

THE ARCHEOLOGY OF DEATH

ANG 6191 (Sect.# 4G20; Class # 20181)

ANT4930 (Sect.# 4G21; Class # 20180)

Fall 2024

Instructor: Dr. James M. Davidson

Course Level/Structure: seminar

Time: Tuesdays -- periods 6 through 8 (12:50 – 3:50 pm)

Classroom: Frazier Rogers Hall 0106

Office: Turlington B134

Email: davidson@ufl.edu

Office Hours: Mondays: 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Website for readings: Canvas

Course Description and Objectives:

This course is an excellent example of the intersection of three of the four subfields of anthropology -- archaeology, biological anthropology, and cultural anthropology. The class focuses on the death event, which is universal for every culture and every person. Understanding how a society treats its dead can offer real insight into their cosmology, social organization, gender roles, age of personhood, and health, among other matters.

The seminar's goal is to provide a solid grounding in the anthropological literature of Mortuary studies; that is, data derived from a study of the Death experience. In addition to archaeological data, a strong emphasis will be placed on the theoretical underpinnings of mortuary data, drawn from cultural anthropology and ethnography.

Along with more theoretical papers, specific case studies will be used to address a variety of topics and issues, such as Social Organization, Spirituality and Religion, Skeletal Biology (e.g., Paleodemography, Paleopathology, and other issues of Bioarchaeology), Gender Issues, the Ethics of using Human Remains, and Post-Processual Critiques.

The time range that we will cover in the course will span from the Neolithic to the 20th century, and numerous cultures from all parts of the globe will be our subject matter.

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

Demonstrate a greater understanding of the death event cross culturally, over the past 15,000 years.

Identify key criteria that can signal the social organization or hierarchy underlying any society's mortuary program.

Critically evaluate how belief systems and religion can influence mortuary traditions over time.

Explain how the relative frequency or type of grave goods placed with the dead may or may not serve as symbols to communicate differences in social hierarchy or gender roles.

Recognize the ethical concerns of greater communities and descendant groups when handling or researching human remains and/or associated grave goods.

Course Requirements:

Class participation/attendance	(15 points)	5%
Leading Class Discussion:	(15 points)	5%
Synopses (of specific readings)	(5 points each; 60 points total)	20%
Two essay/reaction papers	(30 points each; 60 points total)	20%
Research paper	(150 points)	50%

Texts:

- 1). Chapman, Robert (editor)
1981 *The Archaeology of Death*. Cambridge University Press.
- 2). Parker Pearson, Mike
1999 *The Archaeology of Death and Burial*. Texas A&M University Press.
- 3). The primary texts will be derived from individual readings (e.g., articles, book chapters) (see website)

Attendance: Regular attendance and participation in class discussions is a requirement. Students are expected to have read the material for that day, and come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

Synopses of Readings/Two Exercise or Reaction Papers:

For some key readings, a synopsis (i.e., a critical summary) ranging from one to three paragraphs (not to exceed one page in length for each reading) will be required and due at the beginning of each class, before we begin the discussion. Readings requiring synopses are marked with a bold, underlined **X** at the end of each citation.

Two smaller paper assignments, on specific readings, will range from 4 to 6 pages each. Their topics and due dates are given below.

Discussion Leader:

Each week, a student will help lead class discussion. Each student discussion leader will be expected to read the articles with care, and to prepare a list of questions/points of discussion. If you wish, you may meet with me to talk about the readings prior to class.

Research Paper:

One major research paper will be due at the end of the semester: graduate students (15 to 20 pages); undergraduate students (10 to 15 pages).

Each student will choose the individual topics of the paper, after consultation with me. It could involve original research, an analysis of an existing dataset, or a comparison of two

or more papers, sites, or theories. Each student will briefly present his or her work to the class, during the last class of the semester.

Final Papers are due Wednesday, December 11

Grading:

A final letter grade will be assigned at the end of the semester, according to this scale:

- A (93-100%)
- A- (90-92%)
- B+ (88-89%)
- B (83-87%)
- B- (80-82%)
- C+ (78-79%)
- C (73-77%)
- C- (70-72%)
- D+ (68-69%)
- D (63-67%)
- D- (60-62%)
- E (59% or below)

Attendance: Regular attendance is required. Excessive unexcused absences will detract from the student's final grade (see above).

Accommodating Students with Disabilities:

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who in turn must provide this documentation to me when requesting accommodation.

