Three short papers are due over the course of the semester. These papers do not ask you to do outside reading or research. They merely ask you to focus on and reflect upon the readings and discussions that occur in this course. They are designed to help you prepare for exams as well as to think critically about what we are studying.

When approaching the paper, pick a theme, topic, or subject that you would like to explore further, argue with, or that resonates with your own understanding or experience of death. Do not merely repeat what an author says, but engage in a dialogue or conversation with the author about some idea(s) that they raise.

Your papers need to make an argument. What does this mean? They need to take a position on the subject, and then provide evidence from our readings, our class discussions, and from your own life observations, in support. For example: Ernest Becker states that the denial of death is intrinsic to human nature. A thesis might be: While Becker asserts that the denial of death is intrinsic to human nature, the evidence from X, Y, Z would argue against his position. Or, another example: Scheper-Hughes claims that crying at death is culturally-conditioned, rather than intrinsic to human nature. A thesis might be, Scheper-Hughes contention may not be justified, given other factors that go into the grief process.

All papers need to be typed in 12-point Times Roman, double spaced, with one-inch margins all the way around. All papers need to provide citations throughout the paper, and either footnotes, endnotes, or Works Cited. You need to credit the work of others!

**Special Offer:** I am willing to read through drafts of your paper *with* you before you turn in your final version. You must set up an appointment and come to my office, however, to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity. I recommend it highly, especially if English is your second language, or if you have had difficulty with writing assignments in the past.

### # 1 : 2-3 page paper due February 15, worth 20 points
Pick one or more of the readings we had between Jan 18 and Feb 15 to analyze in your paper. Do you agree with Malinowski? Do you find that Lock accurately describes attitudes toward death in the U.S.? Is the situation in northern Spain similar or different to what your experience has been? What do you think of the Northern Cheyenne attitude toward life and personhood? And so on. Take a reading that was thought-provoking or challenging and work with it.

### # 2 : 2-3 page paper due March 21, worth 20 points
Pick one or more of the readings we had between March 2 and March 23 to analyze in your paper. Take a reading, or readings, that really struck you, and spend some time with them. Do you agree that death is an opportunity? Can death advance us personally in some way? Why is there diversity in the afterlife beliefs among XX group?
# 3 : 2-3 page paper, due May 2, worth 20 points
Pick one or more of the readings we had between April 4 and May 2 to analyze in your paper. You could look at the impact violence has on rituals, or at the ways geography, ethnicity, cultural beliefs, or other factors shape mortuary practices. Are there any common themes that run through the diverse practices? Or are cultural differences too great to identify anything other than the fact(s) of difference?

A grading checklist appears below

Grading Checklist

Here is a checklist for you to follow that will be used as grading criteria for all three papers.

Have you:

___ Introduce topic clearly
___ Included a thesis
___ Made an argument
   ___ Used logic
   ___ Created complex argument
___ Provided specific, concrete examples to support argument
___ Used transitions to get from one idea or paragraph to the next
___ Organized paper to flow from beginning to end
___ Aimed for coherency (that is, does the paper hang together?)
___ Incorporated material from texts we are using
___ Provided citations throughout, and footnotes, endnotes, or works cited
___ Used this material in a meaningful way
___ Provided adequate and accurate citations
___ Included insights gained from class
___ Presented your own analysis
____ Wrapped things up nicely at the end
____ Written clearly and concisely
____ Double-checked grammar, spelling, and English usage

If you do all these things in a logical and consistent manner, creating an argument that utilizes everything we are doing--from reading assignments, to lectures, to class discussions--then you should be fine. If you would like feedback on your paper before you turn it in I am happy to talk with you before or after class, or during office hours.