

COURSE SYLLABUS



COURSE TITLE: ANTH-280-Anthropology of Death

CLASS SECTION: 001

TERM: 2024F

COURSE CREDITS: 3

DELIVERY METHOD(S): Face to face

Camosun College respectfully acknowledges that our campuses are situated on the territories of the Ləkʷəŋən (Songhees and Kosapsum) and WSÁNEĆ peoples. We honour their knowledge and welcome to all students who seek education here.

INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

NAME: Nicole Kilburn

EMAIL: kilburn@camosun.ca

OFFICE: Young 212A

HOURS: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1-2:30pm, Thursdays 9:30-10am and by appointment

As your course instructor, I endeavour to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me. Camosun College is committed to identifying and removing institutional and social barriers that prevent access and impede success.

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Students, using an anthropological approach, will explore one of life's inevitabilities: death. While death is a biological reality, its definition and meaning are profoundly shaped by culture. We will survey a wide variety of funerary traditions to understand how these rituals help define death, guide the behaviour of those grieving, and structure the ongoing relations between the living and their dead. We will examine the similarities and differences in conceptions of the human body, death, and death rites in time and space, and consider our own cultural practices in cross-cultural perspective.

PREREQUISITE(S):

One of:

C in ENGL 151

C in ENGL 161

C in ENGL 163

C in ENGL 164

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES / OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course a student will be able to:

1. Explain death as both a biological and cultural phenomenon.
2. Describe how culture shapes the components of death rituals that are important for both the deceased and the bereaved.
3. Analyze examples of grief and mourning practices in a variety of cultural contexts.
4. Explore contemporary and emerging issues regarding death and dying.
5. Illustrate the economic dimension of death, both in terms of the modern death-care industry and the performance opportunities of funerals.
6. Reflect upon deep-seated perspectives on death through comparisons with other cultures.

A Cautionary Note: The subject matter of this course is potentially sensitive and painful. It requires a willingness to explore your own ideas and emotions surrounding death, something that we do not have much experience or guidance with in North American culture. Death is an intense topic, and may be stressful to think about in a classroom setting. You may find yourself unexpectedly triggered by content that we cover. Please think carefully about this and look after yourself. Former students have told me that content in this class is both personally helpful and extremely challenging; if you do not think that you can handle this type of material in an academic setting, this may not be the class for you at this time. While choosing to not participate in some components of the course is an option, all students are still expected to complete the course and be evaluated on the content. If you find that content is triggering you over the course of the semester, please know that I am happy to listen/ talk to all students in office hours. While I am not a trained counsellor, I have expertise as a human being and am not afraid of a few tears. However, I also recommend the services of Camosun's excellent counselling department (<http://camosun.ca/services/counselling-centre/personal.html>), which is a service covered by your student fees.

REQUIRED MATERIALS & RECOMMENDED PREPARATION / INFORMATION

There is no text or course pack to purchase from the bookstore for this course. Readings and other resources for this course are posted and linked directly from the course D2L page (the full bibliography is presented at the end of this course outline).

COURSE SCHEDULE, TOPICS, AND ASSOCIATED PREPARATION / ACTIVITY / EVALUATION

The following schedule and course components are subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC	RESOURCES
1 Sept. 2-8	Introduction to the course; what are we getting ourselves into? Course questionnaire due by Sept. 8 via D2L	Death and Society: A Marxist Approach Anthropology of Death, Annual Review of Anthropology
2 Sept. 9-15	How to define death; let us count the ways!	Content curated on D2L webpage only
3 Sept. 16-22	Introducing Necrogeographies	Monuments, Landscape, and Memory

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC	RESOURCES
	T: fieldtrip to Harling Point and Ross Bay cemetery TH: fieldtrip to RBCM	Death in the Cathedral; mortuary practices in sports stadiums
4 Sept. 23-29	T: debrief from the fieldtrips, more on necrogeographies and discussion about the term project TH: Cultural constructions of life and death Cemetery assignment due by Sept. 30 via D2L	Content curated on D2L webpage only
5 Sept. 30-Oct. 6	Cultural constructions of life and death, continued	Tibetans and Vultures Keep Ancient Burial rite Hunting the Ancestors, death and alliance in Wari cannibalism
6 Oct. 7-13	Rest in Pieces? Fantasy map due by 4pm October 10 (in class) as a hard copy	The Cremated Catholic: the ends of a deceased Guatemalan
7 Oct. 14-20	T: midterm exam TH: Good Death and Bad Death Term project proposal due by Oct. 17 via D2L (or earlier!)	Jandi: The Spirit Ambulance Content curated on D2L webpage
8 Oct. 21-27	T: work block for term project TH: Grief, mourning and Remembrance	Grief and a Headhunter's Rage Three Days of Weeping
9 Oct. 28-Nov. 3	T: Grief, mourning and Remembrance continued... TH: Caring for the Ancestors	Sweetening Death; shifting landscapes in the role of food in grief and mourning
10 Nov. 4-10	Economics of Death	Buying an Afterlife: Mapping the Social Impact of Religious Beliefs through Consumer Death Goods Money and Death: Funeral Business in Asante, Ghana
11 Nov. 11-17	T: Ethics, Body Donation and the Use of Bodies after Death	Plastination on Display

