

Honors Senior Spotlight



Cameron Filipe, '21

Hometown: Somerset, Massachusetts

Major: Forensic Science - Biology

Minor: Biology

Thesis Title: *Investigation of Palatal Rugoscopy for Forensic Human Identification*

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Angie Ambers

What is your thesis about?

This thesis is to determine if palatal rugae, which are the naturally-occurring folds on the roof of the mouth, can be used as an identifying tool in the identification of human remains. In cases where fingerprints may not be viable, palatal rugae can be used to identify human remains, if determined to be an individualizing characteristic. The research will also involve the creation of a preliminary classification system which will be paralleled with other forensic identification techniques, and determination of the best possible way to take impressions of palatal rugae patterns.

What motivated and/or inspired you to select this as your research topic?

In the field of forensic science, I wish to specialize in forensic pathology and identification, and since the use of palatal rugae impressions is currently limited to dental, odontological, and orthodontic uses, having the ability to pioneer its use in forensic identification is very motivating. If this research can suggest that the rugae patterns are individual, then perhaps palatal rugae identification will someday become as ubiquitous as fingerprint identification.

Do you have any advice for future Honors students thinking about writing an Honors Thesis?

Keep an open mind, stay focused, and don't be afraid to venture into certain techniques or approaches to something that have never been used in your field of study. They may become pivotal in your discipline someday as a result of your research!

After graduating, what are your plans?

Starting in the Fall 2021 semester, I will be studying at the Boston University School of Medicine as part of the Biomedical Forensic Sciences Master's degree program.