Anthropology 3DD3 - The Archaeology of Death

Classes: Mondays 7-10 pm

Death and the dead seem to permeate archaeology – from pyramids to mummies to headstones, evidence of mortuary practice is everywhere. However, debates wage on over how to interpret these practices and, ethically, if it is worth having these skeletons in our archaeological closets.

The course is about the archaeological study of human interaction with death, dying and the dead. We will examine how treatment of the dead varies according to the attitudes, concerns and histories of past cultures and how mortuary evidence is used to develop our understanding of human diversity, cultural change and social history. Readings and assignments will focus on case studies to highlight different perspectives on mortuary evidence and approaches to its interpretation. We will also pay particular attention the ethics, politics, and challenges to this type of research, particularly in contemporary anthropology.

Course Outcomes

This course is designed with the goal to understand the complexities, strengths and limitations of archaeological theory and methods in understanding human interaction with the dead, past and present. This includes recognizing cross-cultural variability in mortuary practice, but also the social and political implications of studying human remains and mortuary material culture.

We will also focus on developing research skills, digital literacy, and experience in communicating archaeological findings with diverse audiences. To that end, assignments will explore different approaches to research and public dissemination of knowledge.

Assignments & Grade Values

Reading Assignments	30%
Class Participation & Discussion	20%
Midterm Research Project	20%
Final Project: Public Mortuary Archaeology	30%

Reading Assignments: Weekly readings assignments are due at the beginning of class, each Monday night. In association with the assigned readings for each week of the course there will be two 'Focus Questions' – select one and connect the readings together to present your response to the question. These questions are often relevant debates in the field – there will not be a single 'right' answer, but the emphasis will be placed on presenting a convincing argument using the assigned readings as evidence for your ideas, and connecting to broader themes in the course.

Assignments should be max. 2 pages (double-spaced, including references cited). Late assignments will be accepted for half value for up to one week past their due date.

Class Participation & Discussion: Attendance, engagement and participation in group discussions, activities, and projects during each week's lecture will be evaluated. Preparation for

each class (especially through assigned readings) will be essential. In some cases, topics or debates will be provided in advance to give more opportunities to prepare.

Midterm Research Project & Final Project: Details for the assignments will be circulated during the semester. Each student will develop a comprehensive research paper (midterm) on a particular mortuary archaeology case study, which will later be expanded and transformed as a public archaeology project (final project). As such, successful submission of a midterm research project is mandatory prior to submitting the final project.

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

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) policy
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.
If you have any questions about the MSAF, please contact your Associate Dean's office.
http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1698#Requests_for_Relief_for_Missed_Academic_Term_Work

Academic Skills Counselling and **Services for Students with Disabilities** are available through the Student Accessibility Services (SAS)
Tel: 905-525-9140 x28652   Email: sas@mcmaster.ca   Website: http://sas.mcmaster.ca

AODA: If you require this information in an alternate/accessible format, please contact Marcia Furtado at 905-525-9140 extension 24423 or email furtam1@mcmaster.ca

Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and 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 kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, Appendix 3, www.mcmaster.ca/senate/academic/ac integrity.htm

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:
1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one's own for which other credit has been obtained. *(Insert specific course information, e.g., style guide)*
2. Improper collaboration in group work. *(Insert specific course information)*
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

```
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 their
McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any
changes.
```

> **USE OF COMPUTERS: Computer use in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.**

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.

Email Forwarding in MUGSI:
http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html
*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link

(Approved at the Faculty of Social Sciences meeting on Tues. May 25, 2010)

WEEKLY TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS

Date	Topic	Important Dates/Assignments
Jan. 8	Introduction: What is the Archaeology of Death?	
Jan. 15	Archaeologies of Death, Dying & the Dead	Reading Assignment Due
Jan. 22	Archaeologies of the Living	Reading Assignment Due
Jan. 29	Places of the Dead *Introduction Midterm Research Project*	Reading Assignment Due
Feb. 5	Objects with the Dead	Reading Assignment Due
Feb. 12	Identities of the Dead	Reading Assignment Due
Feb. 19	READING WEEK	No assignments due.

Feb. 26	Scales of Death *Introduction to Final Project*	Reading Assignment Due **Midterm Project Due**
Mar. 5	Remembering the Dead	Reading Assignment Due
Mar. 12	Forgetting the Dead	Reading Assignment Due
Mar. 19	Public Mortuary Archaeology	Reading Assignment Due
Mar. 26	Archaeologists and the Dead	Reading Assignment Due
Apr. 2	Changing Ways of Death	
Apr. 9	Share Final Projects	**Final Projects Due**

Jan. 8   Introduction: What is the Archaeology of Death?

