



**CAMOSUN COLLEGE**  
**School of Arts & Science**  
**Department of Social Sciences**

**ANTH-290-001**  
**Special Topics in Anthropology**  
**Fall 2018**

**COURSE OUTLINE**

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The course description is online @ <http://camosun.ca/learn/calendar/current/web/anth.html>

Ω Please note: This outline will not be kept indefinitely. It is recommended students keep this outline for their records, especially to assist in transfer credit to post-secondary institutions.

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**1. Instructor Information**

<b>(a) Instructor</b>	Nicole Kilburn
<b>(b) Office hours</b>	Tuesday 11:30-1:00, Wednesday 3:30-4:30, Thursday 11:30-1:00 of by apt.
<b>(c) Location</b>	Young 213
<b>(d) Phone</b>	(250) 370 3344 <b>Alternative:</b> _____
<b>(e) E-mail</b>	kilburn@camosun.bc.ca
<b>(f) Website</b>	https://sites.camosun.ca/nicolekilburn

Using an anthropological approach, this course will explore one of life's inevitabilities: death. While death is a biological reality, its definition and meaning it profoundly shaped by culture. There is significant cultural variation in the treatment of the body after death, from sky burials in Tibet to full mummification of the ancestors, which can express a culture's social values and worldview. 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 as well as the 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.

**2. Intended Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Critically analyze the complex array of Anthropology sources, both primary and secondary.
2. Identify the central themes, concepts, and issues relating to the course topic.
3. Critically analyze and apply the tools of Anthropology to issues of the course topic.
4. Synthesize and present varying positions concerning the course topic.
5. Demonstrate skills in research, in creating arguments, and in written and oral communication.

**3. Required Materials**

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 from the course D2L page (the full bibliography is presented at the end of this course outline). There IS, however, a \$15 course supplies fee associated with this class that needs to be paid to the college cashier (this will finance our term project). I will explain how to do this in class!

## 4. Course Content and Schedule

This class meets on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 4:00-5:20pm in Y214. Please note that there are fieldtrips planned for Thursday September 27, Thursday October 11, Tuesday November 6, and that students are expected to participate in the term project at the Royal British Columbia Museum on Saturday, November 24 from 1-3pm (please plan work schedules accordingly!)

WEEK	Lecture Topics	Readings
1 Sept. 3-9	Introduction to the course	The End of Life, the Ends of Life: An Anthropological View; Death and Society: A Marxist Approach
2 Sept. 10-16	Defining death: biologically, medically, legally, and culturally/religiously	Living Cadavers and the Calculation of Death; Kelli Swazey TED Talk "Life that doesn't End with Death"
3 Sept. 17-23	A cultural history of death and the development of "The Afterlife"	Hominin burial- Who First Buried the Dead?
	Cultural constructions of life and death	Tibetans and Vultures Keep Ancient Burial rite
4 Sept. 24-30	Cultural constructions of life and death, cont...	East Asian Attitudes toward Death- A search for ways to help East Asian elderly dying in contemporary America
	Class visits the Egypt exhibit to think about Egyptian concepts of death	The Dissector's Knife
5 Oct. 1-7	Geographies of the Afterlife	
	Rest in Pieces?	
6 Oct. 8-14	Rest in Pieces? Cont...	The Cremated Catholic: the Ends of a Deceased Guatemalan; Hunting the Ancestors
	Fieldtrip to the Royal Oak Burial Park crematorium (to be confirmed)	
7 Oct. 15-21	Debrief from fieldtrip and class discussion	
	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>	
8 Oct. 22-28	Those left behind.... Grief and mourning in cross cultural perspective	Grief and a Headhunter's Rage; Three Days of Weeping
9 Oct. 29-Nov. 4	Caring for the ancestors; ongoing interactions between the living and the dead	Grave Vows; Roman Tombside Feasting
	Offrendas and Dias de los Muertos	Introduction from The Skeleton at the Feast
10 Nov. 5-11	Displaying Death: the Ethics of Museums and Exhibiting Human Remains and Grave Goods	Fieldtrip to the RBCM
	Death and Gender	TBA
11 Nov. 12-18	Exploring Mortuary Landscapes	Defining the Place of Burial: what makes a cemetery a cemetery?
		Remember Me As You Pass By
12 Nov. 19-25	Death on Demand: an anthropological consideration of the right to die movement	Physician-Assisted Suicide: An Anthropological Perspective
	The Economy of Death	Buying an Afterlife: Mapping the Social Impact of Religious Beliefs through Consumer Death Goods
13 Nov. 26-Dec. 2	Death and Sustainability: Green burials	Back to the Land (CBC article); Let your Last Footprint Be A Green One
	Digital Death and Immortality in the Age of Technology	TED Talk: What Happens to our Digital Remains When We Die?
14 Dec. 3-9	Death Cafe	No readings
	The Future of Death	The Last Days of Death