WEEK or DATE RANGE	ACTIVITY or TOPIC	RESOURCES
	TH: Death and identity	
12 Nov. 18-24	T: final work block for term project TH: TBA	No readings this week
13 Nov. 25-Dec. 1	T: Animals and the Afterlife TH: Death and sustainability pop up exhibit Saturday November 30	Back to the Land Let your Last Footprint Be a Green One
14 Dec. 2-8	The Future of Death (and wrap up)	The Last Days of Death

Students registered with the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) who complete quizzes, tests, and exams with academic accommodations have booking procedures and deadlines with CAL where advanced notice is required. Deadlines can be reviewed on the [CAL exams page](https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning/academic-accommodations-exams). <https://camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning/academic-accommodations-exams>

EVALUATION OF LEARNING

DESCRIPTION	WEIGHTING
<p>Death and Dying Questionnaire Part 1 to be completed by September 8 at 11:59pm, Part 2 to be completed by December 8 at 11:59pm. Please submit them to the Questionnaire folder in the Assignments section (you can submit both of them there).</p> <p>This class is an academic exploration of death, but also an intensely personal one. In the first week of class I would like you to complete a confidential questionnaire that will help you start to think about some key issues that will arise throughout the course. I will not provide feedback or ask you anything related to what you put in the questionnaire unless you bring it up, this is a document to get you thinking about some key questions and for me to gauge where people are it as we get started in the class. Please retain the electronic copy of the questionnaire; in the last week of class you will be asked to revisit the document to consider how your answers to relevant questions and overall perspectives may have changed or been refined over the course of the semester. You will add to your answers in italics text below the original text and resubmit to D2L by December 8.</p>	<p>5%</p> <p>Each part is worth 2.5%, earned by completing the exercise.</p>
<p>Cemetery Assignment Due by 11:59pm September 30 in D2L For this exercise you will record 10 different grave markers in Ross Bay cemetery, one of Canada's oldest and largest surviving Victorian cemeteries (that is still in use today!) and use resources provided to decode the symbols represented in this landscape and provide a short overall analysis. More information, reference resources and recording forms are provided on D2L. We will be visiting this cemetery as part of a fieldtrip on September 17, and while you will not have time to complete the assignment during the fieldtrip I can help by providing some context.</p>	<p>8%</p>

DESCRIPTION	WEIGHTING
If there is a personal reason why you cannot interact with this cultural landscape please come and talk to me ASAP about an alternative assignment.	
Fantasy map of the Afterlife Due in class Octoebr 10 AS A HARD COPY As we will see in class, constructions of the Afterlife are not arbitrary flights of creativity. They reflect the society in which the are created, and are important for setting the moral compass. Here is your opportunity to apply what you have learned about the key “ingredients” of the “here after” in a creative way. Inspired by D and D, this assignment asks students to draw a map of the Afterlife and provide a short written description of the visual representation of this course content.	7%
Term project proposal due by October 17 (but handing in sooner would be great!). The sooner you submit it, the more time you have to work with my feedback.	5%
Term project This is a team project that contirbutes to a pop up exhibit at the RBCM as part of the Stonehenge exhibit. Our pop up will be on Saturday, November 30 from 1-3pm. More information is posted on our D2L page, and students will will be organized into groups of 3-4 peers in the second week of the semester based on their stated topics of interest. NOTE: An individual paper option is also available and due by November 24 .	25%
Midterm exam Tuesday, October 15 This exam will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer and long answer responses drawing from material covered in class, the readings, and other assigned resources. It will be written on the computer in a computer lab.	25%
Final Exam written during the college final exam period This exam will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer and long answer responses drawing from material covered in class, the readings, and other assigned resources. The final exam is not cumulative, but will consider reoccurring themes that weave their way through the entire course.	25%
If you have a concern about a grade you have received for an evaluation, please come and see me as soon as possible. Refer to the Grade Review and Appeals policy for more information. https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.14.pdf	100%

COURSE GUIDELINES & EXPECTATIONS

Exams: Exams must be written at the scheduled times unless prior notice has been given to the instructor and approval received to write at a different time. If a student misses an exam due to illness, s/he must present a medical note to write a makeup exam and communicate with the instructor before the start of the exam. There will be no exceptions (this is college policy). Additional exams/assignments are not available to students in order to upgrade poor marks.

Assignments: Please make sure that assignments are submitted properly via D2L instead of emailed to me. Things get misplaced very easily in my inbox, and it is harder for me to provide feedback and tie grades into the gradebook if files are not submitted through D2L. Please submit as a Word document or PDF, other formats often will not open for me.

It is important that assignments be submitted on time. **Five percent** of the total mark will be deducted for every day an assignment is late (yes, even weekends); while this may not seem like many marks, remember that 5% is the difference of a letter grade, and this adds up quickly. This is an unfortunate way to lose marks, and can be avoided by not procrastinating and staying organized in terms of time management. Unless there is a documented medical reason there will be no exceptions made.

