

**ANTH 2220: ANTHROPOLOGY OF DEATH**  
**SPRING 2016**  
**MON/WED 9:30 – 10:45 AM**  
**SOCIAL SCIENCES (402) ROOM 3029**



**INSTRUCTOR: Heather Kravagna (Kerr)**

**OFFICE: Social Sciences, Room 4005**

**OFFICE HOURS: By Appointment**

**EMAIL: [hkerr@kennesaw.edu](mailto:hkerr@kennesaw.edu) (DO NOT EMAIL ME ON D2L)**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

How we dispose of and commemorate our dead is fundamental to all societies. Despite the motifs and topics surrounding death and the dead body enjoying popularity in the trend over the Mexican Day of the Dead, and the popularity of shows such as *Bones* and *CSI*, death can be one of the most sensitive topics to discuss, particularly here in the U.S. In this course students examine how anthropologists have looked at the topic of death from a multitude of perspectives. Students explore the importance of death to the field of anthropology and also use it as a lens to examine American attitudes toward and rituals surrounding death.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The objective of the course is not only to give you a general overview of the various cultural understandings of and traditions surrounding death throughout time, but also to challenge you to explore and reflect upon who we (humans) are, our similarities and differences. In doing so, this course will provide ways with which you may be able to approach and appreciate people from other cultures with habits, beliefs, and values different than your own; something that is of vital importance in today's globalized world. From an academic standpoint, by the end of the course you will be able to read with understanding, think critically about an argument, develop your own, and articulate it.

**REQUIRED READINGS**

To do well and participate in this class, you will need to do the required readings **before the class in which they are discussed**. Completing the readings before class will also help you better understand my lectures, perform well on the tests, and help you get full marks for participation. It may also help you to review some readings after class to ensure that you fully understand the topics discussed in class. By its nature, anthropology covers material that may be unfamiliar to you.

Tip: Check Amazon.com, Chegg.com, textbooks.com, textbookrentals.com, and other textbook sites for cheaper textbook options!

**MAIN TEXTBOOK:**

**Robben, Antonius (ed)**

**2004 Death, Mourning, and Burial: A Cross-Cultural Reader. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.**

**SUPPLEMENTAL (BUT REQUIRED) READINGS:**

I will post articles on D2L that will supplement the textbook material, and which are **just as required**. It is your responsibility to get these readings from D2L and read them BEFORE class. If you are having trouble accessing them, **email me** and I will send them to you directly.

**GRADING****A. Overview of Class Requirements**

Your evaluation is based upon your performance on a mixture of assignments, your participation and leading of class discussion, and a final paper. All points are cumulative.

Article Discussion	250 points (25%)
Participation	200 points (20%)
Assignments	6 @ 50 pts ea = 300 points (30%)
Final Paper	250 points (25%)
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1000 points (100%)</b>

**The prerequisite for ANTH 2220 is ENGL 1102. This course requires you to consistently read the assigned articles and participate and engage in class and online discussions and activities.**

**B. Grades**

The final grade will be based on fulfilling the above requirements to the best of your ability. Your performance will be assessed as follows:

<b>Your Grade</b>	<b>Your Points</b>
A	1000-900
B	899-800
C	799-700
D	699-600
F	599 and below

If you would like to dispute any of your grades please come see me. I would also require a written rationale for requests of a higher grade.

Final Grades WILL NOT be emailed, posted, or given over the phone. They will ONLY be available through Owl Express (they will not be posted on D2L).

## CLASS REQUIREMENTS

### A. Assignments

I will assign 6 assignments throughout the semester to engage you with the material outside of the classroom. The guidelines for each assignment will be posted on D2L, and due dates are listed in the lecture schedule.

**Late assignments will receive 5 points off for each day they are late.**

### B. Final Paper

By the end of this course, you will have been introduced to many different topics surrounding the process of death and dying and the cultural approaches to dealing with death. For your final paper, you will choose any non-Western culture, contemporary or historic, to research. You will then write a final reflection paper of **at least 1500 words**, using **at least 3 academic sources (not including those assigned for this course)**.