Academic Honesty:

The University reminds every student of the implied pledge of Academic Honesty: "on any work submitted for credit the student has neither received nor given unauthorized aid." This refers to cheating and plagiarism. Consult the Student Guide at www.dso.ufl.edu/stg/ for further information. Students caught cheating will be referred to the University administration for disciplinary action, the consequences of which can include (among other things) failure of this course.

Schedule/Topics/Readings:

Week 1 (August 20)

No Class this Week

Read the course materials for week 2, and be prepared for open discussion.

Week 2 (August 27)

Historical Perspectives on the Anthropological and Archaeological Study of Death

Emphasis during the initial class sessions will be on some of the fundamental literature upon which contemporary interpretations of archaeological burials are based. The readings include both summaries of historical developments and older works; some of the latter have only historical value.

It may be helpful to read Chapman and Randsborg 1981 (pp. 1-24) first, as background.

Hertz, Robert

1960 [1907] A contribution to the study of the collective representation of death. In *Death and the Right Hand*. The Free Press, Glencoe, IL. **X**

Read only pp. 27-86 of Hertz, (notes for these pages are between 117-154).

Kroeber, Alfred L.

1927 Disposal of the dead. *American Anthropologist* 29:308-315

Childe, V. Gordon

1945 Directional changes in funerary practices during 50,000 years. *Man* 45:13-19.

Binford, Lewis R.

1962 Archaeology as anthropology. *American Antiquity* 28(2):217-225. **X**

Ucko, Peter

1969 Ethnography and archaeological interpretation of funerary remains. *World Archaeology* 1: 262-80. **X**

Chapman, Robert, and Klavs Randsborg

1981 Approaches to the archaeology of death. In *The Archaeology of Death*, edited by Robert Chapman, I. Kinnes, and Klavs Randsborg, pp. 1-24. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

Text (Parker Pearson) --- Chapter One (pages 1-20)

Week 3 (Sept 3)

Theoretical Positions and Issues

This class will focus on the framework within which the interpretation of human burials developed in the 1970s and 1980s.

Binford, Lewis R.

1971 Mortuary practices: their study and their potential. In *Approaches to the Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices*, edited by J. A. Brown. Society for American Archaeology Memoir 25: 6-29. X

Goodenough, Ward

1965 Rethinking “status” and “role”: Toward a general model of the cultural organization of social relationships. In *The Relevance of Models for Social Anthropology*, edited by Michael Blanton, pp. 1-24. A.S.A. Monographs No. 1. Praeger, New York, NY. X

Brown, James A.

1971 The dimensions of status in the burials at Spiro. In *Approaches to the Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices*, edited by J.A. Brown, pp. 92-112. Society for American Archaeology Memoir 25.

Tainter, Joseph A.

1978 Mortuary practices and the study of prehistoric social systems. *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 1:105-141. X

Braun, David

1979 Illinois Hopewell burial practices and social organization: a reexamination of the Klunk-Gibson mound group. In *Hopewell Archaeology: The Chillicothe Conference*, edited by D. Brose and N. Greber, pp. 66-79. Cleveland Museum of Natural History and Kent State University Press, Kent, OH. X

Parker Pearson ---- Chapter 4 (pages 72-94)

(Supplementary reading)

Saxe, Arthur A.

1970 *Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan. (Emphasize pp. 1-121)

Week 4 (Sept 10)

Theoretical Positions and Issues II

O’Shea, John M.

1984 *Mortuary Variability: An Archaeological Investigation*. Academic Press, New York. (Emphasize Chapters 1, 2, 3, 7, 8)

Peebles, Christopher S. and Susan M. Kus

1977 Some archaeological correlates of ranked societies. *American Antiquity* 42(3):421- 448. X

Hodder, Ian

1982 The identification and interpretation of ranking in prehistory: A contextual perspective. In *Ranking, Resource and Exchange: Aspects of the Archaeology of Early European Society*, edited by A. C. Renfrew and S. J. Shennan, pp. 150-154. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. X

Parker Pearson ----- Chapter 2 (pages 21-44)

Week 5 (Sept 17)

Explanation and Mortuary Studies

Case studies highlighting specific applications of mortuary theory. The readings for this week deal with the interpretation of the rise of sedentism and marking control over critical resources. This is the subject of Saxe's (1970) Hypothesis 8.

