



CAMOSUN COLLEGE
School of Arts & Science
Department of Social Sciences

ANTH-290-001
Special Topics in Anthropology
Fall 2019

COURSE OUTLINE

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.

1. Instructor Information

| | |
|------------------|---|
| (a) Instructor | Nicole Kilburn |
| (b) Office hours | Tuesday 11:30-1:00, Thursday 11:30-1:00 of by apt. |
| (c) Location | Young 213 |
| (d) Phone | (250) 370 3344 Alternative: _____ |
| (e) E-mail | kilburn@camosun.bc.ca |
| (f) Website | 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 at the college bookstore (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 26, Thursday October 10, Tuesday November 5, and that students are expected to participate in the term project at the Royal British Columbia Museum on Saturday, November 23 from 1-3:30pm (please plan work schedules accordingly!)

| Week | Lecture Topics | Readings |
|-------------------|--|--|
| 1 Sept. 2-8 | Introduction to the course | The End of Life, the Ends of Life: An Anthropological View; Death and Society: A Marxist Approach |
| 2 Sept. 9-15 | 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. 16-22 | T: A cultural history of death and the development of "The Afterlife" | Hominin burial- Who First Buried the Dead? |
| | TH: Cultural constructions of life and death | Tibetans and Vultures Keep Ancient Burial Rite |
| 4 Sept. 23-29 | T: Cultural constructions of life and death, cont... | East Asian Attitudes toward Death |
| | TH: Victorian concepts of death, from the perspective of Ross Bay Cemetery (fieldtrip, meet at the cemetery for a 4:20 start) | Remember Me As You Pass By |
| 5 Sept. 30-Oct. 6 | T: Geographies of the Afterlife | No reading for this lecture |
| | TH: Rest in Pieces? | |
| 6 Oct. 7-13 | T: Rest in Pieces? Cont... | The Cremated Catholic: The Ends of a Deceased Guatemalan; Hunting the Ancestors |
| | TH: Fieldtrip to the Royal Oak Burial Park crematorium | |
| 7 Oct. 14-20 | T: Debrief from fieldtrip and class discussion | |
| | TH: MIDTERM EXAM | |
| 8 Oct. 21-27 | Those left behind.... Grief and mourning in cross cultural perspective | Grief and a Headhunter's Rage; Three Days of Weeping |
| 9 Oct. 28-Nov. 3 | T: Caring for the ancestors; ongoing interactions between the living and the dead | Grave Vows; Roman Tombside Feasting |
| | TH: Offrendas and <i>Dias de los Muertos</i> | Introduction from The Skeleton at the Feast |
| 10 Nov. 4-10 | T: Ethics of Museums and Exhibiting Human Remains and Grave Goods Fieldtrip to the Royal BC Museum | The Long Ethical Arc of Displaying Human Remains; Bog Bodies on Display |
| | TH: In class prep time for the term project | No readings |
| 11 Nov. 11-17 | T: Exploring Mortuary Landscapes; guest speaker Darcy Mathews discusses Coast Salish cairn burial landscapes | Defining the Place of Burial: what makes a cemetery a cemetery? |
| | TH: Death on Demand: an anthropological consideration of the right to die movement | Physician-Assisted Suicide: An Anthropological Perspective |
| 12 Nov. 18-24 | T: The Economy of Death part 1 | Buying an Afterlife: Mapping the Social Impact of Religious Beliefs through Consumer Death Goods |
| | TH: The Economy of Death part 2 | Money and Death: Funeral Business in Asante, Ghana |
| 13. Nov. 25- | T: Death and Sustainability: Green burials | Back to the Land; Let your Last Footprint Be A Green One |

| | | |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Dec. 1 | TH: Digital Death and Immortality in the Age of Technology | Vered Shavit TED Talk: "What happens to our digital remains when we die?" |
| 14. Dec. 2-8 | T: Death Cafe | BJ Miller TED Talk "What Really Matters at the End of Life" |
| | TH: 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 is available on our D2L page; please complete it submit it to me as an electronic copy via drop box 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 between October 10 and November 7

