

Anthropology 3DD3 - The Archaeology of Death

Office: Chester New Hall Rm. 508
Office hours: Wednesday 1:30-2:30, or by appointment

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Classes: Tuesday 10:30-11:30, Thursday 9:30-11:30 KTH B104

The archaeological study of human engagement with death and the dead. We will examine how treatments of the dead vary through context and circumstance, and how mortuary evidence is used to develop understandings of past cultures and their long-term histories. Readings and research projects focus on case studies to highlight different perspectives on mortuary evidence and its interpretation.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE VALUES:

Reading Assignments, Discussions and Debates	- 20 %
Case Study Reviews	- 20 %
Case Study Alternative Proposals	- 20 %
Final Paper	- 40 %

Reading Assignments, Discussions and Debates: Points will be assigned for readings, prepared participation in class discussions related to the case study assignments, and prepared participation in in-class debates. The combined grade will be based on the points earned from the total number available.

Weekly reading assignments will consist of written notations on **each** of the week's assigned readings. Each notation will highlight at least one point of particular interest from the reading together with a very brief (2-3 sentence) explanation of why that point is of interest. The explanations may consist of critical commentaries or discussion of the implications of points raised in the reading. Notations may also include questions based on the reading. The written notations may be used as the basis for in-class discussion of the readings and the issues they raise. The notation on each reading will be worth one point toward a final total. Reading assignments are **due on the Tuesday** of the week for which the reading is assigned. Late assignments will be accepted for half value for up to one week past their due date, but will not be accepted beyond that point.

Discussion points focused on preparation for the written assignments will be assigned for on-line submission and in-class discussion. Their number and value will be described in the detailed assignment outlines.

Prepared participation in a series of four in-class debates will be worth the equivalent of three reading points each. Preparation for the debates will consist of a minimum of 3-4 typed points for presentation and submission. Debates will be scheduled at intervals throughout the course and will focus on topics intrinsic to the study of mortuary archaeology. Points will be awarded for on-time submission of position statements and supporting arguments (one point) and for in-class participation in each debate (two points).

Case Study Reviews: These will be reviews of two assigned archaeological case studies involving the analysis and interpretation of mortuary evidence. For each, you will be required to identify the theoretical approach, the specific goals of the study, its analyses of the evidence, the main conclusions

and the validity and effectiveness of the arguments in support of those conclusions. A detailed outline of this assignment will be provided.

Case Study Alternative Proposals: These will be detailed point-form outlines of alternative research proposals for the case studies reviewed in the first assignment. For each case study you will be required to define an alternative research goal and/or theoretical perspective for the analysis of the described or potentially available evidence and specify and explain how different classes of evidence could be analysed and interpreted to support conclusions about the past that were not the focus of the original studies. A detailed outline of this assignment will be provided.

Final Paper: The final paper will be a research proposal for the re-analysis and re-interpretation of an excavated cemetery site. The proposal will draw on everything learned from the overall course content to outline and explain how alternative approaches could be applied to the analysis and interpretation of the mortuary data. The proposal will not be an exhaustive review of all possible alternatives, but will be a well-developed and imaginative application of ideas and analytical or interpretive approaches examined in the course. A detailed outline of this assignment will be provided.

Penalty deductions of 1% of the COURSE grade per day late apply to all late and missed assignments unless an MSAF is submitted.

WEEKLY TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS

Jan. 8-10: Introduction.

Approaches to the Archaeology of Death

Jan. 15-17: Thinking historically, analytically and contextually about the dead. (Binford 1971, Kroeber 1927, Hodder 1980)

Jan. 22-24: Thinking emotionally and interpretively about the dead. (Hill 2013, Joyce 2001)

Jan 29-31: Thinking relationally about the dead. (Fowler 2013:219-255)

Feb. 5-7: Treatment of the dead as process, symbol and history. (Chapman 1981, Hodder 1984, Thomas 2016)

Structured Patterns of the Dead

Feb. 12-14: Places for the dead. (Joyce 2011, Littleton and Allen 2007, Parker Pearson 1993)

Feb. 19-21: Mid-term recess.

