

# CEMETERIES, CORPSES, AND THE DREAMTIME: CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON DEATH

Anthropology 390-080

Spring 2006

**Instructor:** Jill Neitzel

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**Office:** Munroe 107; you can also drop off messages/papers to be put in my mailbox in Munroe 135

**Office Hours:** Mon 11:00-11:45am; Tue 8:30-9:15am, 10:45-11:45am; Wed 11:00-11:45am; Thr 8:30-9:15am, 10:45-11:45am; Fri 11:00-11:45am; or see me before or after class, e-mail me, or make an appointment

**Phone:** 831-2802 (this is the Anthropology Dept. number where you can leave messages for me)

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## Course Description

This course explores how culture affects our beliefs and experiences of death. After studying the biology of dying, students will learn about how death is viewed in different societies past and present. Topics to be covered include religious beliefs, death rituals, and burial practices. The class will be run as a seminar with an emphasis on reading, discussion, student research, and writing.

## Required Textbooks

Bahn, Paul – Written in Bones: How Human Remains Unlock the Secrets of the Dead

Haley, Shawn – Look at the Sky: Death in Cultures around the World

Lock, Margaret – Twice Dead: Organ Transplants and the Reinvention of Death

Mitford, Jessica – The American Way of Death Revisited

Nuland, Sherwin – How We Die: Reflections on Life's Final Chapter

Pearson, Mike – The Archaeology of Death and Burial

## Assignments

2 quizzes – total 50 pts

midterm – 100 pts

final – 100 pts

poster – 50 pts

research project – 100 pts

oral presentation – 25 pts

optional: extra credit movie review of "Wit" (media services DVD1123) – 5 pts

optional: extra credit book review of Chasing Daylight: How My Forthcoming Death Transformed My Life by Eugene O'Kelly – 10 pts

NOTE: Attendance for this class is **MANDATORY**. Three points will be deducted for each absence. Absences will be excused only if students have a legitimate reason for their absence and have informed the instructor prior to the start of class.

No make-ups will be given for quizzes or exams unless the student has a written excuse from the health center or has informed the instructor in advance about a legitimate, unavoidable absence.

Late assignments will have penalty points deducted. The penalties will be 5pts for after class on the due date, 10 pts for each additional day. Exceptions will be made only if the student has a written excuse from the health center or has made prior arrangements with the instructor

## **Grades**

Grades will be assigned on a scale of 93-100% A; 90-92% A-; 87-89% B+; 83-86% B; 80-82% B-; 77-79% C+; 73-76% C; 70-72% C-; 67-69% D+; 63-66% D; 60-62% D-; 0-59% F

## **Schedule**

Wed, 2/8 – introduction

Fri, 2/10 – Nuland chapters 1-3

Mon, 2/13 – Nuland chapters 4-5

Wed, 2/15 – Nuland chapter 6-7

Fri, 2/17 – TBA

Video: Death on Request

Mon, 2/20 – Nuland chapters 8-9

Wed, 2/22 – Nuland chapter 10-epilogue

Fri, 2/24 – TBA

### **QUIZ 1**

Mon, 2/27 – Haley chapters 1-2

Video: Ganges River to Heaven

Wed, 3/1 – Haley chapter 3

Fri, 3/3 – Haley chapter 7

Mon, 3/6 – Haley chapters 8-9

Wed, 3/8 – Haley chapter 4

Video: Crypts, Coffins, and Corpses

Fri, 3/10 – Haley chapter 5

Mon, 3/13 – Haley chapter 6

Video: Rites of Death

Last day for 1<sup>st</sup> Writing Fellow Meeting

DUE: **“Wit” Extra Credit**

Wed, 3/15 – **DUE: Poster**

Fri, 3/17 – TBA

Mon, 3/20 – **MIDTERM EXAM**

Wed, 3/22 – Pearson chapters 1-2, appendix

Fri, 3/24 – Pearson chapter 3

Mon, 3/27 – NO CLASS

Wed, 3/29 – NO CLASS

Fri, 3/31 – NO CLASS

Mon, 4/3 – Pearson chapter 4

Wed, 4/5 – Pearson chapter 5

Fri, 4/7 – Pearson chapter 6, 9

Mon, 4/10 – Pearson chapters 7

Wed, 4/12 – Pearson chapters 8

Video: Science or Sacrilege

Fri, 4/14 – Bahn intro-chapter 1

Mon, 4/17 – Bahn chapter 2

Wed, 4/19 – Bahn chapter 3

Fri, 4/21 – Bahn chapters 4-5

Mon, 4/24 – Mitford forward, introduction, chapters 1-5

**QUIZ 2**

Wed, 4/26 – Mitford chapters 6-10

Fri, 4/28 – Mitford 11-15

Mon, 5/1 – Mitford chapters 16-20

Last day for 2<sup>nd</sup> writing fellow visit

DUE: Chasing Daylight extra credit

Wed, 5/3 – Lock preamble-chapter 2

Fri, 5/4 – Lock chapters 3-5

Video: The Vanishing Line

Mon, 5/8 – Lock chapters 6-8

DUE: **Research paper**

Wed, 5/10 – Lock chapters 9-11

Fri, 5/12 – Lock chapters 12-14

Mon, 5/15 – oral presentations

Wed, 5/17 – oral presentations

**FINAL EXAM** - Mon., 5/22, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.