This paper should 1) briefly introduce the time period and geographic location of the culture, 2) review the cultural beliefs and traditions associated with death, and 3) discuss the similarities and differences between Western traditions and those of the culture you chose. All papers must be individually written, and must be your own, unique work done specifically for this class. No group work or recycling papers from other class assignments will be permitted. **Late papers will receive 5 points off for each day they are late.** Papers will be submitted via the designated dropbox folder on D2L. This course uses turnitin.com for plagiarism detection.

### C. Discussion Leading

Each student will select a day to lead class discussion on the second day of class. Due to the amount of students registered for the class, most days will have 2 students leading that discussion. In this case, you both must coordinate with each other **before that class** on how you will be sharing this role. Make sure you have looked over the assigned articles before the second day of class so you will know which one you would like to select. You will be graded on how prepared you are for leading that discussion. If you have an emergency and cannot make the class for which you are helping lead discussion, you **MUST** contact not only me, but also the other student you are co-leading with **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**. If possible, and if there is enough notice, you should try to switch days with another classmate so you can get credit for this portion of your grade. If this is not possible, depending on the nature and validity of your emergency, you must see me concerning what you can do to make up these points.

### D. Ethics Bowl

Each year, the Society for American Archaeology organizes an ethics bowl where anthropologists explore the ethics of archaeological practice in a debate-style competition called an Ethics Bowl. During the semester, we will be recreating our own mock ethics bowl. This exercise will fulfill the course objective, and important skill, of being able to understand and articulate both sides of a debate equally, whether you agree with the side you are arguing or not. It will also help us delve into the topics discussed in this course in a different, and engaging, way. Details on the Ethics Bowl will be given in class. More information on the SAA's Ethics Bowls on which ours will be based can be found at

(<http://www.saa.org/AbouttheSociety/AnnualMeeting/SAAEthicsBowlCases/tabid/194/Default.aspx>)

### E. Your Attendance and Participation

Since the format of this class is mixed lecture/student-led discussion, attendance is required, and you will be graded on your participation. Together, your organization and participation in class discussion comes to 45% of your grade. To encourage students to do the readings before class, which will facilitate class discussion, there will be discussion prompts and short participation write-ups on D2L for each week's readings. You should respond to 10 out of the 15 of them. Your participation grade will be based on not only your contribution to online posts and the participation write-ups, but also on your participation in class.

If you are sick or have significant emergency that prevents you from attending class, you must contact me as soon as you are physically able and provide written documentation to show why you were absent. We can then discuss what you need to do to make up anything you have missed.

You can earn up to 50 extra credit points for attendance if you attend **18 sessions or more!** I will take attendance near the end of each class.

18-19 sessions	25 points
20-21 sessions	30 points
22-23 sessions	35 points
24-25 sessions	40 points
26-27 sessions	45 points
28-30 sessions	50 points

### CLASS CONDUCT

Asking questions, requesting assistance or clarification, and participating in class discussions are **encouraged** and are essential to your education. Feel free to speak up during class and engage me and other students in *course-appropriate* conversation. As well, do not hesitate to talk to me after class, or to make an appointment to meet with me. I expect that while in class you will behave in a manner conducive to your own learning and to the learning of others. I will **not** provide lecture notes to students. If you miss a class it is **your responsibility** to find class notes. Of course, you can always come to my office hours and discuss specific questions or go over class material with me. And finally, remember! – *You earn* your grades – I do not give them to you!

This course will, by nature, cover very sensitive and often controversial topics, which we will explore through a culturally relative, anthropological, lens. Therefore, each student, by taking this class, should understand and be mindful of the sensitive nature of the topics, and agrees to be respectful of the potentially extremely different yet equally valid views of their instructor and fellow classmates, and understands that some topics may trigger heightened emotional responses. Each student agrees by taking this class, to be respectful, considerate, honest, and to put their own biases aside to the best of their ability. We will be coming up with ground rules and boundaries for discussion to help keep things civil and professional as we engage with these topics.

