

# **ANTH 392 A01: Selected Problems in Anthropology: Archaeology To the Grave and Beyond: The anthropology of Death**

Instructor: Dr Erin McGuire

Office: Cornett B246a.

Office Hours: Thursday 10:00-11:00, and by appointment.

e-mail: [ehalstad@uvic.ca](mailto:ehalstad@uvic.ca) [see email policy below]

TA: Kristi Bowie ([kmbowie@uvic.ca](mailto:kmbowie@uvic.ca) – same email policy applies)

Lecture Schedule: TWF: 9:30 am - 10:20 pm; Cornett B143

Dates: Jan 5 - Apr 1, 2011

## **Course description**

The dead are all around us. Yet they are not silent. They built the house I am sitting in now, they founded the University at which we study. The dead are constantly invoked and recycled in daily life, this much is true. And yet, what can the actual treatment of the dead, the death and mortuary behaviour of a society, tell us about the living? Some societies do not bury their dead: can an absence of evidence tell us anything about a society's beliefs? The first burials in the history of humanity are often said to herald the "origins of symbolism, ritual and religion" (Parker Pearson, 1999, p.147). But is burial any more than a practical means of getting rid of a body? This course explores themes and issues in the study of mortuary practices. Topics and case studies will include ethical issues, gender and identity, social organisation and structure, spirituality etc... The time range that we will cover in the course will span from the Neolithic to the 20th century, and numerous cultures from all parts of the globe will be our subject matter.

## **Aims**

The aims of this course are:

- To investigate funerary in the archaeological record through the use of cross-cultural case studies;
- To outline theoretical and interpretative approaches to mortuary archaeology;
- To explore issues of ethics and respect in relation to the study of funerary remains; and
- To challenge notions of legitimate knowledge and identify and explore alternative agendas.

## **Learning objectives**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

1. Identify and discuss various types of funerary rituals and their archaeological expression;
2. Assess the contribution archaeology makes to interpreting the ways that societies respond to death;
3. Recognise, describe, apply and analyze a range of different interpretative stances used in the archaeological study of funerary remains;
4. Apply anthropological terminology and methods to the written expression of an argument analysing archaeological approaches to the study of funerary remains;
5. Discuss the ethical considerations that apply to the archaeological study of funerary remains;
6. Critically evaluate a case study as a tool for analysing theoretical perspectives; and
7. Effectively utilise internet resources for presenting archaeological materials, including research, article reviews, mapping and cemetery survey.

## Course requirements

This course includes a combination of lectures, discussions, and group work. The nature of the assignments means that regular attendance is essential, as is completion of the assigned readings. Because of the nature of the group assignments you will sometimes be given class time to work within your groups.

## Textbook

Parker Pearson, M. (1999) *The Archaeology of Death and Burial*. Sutton: Stroud.

Metcalfe & Huntington (1991) *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual*. Cambridge Uni Press: Cambridge. **(Optional, but highly recommended)**

Other reading materials will be available in the library or on Moodle.

## Grading

A+ = 90-100 %	B+ = 75-79%	C+ = 60-64 %
A = 85-89 %	B = 70-74 %	C = 55-59 %
A- = 80-84 %	B- = 65-69 %	D = 50-54 %
		F = 0-49 % below

This is an overview; please read the further explanations in the course Moodle.

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## Assessment

Participation	5%
Blog	20%
Reflective readings x 3 (out of 4)	25%
Cemetery Assignment	15%
Case study: Proposal	10%
Case study	25%

### Participation and Attendance (5%):

Students will be graded on the basis of attendance, participation in general class discussion, discussion on Moodle and in group activities, including in-class workshops. I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. Students must ensure that they make their presence in class evident. **Participation in general class discussion will be graded on the quality, not quantity, of one's discussion questions and comments.** Frequent comments are not guarantee of a good grade.