Chapman, Robert

1981 The emergence of formal disposal areas and the “problem” of megalithic tombs in prehistoric Europe. In *The Archaeology of Death*, edited by R. Chapman, I. Kinnes, and K. Randsborg, pp. 71-81. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. X

Charles, Douglas and Jane Buikstra

1983 Archaic mortuary sites in the central Mississippi drainage: distribution, structure, and behavioral implications. In *Archaic Hunters and Gatherers in the American Midwest*, edited by J. L. Phillips and J.A. Brown, pp. 117-145. Academic Press, New York, NY. X

Saxe, Arthur A. and Patricia L. Gall

1977 Ecological determinants of mortuary practices: the Temuan of Malaysia. In *Cultural- Ecological Perspectives on Southeast Asia*, edited by W. Wood, 41: 74-82. Papers in International Southeast Asia Studies, Ohio University, Athens.

Goldstein, Lynne

1981 One-dimensional archaeology and multi-dimensional people: spatial organization and mortuary analysis. In *The Archaeology of Death*, edited by R. Chapman, I. Kinnes, and K. Randsborg, pp. 53-69. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge UK. X

Dillehay, Tom D.

1990 Mapuche ceremonial landscape, social recruitment and resource rights. *World Archaeology* 22: 223-241. X

Glazier, Jack

1984 Mbeere ancestors and the domestication of death. *Man* (ns) 19:133-148.

Parker Pearson ----- Chapter 3 (pages 72-94)

Paper No. 1: write an essay (4 to 6 pages in length), that discusses the Saxe-Binford approach to Mortuary data, emphasizing the middle range nature of their efforts, and how their approach may be defined as “representationist.”
How can it be applied to archaeological data, and what would be some potential pitfalls in this application?

Week 6 (Sept 24)

Bioarchaeological Perspectives

Topics covered in this class would include paleodemography, paleopathology, diet and nutrition, and the biological costs and benefits of maize agriculture. Consider the prehistoric and historic case studies; how do they differ?

Rose, Jerome C., Murray K. Marks, and Larry L. Tieszen
1991 Bioarchaeology and Subsistence in the Central and Lower Portions of the Mississippi Valley. In *What Mean These Bones? Studies in Southeastern Bioarchaeology*, edited by M.L. Powell, P.S. Bridges, and A.M. Wagner Mires, pp. 7-21. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.

Davidson, James M., Jerome Rose, Myron Gutmann, Michael Haines, Cindy Condon, and Keith Condon
2002 The Quality of African-American Life in the Old Southwest near the Turn of the 20th Century. In *The Backbone of History: Health and Nutrition in the Western Hemisphere*, edited by Richard Steckel, pp. 226-277. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

Wood, James W., George R. Milner, Henry C. Harpending, and Kenneth M. Weiss
1992 The osteological paradox: Problems of inferring health from skeletal samples. *Current Anthropology* 33(4): 343-370. X

Wright, Lori E. and Cassady J. Yoder
2003 Recent Progress in Bioarchaeology: Approaches to the Osteological Paradox. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 11(1):43-70.

DeWitte, Sharon N. and Christopher M. Stojanowski
2015 The Osteological Paradox 20 Years Later: Past Perspectives, Future Directions. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 23(4):397-450. X

Larsen, Clark Spencer, Simon W. Hillson, Başak Boz, Marin A. Pilloud, Joshua W. Sadvari, Sabrina C. Agarwal, Bonnie Glencross, Patrick Beauchesne, Jessica Pearson, Christopher B. Ruff, Evan M. Garofalo, Lori D. Hager, Scott D. Haddow and Christopher J. Knüsel
2015 Bioarchaeology of Neolithic Çatalhöyük: Lives and Lifestyles of an Early Farming Society in Transition. *Journal of World Prehistory* 28(1):27-68.

Supplementary Readings

Boquet-Appel, Jean-Pierre and Claude Massett

1982 Farewell to Paleodemography. *Journal of Human Evolution* 11:321-333.

Van Gerven, Dennis P. and George J. Armelagos

1983 "Farewell to Paleodemography?" Rumors of Its Death Have Been Greatly Exaggerated. *Journal of Human Evolution* 121:353-360.

Week 7 (Oct 1)

Archaeological Case Studies I: North America

Brown, James A.

1981 The search for rank in prehistoric burials. In *The Archaeology of Death*, edited by R. Chapman, I. Kinnes, and K. Randsborg, pp. 25-37. Cambridge University Press.

Gilman, Patricia S.

1990 Social organization and Classic Mimbres period burials in the SW United States. *Journal of Field Archaeology* 17:457-469.

Plog, Stephen and Carrie Heitman

2010 Hierarchy and social inequality in the American Southwest, A.D. 800–1200. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 107(46):19619–19626.

Howell, Todd L. and Keith W. Kintigh

1996 Archaeological identification of kin groups using mortuary and biological data: an example from the American Southwest. *American Antiquity* 61(3):537-554. **X**

Shryock, Andrew J.

