

# ANTH 397: Archaeology of Death

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## DEAD (WO)MEN DO TELL TALES

<b>Instructor</b>	Dr E McGuire	<b>e-mail</b>	ehalstad@uvic.ca [Please see email policy below]
<b>Office</b>	Cornett B246a	<b>Office Hours</b>	Thurs 10:00-11:00 or by appointment
<b>Dates</b>	Jan 4- Apr 5, 2012	<b>TA</b>	Mary-Ellen Johnson <a href="mailto:maryjohn@uvic.ca">maryjohn@uvic.ca</a>
<b>Time</b>	TWF 9:30-10:20	<b>Location</b>	COR B107

## 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 technological 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.  
[Check SUBText for used copies!]

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

### Grading Scale

We will be using the standard UVic Undergraduate Grading Scale, as can be seen here:

<http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2012/FACS/UnIn/UARe/Grad.html>

In particular, I draw your attention to the criteria required for grades within the A range (A- to A+):

*“Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.”* Therefore, B range grades are assigned to students who fulfill all expectations, while A range grades must be reserved for those who exceed them.

### Assessment

Blog	20%	Weekly; deadline Apr 2
Reading Assignments	10%	Weekly
Data Assignment	10%	Jan 25
Monument Analysis (Group portion)	15%	Feb 15
Monument Analysis (Individual portion)	15%	Feb 18 (or earlier)
Case study: Proposal	5%	Mar 1
Case study: Final	25%	Mar 28 (11:55 pm)

### Blog (20%)

You 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**, each from a **different** week. You cannot make up for missed weeks by doing several entries at once. Further guidelines will be given in class and on Moodle.

### Reading Assignments (10%)

Every week there will be opportunities to make direct contributions to this class. These may include responding to writing prompts in class (e.g. summarise the assigned reading in a short paragraph); preparing something in advance of class (e.g. write down two questions about the reading and bring them to class); or complete an in-class group activity (e.g. create a shared mind-map about...). You will receive marks towards your course contributions on the basis of these activities. You are given one freebie (e.g. where you can

submit a note that says “I didn’t complete the reading”). If you have to miss class because you are ill, then I will need medical documentation to exempt you from the reading assignment that day.

## **Data Assignment (10%)**

We will spend two classes working in a computer lab (week of Jan 15 and week of Jan 22). You will be given a dataset to manipulate and a worksheet to complete. The worksheet will be due a short time after the second lab session (Friday, Jan 18). The purpose of this assignment is to introduce you to core skills relating to data management and manipulation, helping establish skills required for the monument analysis and reading assignments.

## **Group Assignments**

### **1. Memorial Monument Analysis (15% +15%)**

Students will work in groups to create a digital record of a set of graves or monuments. The record will include a database, 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... The assignment is broken into two parts for assessment. The digital record is a group project and is worth 15%. In addition to the digital record, each student will write a short essay based on their analysis. These essays are individual projects and are worth a further 15%. Further details will be available on Moodle.

### **2. Case study (25%) and Proposal (5%)**

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, a digital magazine, 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 (5%) for their project. Further details will be made available via Moodle.

## **Course policies**

### **Email Policy:**

Most of the time, you can expect a reply to an email within 24-48 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 397) 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.

### **Student Success Tips:**

Your success at UVic is important to the Department of Anthropology. Familiarize yourself with the language of the campus: <http://www.registrar.uvic.ca/recruiting/vocabulary-large.html> for more information and refer to the Academic Calendar as well <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2010/>.

### **Resources:**

The University of Victoria makes available an array of student-centred resources to help you achieve your academic goals. For example, the Learning Skills Program has online and in-person advice about all aspects of the educational environment, including: note-taking, study skills, thinking critically, and preparing for and writing examinations. I highly recommend making use of these resources. Importantly, peer-counselling is also available. For additional information:

The Learning Commons: <http://learningcommons.uvic.ca/>

Learning Skills Program: <http://coun.uvic.ca/learning/>

Writing Centre: <http://www.ltc.uvic.ca/servicesprograms/twc.php>

Peer Help: <http://web.uvic.ca/~peerhelp/>

## 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 8-11	<p><b>Intro to course:</b> Textbook: Ch 1; Funeral of a Rus'</p> <p><b>Ethnoarchaeology:</b> Textbook: Ch 2 Garazhian O., Papoli Yazdi, L. (2008) Mortuary practices in Bam after the earthquake: An ethnoarchaeological study. <i>Journal of Social Archaeology</i>: 8(1): 94-112.</p>	
2 Jan 15-18	<p><b>Theoretical approaches to death</b></p> <p>Morris, I. (1991) The Archaeology of Ancestors: The Saxe/Goldstein Hypothesis Revisited. <i>Cambridge Archaeological Journal</i>: 1(2): 147-169.</p>	<p>This week: Group formation</p> <p>Data Assignment workshops (Jan 15/16)<sup>1</sup> In <b>CLEA 012</b></p>
3 Jan 22-25	<p><b>Treatment of the body:</b> Textbook: Ch 3</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>Barrett (1990) The monumentality of death: The Character of Early Bronze Age Mortuary Mounds in Southern Britain. <i>World Archaeology</i>: 22(2): 179-189.</p>	<p>Data Assignment workshops (Jan 22/23) In <b>CLEA 012</b></p> <p>Data assignment due 11:55 pm on Jan 25</p>
4 Jan 28-Feb 1	<p><b>Landscapes of death:</b> Textbook: Ch 6</p> <p>Parker Pearson, M. (1993) The Powerful Dead: Archaeological relationships between the living and the dead. <i>Cambridge Archaeological Journal</i> 3(2): 203-229.</p> <p>Stig Sørensen, M.L. and K. Rebay-Salisbury (2008) Landscapes of the Body: Burials of the Middle Bronze Age in Hungary. <i>European Journal of Archaeology</i> 11: 49-74.</p>	<p>In-class time for Project planning – Monument analysis (Jan 29)</p>

