

Anthropology 3DD3 - The Archaeology of Death

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Classes: Tuesday 12:30-2:20, Thursday 12:30-1:20 Room MDCL 1008

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	- 30 %
Final Paper	- 50 %

Reading Assignments, Discussions and Debates: Points will be assigned for reading comments, 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. 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 Monday** 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.

Preparation for and participation in a series of three debates will be worth the equivalent of five reading points each. Preparation for the debates will consist of a minimum of 3-4 written points in support of one side or the other. Debates will be scheduled at intervals throughout the course and will focus on topics intrinsic to the study of mortuary archaeology. A detailed outline will be provided for each debate.

Preparation for discussion of the articles assigned for Jan. 31-Feb. 2 (Mainfort 1985, Torres-Rouff et al. 2012) will require identification of the main goals, an outline of the main classes of mortuary evidence used in the study and a brief explanation of how the evidence is used to draw conclusions. This written preparation will be worth the equivalent of six reading points (three for each article). Regular reading notations are not required this week.

Case Study Reviews: The assignment will require the selection and critical review of two archaeological case studies incorporating different approaches to 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.

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 potentially available mortuary data. The proposal will not be an exhaustive review of all possible alternatives but will be a well-developed application of ideas and analytical or interpretive approaches examined in the course, toward the goal of developing a research program that will lead to an understanding of the past culture and its history from its mortuary remains. A detailed outline of this assignment will be provided.

Late Assignments: 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. 10-12: Introduction: archaeo-ethnographies and archaeological histories of death.

Approaches to the Archaeology of Death

Jan. 17-19: The evocative and the sensational in the archaeology of death. (Prieto et al. 2019, Quilter 1989:59, Sommer 1999, White et al. 2021) **D1**

Jan. 24-26: Historical, formal and contextual approaches to the analysis and interpretation of mortuary practice. (Binford 1971, Kroeber 1927, Hodder 1980)

Jan. 31-Feb. 2: Formal and contextual studies of mortuary practice. (Mainfort 1985, Torres-Rouff et al. 2012)

Feb. 7-9: Treatment of the dead as process, symbol and history. (Chapman 1981, Hodder 1984, Thomas 2016)

Long-term histories of Death and the Dead

Feb. 14-16: Emergent control over death and the dead. (Bermúdez de Castro 2021, Pettit 2011:78-214 (Ch. 5-6), Einwögerer et al. 2006) **D2**

Feb. 21-23: **Mid-term recess.**

Feb. 28-March 2: Creating aggregations, cemeteries and spatial identities. (Brown 1993, Joyce 2011, Littleton and Allen 2007, Snodgrass 2016)

March 7-9: Grave goods and the creation of reciprocal identities between the living and the dead. (Brück 2004, Joyce 2001, Sørensen 2004)

The Changing Ways of Death

March 14-16: Reusing/reimagining the ways and places of death. (Fowler 2013:219-255, Quinn 2015)

March 21-23: The dead: attachment and avoidance. (Cannon and Cook 2015, Croucher 2018, Parker Pearson 1993)

March 28-30: Influential, incremental, and competitive comparison. (Nakamura 2011, Chapman 2000, Keswani 2005)

April 4-6: Interactive, integrative and transcendent ritual and display. (Byrd and Rosenthal 2016, Henry and Barrier 2016, Matsumoto 2018, Stevenson 2016)

Continuing Debates in the Archaeology of Death

April 11: Formal analysis, contextual interpretation, archaeological history and contemporary values. (Arnold 2016, Rosenswig et al. 2020, Giles and Williams 2016) **D3**

READINGS

Note: Readings marked POSTED are available for download from Avenue to Learn.