### A MESSAGE FROM THE KSU WRITING CENTER

The KSU Writing Center helps students in all majors improve their writing. Experienced, friendly writing assistants help with topic development, revision, research, documentation, grammar, and more. For more information or to make an appointment, visit <http://www.writingcenter.kennesaw.edu> or stop by English Building, Room 242 (Kennesaw campus) or Building A, Room 184 (Marietta campus).

## A MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY

The KSU Library System assists all students, faculty and staff with their research, including using library databases to find articles, accessing books and other materials in our catalog, and for specialized research needs. Librarians are available for in-person walk-up assistance at library help desks, one-on-one research appointments, and 24x7 via library chat. For more information on library locations, hours, and how to access our services please visit <http://library.kennesaw.edu/>.

### DISCLAIMER

This course syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations may be necessary in the course of the semester. Changes will be both announced in class and posted on D2L. **It is the responsibility of every student to keep informed and be aware of any such changes.**

## UNIVERSITY-WIDE POLICIES

### A. HONOR CODE

As students of Kennesaw State University, you are expected to comply with the university's policies on academic honesty (see: <https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/content/ksu-student-code-conduct>).

This means that plagiarism, cheating, and dishonesty will not be accepted. To find how you can cite sources see the citation manual available on D2L or see the Writing Center (<http://www.writingcenter.kennesaw.edu>). Also, note: SELF-PLAGIARISM IS A THING AND IS NOT ACCEPTABLE! See the above link (code of conduct) for more info.

### B. WITHDRAWALS AND INCOMPLETES

If there are non-academic reasons why you cannot complete this course, you can also be awarded an incomplete grade (I) at the discretion of your instructor, for satisfactory work up to the last two weeks of the semester. An "I" means that you will have to make-up your incomplete work in the next term of enrollment, no later than one calendar year of non-enrollment, whichever comes first. An "I" is different from "W" (hardship withdrawal). Hardship status is determined by the Office of the Dean of Students, NOT by your instructor. You receive a withdrawal failure (WF) if you withdraw with a failing grade or do not follow proper withdrawal protocol.

**\*\*Please be advised, therefore, that the last day to withdraw from the course with the possibility of receiving a "W" is March 2, 2016. After that date you will receive a "WF" which means that you fail the course.\*\***

**If you are encountering problems with the course please come and speak to me.** I can only help you when I know there is a problem. Tutoring services are also available on campus (see: [http://www.kennesaw.edu/stu\\_dev/msrs/academic.html](http://www.kennesaw.edu/stu_dev/msrs/academic.html)). For a full description of grading policies and procedures, please see <http://catalog.kennesaw.edu/content.php?catoid=24&navoid=2170>.

### C. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

For students who require special classroom or test-taking accommodations: please come and see me AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! You must also register with the Coordinator of Disability Services. Information collected by the Office of Disability Services is strictly confidential. To make any accommodations for this course the instructor must receive notification by this office. (See: [http://www.kennesaw.edu/stu\\_dev/dsss/dsss.html](http://www.kennesaw.edu/stu_dev/dsss/dsss.html))

WEEK	DATE & CLASS TOPICS	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS/ ACTIVITIES	THEMES
Week 1	<i>Tues Jan 12</i>		Class intro	<b>Introduction</b>
	<i>Thurs Jan 14</i>		Select articles to discuss (beginning week 3)	
Week 2	<i>Tues Jan 19</i>	1. Learning from the Dead (D2L)		<b>Investigating Death</b>
	<i>Thurs Jan 21</i>	1. Mortuary Practices: Their Study and their Potential (D2L) 2. Mortuary Practices: Their Social, Philosophical-Religious, Circumstantial, and Physical Determinants (D2L)		
Week 3	<i>Tues Jan 26</i>	1. How Other's Die: Reflections on the Anthropology of Death (DM&B)	Assignment 1 due	<b>Concepts of Death</b>
	<i>Thurs Jan 28</i>	1. Magic, Science and Religion (DM&B) 2. The Terror of Death (DM&B)		
Week 4	<i>Tues Feb 2</i>	1. Symbolic Immortality (DM&B) 2. The Hour of Our Death (DM&B)		<b>Concepts of Death</b>
	<i>Thurs Feb 4</i>	1. Death, Life, Scarcity, and Value: An Alternative Perspective on the Meaning of Death (D2L) 2. Death and Social Change in Greece (D2L)		
Week 5	<i>Tues Feb 9</i>	1. The Postmodernization of Death and Dying (D2L) 2. Philosophical Perspectives on Death and Dying (D2L)		<b>Death and Dying</b>
	<i>Thurs Feb 11</i>	1. Death and Dying (Journal of Religion and Health)(D2L) 2. Death and Dying (American Journal of Nursing) (D2L)	Assignment 2 due	