## 5. Basis of Student Assessment (Weighting)

### (a) Assignments

#### **Death and Dying Questionnaire (5%)**

To be completed by December 9 (but see below)

This class is an academic exploration of death, but also an intensely personal one. In the first week of class students will complete a questionnaire that helps them think about key issues that will arise throughout the course. The questionnaire will be submitted to me as a hard copy by September 13. 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 and overall perspectives may have changed over the course of the semester. You will add to your answers in italics text below the original text and submit via Dropbox on D2L by 4pm on December 9.

#### **An anthropological evaluation of a topic chosen from the Encyclopedia of Death (10%)**

Due October 11 or November 6

Students will each choose an entry from the Encyclopedia of Death (<http://www.deathreference.com/>) and write a 5 page paper (double spaced, 12 point font) on the topic that both describes the particular topic (for example Soul Birds) and evaluates it from an anthropological perspective based on concepts discussed in class. This gives students an opportunity to explore a topic of personal interest that may not be discussed directly in class and apply material from the course to consider the topic critically. Because this assignment is meant to compliment other material covered in class, please do not choose a topic that we covered in course readings or discussed in lecture. Feel free to come and talk about a topic before working on it. Remember that all resources require proper APA citing and in-text citations.

The 2 options for due dates has to do with when material is covered in class. If you choose a topic where the analysis will benefit from concepts (like grief and mourning) that will be considered after October 11, you can choose the November 6 due date. It also means that you can manage your time based on other assignments, in this class and others. The second half of term is already demanding in this class (think term project) so you can choose your due date.

#### **Term project: Hosting a Mock Egyptian Funeral at the RBCM November 24 (25%)**

The following appears in the RBCM's fall program guide:

The Egyptians had rich, complex traditions that created vivid understandings of the Afterlife, and the rituals required for the soul (called the *Ka*) to get there. You are invited to a mock Egyptian funeral, organized by Camosun's Anthropology of Death students. By exploring the various steps of the Egyptian funeral process you will learn about the importance of mummification, why particular grave goods were included in the tomb, and the elaborate ceremonies that helped transform the mortal pharaoh into a divine ancestor and prepare them for their journey to and eternity in the Afterlife.

In groups of 3-4 students will work on one aspect of this event, from learning about tomb construction and the embalming of the body through to grave inclusions and the funerary ritual of the Opening of the Mouth ceremony. One group will also present information about the ethics of doing archaeology in tombs and displaying grave goods and mummies in museums. Information will be presented to the public in a fun, informative, and engaging way in a 2 hour pop-up exhibit event in late November that is open to all museum patrons. A detailed description of the event and each group topic will be posted on the course webpage and students will be organized into groups in the second week of the semester based on their stated topics of interest.

A detailed outline of what the group intends to present, and how they plan to do it, is due **October 6** (worth 5% of the total mark for this assignment). Please include an itemized estimate of any expenses related to the presentation. A preliminary bibliography containing at least 5 good resources is also required in the outline to indicate that research has begun and that this is not just Wikipedia information (!!).

Print material will be due in digital form **NO LATER THAN Thursday November 15 at 6pm** so that it can be printed in time for the event. Information about formatting these materials is presented in the document posted on D2L and my website.

## (b) Exams

There are 2 exams in this course, which combine multiple choice, short answer, and longer answer responses. Both exams are worth 30% of the final grade in the course. The final exam is not cumulative, but will consider reoccurring themes that weave their way through the entire course.