Feb. 26-28: Places and spaces for the dead. (Snodgrass 2016)

March 5-7: Placement of the dead. (Brown 1993, Chapman 2000)

March 12-14: Identities of the dead. (Brück 2004, Chunga and Castillo Butters 2015, Sørensen 2004)

Engagements with the Dead

- March 19-21:** Physical engagements with the dead. (Croucher 2012:94-117, Hanna et al. 2012, Smith and Pérez Arias 2015)
- March 26-28:** Spiritual engagements with the dead. (Harrington 2013:1-27, Headrick 2007:44-71, Toyne 2015)
- April 2-4:** Social engagements with the dead. (Oestigaard and Goldhahn 2006, Keswani 2005)
- April 9:** Pattern and change in mortuary practice.

READINGS

Note: Readings marked ONLINE are available for download through the Library by searching for the journal or publication in the Library Catalogue. Readings marked POSTED will be available for download from Avenue to Learn.

Binford, Lewis R.

1971 Mortuary Practices: Their Study and Their Potential. In *Approaches to the Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices*, edited by James A. Brown, pp. 6-29. *Memoirs of the Society for American Archaeology* No. 25. Washington, D.C. ONLINE

Brown Ian W.

1993 The New England Cemetery as a Cultural Landscape. In *History from Things: Essays on Material Culture*, edited by Steven Lubar and W. David Kingery, pp. 140-159. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press. POSTED

Brück, Joanna

2004 Material Metaphors: The Relational Construction of Identity in Early Bronze Age Burials in Ireland and Britain. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 4:307-333. ONLINE

Chapman, John

2000 Tension at Funerals: Social Practices and the Subversion of Community Structure in Later Hungarian Prehistory. In *Agency in Archaeology*, edited by Marcia-Anne Dobres and John E. Robb, pp. 169-195. London: Routledge. POSTED

Chapman, Robert

1981 The Emergence of Formal Disposal Areas and the 'Problem' of Megalithic Tombs in Prehistoric Europe. In *The Archaeology of Death*, edited by Robert Chapman, Ian Kinnes and Klavs Randsborg, pp. 71-81. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. POSTED

Chunga, Carlos Rengifo and Luis Castillo Butters

2015 The Construction of Social Identity: Tombs of Specialists at San José de Moro, Jequetepeque Valley, Perú. In *Funerary Practices and Models in the Ancient Andes: The Return of the Living Dead*, edited by Peter Eeckhout and Lawrence S. Owens, pp. 117-136. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. POSTED

Croucher, Karina

2012 *Death and Dying in the Neolithic Near East*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. POSTED

Fowler, Chris

2013 *The Emergent Past: A Relational Realist Archaeology of Early Bronze Age Mortuary Practices*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. POSTED

Hanna, Jayd, Abigail S. Bouwman, Keri A. Brown, Mike Parker Pearson, and Terence A. Brown

2012 Ancient DNA Typing shows that a Bronze Age Mummy is a Composite of Different Skeletons. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 39:2774-2779. ONLINE

Harrington, Nicola

2013 *Living with the Dead: Ancestor Worship and Mortuary Ritual in Ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Oxbow. POSTED

Headrick, Annabeth

2007 *The Teotihuacan Trinity: The Sociopolitical Structure of an Ancient Mesoamerican City*. Austin: University of Texas Press. POSTED

Hill, Erica

2013 Death, Emotion, and the Household among the Late Moche. In *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Death and Burial*, edited by Sarah Tarlow and Liv Nilsson Stutz, pp. 597-616. Oxford: Oxford University Press. POSTED

Hodder, Ian

1980 Social Structure and Cemeteries: A Critical Appraisal. In *Anglo-Saxon Cemeteries*, edited by Philip Rahtz, Tania Dickinson, and Lorna Watts, pp. 161-169. British Archaeological Reports vol. 82. Oxford: BAR. POSTED

Hodder, Ian

1984 Burials, Houses, Women and Men in the European Neolithic. In *Ideology, Power and Prehistory*, edited by Daniel Miller and Christopher Tilley, pp. 51-68. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. POSTED

Joyce, Rosemary A.

