



# Death & Ritual in Victorian London

## Course Details

**Course Designator & Number: ENGL 3092.500**

**Number of Credits: 3**

**Language of Instruction: English**

**Contact Hours: TBD**

**Instructor: Dr. Ann M. Tandy-Treiber**

## Course Description

The area around London has been occupied by humans for around 4,000 years. That's a lot of humans. Like, a LOT of humans. And what do all humans do? Not that. Stop it. WE DIE. Really, it's the one universal thing we do. And it turns out that dying is a complex thing.

One of the ways anthropologists talk about the emergence of early hominids is through the treatment of death. Dead bodies are always a concern; they make their immediate environment unpleasant, eventually, and they can attract predators. So there are plenty of reasons to remove a dead body from the immediate vicinity of a settlement, or to bury it. But something changed in our evolution, and at a certain point early humans started giving their dead special kinds of treatment: burying them in specific locations set aside for that purpose; arranging bodies in specific positions; including items both personal and symbolic with the body. This represents a fundamentally different attitude toward death, an attitude that assumes that WHAT HAPPENS TO THE BODY is important to the person—the soul. In other words, this implies a sense, however vague, that there is something about “us” that is not just limited to our physical existence. Most human cultures throughout history have posited this idea, in one way or another.

This brings me back to the practical realities of death and dead bodies. With 4,000 years of continuous occupation, London's dead residents far outnumber those living there today. What does that do to a city? How does a city accommodate and incorporate that? Because any human settlement has to account for and deal with their dead; we cannot be ignored.

## Course Objectives

In these brief three weeks, we will engage with the cities of Edinburgh and London and consider their relationships with their dead, in a number of ways:

- What role do historical and current places of burial have, in a living city?
- How do historical instances of death (from plagues to war to famous murderers) continue to play a role, in a living city?
- How have dead bodies played a role in the political/cultural/intellectual development of these cities?
- How have the technologies of death/dying/preventing death changed life in these cities?

## Methodology

- Five free-writes and one formal paper on *Dracula*: 30%
- Journaling: 30%
- Guidebook: 10%
- Travel blog—4 posts, in groups: 20%
- Participation: in-class discussions, small group work, etc.: 10%

Each of these (except for the participation) has its own detailed explanation on Canvas.

## Other Course Matters

**Be on time for all excursions/departures.** One person being late throws everything off.

- If we are leaving together via some sort of transport, we will not wait for you. It will be up to you to get yourself there.
- If we are meeting someplace, plan ahead, know your route, and be there promptly or (better yet) early. We are being met by professional guides/scholars who have busy lives.

**Attend all class sessions.** I have a lot of work planned for you to do IN CLASS so that you don't have to do it later, such as working in groups on blog posts, or *Dracula* freewrites, or working on the Guidebook.

**Stay on top of the reading.** It's not a lot—really, it isn't. But don't get behind.

**Pay attention to your needs.** This is going to be fun, but it will also be exhausting and stressful. Be mindful of yourself and when you might need to ease up on some of your extra-curricular activities. Don't burn yourself out.

**Most importantly:** This is not like a normal class in which we will see each other for a few hours each week. We will be spending a lot of time together. It would be naive to assume that we will all get along, 100% of the time, but there are things we can do to make things better:

- Be respectful of each other (e.g., see above re: not being late) at all times. We will get tired and cranky and annoyed with each other; remind yourself that everyone is feeling this way.
- Take deep breaths and step away if you need to.
- Think before you speak.
- Come to me if something feels irreconcilable.
- Be the adults I know you are.

## **Experiential Learning & Field Visits**

During the three-week course, students will learn through experience and interaction in the cities of Edinburgh and London.

## **Required Reading / Materials**

*Dracula* by Bram Stoker. I am not picky about editions; even an e-text will be fine, though I do think you'd benefit from a version that has some explanatory footnotes.

# Grading

## Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

## Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Percentage of Grade</b>
Participation in class	25%
Cultural activities	25%
Quizzes	25%
Final oral exam	25%
<b>Overall grade</b>	<b>100%</b>

# Policies

## Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

## University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

### Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

### Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).