



# Paleopathology: Impact of the environment on health, past & present

Charlotte Roberts, Ph.D.  
Department of Archaeology, Durham  
University, Durham, UK

*Tuesday, Nov. 17, 2015*  
*2:00 - 3:30 pm*  
*Auditorium, Hesburgh Library*

**Abstract:** Humans have witnessed three epidemiological transitions: from hunting and foraging to farming; followed by industrialization with a resultant rise in degenerative disorders and decline in infectious disease; to a third transition, illustrated by emerging new and re-emerging old diseases. Bioarchaeologists are in a prime position to interpret the relationship between the environment and health over deep time, thus contributing to the emerging discipline of **evolutionary medicine**.

This lecture will address the contribution of palaeopathology to understanding how our disease experience has evolved, how that relates to our changing environments, and in particular how health has been impacted by the epidemiological transitions. The importance of contextualizing skeletal data will be emphasized, supported by research the author has completed over the last 30 years on remains from the UK (c.4th -19<sup>th</sup> century AD). There is no future without the past, and understanding the history of past health may help us appreciate current health challenges.

\*\* Sponsored by the Department of Anthropology, the Teaching Beyond the Classroom program, and the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts \*\*