- Midterm exam: written **Thursday, October 18**
- Final exam: written during the college final exam period

All exams must be attempted and an overall passing grade achieved in order to pass this course. 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.

### Notes:

Please make every effort to hand in assignments 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.

Powerpoints are visual aids that are used in the classroom. They are NOT posted on D2L or my website. If you would like the benefit of these teaching aids please come to class. If you miss a class, perhaps you can find a generous classmate that will share notes with you.

If you email me an assignment, PLEASE bring me a hard copy as quickly as possible for me to mark. This is a student's responsibility; emailing a document only serves to get it handed in with a time stamp, but I will not hunt through my inbox for missing assignments!

## 6. Grading System

- Standard Grading System (GPA)
- Competency Based Grading System

## 7. Recommended Materials to Assist Students to Succeed Throughout the Course

Please consult the Wordpress webpage for this course at <https://sites.camosun.ca/nicolekilburn>. Interesting additional information will be posted there throughout the semester.

## 8. College Supports, Services and Policies



### Immediate, Urgent, or Emergency Support

If you or someone you know requires immediate, urgent, or emergency support (e.g. illness, injury, thoughts of suicide, sexual assault, etc.), **SEEK HELP**. Resource contacts @ <http://camosun.ca/about/mental-health/emergency.html> or <http://camosun.ca/services/sexual-violence/get-support.html#urgent>

## College Services

Camosun offers a variety of health and academic support services, including counselling, dental, disability resource centre, help centre, learning skills, sexual violence support & education, library, and writing centre. For more information on each of these services, visit the **STUDENT SERVICES** link on the College website at <http://camosun.ca/>

## College Policies

Camosun strives to provide clear, transparent, and easily accessible policies that exemplify the college's commitment to life-changing learning. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of College policies. Policies are available on the College website at <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/>. Education and academic policies include, but are not limited to, Academic Progress, Admission, Course Withdrawals, Standards for Awarding Credentials, Involuntary Health and Safety Leave of Absence, Prior Learning Assessment, Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal, Sexual Violence and Misconduct, Student Ancillary Fees, Student Appeals, Student Conduct, and Student Penalties and Fines.

### A. GRADING SYSTEMS <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/index.html>

The following grading system is used at Camosun College (with descriptions based on grading at the University of Victoria):

#### 1. Standard Grading System (GPA)

Percentage	Grade	Description	Grade Point Equivalency
90-100	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.	9
85-89	A		8
80-84	A-		7
77-79	B+	Very good, good, and solid performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other areas.	6
73-76	B		5
70-72	B-		4
65-69	C+	Satisfactory or minimally satisfactory. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject material.	3
60-64	C		2
50-59	D	Minimum level of achievement for which credit is granted; a course with a "D" grade cannot be used as a prerequisite. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the material.	1
0-49	F	Minimum level has not been achieved.	0

### B. Temporary Grades

Temporary grades are assigned for specific circumstances and will convert to a final grade according to the grading scheme being used in the course. See Grading Policy at <http://camosun.ca/about/policies/index.html> for information on conversion to final grades, and for additional information on student record and transcript notations.

Temporary Grade	Description
I	<i>Incomplete:</i> A temporary grade assigned when the requirements of a course have not yet been completed due to hardship or extenuating circumstances, such as illness or death in the family.
IP	<i>In progress:</i> A temporary grade assigned for courses that are designed to have an anticipated enrollment that extends beyond one term. No more than two IP grades will be assigned for the same course.
CW	<i>Compulsory Withdrawal:</i> A temporary grade assigned by a Dean when an instructor, after documenting the prescriptive strategies applied and consulting with peers, deems that a student is unsafe to self or others and must be removed from the lab, practicum, worksite, or field placement.

## F2018 Course reading bibliography

Brandes, Stanley

2001 The Cremated Catholic: the Ends of a Deceased Guatemalan. *Body and Society* 7(2-3): 111-120.

Cann, Candi

2017 Buying an Afterlife: Mapping the Social Impact of Religious Beliefs through Consumer Death Goods. *Religions* 8(167).

