

Call for papers for “The Many Lives of Death: Imagining Death and Dying Through Space and Time,” a panel at the 113th Annual American Anthropological Association (AAA) conference, December 3-7, 2014, Washington, DC. This year’s conference theme: “Producing Anthropology.” The confirmed discussant for this panel will be **Cheryl Mattingly** (USC).

The Many Lives of Death: Imagining Death and Dying Through Space and Time

Death is a classic topic of anthropological study: Funerary rites, afterlife beliefs, mourning rituals—all are aspects of social life that the good anthropologist could not leave out in her complete cultural monograph. In this panel, we seek to approach the study of death from what remains to this day an understudied aspect of individual and social life: the imagination. Death lives, for the living, only ever in the imagination. It is thus crucial to any study of death to explore the imaginary processes and practices, habits and manifestations that keep death alive and present in manifold cultural contexts.

At its most basic, this panel inquires into the relationship between death and the imagination. How is death imagined, and by whom? What forms does this imagining take, and to what extent is it a collective venture? What meaning does this imagining have for individuals who are engaged in it? Furthermore, we encourage inquiries into the following topics:

- What are the material traces of imagining death, and how can we trace the imagination through these artifacts?
- How are social imaginaries interwoven with, or disconnected from, individual imaginings of death?
- How is death imagined through bodies, both dead and living?
- How are imaginary forms transmitted through time and space?
- How do the dead haunt the imaginations of the living?
- What is the relationship between imagining and other forms of representation such as narrative?
- How are we as anthropologists to systematically study these two aspects of humanity, both of which are so epistemically slippery?

Looking to all subfields and methodologies for contributions, this panel both takes for granted that partnerships between differing theoretical and methodological approaches are crucial for investigating the human universals of dying and imagining, but also seeks to enact this partnership by bringing together interlocutors who have not traditionally been part of the same conversation. Furthermore, we invite participants to reflect upon what the current state of anthropological research into both death and the imagination shows about where anthropology has been, and where it is going.

Please submit your **250-word** abstracts to Emily Lucitt (UCLA), elucitt@ucla.edu, or Devin Flaherty (UCLA) devinflaherty@ucla.edu by **March 15**. We look forward to reading your submissions!