

Ancient Lives in Death



(naturally mummified frogs on the Isle of Sky)

HPAH5080/6080

2025-26, Block 5



(Ramses II – representation and mummy)

Institute of Education and Humanities
University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Ancient Lives in Death

→ Credits: 20

→ Block 4; rooms TBC

Module convener: Dr Katharina Zinn

Teaching Lecturers: Dr Ros Coard, Dr Katharina Zinn

AIM(S)

- To critically examine interdisciplinary concepts, principles, and practices needed when assessing death and human/animal remains using the example of ancient Egypt.
- To explore new ways to deal with material culture representing ancient lives using scientific techniques combined with anthropological methods to shed new light on ancient cultures

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to:

- demonstrate an ability to critically evaluate the application of the key theoretical concepts and archaeological methodologies associated with the analysis of death and its material remains using ancient Egypt as the case study;
- critically appraise the various advantages and disadvantages working multidisciplinary and develop strategies to deal with these;
- research and critically analyse ethical issues when dealing with death and human/animal remains.

DISCLAIMER

As a module devoted to death, the content might be disturbing, potentially shocking or offensive to some of you. As academics and teaching staff, we aim to provide accurate, current, unbiased and trustworthy information of academic research value in order to capture the learning outcomes of this module.

SYLLABUS

Date / Session	Who?	Topic
Week 1 – 02-06/03/2026		
AL1 Mon 2/03	KZ	Introduction to the module
	KZ	The materiality of death
AL2 Thu 05/03	RC	Introduction to your Lab work / Lab session 1
AL3 Fri 06/03	KZ	The view on and practicalities of death in Egyptological research: archaeology, forensics, religion and culture
Week 2 – 09-13/03/2026		
AL4 Mo 09/03	KZ	The eternal human body: Skeletal Remains and Forensic methods
RC Thu 12/03	RC 10-11:30	Lab session 2
	KZ 11:50-1	Mummification across the globe
AL6 Fri 13/03	KZ	Ethical issues of lives in death
		Submission Portfolio Part 1
Week 3 – 16-20/03/2026		
AL7 Mo 16/03	KZ	The Egyptian mummification process ➔ watching “Mummifying Alan”
AL8 Thu 19/03	RC 10-11:30	Lab Session 3
	KZ 4-5pm online	Discussion of Mummifying Alan together with Prof Joann Fletcher and Dr Stephen Buckley
AL9 Fri 20/03	KZ	Case study – Tutankhamun and the Amarna period: excavation, material culture and modern science

Sun 22/03		Submission Portfolio Part 2
Week 4 – 23-27/03/2026		
AL10 Mo 23/03	KZ	The eternal body of animals: Burial and mummification of animals
	KZ	Popular reception of ancient mummies
AL11 Thu 26/03	KZ	Assessing mummies: unwrapping, CT scans and computer visualisations
AL12 Fri 27/03	KZ	Wrapping up (the pun was too good to miss....)
Sun 29/03		Submission Portfolio Part 3

ASSESSMENT

The assessment consists of one portfolio comprising 3 tasks. You have to achieve an overall mark of at least 40 in order to pass this module, irrespective of the number of attempted tasks.

Task 1: The material culture of death (2000 words, 40% of the portfolio mark), to be submitted 13/03/2026, by latest 23:59 via MOODLE/Turnitin

Starting from the Egyptian tom TT99 in Thebes (Senneferi), describe the architecture and finds of this tomb. How does this material culture illustrates the position this person had in the ancient Egyptian society.

Base your description and analysis on the excavator's book and website:

THE TOMB OF SENNEFERI THEBAN TOMB 99.
<https://tt99.fitz.ms/architecture.html>

Strudwick, N. 2016. The Tomb of Pharaoh's Chancellor Senneferi at Thebes (TT99). Oxford: Oxbow.