<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Tues Feb 16</b>	1. Death Omens in a Breton Memoriate (DM&B) 2. The Meaning of Death in Northern Cheyenne Culture (DM&B)		
	<b>Thurs Feb 18</b>	1. Kinds of Death and the House (DM&B) 2. Displacing Suffering: The Reconstruction of Death in North America and Japan (DM&B)		
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Tues Feb 23</b>	1. Poverty and Witch Killing (D2L) 2. Murder Ritual on Adonara, Indonesia (D2L)		<b>Uncommon Death</b>
	<b>Thurs Feb 25</b>	1. Burial Alive (DM&B) 2. State Terror in the Netherworld: Disappearance and Reburial in Argentina (DM&B)		
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Tues Mar 1</b>	1. The archaeology of grief (D2L) 2. Metaphors of Mediation in Greek funeral laments (DM&B)	Assignment 3 due	<b>Grief and Mourning</b>
	<b>Wed Mar 2</b>	Last day to withdraw without penalty		
	<b>Thurs Mar 3</b>	1. Death Without Weeping (DM&B) 2. Grief and a Headhunter's Rage (DM&B)		
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Tues Mar 8</b>	1. Sacrificial Death and the Necrophagus Ascetic (DM&B) 2. Dead Bodies Animate the Study of Politics (DM&B)		<b>Remembrance and Regeneration</b>
	<b>Thurs Mar 10</b>	1. The Nineteenth-Century Tlingit Potlatch: A New Perspective (DM&B)		
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Tues Mar 15</b>	1. A Contribution to the Study of the Collective Representation of Death (DM&B) 2. Mortuary Ritual and Mortuary Remains (D2L)	Assignment 4 due	<b>Mortuary Rituals, Past and Present</b>
	<b>Thurs Mar 17</b>	1. The Rites of Passage (DM&B) 2. The Phase of Negated Death (DM&B)		

<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Tues Mar 22</b>	1. "Thus Are Our Bodies, Thus Was Our Custom": Mortuary Cannibalism in an Amazonian Society" (DM&B)		<b>Ethics in Studying the Dead</b>	
	<b>Thurs Mar 24</b>	1. Mortuary display and status in a 19 <sup>th</sup> century Anglo-American cemetery in Manassus, VA (D2L) 2.			
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Tues Mar 29</b>	1. Secondary cremation burials at Kavousi (D2L) 2. Archaeologies of Life and Death (D2L)			
	<b>Thurs Mar 31</b>	1. Bones of Contention (D2L) 2. Battle of the Bones (D2L)	Assignment 5 Due		
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>April 2 -9 Spring Break!</b>				
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>Tues Apr 12</b>		Ethics Bowl Prep		
	<b>Thurs Apr 14</b>		Ethics Bowl Part 1		
<b>Week 15</b>	<b>Tues Apr 19</b>		Ethics Bowl Part 2		
	<b>Thurs Apr 21</b>		Ethics Bowl wrap-up		
<b>Week 16</b>	<b>Tues Apr 26</b>	1. Ethical Dilemma Facing Conservation: Care and Treatment of Human Skeletal Remains 2. Case Study: The "Body Farm"			
	<b>Thurs Apr 28</b>	TBD	Assignment 6 due Wrap-Up		
<b>Final paper due Friday May 6, 2016 by midnight</b> <b>Submit your paper via dropbox on D2L</b>					