No readings.

Jan. 15   Archaeologies of Death, Dying & the Dead

Focus Questions:

a) What is the difference between concepts of 'death', 'dying' and 'the dead' in mortuary archaeology and why is the distinction important?
b) What methods and evidence are available for archaeologists to understand death, dying and the dead in the past?

Balter, Michael
　　2012 Did Neanderthals Truly Bury Their Dead? *Science* 337:1443-1444.

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.

Katzenberg, M. Anne
　　2000 Stable Isotope Analysis: A Tool for Studying Past Diet, Demography, and Life History. In: *Biological Anthropology of the Human Skeleton*, edited by M. Anne Katzenberg and Shelley R. Saunders, pp. 305-327. Wiley-Liss, New York.

Jan. 22   Archaeologies of the Living

Focus Questions:

a) As discussed in Lecture 1, some would argue that mortuary archaeology is more about the living than the dead. Use the readings as evidence to argue or refute this point.
b) What role does emotion and social interaction play in mortuary practices?

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.

Parker Pearson, Mike
> 1993 The Powerful Dead: Archaeological Relationships between the Living and the Dead. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 3:203-229.

Oestigaard, Terje and Joakim Goldhahn
> 2006 From the Dead to the Living: Death as Transactions and Re-negotiations. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 39:27-48.

Jan. 29   Places of the Dead

Focus Questions:

a) In what ways do the space and place of burials tell us about people in the past?
b) How do the dead transform the landscape?

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.

Laviolette, Patrick
> 2003 Landscaping Death: Resting Places for Cornish Identity. *Journal of Material Culture*: 215-240.

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.

Feb. 5   Things with the Dead

Focus Questions:
a) In what ways is material culture incorporated into mortuary practice and why are they relevant to archaeology?
b) Two of these assigned 'readings' are formal academic articles and two are more creative discussions of things with the dead – discuss the impact of communication styles in this context.

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.

Kristensen, Todd J. and Donald H. Holly
2013 Birds, Burials and Sacred Cosmology of the Indigenous Beothuk of Newfoundland, Canada. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 23:41–53.

Urquhart, Jane
2016 Legging. In *A Number of Things: Stories of Canada told through Fifty Objects*, pp. 1- 4. HarperCollins.

Laskow, Sarah
2017 Found: Evidence That a Lavish Burial Honored a Viking Warrior Woman. *Atlas Obscura*. URL: https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/viking-warrior-woman-burial-birka

Feb. 12   Identities of the Dead

Focus Questions:
   a) How do archaeologists reconstruct the identities of the dead? What are the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches?
   b) Why does the identity of the dead matter?

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.

Meskell, Lynn
1998 Intimate Archaeologies: The Case of Kha and Merit. *World Archaeology* 29: 363-379.

Arnold, Bettina
2002 "Sein und Werden": Gender as Process in Mortuary Ritual. In: *In Pursuit of Gender: Worldwide Archaeological Approaches*, edited by Sarah Milledge Nelson and Myriam Rosen-Ayalon., pp. 239-256. AltaMira Press, New York.

Feb. 19   READING WEEK

Feb. 26   Scales of Death

Focus Questions:
   a) Should contexts of mass death or mass graves be considered as a separate branch of

mortuary archaeology? Why or why not?
b) In what ways might large-scale deaths in a community influence the space/place, material culture or treatment of the dead and what does that tell archaeologists?

Garazhian, Omran and Leila Papoli Yazdi
2008 Mortuary practices in Bam after the earthquake: An ethnoarchaeological study. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 8: 94-112

Jessee, Erin, and Mark Skinner
2005 A Typology of Mass Grave and Mass Grave-Related Sites. *Forensic Science International* 152:55-59.

Jackes, Mary
1996 Complexity in Seventeenth Century Southern Ontario Burial Practices. In: *Debating Complexity: Proceedings of the 26th Annual Chacmool Conference*, edited by Daniel A. Meyer, Peter C. Dawson, and Donald T. Hanna, pp.127-140. Calgary, The Archaeological Association of the University of Calgary.

Mar. 5   Remembering the Dead

Focus Questions:
a) What methods have people (past and present) used to remember the dead? Create a typology (categories) of memory practices based on the case studies from this week (and past weeks if applicable) and explain why your typology is relevant to interpreting archaeological evidence.
b) Remembering the dead is often conceptualized as a conscious 'social strategy' – why? Why is it important for archaeologists to recognize mortuary practice as a social strategy?