Arnold, Bettina

2016 Belts vs. Blades: The Binary Bind in Iron Age Mortuary Contexts in Southwest Germany. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 23:832–853. https://journals-scholarsportal-info.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/details/10725369/v23i0003/832_bvbtbbamcisg.xml

Bermúdez de Castro, José María, James Blinkhorn, Alison Crowther, Katerina Douka, Stéphan Dubernet, Patrick Faulkner, Pilar Fernández-Colón, Nikos Kourampas, Jorge González García, David Larreina, François-Xavier Le Bourdonnec, George MacLeod, Laura Martín-Francés, Diyendo Massilani, Julio Mercader, Jennifer M. Miller, Emmanuel Ndiema, Belén Notario, Africa Pitarch Martí, Mary E. Prendergast, Alain Queffelec, Solange Rigaud, Patrick Roberts, Mohammad Javad Shoaee, Ceri Shipton, Ian Simpson, Nicole Boivin, and Michael D. Petraglia

2021 Earliest known human burial in Africa. *Nature* 593:95-100. <https://www-nature-com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/articles/s41586-021-03457-8>

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. https://www-jstor-org.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/stable/25146709?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

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. https://journals-scholarsportal-info.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/details/14696053/v04i0003/307_mm.xml

Byrd, Brian F., and Jeffrey Rosenthal

2016 Gathering the Dead and Recrafting Social Identity: Placing Prehistoric Mortuary Practices in Broader Social Context. In *Archaeological Variability and Interpretation in Global Perspective*, edited by Alan P. Sullivan and Deborah Olszewski, pp. 233-265. Boulder: University Press of Colorado. **POSTED**

Cannon, Aubrey, and Katherine Cook

2015 Infant Death and the Archaeology of Grief. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 25:399-416. https://journals-scholarsportal-info.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/details/09597743/v25i0002/399_idataog.xml

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. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315866000-23/tension-funerals-social-practices-subversion-community-structure-later-hungarian-prehistory-john-chapman?context=ubx&refId=ba8c1a35-8d65-4040-a229-9793c76a0829>

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

Croucher, Karina

2018 Keeping the Dead Close: Grief and Bereavement in the Treatment of Skulls from the Neolithic Middle East. *Mortality* 23:103-120. https://journals-scholarsportal-info.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/pdf/13576275/v23i0002/103_ktdegasftnme.xml

Einwögerer, Thomas, Herwig Friesinger, Marc Händel, Christine Neugebauer-Maresch, Ulrich Simon, and Maria Teschler-Nicola

2006 Upper Palaeolithic Infant Burials. *Nature* 444:285. <https://doi-org.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/10.1038/444285a>

Fowler, Chris

2013 *The Emergent Past: A Relational Realist Archaeology of Early Bronze Age Mortuary Practices*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://academic-oup-com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/book/5433/chapter/148292826>

Giles, Melanie, and Howard Williams

2016 Introduction. In *Archaeologists and the Dead: Mortuary Archaeology in Contemporary Society*, edited by Howard Williams and Melanie Giles, pp. 1-18. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/mcmu/reader.action?docID=4706468&ppg=22>

Henry, Edward R., and Casey R. Barrier

2016 The Organization of Dissonance in Adena-Hopewell Societies of Eastern North America. *World Archaeology* 48(1):87-109. <https://www-tandfonline-com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/doi/full/10.1080/00438243.2015.1132175>

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. https://journals-scholarsportal-info.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/details/1551823x/v10i0001/12_btdatsmasi.xml

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. https://journals-scholarsportal-info.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/details/1551823x/v20i0001/33_3tbteorbiph.xml

Keswani, Priscilla Schuster

2005 Death, Prestige, and Copper in Bronze Age Cyprus. *American Journal of Archaeology* 109:341-401. https://www-jstor-org.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/stable/40026118?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Kroeber, A. L.

1927 Disposal of the Dead. *American Anthropologist* 29:308-315. https://www-jstor-org.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/stable/661153?refreqid=excelsior%3A878469a56c16b2b711d5bc76e5549bfe&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

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. https://journals-scholarsportal-info.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/details/02784165/v26i0002/283_hbatcoppisa.xml

Mainfort, Robert C.

1985 Wealth, Space, and Status in a Historic Indian Cemetery. *American Antiquity* 50:555-579. https://www-jstor-org.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/stable/280321?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

Matsumoto, Naoko

2018 Changing Relationship between the Dead and the Living in Japanese Prehistory. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B Biology* 373(1754) <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2017.0272>

Nakamura, Daisuke

2011 The Diversity of Mortuary Practice Acceptance at the Beginning of the Yayoi Period. In *Coexistence and Cultural Transmission in East Asia*, edited by Naoko Matsumoto, Hidetaka Bessho, and Makoto Tomii, pp. 223-256. London: Routledge. <https://www-taylorfrancis-com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315432212-22/diversity-mortuary-practice-acceptance-beginning-yayoi-period?context=ubx&refId=d75c8ac3-1388-40a1-983b-2cf431427289>