1987 The Wright Mound reexamined: Generative structures and the political economy of a simple chiefdom. *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* 12:243-268. **X**

Mainfort, Robert C., Jr.

1989 Adena chiefdoms? Evidence from the Wright Mound. *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* 14(2):164-178. **X**

Milner, George R., Eve Anderson, and Virginia G. Smith

1991 Warfare in late prehistoric west-central Illinois. *American Antiquity* 56(4):581-603. **X**

Week 8 (Oct 8)

Archaeological Case Studies II: South America, Europe, the Near East

Byrd, Brian F., and Christopher M. Monahan

1995 Death, mortuary ritual, and Natufian social structure. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 14:251-287. X

Dillehay, Tom D.

1995 Mounds of social death: Araucanian funerary rites and political succession. In *Tombs for the Living: Andean Mortuary Practices*, edited by Tom D. Dillehay, pp. 281-313. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC. X

Pollock, Susan

1991 Of priestesses, princes and poor relations: The dead in the royal cemetery of Ur. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 1(2): 171-189.

Randsborg, Klavs

1981 Burial, succession and early state formation in Denmark. In *The Archaeology of Death*, edited by Robert Chapman, I. Kinnes, and Klavs Randsborg, pp. 105-121. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK. X

Week 9 (Oct 15)

Ethnographic and Historical Observations on Treatment of the Dead

Metcalf, Peter A.

1976 Who are the Berawan? Ethnic classification and the distribution of secondary treatment of the dead in central north Borneo. *Oceania* 47:85-105. X

Metcalf, Peter

1981 Meaning and materialism: The ritual economy of death. *Man* 16:564-578. X

Precourt, Walter E.

1984 Mortuary practices and economic transaction: A hologeistic study. *Research in Economic Anthropology* 6: 161-170. X

Aries, Phillippe

1974 *Western Attitudes Toward Death*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

Week 10 (Oct 22)

Ethnographic Observations II

Elliott, John R.

1990 Funerary Artifacts in Contemporary America. *Death Studies* 14: 601-612.

Pearson, Michael Parker

1982 Mortuary practices, society and ideology: an ethnoarchaeological study. In *Symbolic and Structural Archaeology*, edited by Ian Hodder, pp. 99-113. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. X

Farrell, James J.

1980 *Inventing the American Way of Death, 1830-1920*. Temple University Press, Philadelphia. (Read pages 16-73).

McGuire, Randall H.

1988 Dialogues with the Dead: Ideology and the Cemetery. In *The Recovery of Meaning: Historical Archaeology in the Eastern United States*, edited by Mark P. Leone and Parker B. Potter, Jr., pp. 435-480. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C. X

Dethlefsen, Edwin N. and James Deetz

1966 Death's Heads, Cherubs, and Willow Trees: Experimental Archaeology in Colonial Cemeteries. *American Antiquity* 31(4):502-510.

Jamieson, Ross W.

1995 Material culture and social death: African-American burial practices. *Historical Archaeology* 29(4):39-58. X

Week 11 (Oct 29)

Archaeological Case Studies III: Historical Archaeology

Mainfort, Robert C., Jr.

1985 Wealth, space, and status in a historic Indian cemetery. *American Antiquity* 50:555-579. X

Bell, Edward L.

1990 The historical archaeology of mortuary behavior: Coffin hardware from Uxbridge, Massachusetts. *Historical Archaeology* 24(3):54-78. X

Cannon, Aubrey

1989 The Historic Dimension in Mortuary Expressions of Status and Sentiment. *Current Anthropology* 30(4):437-458. X

Davidson, James M.

2008 Identity and Violent Death: Contextualizing Lethal Gun Violence within the African-American Community of Dallas, TX (1900-1907). *The Journal of Social Archaeology* 8(3):321-356.

Little, Barbara J., Kim M. Lamphear, and Douglas W. Owsley

1992 Mortuary display and status in a nineteenth-century Anglo-American cemetery in Manassas, Virginia. *American Antiquity* 57(3):397-418. X

Gould, Elspeth M. and David B. Chappel
2000 Graveyard gleanings: socio-economic, geographical and gender inequalities in health at Tynemouth, UK, 1833-1853. *Journal of Public Health Medicine* 22(3):280-286.

Davidson, James M.
2010 Keeping the Devil at Bay: The Shoe on the Coffin Lid and Other Grave Charms in 19th and Early 20th Century America. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 14(4):614-649.

