

'CSI' skills are focus of summer course

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Gregory Smith, a student in last year's course, molds "skin" onto a skull. (Photo by Jason Wild)

Roy Paschal's portfolio includes landscapes, still lifes and portraits. However, his artistic talents don't stop there. He is also a retired forensic artist, having helped the Law Enforcement Division of South Carolina solve crimes through facial reconstruction.

Last summer, he brought his skills to Tulane University for a one-week Techniques of Facial Reconstruction course. Tulane professor of anthropology John Verano said the class was so successful that Paschal is returning this summer to teach a new crop of students.

The [Tulane School of Professional Advancement](#) class, in partnership with the [Southern Institute of Forensic Science](#), will take place July 24–29 on Tulane’s uptown campus. The tuition is \$1,000, and students earn three hours of undergraduate credit.

“The class is a good match for a variety of disciplines — those interested in facial anatomy, sculpting, law enforcement investigation and general interest,” Paschal said. The majors of students enrolled in the course run the gamut from fine art and criminal justice to homeland security and nursing.

The class covers the anatomy of the skull and neck, with the bulk of the time spent on the scientific principles behind facial reconstruction. Re-creating skulls and faces with clay and other materials is also an important part of the class. “It will be set up as if we are working on an actual case, with crime scene photos, an evidence list and scientific reports,” Paschal said.

Verano, a forensic specialist in Tulane’s Department of Anthropology, said fans of such shows as “CSI” and “Bones” will recognize the process. “If (law enforcement) can’t get a lead on somebody, facial reconstruction can and has led to successful solving of cases,” he said.

Paschal said the class is a “great opportunity to pick up those needed credits in a fun and exciting way.” And while students will be graded, he said, “We do not grade the sculptural aspect of the procedure, so students should not be intimidated by a lack of artistic skills.”

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