Parker Pearson, Mike

1993 The Powerful Dead: Archaeological Relationships between the Living and the Dead. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 3:203-229. <https://www-cambridge-org.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/core/journals/cambridge-archaeological-journal/article/powerful-dead-archaeological-relationships-between-the-living-and-the-dead/E32BD9EFC07AE2F776002722AF29A1E9>

Pettitt, Paul

2011 *The Palaeolithic Origins of Human Burial*. London: Routledge. <https://doi-org.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/10.4324/9780203813300>

Prieto, Gabriel, John W. Verano, Nicolas Goepfert, Douglas Kennett, Jeffrey Quilter, Steven LeBlanc, Lars Fehren-Schmitz, Jannine Forst, Mellisa Lund, Brittany Dement, Elise Dufour, Olivier Tombret, Melina Calmon, Davette Gadison, and Khrystyne Tschinkel

2019 A mass sacrifice of children and camelids at the Huanchaquito-Las Llamas site, Moche Valley, Peru. *PLoS ONE* 14(3): e0211691. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0211691>

Quilter, Jeffrey

1989 *Life and Death at Paloma: Society and Mortuary Practices in a Preceramic Peruvian Village*. University of Iowa Press.

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/mcmu/detail.action?docID=836716>

Quinn, Colin P.

2015 Returning and reuse: Diachronic perspectives on multi-component cemeteries and mortuary politics at Middle Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Tara, Ireland. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 37:1–18. https://journals-scholarsportal-info.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/details/02784165/v37/icomplete/1_rardpoaebati.xml

Rosenswig, Robert M., Margaret L. Briggs, and Marilyn A. Masson

2020 Burying the Dead during the Maya Postclassic Period: Saxe, Binford and Goldstein's Continued Relevance to Mortuary Analysis. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 58, <https://www-sciencedirect-com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/science/article/pii/S0278416519300996>

Sommer, Jeffrey D.

1999 The Shanidar IV 'Flower Burial': a Reevaluation of Neanderthal Burial Ritual. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 9:127–129. <https://www-cambridge-org.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/core/journals/cambridge-archaeological-journal/article/shanidar-iv-flower-burial-a-reevaluation-of-neanderthal-burial-ritual/C28BB4644C55E12ED64819A260A5055D>

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

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. <https://www-cambridge-org.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/core/books/death-rituals-social-order-and-the-archaeology-of-immortality-in-the-ancient-world/putting-death-in-its-place-the-idea-of-the-cemetery/79A940542B0C2A3A59AF98188C06F440>

Stevenson, Alice

2016 Locating a Sense of Immortality in Early Egyptian Cemeteries. 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. 371-381. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://www-cambridge-org.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/core/books/death-rituals-social-order-and-the-archaeology-of-immortality-in-the-ancient-world/locating-a-sense-of-immortality-in-early-egyptian-cemeteries/87B48759A1F9A1629C9133328242903A>

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. <https://www-cambridge-org.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/core/books/death-rituals-social-order-and-the-archaeology-of-immortality-in-the-ancient-world/house-societies-and-founding-ancestors-in-early-neolithic-britain/155AA882AF7F644489DF0D414082674F>

Torres-Rouff, Christina, William J. Pestle, and Blair M. Daverman

2012 Commemorating Bodies and Lives at Kish's 'A Cemetery': (Re)presenting Social Memory. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 12:193–219. https://journals-scholarsportal-info.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/details/14696053/v12i0002/193_cbalakcsm.xml

White, J. Alyssa, George H. Burgess, Masato Nakatsukasa, Mark J. Hudson, John Pouncett, Soichiro Kusaka, Minoru Yoneda, Yasuhiro Yamada, and Rick J. Schulting

2021 3000-year-old shark attack victim from Tsukumo shell-mound, Okayama, Japan. *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 38. <https://www-sciencedirect-com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/science/article/pii/S2352409X21002777>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

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 behaviour 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. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.

improper collaboration in group work.

copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster’s use of Turnitin.com please go to

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Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities policy.

REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

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”.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

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EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.