

# **GSEM 619 Death and Beyond: Ancient Greece and China Fall 2014**

Tuesday 2-4, Carpenter 15

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Office Hours: MWF 9:00-10:00

or by appointment

or by appointment

## **Required Texts:**

- Garland, Robert, *The Greek Way of Death*, Cornell University Press: New York, 1985.
- Grant, Beata and Wilt Idema, *Escape from Bloodpond Hell*. Seattle: Univ. Washington Press, 2011
- Olberding, Amy and Philip Ivanhoe, eds. *Mortality in Traditional Chinese Thought*. Albany: SUNY, 2012.
- *The Peony Pavilion: Mudan ting*, Second Edition (ed. Cyril Birch and Catherine Swatek Intro.). Indianapolis: Indiana Univ., 2002.
- *Six Yuan Plays* (Penguin Classics). London: Penguin, 1972.
- van Gennep, Arnold, *Rites of Passage*, trans. M.B. Vizedom & G. L. Caffee, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1960.

## **Course Description:**

The question of what happens after the moment of death ha

the transition between the worlds; and

Afterlife and the community  
Ancient Greece and China

**Readings:**

Van Gennep, Rites of Passage  
Scheffler 2013, Death and Afterlife

Week 2. Sept. 9 – **Death in Greece:** Dying - Who Dies? When and How?

Topics:

- Mortals vs. Immortals
- Good Death and Bad Death
- Mechanics of Dying - departure of the psyche, dissolution of elements

Primary Readings:

Plato, Phaedo  
Hesiod, Works and Days  
Lyric Poets: Callinus, Tyrtaeus, Semonides, Mimnermus, and Solon  
Homer, Iliad xvi, xxii  
Herodotus I.30-33 (Solon)

Secondary Readings:

Garland, ch. 1-2  
Johnston 1999, ch.1  
Vermeule 1979, ch. 1 & 3  
Sourvinou-Inwood 1981, To Die and Enter the House of Hades  
Humphreys 1980, Death and Time

Special Topics:

- Mortals vs. Immortals  
Vernant, Mortals and Immortals ch 1  
Loraux 1995, Therefore Socrates is Immortal
- Good Death and Bad Death  
Simonides on the Battle of Plataea  
Vernant, A Beautiful Death ch 2  
Vernant, Panta kala ch 4

- Mechanics of Dying

Bremmer 1983, The Early Greek Concept of the Soul

Primary Readings:

*The Injustice Done to Dou E* and *The Orphan of Zhao* (Both in 6 Yuan plays)  
Sima Qian, "Letter to Ren'an" "Biography of Boyi and Shuqi" "Biography of Nie Zheng"  
Confucius, *Analects* Book 11

Secondary Readings:

Olberding. Chs. 4 "War, Death and Ancient Chinese Cosmology: Thinking Through the Thickness of Culture", 5 "Death and Dying in the Analects" and 6 "I Know not 'Seems': Grief for Parents in the *Analects*"

**Special Topics:**

- *Women and inheritance:*

Birge, *Women, Property and Confucian Reaction* Chs. 2 and 4 (connect on Tripod)

- *Chinese Knight Errants*

James Liu, "The Chinese Knight Errant" and "Yueh Fei and China's Heritage of Loyalty"

- *Womanly Virtue:*

Theiss, Ch. From *Disgraceful Matters*

Week 4. Sept. 23 Liminality for the Community in Greece: The Funeral Ritual and Mourning

Topics:

- Ritual for the community
- Miasma and Purification
- Funeral ritual in different periods
  - Funeral components - burial vs. cremation, offerings, lamentation
  - Funeral Legislation - community regulates its rituals, the role of women
- Parallels between funeral ritual and marriage ritual
  - Assimilation of the transitions in myth
  - the case of Persephone at Locri

Primary Readings:

Aeschylus, *Libation Bearers*  
Sophocles, *Antigone*  
Homeric Hymn to Demeter  
Lucian On Mourning  
Funeral legislation references: Demosthenes 43.57-66 & Plato, *Laws* 958d-960b;  
Plutarch, *Life of Solon*; Cicero, *de legibus* 2.55-69

Secondary Readings

Garland, ch. 3; 4  
Kurtz and Boardman 1971, ch. vii; xi  
Alexiou 1974, *The Ritual Lament* ch. 1  
Johnston 1999, ch. 2  
Vermeule 1979, ch. 5

Special Topics:

- Miasma and Purification
  - Parker 1983, Miasma ch. 1-2, Cyrene Appendix
  - Lex Sacra from Selinous
- Funeral ritual in different periods
  - Sourvinou-Inwood 1983, A Trauma in Flux; Appendix to Reading Greek Death
  - Morris 1989, Attitudes toward Death in Archaic Greece
- Lamentation
  - Alexiou 1974, Ritual Lament ch. 7-9 (on reserve in Carpenter)
  - Hame 2008, Female Control
- Funeral Legislation
  - Garland 1989, The well-ordered corpse
  - Toher 1991, Greek funerary legislation and the two Spartan funerals
- Marriage and Death
  - Seaford 1987, The Tragic Wedding
  - Rehm 1994, Marriage to Death, ch 1-2
  - Sourvinou-

Topics:

- the journey - directions
- obstacles to the journey - need for burial, the water barrier, special knowledge
- Failed transitions - the fate of the unburied, unmarried, or untimely dead, Lamia and other female demons
- the use of ghosts - necromancy, defixiones

Primary Readings:

Odyssey 10-11, 24

Necromancy in Kestos of Julius Africanus & Aeschylus' Persians

Pausan

Poo, Intro and *Rethinking Ghosts* "Culture of Ghosts in the Six Dynasties Period"  
Yu, Anthony, "Rest, Rest, Perturbed Spirit!"