### Blog (20%):

Students will maintain a weekly blog (web-based journal), prompted by questions posed in class. A regular feature of the blog will be reflection on course concepts and themes as encountered in our lives, as well as in other times and places. The blog will be informally assessed on a regular basis for feedback. Marks for the blog will be based on the submission of THREE blog entries, primarily selected by you, and the completion of a minimum of 10 blog entries. Further guidelines will be given in the first class and on Moodle.

**Reflective Readings (25%)**

Students will respond to 4 of the assigned course readings. Four of the readings will have set questions for you to answer. You will receive 15% of your grade based on the three highest scores of these four. The responses will be in the form of 1 page (12 pt font, 1.5 line spacing), guided by questions supplied in advance via Moodle. The readings are noted in the timetable below. The reflective responses will be submitted via Moodle on the assigned dates, **but must also be brought to class** as they will form the basis for discussion and assessment. The remaining 10% of the mark will come through the completion of peer assessment.

**Group Assignments****Memorial Monument Analysis (15%)**

Students will create a digital record of a set of graves or monuments. The record will include a map, photos, and transcriptions of each inscription included in the set. Students will form groups of 4 or 5 for this assignment. Each group will need to do some fieldwork on sites selected by students. Possibilities include, but are not limited to: segments of Ross Bay Cemetery, Pioneer's Square, the Veterans' Cemetery, memorial benches in Oak Bay etc...

**Case study (35%)**

Each student group will select a case study to analyse. The analysis will be presented in an on-line format of the group's choice. Some possible options include a web page, wiki, or group blog. The analysis should include a short description of the site, an analysis and critique of current interpretation(s), and one or more alternative interpretations, based on different methodological or theoretical approaches. In addition to the final product, groups need to produce a proposal (10%) for their project and a proposed marking rubric. Further details will be made available via Moodle.

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**Course policies**

**Email Policy:** Most of the time, you can expect a reply to an email within 24 hours. Please do NOT expect and immediate reply. You should also know that I will only rarely reply to emails on the weekends. Moreover, there are limited issues that I will deal with over email – general administrative business, quick questions regarding class assignments etc. I will not answer bigger questions over email (such as questions about your marks, problems within your groups or course content questions while working on group papers). Please visit me during office hours or make an appointment to see me. Make sure you include the course code (ANTH 392) in your subject line, along with the subject of your message, otherwise your email may skip my inbox and be rejected as junk mail. Finally, before emailing me a question, check the Moodle, syllabus, assignment guidelines and announcements – the answer to your question may already be there.

**Late Assignments:** Assignments are to be submitted to Moodle by the start of the class on the due date unless otherwise noted. If you are unable to attend the class the day that something is due, you must still submit your assignment. **All late assignments will be penalised by 10% per day**, including weekends and holidays, to a maximum of 5 days. Assignments more than 5 days late will not be marked.

**Extensions will only be granted by prior arrangement or upon receipt of a medical note.**

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Victoria does not tolerate academic misconduct, and the policies of the University will be upheld in this course. The *Policy on Academic Integrity* can be found in the *University of Victoria Calendar*.

**Equity in the classroom:** The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive, supportive and safe learning and working environment for all its members [Senate resolution, January 13th, 1999]. As part of our commitment to equity, the Department of Anthropology has established an Equity Committee. If you have concerns regarding equity issues in the classroom, you may contact a member of the Equity committee or the Chair of the Department. The Department Secretary can provide you with the names of the current members of this committee.

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCSd) as soon as possible. The RCSd staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations <http://rcsd.uvic.ca/>. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

## Tentative schedule of themes, readings and course assignments

This list is approximate, the dates are based on the week, not on specific class days. **The course Moodle will tell you by which days each specific reading must be completed.** The length of class topics may be adjusted to support in-class discussions and activities. The reading list is also tentative, pending receipt of the requested articles by the library. All readings not contained in your course text will be made available through reserve or on Moodle. Please be aware that this is a short list – it will be expanded. You can anticipate reading at least two academic papers per week in addition to your textbook.