Task 2: Documentary Review – Mummifying Alan (1000 words, 20% of the module mark), to be submitted 22/03/2026, by latest 23:59 via MOODLE/Turnitin

Write a review of the documentary *Mummifying Alan* (will be shown in class) commenting specifically on the process of mummification and potential ethical issues.

An "How to write a documentary review guide" will be uploaded on MOODLE.

Task 3: Salt Mummification Experiment. (2000 words, 40% of the module mark), to be submitted 27/03/2026, by latest 23:59 via MOODLE/Turnitin

Students will engage with a practical designed to examine the process of 'mummification'. A laboratory-based report will be produced outlining the rationale, method, results and discussion of results. The report should be fully illustrated and supported with tables and/or graphs.

Task brief:

Salt is a desiccant (removes moisture), including from human bodies. This experiment will test the efficacy of several salts/salt combinations on food-based fabrics. An experimental method will be adopted and followed with the results recorded over a four- week period. Students will write-up the full experimental method in the form of a laboratory report in 2000 Words/equivalent for 40% of the module mark.

Included in a report should be a title.

Abstract (written last)

Key words (max. 5)

- Introduction
- Aims and Hypothesis
- Method
 - Design
 - Materials
 - Procedure
- Results
- Discussion of Results
 - Interpretation
 - Conclusions

All work at this level of study should engage in good scholarship and be accompanied by a reference list (note reference list NOT a bibliography).

All work should be fully illustrated.

Submission deadline:	1. 13/03/2026 2. 22/03/2026 3. 27/03/2026	Return date of provisional marks & written feedback:	1. 20/3/2026 2. 30/03/2026 3. 03/04/2026
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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Essential:

David, R. (ed.). 2008. Egyptian Mummies and Modern Science. Cambridge: CUP.

- Loynes, R. 2015. Prepared for Eternity: A study of human embalming techniques in ancient Egypt using computerised tomography scans of mummies. Oxford: Archaeopr.
- Taylor, J. 2001 (or any other edition). Death and Afterlife in Ancient Egypt. London: British Museum Pr.
- Taylor, J. 2014. Ancient lives: new discoveries: eight mummies, eight stories. London: The British Museum, 2014.

Recommended

- Aziz, S. 2023. The Human Brain in Ancient Egypt: A Medical and Historical Re-evaluation of Its Function and Importance. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- David, R. 2007. The Two Brothers: Death and the Afterlife in Middle Kingdom Egypt. London: Rutherford Pr.
- Grajetzki, W. 2003. Burial customs in ancient Egypt: life in death for rich and poor. London; Duckworth.
- Hawass, Z.A. & S. Saleem. 2015. Scanning the Pharaohs: CT Imaging of the New Kingdom Royal Mummies. Cairo: American Univ. Pr.
- Ikram, S. 2015. Death and Burial in Ancient Egypt. Cairo: American Univ. Pr.
- Ikram, S. 2015. Divine Creatures: Animal Mummies in Ancient Egypt. Cairo: American Univ. Pr.
- Loynes, R. 2015. Prepared for Eternity: A study of human embalming techniques in ancient Egypt using computerised tomography scans of mummies. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Price, C. et al (eds.). 2016. Mummies, Magic and Medicine in Ancient Egypt: Multidisciplinary Essays for Rosalie David. Manchester: Manchester Univ. Pr.
- Smith, M. 2017. Following Osiris: Perspectives on the Osirian Afterlife from Four Millennia. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Pr.
- Stiene, A. 2022. Mummified: The Stories Behind Egyptian Mummies in Museums. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Sugg, R. 2011. Mummies, Cannibals and Vampires: The History of Corpse Medicine from the Renaissance to the Victorians. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Taylor, J. 1995. Unwrapping a Mummy. London: British University Pr.

You can find your level specific Marking Criteria, which will be applied to coursework and exams, on MOODLE, along with the assessment specifications and modules descriptors. Recommended readings are posted on the Leganto link.

NOTES