<sup>1</sup> The computer lab is not big enough for the whole class. You will be assigned to attend on either Tuesday OR Wednesday.

5 Feb 5-8	<p><b>Cemetery Analysis</b> 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>The Evergreen Cemetery Recording Project: An Interview with Gregory Vogel [<a href="http://archaeology.about.com/od/mortuarestudies/a/evergreen.htm">http://archaeology.about.com/od/mortuarestudies/a/evergreen.htm</a>]</p>	
Feb 12-15	<p><b>Status</b> Textbook: Ch 4</p> <p>Robb, J., R. Bigazzi, L. Lazzarini, C. Scarsini, and F. Sonogo (2001) Social "status" and biological "status": A comparison of grave goods and skeletal indicators from Pontecagnano. <i>Physical Anthropology</i> 113(3): 213-222.</p> <p>Lopez Castro, J.L. (2006) Colonials, merchants and alabaster vases: The western Phoenician aristocracy. <i>Antiquity</i> 80(307): 74-88.</p>	<p>Due Feb 15: Monument analysis</p> <p>In-class time for Proposal drafting/editing</p>
Feb 18-22	Reading break – No classes	
Feb 26-Mar 1	<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>Rodning (2011) Mortuary practices, gender ideology, and the Cherokee town at the Coweeta Creek site. <i>Journal of Anthropological Archaeology</i> 30(20): 145-173</p>	<p>Due Mar 1: Case study proposal</p>
Mar 5-8	<p><b>Life-cycle</b> 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>	
Mar 12-15	<p><b>Kinship:</b> Textbook: Ch 5 (focus on kinship this time)</p> <p>Gillespie, S. D. (2001) Personhood, Agency and Mortuary Ritual: A case study from the Ancient Maya. <i>Journal of Anthropological Archaeology</i> 20: 73-112</p> <p>Howell, Todd L. and Keith W. Kintigh (1996) Archaeological identification of kin groups using mortuary and biological data: an example from the American Southwest. <i>American Antiquity</i> 61(3): 537-554.</p>	

<p>Mar 19-22</p>	<p><b>Death through time:</b> Textbook: Ch 7</p> <p>Formicola, V. (2007) From the Sunghir Children to the Romito Dwarf: Aspects of the Upper Paleolithic Funerary Landscape. <i>Current Anthropology</i> 48(3): 446-453.</p> <p>Hayden, B. (2009) Funerals as Feasts: Why Are They So Important? <i>Cambridge Archaeological Journal</i> 19: 29-52.</p> <p>Kuijt, I. (1996) Negotiating Equality through Ritual: A Consideration of Late Natufian and Prepottery Neolithic A Period Mortuary Practices. <i>Journal of Anthropological Archaeology</i> 15(4): 313–336.</p>	
<p>Mar 26-27 (holiday on Friday)</p>	<p><b>Politics of death:</b> Textbook: Ch 8</p> <p>Read Morrell (1995) and at least one of the other two articles. Feel free to hunt down other perspectives on-line as well. These are VERY short, so please do the reading.</p> <p>Cast, R., B. Gonzalez, and T. Pertulla (2010) Claiming respect for ancestral remains: Repatriation and the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma. <i>Anthropology News</i> March 2010: 7-8.</p> <p>Morrell, Virginia (1995) Who Owns the Past? <i>Science</i> 268(5216): 1424-1426.</p> <p>Wilson, C. (2009) Implications and challenges of repatriating and reburial of Ngarrindjeri Old People from the 'Edinburgh Collection.' <i>Museum International</i> 61(1-2): 37 -40.</p> <p>Landau (1996) Why Anthropologists study human remains. <i>American Indian Quarterly</i> 20(2): 209-228.</p>	<p>Due Mar 28: Case study, 11:55pm</p>
<p>Apr 2-5</p>	<p><b>Memory</b> Textbook: Ch 9</p> <p>Barrett, John C. (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>Williams, Howard (2005) Keeping the dead at arm's length: Memory, weaponry and early medieval mortuary technologies. <i>Journal of Social Archaeology</i> 5(2):253-275.</p>	<p>Due Apr 2: Blog</p>