Week	Topic	Important Dates
1 Jan 3-7	<b>Intro to course</b> Textbook: Ch 1 Funeral of a Rus'	No class on Friday (Jan 7) Due Fri, Jan 7: Create blog
2 Jan 10-14	<b>Ethnoarchaeology</b> Textbook: Ch 2 Metcalf & Huntington Ch 1 (esp. pp. 29-37) Morris, I. (1991) The Archaeology of Ancestors: The Saxe/Goldstein Hypothesis Revisited. <i>Cambridge Archaeological Journal</i> : 1(2): 147-169.	Due Fri, Jan 14: RR1 Garazhian O., Papoli Yazdi, L. (2008) Mortuary practices in Bam after the earthquake: An ethnoarchaeological study. <i>Journal of Social Archaeology</i> , 8 (1), pp. 94-112.

<p>3 Jan 17-21</p>	<p><b>Treatment of the body</b> Textbook: Ch 3 Metcalf &amp; Huntington Ch 5 (esp. pp. 144-151)</p> <p>Barrett, J. (1990) The monumentality of death: The character of early bronze age mortuary mounds in Southern Britain. <i>World Archaeology</i> 22: 179-189.</p> <p>Oestigaard, T. (2004) Death and Ambivalent Materiality – Human Flesh as Culture and Cosmology. In Oestigaard, T., Anfinset, N. &amp; Saetersdal, T. (eds.). <i>Combining the Past and the Present: Archaeological perspectives on society</i>: 23-30. BAR International Series 1210. Oxford.</p>	<p>Jan 18: Guest lecture (J. Lacy)</p>
<p>4 Jan 24-28</p>	<p><b>Landscapes of death</b> Textbook: Ch 6 Metcalf &amp; Huntington Ch 6 (esp. pp. 144-151)</p>	<p>Jan 25: Guest Lecture (D. Matthews)</p> <p>Due Jan 28: RR2 Parker Pearson, M. (1993). The Powerful Dead: Archaeological Relationships between the Living and the Dead. <i>Cambridge Archaeological Journal</i>, 3, pp 203-229.</p>
<p>5 Jan 31- Feb 4</p>	<p><b>Status</b> Textbook: Ch 4 Metcalf &amp; Huntington Ch 6</p> <p>Lopez Castro, J.L. (2006) Colonials, merchants and alabaster vases: The western Phoenician aristocracy. <i>Antiquity</i> 80:74-88.</p> <p>Solberg, B. (1985) Social status in the Merovingian and Viking periods in Norway from archaeological and historical sources. <i>Norwegian Archaeological Review</i> 18: 241-256.</p>	<p>Feb 1<sup>st</sup>: Group formation</p>

6 Feb 7-11	<p><b>Gender</b> Textbook: Ch 5</p> <p>Bruck, J. (2009) Women, death and social change in the British Bronze Age. <i>Norwegian Archaeological Review</i> 42: 1-23.</p> <p>Dethlefsen, E. and J. Deetz (1969) Death's Heads, Cherubs and Willow Trees: Experimental Archaeology in Colonial Cemeteries. <i>American Antiquity</i> 31(4):502-510.</p> <p>Sofaer Derevenski, J. (2000) Rings of Life: The role of metalwork in mediating the gendered life course. <i>World Archaeology</i> 31:389-406.</p>	Due Feb 11: Monument analysis
7 Feb 14-18	In-class prep-time for proposals	Due Feb 18: Case study Proposal
8 Feb 21-25	READING BREAK	READING BREAK
9 Feb 28- Mar 4	<b>Kinship</b>	Due Mar 4: RR3
10 Mar 7-11	<b>Death through time</b> Textbook: Ch 7	Due Mar 11: RR4
11 Mar 14-18	In-class prep-time for case studies	Due Mar 18: Proposed marking rubric
12 Mar 21-25	<b>Politics of death</b> Textbook: Ch 8	Due Mar 23: Case study
13 Mar 28- Apr 1	<b>Memory</b> Textbook: Ch 9	Due Mar 30: Blog Apr 1 <sup>st</sup> , last day of classes