Course Engagement: The topics in the course can be controversial. Students are expected to engage in respectful dialogue at all times as they bring diverse thoughts and perspectives to a lively discussion, where disagreements may surface.

SCHOOL OR DEPARTMENTAL INFORMATION

There is no specific additional information to add at this time.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Enrolment at Camosun assumes that the student will become a responsible member of the College community. As such, each student will display a positive work ethic, assist in the preservation of College property, and assume responsibility for their education by researching academic requirements and policies; demonstrating courtesy and respect toward others; and respecting expectations concerning attendance, assignments, deadlines, and appointments.

SUPPORTS AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

Camosun College offers a number of services to help you succeed in and out of the classroom. For a detailed overview of the supports and services visit camosun.ca/services.

Support Service	Website
Academic Advising	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/academic-advising
Accessible Learning	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/accessible-learning
Counselling	camosun.ca/services/health-and-wellness/counselling-centre
Career Services	camosun.ca/services/co-operative-education-and-career-services
Financial Aid and Awards	camosun.ca/registration-records/financial-aid-awards
Help Centres (Math/English/Science)	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres
Indigenous Student Support	camosun.ca/programs-courses/iecc/indigenous-student-services
International Student Support	camosun.ca/international
Learning Skills	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres/writing-centre-learning-skills
Library	camosun.ca/services/library
Office of Student Support	camosun.ca/services/office-student-support

Support Service	Website
Ombudsperson	camosun.ca/services/ombudsperson
Registration	camosun.ca/registration-records/registration
Technology Support	camosun.ca/services/its
Writing Centre	camosun.ca/services/academic-supports/help-centres/writing-centre-learning-skills

If you have a mental health concern, please contact Counselling to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. Counselling sessions are available at both campuses during business hours. If you need urgent support after-hours, please contact the Vancouver Island Crisis Line at 1-888-494-3888 or call 911.

COLLEGE-WIDE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, REQUIREMENTS, AND STANDARDS

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to comply with all College policy regarding academic integrity; which is about honest and ethical behaviour in your education journey. The following guide is designed to help you understand your responsibilities: <https://camosun.libguides.com/academicintegrity/welcome>

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.13.pdf> for Camosun's Academic Integrity policy and details for addressing and resolving matters of academic misconduct.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Camosun College is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging appropriate academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a documented disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) and register as early as possible. Please visit the CAL website for more information about the process of registering with CAL, including important deadlines:

<https://camosun.ca/cal>

Academic Progress

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2023-02/e-1.1.pdf> for further details on how Camosun College monitors students' academic progress and what steps can be taken if a student is at risk of not meeting the College's academic progress standards.

Course Withdrawals Policy

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.2.pdf> for further details about course withdrawals. For deadline for fees, course drop dates, and tuition refund, please visit <https://camosun.ca/registration-records/tuition-fees#deadlines>.

Grading Policy

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.5.pdf> for further details about grading.

Grade Review and Appeals

Please visit <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-1.14.pdf> for policy relating to requests for review and appeal of grades.

Medical / Compassionate Withdrawals

Students who are incapacitated and unable to complete or succeed in their studies by virtue of serious and demonstrated exceptional circumstances may be eligible for a medical/compassionate withdrawal (see [Medical/Compassionate Withdrawals policy](#)). Please visit <https://camosun.ca/services/forms#medical> to learn more about the process involved in a medical/compassionate withdrawal.

Sexual Violence

Camosun is committed to creating a campus culture of safety, respect, and consent. Camosun's Office of Student Support is responsible for offering support to students impacted by sexual violence. Regardless of when or where the sexual violence occurred, students can access support at Camosun. The Office of Student Support will make sure students have a safe and private place to talk and will help them understand what supports are available and their options for next steps. The Office of Student Support respects a student's right to choose what is right for them. For more information see Camosun's Sexualized Violence Policy: <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.9.pdf> and camosun.ca/services/sexual-violence-support-and-education.

To contact the Office of Student Support: oss@camosun.ca or by phone: 250-370-3046 or 250-370-3841

Student Misconduct (Non-Academic)

Camosun College is committed to building the academic competency of all students, seeks to empower students to become agents of their own learning, and promotes academic belonging for everyone. Camosun also expects that all students to conduct themselves in a manner that contributes to a positive, supportive, and safe learning environment. Please review Camosun College's Student Misconduct Policy at <https://camosun.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/e-2.5.pdf> to understand the College's expectations of academic integrity and student behavioural conduct.

Looking for other policies?

The full suite of College policies and directives can be found here: <https://camosun.ca/about/camosun-college-policies-and-directives>

Changes to this Syllabus: Every effort has been made to ensure that information in this syllabus is accurate at the time of publication. The College reserves the right to change courses if it becomes necessary so that course content remains relevant. In such cases, the instructor will give the students clear and timely notice of the changes.