2001 Burying the Dead at Tlatilco: Social Memory and Social Identities. In *Social Memory, Identity, and Death: Anthropological Perspectives on Mortuary Rituals*, edited by Meredith S. Chesson, pp. 12-26. Archeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association, No. 10. Arlington, Virginia. ONLINE

Joyce, Rosemary A.

2011 In the Beginning: The Experience of Residential Burial in Prehispanic Honduras. In *Residential Burial: A Multiregional Exploration*, edited by Ron L. Adams and Stacie M. King, pp. 33-43. Archeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association Vol. 20. ONLINE

- Keswani, Priscilla Schuster
2005 Death, Prestige, and Copper in Bronze Age Cyprus. *American Journal of Archaeology* 109:341-401. ONLINE
- Kroeber, A.L.
1927 Disposal of the Dead. *American Anthropologist* 29:308-315. ONLINE
- Littleton, Judith and Harry Allen
2007 Hunter-gatherer Burials and the Creation of Persistent Places in Southeastern Australia. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 26:283–298. ONLINE
- Oestigaard, Terje and Joakim Goldhahn
2006 From the Dead to the Living: Death as Transactions and Re-negotiations. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 39:27-48. ONLINE
- Parker Pearson, Mike
1993 The Powerful Dead: Archaeological Relationships between the Living and the Dead. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 3:203-229. POSTED
- Sørensen, Marie Louise Stig
2004 Stating Identities: The Use of Objects in Rich Bronze Age Graves. In *Explaining Social Change: Studies in Honour of Colin Renfrew*, edited by John Cherry, Chris Scarre, and Stephen Shennan, pp. 167-176. Cambridge: MacDonald Institute for Archaeological Research. POSTED
- Smith, Scott C. and Maribel Pérez Arias
2015 From Bodies to Bones: Death and Mobility in the Lake Titicaca Basin, Bolivia. *Antiquity* 89:106-121. ONLINE
- Snodgrass, Anthony
2016 Putting Death in Its Place: The Idea of the Cemetery. In *Death Rituals, Social Order and the Archaeology of Immortality in the Ancient World*, edited by Colin Renfrew, Michael J. Boyd and Iain Morley, pp. 187-199. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. POSTED
- Thomas, Julian
2016 House Societies and Founding Ancestors in Early Neolithic Britain. In *Death Rituals, Social Order and the Archaeology of Immortality in the Ancient World*, edited by Colin Renfrew, Michael J. Boyd and Iain Morley, pp. 138-150. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. POSTED
- Toyne, J. Marla
2015 Ritual Violence and Human Offerings at the Temple of the Sacred Stone, Túcume, Peru. In *Living with the Dead in the Andes*, edited by Izumi Shimada and James L. Fitzsimmons, pp. 172-199. Tucson: University of Arizona Press. POSTED

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process.

Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at

www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University’s Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)

The University recognizes that, on occasion, the timing of a student’s religious, Indigenous, or spiritual observances and that of their academic obligations may conflict. In such cases, the University will provide reasonable academic accommodation for students that is consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code. Please review the [RISO information for students in the Faculty of Social Sciences](#) about how to request accommodation.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Privacy Protection

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. Similarly, grades for assignments for courses may only be posted using the last 5 digits of the student number as the identifying data. The following possibilities exist for return of graded materials:

1. Direct return of materials to students in class;
2. Return of materials to students during office hours;
3. Students attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with assignments for return by mail;
4. Submit/grade/return papers electronically.

Arrangements for the return of assignments from the options above will be finalized during the first class.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF)

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”. Please note these regulations have changed beginning Spring/Summer 2015.