Carmichael, Elizabeth and Chloe Sayer

1991 Introduction. IN: *The Skeleton at the Feast; the day of the Dead in Mexico* by E. Carmichael and C. Sayer pp. 9-24. British Museum Press: London.

Conklin, Beth

2018 (1993) Hunting the Ancestors: Death and Alliance in Wari' Cannibalism. IN: *Death, Mourning and Burial: A Cross Cultural Reader*, second edition, edited by A. Robben pp. 211-216. John Wiley and Sons: Oxford.

Deetz, James

1977 Remember me as you pass by. IN: *In Small Things Forgotten; an Archaeology of Early American Life*, by James Deetz, p. 64-90. Anchor Publications: New York.

Faison, Seth

1999 Lirong Journal; Tibetans, and Vultures, Keep Ancient Burial Rite. *The New York Times*.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/1999/07/03/world/lirong-journal-tibetans-and-vultures-keep-ancient-burial-rite.html>

Gee, Regina

2008 From corpse to Ancestor; the role of tombstone dining in the transformation of the body in ancient Rome. in: *The Materiality of Death. Bodies, Burials, Beliefs* p. 59-68. edited by Fredrik Fahlander and Terje Oestigaard. Archaeopress: Oxford. Available online from [http://www.mikroarkeologi.se/publications/ch5\\_Regina.pdf](http://www.mikroarkeologi.se/publications/ch5_Regina.pdf)

Harari, Yuval Noah

2016 The Last Days of Death; the looming struggle for eternal youth. Excerpt from *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* by Yuval Noah Harari published as an open essay  
<http://open.themagazine.com/article/essay/the-last-days-of-death>

Locke, Margaret

2004 Living Cadavers and the Calculation of Death. *Body and Society* 10 (2-3): 135-152.

Lull, Vicente

2000 Death and Society: A Marxist Approach. *Antiquity* 74: 576-580.

Madison, Paige

2017 Hominin Burial-Who first Buried the Dead?. Retrieved from <https://aeon.co/essays/why-we-should-bury-the-idea-that-human-rituals-are-unique>

(optional, if you have already read *Grave Vows* and want something more)

Martin, Diana

1991 Chinese Ghost Marriage. *JASO Occasional Papers* 8, edited by H. Baker and S. Feuchtwang pp. 25-43. University of Oxford: Oxford.

Mayer, Andre

2016 *Back to the Land*. CBC May 16, 2018. <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform/death-burial-green-recycling>

Mwaria, Cheryl

1997 Physician-Assisted Suicide: an Anthropological Perspective. *Fordham Urban Law Journal* 24(4): 859-868. Available at: <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/ulj/vol24/iss4/15>

Pringle, Heather

2001 The Dissector's Knife. IN: *The Mummy Congress; Science, obsession, and the everlasting dead* by Heather Pringle pp. 21-53. Penguin: Toronto.

Shepard, Glenn H. Jr.

2002 Three Days for Weeping: Dreams, Emotions, and Death in the Peruvian Amazon. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 16 (2): 200-229

Rosaldo, Renato

1993 Introduction: Grief and a Headhunter's Rage. IN: *Culture and Truth: the Remaking of Social Analysis* by Renato Rosaldo, pp. 167-178. Beacon Press: Boston.

Rugg, Julie

2000 Defining a Place of Burial; what makes a cemetery and cemetery? *Mortality* 5(3): 259-275.

Rumble, Hannah

2016 Let your Last Footprint be a Green One. *Anthropology and Aging*, 37 (1): 41-45.

Schwartz, Lucas J.

2010 Grave Vows: A Cross-Cultural Examination of the Varying forms of Ghost Marriage among Five Societies. *Nebraska Anthropologist*. 60. Accessed from <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nebanthro/60>

Sok, Lee

2009 East Asian attitudes Towards Death- A search for ways to help East Asian elderly dying in contemporary America. *Permanente Journal* 13(3): 55-60. Accessed from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2911815/>

Varisco, Daniel

2011 The End of Life, the Ends of Life: An anthropological View. *Journal of the Islamic Medical Association of America* 43: 203-207. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3516113/>