*, edited by K. Squires, D. Erickson, and N. Marquez-Grant, 347–366. Springer.
- McCrane, S. M., C. J. Hsiao, and S. D. Tallman. 2022. "Implementing an Antiracist Framework in Forensic Anthropology: Our Responsibility in Professional Organizations and as Scientists." *American Anthropologist* 124, no. 3: 575–579.

- McCrane, S. M., and S. Tallman. 2022. "The Ethical Responsibilities of Forensic Science Organizations in an Era of Oppressive Legislative Action." *Human Biology* 94, no. 2: 111–121.
- National Research Council. 2009. *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward*. National Academy Press.
- OSAC. 2025. OSAC 2025-N-0002: Standard for Qualifications for Forensic Anthropology Practitioners. <https://www.nist.gov/osac/registry>.
- Passalacqua, N., B. Spatola, and R. Thomas. 2022. "Response to Goldstein Et al. (2022) Humanitarian Action in Academic Institutions: A Case Study in the Ethical Stewardship of Unidentified Forensic Cases." *Forensic Sciences Research* 7, no. 4: 826–829.
- Passalacqua, N. V. 2018. "Are Careers in Biological Anthropology Sustainable?" *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 166, no. 3: 772–776.
- Passalacqua, N. V., E. J. Bartelink, W. McQuade, et al. 2025. "The Development of Standards for the Ethical Use of Human Skeletal Remains for Education, Research, and Training." *American Journal of Biological Anthropology* 186: e70022.
- Passalacqua, N. V., and I. Clever. 2024. "The Origins of Forensic Anthropology in the United States." *Forensic Anthropology* 7, no. 4: 223–236.
- Passalacqua, N. V., N. R. Langley, M. A. Pilloud, and M. A. Tersigni-Tarrant. 2023. "Evaluating Expertise in Forensic Anthropology." *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 68, no. 4: 1111–1120.
- Passalacqua, N. V., S. Mulholland, M. A. Pilloud, and A. R. Klales. 2021. "The Value of Forensic Anthropology in Undergraduate Anthropology Programs." *American Anthropologist* 123, no. 3: 603–616.
- Passalacqua, N. V., and M. A. Pilloud. 2018. *Ethics and Professionalism in Forensic Anthropology*. Academic Press.
- Passalacqua, N. V., and M. A. Pilloud. 2020. "Education and Training in Forensic Anthropology." *Forensic Anthropology* 3, no. 3: 65–74.
- Passalacqua, N. V., and M. A. Pilloud. 2021. "The Need to Professionalize Forensic Anthropology." *European Journal of Anatomy* 25, no. S2: 35–47.
- Passalacqua, N. V., and M. A. Pilloud. 2022. "The Importance of Professional Organizations as Disciplinary Leaders and the Need for Meaningful Ethical Codes in Anthropology." *American Anthropologist* 124, no. 1: 198–203.
- Passalacqua, N. V., M. A. Pilloud, and D. Congram. 2021. "Forensic Anthropology as a Discipline." *Biology* 10, no. 8: 691–708.
- Passalacqua, N. V., M. A. Pilloud, and G. A. Gruters. 2014. "Letter to the Editor—Professionalism: Ethics and Scholarship in Forensic Science." *Journal of Forensic Sciences* 59, no. 2: 573–575.
- Pilloud, M. A., N. V. Passalacqua, and C. S. Philbin. 2022. "Caseloads in Forensic Anthropology." *American Journal of Biological Anthropology* 177, no. 3: 556–565.
- Pink, C. M., J. B. Cornelison, and J. K. Juarez. 2025. "Standardizing Advanced Training in Forensic Anthropology: Defining a Clear Path to Achieve Forensic Specialization in Biological Anthropology." *American Journal of Biological Anthropology* 186, no. 4: e70055.
- Pinto, D., M. L. Pierce, and J. M. Wiersema. 2020. "A Model for Forensic Anthropology Training." *Forensic Anthropology* 3, no. 2: 91–96.
- Plemons, A. M., and M. C. Spiros. 2025. "Toward Ethical Digital Practices: Guidelines for Consent, Accountability, and Transparency in Anthropology." *American Journal of Biological Anthropology* 186, no. 4: e70044.
- Schultz, J. J., and T. L. Dupras. 2008. "The Contribution of Forensic Archaeology to Homicide Investigations." *Homicide Studies* 12, no. 4: 399–413.
- Smith, S. E., and C. S. Hirst. 2019. "3D Data in Human Remains Disciplines: The Ethical Challenges." In *Ethical Approaches to Human Remains: A Global Challenge in Bioarchaeology and Forensic Anthropology*, edited by K. Squires, D. Erickson, and N. Márquez-Grant, 315–346. Springer International Publishing.
- Snow, C. C. 1982. "Forensic Anthropology." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 11: 97–131.
- Sonderman, R. C. 2001. "Looking for a Needle in a Haystack: Developing Closer Relationships Between Law Enforcement Specialists and Archaeology." *Historical Archaeology* 35, no. 1: 70–78.
- SWGAnth. 2010. Qualifications. https://www.nist.gov/system/files/documents/2018/03/13/swganth_qualifications.pdf.
- Tallman, S. 2020. *Opinion: The Forensic Sciences Have a Diversity Problem*. Forensic: On the Scene and in the Lab. <https://www.forensicmag.com/569912-Opinion-The-Forensic-Sciences-Have-a-Diversity-Inclusion-Problem/>.
- Tallman, S., and C. Bird. 2022. "Diversity and Inclusion in Forensic Anthropology: Where We Stand and Prospects for the Future." *Forensic Anthropology* 5, no. 2: 84–101.
- Tallman, S., C. Kincer, and E. Plemons. 2022. "Centering Transgender Individuals in Forensic Anthropology and Expanding Binary Sex Estimation in Casework and Research." *Forensic Anthropology* 5, no. 2: 161–180.
- Tallman, S. D., R. L. George, A. J. Baide, et al. 2022. "Barriers to Entry and Success in Forensic Anthropology." *American Anthropologist* 124, no. 3: 580–596.
- Thompson, T. 2001. "Legal and Ethical Considerations of Forensic Anthropological Research." *Science & Justice* 41, no. 4: 261–270.
- Ubelaker, D. H. 2010. "Issues in Forensic Anthropology." In *A Companion to Biological Anthropology*, edited by C. S. Larsen, 412–426. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Ubelaker, D. H. 2018. "A History of Forensic Anthropology." *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 165, no. 4: 915–923.
- Walsh-Haney, H. A., and L. S. Lieberman. 2005. "Ethical Concerns in Forensic Anthropology." In *Biological Anthropology and Ethics: From Repatriation to Genetic Identity*, edited by T. Turner, 121–132. State University of New York Press.
- Williams, S. E., and A. H. Ross. 2022. "Ethical Dilemmas in Skeletal Collection Utilization: Implications of the Black Lives Matter Movement on the Anatomical and Anthropological Sciences." *Anatomical Record* 305, no. 4: 860–868.
- Yim, A.-D., J. K. Juarez, J. R. Goliath, and I. S. Melhado. 2022. "Diversity in Forensic Sciences: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Representation in Different Medicolegal Fields in the United States." *Forensic Science International: Synergy* 5: 100280.