Cannon, Aubrey
2005 Gender and Agency in Mortuary Fashion. In Interacting with the Dead: Perspectives on Mortuary Archaeology for the New Millenium. Gordon F.M. Rakita, Jane E. Buikstra, Lane A. Beck and Sloan R. Williams, eds. Pp. 41-65.

DiMeo, Nate
2015 Notes on an Imagined Plaque to be Added to the Statue of General Nathan Bedford Forrest, ... Episode 73: *The Memory Palace*. http://thememorypalace.us/2015/08/notes-on-an-imagined-plaque/

Torres-Rouff, Christina, William J. Pestle, and Blair M. Daverman (mon)
2012 Commemorating Bodies and Lives at Kish's 'A Cemetery': (Re)presenting Social Memory. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 12(2):193-219.

Mar. 12   Forgetting the Dead

Focus Questions:
a) Is forgetting the dead as equally common/important process as remembering the dead?

b) What does the timing and process of forgetting the dead tell us about people in the past (and present)?

Baines, John and Peter Lacovara
   2002 Burial and the dead in ancient Egyptian society: Respect, formalism, neglect. *Journal of Social Archaeology*: 5-36.

Tzortzopoulou-Gregory, Lita
   2010 Remembering and Forgetting: The Relationship Between Memory and the Abandonment of Graves in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Greek Cemeteries. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 14: 285-301.

Mar. 19   Public Mortuary Archaeology

Focus Questions:
   a) What is public archaeology and why is it an important part of mortuary archaeology?
   b) What methods can we use to do 'public mortuary archaeology'? Who is our audience? How do we measure impact?

Mack, Mark E. and Michael L. Blakey.
2004 The New York African Burial Ground Project: Past Biases, Current Dilemmas, and Future Research Opportunities. *Historical Archaeology* 38:10-17.

Meyers, K. and Williams, H. (2014). Blog bodies: mortuary archaeology and blogging. In D. Rocks-Macqueen and C. Webster (eds) *Blogging Archaeology*, E-Book, pp.-137-170. Landward Research.

And take a look at a sample of these blogs on mortuary archaeology:
https://spadeandthegrave.wordpress.com/author/robynla/
https://bonesdontlie.wordpress.com
https://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com
https://www.forbes.com/sites/kristinakillgrove/#11db6eb616da

Mar. 26   Archaeologists and the Dead

Focus Questions:
   a) What is repatriation and how is it influencing mortuary archaeology?
   b) Write a Code of Ethics for mortuary archaeologists. What are the most important principles of doing mortuary archaeology in a responsible and ethical manner? (draw upon the whole course as much as possible).

Hutt, Sherry, and Jennifer Riddle
   2007 The Law of Human Remains and Burials. In *Human Remains: Guide for Museums and Academic Institutions*, edited by Cassman Vicki, pp. 223-243. Toronto, AltaMira Press.

Kakaliouras, Ann M.

2008 Leaving Few Bones Unturned: Recent Work on Repatriation by Osteologists.
American Anthropologist 110(1):44-52.

Walker, Phillip L.
2000 Bioarchaeological Ethics: A Historical Perspective on the Value of Human Remains.
In *Biological Anthropology of the Human Skeleton*, edited by M. Anne Katzenberg and
Shelley R. Saunders, pp. 3-39. Wiley-Liss, New York.

Apr. 2   Changing Ways of Death

Focus Questions:
a) We know cultures are constantly changing – how do we see this in mortuary practice?
What can these changes tell us?
b) Relationships to the dead have changed considerably in 20th and 21st centuries – has this
influenced the relationship between archaeologists and the dead? What is the impact on
research?

Keswani, Priscilla Schuster
2005 Death, Prestige, and Copper in Bronze Age Cyprus. *American Journal of Archaeology*
109:341-401.

Larsson, Xsa M. and Liv Nilsson Stutz
2014 Reconcilable Differences: Cremation, Fragmentation, and Inhumation in Mesolithic and
Neolithic Sweden. In *Transformation by Fire: The Archaeology of Cremation in Cultural
Context*, edited by Ian Kuijt, Colin P. Quinn, and Gabriel Cooney, pp. 47-66. Tucson, AZ:
University of Arizona Press.

Lacy, Robyn
2017 Archaeology, Death Positivity and Public Engagement. *Death Maidens Blog*.
https://deadmaidens.com/2017/11/24/archaeology-death-positivity-and-public-engagement/

Apr. 9   Share Final Projects

No readings.