Special Topics:

- *Theorizing the ghost in literary theory:*

Marge Garber's *Shakespeare's Ghosts* Intro, Ch. 1 and 7

- *Gendering the Ghost*

Zeitlin, *The Phantom Heroine* Intro and Chs. 1 "The Ghost's Body" and 3 "Ghosts and Historical Time" (connect via Tripod)

- *The Angry Ghost*

Feuchtwang, "The Avenging Ghost" in *Religion and Society: Anthropology of Religion, Charisma and Ghosts* (connect via Tripod)

Week 9.Oct. 28 **Beyond:** After Death in Greece - the community regroups

Topics:

- secondary burial practices
- epitaphs and funeral orations
- visiting the tomb and hero cult

Primary Readings:

Homer, *Iliad* xxiii-xxiv

Thucydides 2.33-46, Pericles' Funeral Oration

Lysias Funeral Oration

Demosthenes Funeral Oration

Hyperides Funeral Oration

Plato, *Menexenus*

Secondary Readings

Kurtz and Boardman 1971 ch. xii; xiv

Garland, ch.7

Lattimore 1942, *Themes in Greek & Latin Epitaphs*

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Rohde 1925, Psyche ch.iv

Whitely 1995, Tomb and hero cult in Archaic Greece

- funeral games



Plato: myths from Phaedo (107c-115b) and Gorgias (523a-527e);  
Pausanias X.28-31 on Polygnotos (cp. Frazer's commentary)  
Lucian, Dialogues of the Dead  
Plutarch de sera numinis vindicta

Secondary Readings

Garland, ch. 5, 6  
Vermeule 1979, ch. 2

Special Topics:

- post-mortem punishment
  - Burkert 2009, Pleading for Hell
  - Saunders 1991, Anxieties and Surrogates
- Mystery Cults and Salvation
  - Burkert 1987, Mystery Cults
  - Redfield 1991, The Politics of Immortality
- Orphism
  - Parker 1995, Early Orphism
  - Edmonds 2008, Extra-ordinary People
- Philosophical Consolations
  - [Plato] Axiochus
  - Plutarch, Consolatio ad Apollonium
  - Boys-Stones 2013, The Consolatio ad Apollonium: Therapy for the Dead

Week 12. Nov. 18 **Beyond the** Afterlife: Reincarnation or Nothing in China

Topics:

- Memory and Identity
- Spirit and self
- Trials and justice

Primary Readings:

"Moonlight Monk" and "Mi Heng"  
Lang Xian "Censor Xue Finds Immortality"

Secondary Readings:

Introduction from The Resurrected Skeleton: From Zhuangzi to Lu Xun  
Bokenkamp, Ancestors and Anxiety pp.1-32, Chs. 4 and 5 (Connect on Tripod)

Special Topics:

- Purgatory in Medieval Buddhism
  - Teiser, Scripture of the Ten Kings pp. 1-31
- Memory and Rebirth
  - Mo Yan Life and Death are Wearing Me Out

Week 13. Nov. 25 **Beyond the** Afterlife: Reincarnation or Nothing in Greece

Topics:

- Alternatives to the Underworld
- Atomism and the afterlife
- Ethicization of reincarnation

Primary Readings:

Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Empedokles & Pythagoras  
Plato on reincarnation: selections from Republic & Phaedrus  
Lucretius, On the Nature of Things, book III  
Aeneas of Gaza, Theophrastus

Secondary Readings:

Edmonds 2013, Life in the Afterlife  
Henry, Epicurean Ideas of Death  
Long 1948, A Study of the Doctrine of Metempsychosis  
Obeyesekere 2002, Eschatology In Greek And Rebirth Soteriology

Special Topics:

- *pre-ethicized reincarnation*

Obeyesekere, Imagining Karma (on reserve in Carpenter)

- *Epicurean philosophy and death*

Philodemus On Death (on reserve in Carpenter)

Epicurus, *Letter to Menoecius*

Warren, *Facing death: Epicurus and his critics* (on reserve in Carpenter)

- *Neoplatonic ideas of reincarnation*

Neoplatonists on Reincarnation: excerpts from Plotinus, Proclus, et al.

Baltzly, Patriarchy, Metempsychosis and Women in the Neoplatonic Commentary  
Tradition

[Proclus, *in Remp.* XVI]

Week 14.Dec. 2 Student Reports

Week 15.Dec. 9 Conclusions