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 (ex. Vulture burials). Feel free to come and talk about a topic before working on it as some entries in this online resource are not as relevant to this assignment as others, and some may suffer from not having enough resources to evaluate anthropologically. 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 that will be considered after October 10 (like grief and mourning), you can choose to submit a bit later. 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: Preparing for a Victorian Funeral at the RBCM November 23 (25%)

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

"Preparing for a Victorian Funeral"

In the late 1800's, death was common in families and communities throughout British Columbia; you were lucky to celebrate your 50th birthday, and sadly, many families experienced the death of young children. The Victorians had a complex and vivid set of rituals that guided their grief and mourning, shaped in great part by Britain's Queen Victoria, who mourned the death of her husband Prince Albert in extreme fashion for 40 years. You are invited to walk the streets of Old Town, circa 1900, where a member of the community has died and preparations are underway for a "proper" funeral. Join students from Camosun's Anthropology of Death class who will share the many aspects of these preparations, from the wake to post-mortem photography and cemetery headstones. Explore how religious and cultural perspectives shape death, the many social messages of both the deceased and those left behind, and how the development of the death industry in the past century, with its many professionals, has changed the way we die and grieve.

Students will work in teams 3 or 4 students on one aspect of this event. A list of team topics and a brief overview of each is provided on D2L, and students will submit their top 3 topic choices to me in HARD COPY (ie. piece of paper with name and your 3 choices in ranked order) on September 10 (you will know your topic and meet your group members on September 12). Please note that there are a few solo topic options for people who REALLY don't want to work in teams,

but I encourage you to work in teams to hone your collaborative skills, share the work, and have support while presenting at the museum (plus it is generally more fun!). Information will be presented to the public in a fun, informative, and engaging way in a 1.5 hour pop-up exhibit event in late November that is open to all museum patrons.

A detailed outline of what the group intends to present, and how they plan to do it, is due **October 8** (worth 5% of the total mark for this assignment). Please include an itemized estimate of any expenses related to the presentation. A preliminary annotated 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 14 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 17**
- 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!

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. Please think carefully about this and look after yourself, content may be very helpful, or extremely challenging; if you do not think that you can handle this type of material in an academic setting that 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. I also recommend the services of Camosun's excellent counselling department (<http://camosun.ca/services/counselling-centre/personal.html>).

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.

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 is posted there and will be added to 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. |

F2019 Course resource bibliography (all of these are linked off of the class D2L page)

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.

Colwell, Chip

2017 The Long Ethical Arc of Displaying Human Remains. Retrieved from <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/displaying-native-american-remains>

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.

de Witte, Marleen

2003 Money and Death: Funeral Business in Asante, Ghana. *Africa* 73: 531-559.

Faison, Seth

1999 Lirong Journal; Tibetans, and Vultures, Keep Ancient Burial Rite. The New York Times. Retrieved from <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. Retrieved from http://www.mikroarkeologi.se/publications/ch5_Regina.pdf

Gill-Robinson, Heather

2004 Bog Bodies on Display. *Journal of Wetland Archaeology* 4: 111-116.

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 retrieved from <http://openthemagazine.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>

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

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. Retrieved from <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/longform/death-burial-green-recycling>
- Miller, BJ
2015 "What really matters at the end of life" TED Talk. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/bj_miller_what_really_matters_at_the_end_of_life?language=nb
- 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>
- 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. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/nebanthro/60>
- Shavit, Vered
2017 "What Happens to our Digital Remains When We Die?" TEDx Talk. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vFPkEIGUofc>
- Shepard, Glenn H. Jr.
2002 Three Days for Weeping: Dreams, Emotions, and Death in the Peruvian Amazon. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 16 (2): 200-229
- 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. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2911815/>
- Swazey, Kelli
2013 "Life that Doesn't End with Death" TEDMed Talk. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/kelli_swazey_life_that_doesn_t_end_with_death?language=en
- 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. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3516113/>