Paper No. 2: Write an essay (5 to 6 pages in length) discussing the methodologies and theoretical underpinnings of historic mortuary studies, contrasting them with prehistoric theory and datasets. Especially emphasize the search for “status” markers.

Week 12 (Nov 5) Archaeological Case Studies IV: Historical Archaeology

Workshop on Beautification of Death, Coffin Hardware, etc.

Read:

Davidson 2004 (Chapter 5 of the report)

Mainfort, Robert C. Jr., and James M. Davidson (editors and contributors)
2004 *Archaeological Excavation and Removal of Two Historic Cemeteries in Crawford County, Arkansas*. Final Report, AAS Project 02-02, October 2004. Report to Burns and McDonald, Inc., from Sponsored Research Program, Arkansas Archeological Survey, Fayetteville.

Week 13 (Nov 19)

Ethical Perspectives in Mortuary Archaeology

McGowan, Gary S. and Cheryl J. LaRoche
1996 The Ethical Dilemma Facing Conservation: Care and Treatment of Human Skeletal Remains and Mortuary Objects. *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 35(2):109-121.

Crist, Thomas

2002 Empowerment, Ecology, and Evidence: The Relevance of Mortuary Archaeology to the Public. In *Public Benefits of Archaeology*, pp. 101-117, edited by Barbara J. Little. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

Buikstra, Jane E., and Claire C. Gordon

1981 The study and re-study of human skeletal series: The importance of long-term curation. In *The Research Potential of Anthropological Collections*, edited by A.E. Cantwell, J.B. Griffin, and N.A. Rothschild, pp. 449-465. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, Volume 376. **X**

Walker, Phillip L.

2000 Bioarchaeological Ethics: A Historical Perspective on the Value of Human Remains. In *Biological Anthropology of the Human Skeleton*, pp. 3-39, edited by M. Anne Katzenberg and Shelley R. Saunders. Wiley-Liss, Inc. X

Rose, Jerome C., Thomas J. Green, and Victoria D. Green

1996 NAGPRA is forever: Osteology and the repatriation of skeletons. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 25: 81-103. X

Watkins, Joe

2004 Becoming American or Becoming Indian? Nagpra, Kennewick and Cultural Affiliation. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 4(1):60-80.

Morrell, Virginia

1995 Who Owns the Past? *Science* 268(5216):1424-1426.

Week 14 (Nov 26)

Postprocessual and other Criticisms of Mortuary Site Studies I

Chapman, Robert

2003 Death, society, and Archaeology: the social dimensions of mortuary practices. *Mortality* 8(3):3-5-312.

Barrett, John C.

1990 The monumentality of death: The character of Early Bronze Age mortuary mounds in southern Britain. *World Archaeology* 22:179-189. X

Sullivan, Lynne P.

2001 Those Men in the Mounds: Gender, Politics, and Mortuary Practices in Late Prehistoric Eastern Tennessee. In *Archaeological Studies of Gender in the Southeastern United States*, edited by Jane M. Eastman and Christopher B. Rodning, pp. 101-126. University Press of Florida, Gainesville. X

Joyce, Rosemary A.

2001 Burying the Dead at Tlatilco: Social Memory and Social Memories. In *Archeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association Number 10; Social Memory, Identity, and Death: Anthropological Perspectives on Mortuary Rituals*, edited by Meredith S. Chesson, pp. 12-26. X

Week 15 (Nov 26)

NO CLASS THANKSGIVING

Week 16 (Dec 3) Last Day of Classes (end of semester Wed. - Dec 4)

Postprocessual and other Criticisms of Mortuary Site Studies II

Brown, James

1995 On Mortuary Analysis – with Special Reference to the Saxe-Binford Research Program. In *Regional Approaches to Mortuary Analysis*, pp. 3-26, edited by Lane Anderson Beck. Plenum Press, New York, NY.

Chapman, Robert

1995 Ten years after-Megaliths, mortuary practices, and the territorial model. In *Regional Approaches to Mortuary Analysis*, edited by Lane Anderson Beck, pp. 29-51. Plenum Press, New York, NY.

Lull, Vicente

2000 Death and Society: a Marxist approach. *Antiquity* 74:576-580.

Morris, Ian

1991 The archaeology of ancestors: The Saxe/Goldstein hypothesis revisited. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 1(2): 147-169.

Harke, Heinrich

2002 Interdisciplinarity and the archaeological study of death. *Mortality* 7(3):340-341.

Pearson, Mike Parker

1993 The powerful dead: Archaeological relationships between the living and the dead. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 3(2): 203-229.