

**Death and Dying
PH-444
Spring 2012**

Instructor:

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Office Hours: MWF: 9:30AM-10:15AM, TTH: 11:30AM-1:00PM, or by appointment
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Class Time: Web-based

Text: Despelder, A.L., and Strickland, A.L.(2002). The Last Dance: Encountering death and dying (6th edition). Boston: McGraw-Hill

ISBN: 978-0-07-353201-1

Course Description:

This class introduces student to issues of death, dying and bereavement focusing primarily on psychosocial, mental health, behavioral, and ethical issues. Through-out the semester also student will become familiar with key facts, theories and concepts to help for understanding on the most important topics confronting both individuals, families and society.

Course Objectives By successfully completing this course, students will be able to

1. Explore personal affective and spiritual aspects toward death, dying, and bereavement.
2. Define and analyze professional and interdisciplinary roles and responsibilities related to caring for dying people and their families.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical issues surrounding death and dying in contemporary American society.
4. Examine the interrelationships among social, professional, cultural, and political factors on the dying person, family, and care providers.
5. Analyze the role of religious, spiritual, and cultural rituals associated with death and bereavement.
6. Describe variables related to death and bereavement in various stages throughout the lifespan.

Course Format:

This on-line course consists of 15 chapters that are organized into 4 Sections. Each Section contains readings, assignments, discussion boards, and a test. The on-line class sessions are asynchronous and allow students to work within specified time parameters for each section. After completing all readings and lectures in a Section, students will complete assignments, test, and a discussion. Each discussion is intended to expand the student's critical thinking skills and to apply information just learned.

Instructional Strategies:

Instructional strategies include assigned textbook chapter readings, power point lectures, summary of articles, student discussions, assignments, extra credit opportunities, and tests.

Attendance Policy

The University policy states that "Registration in a course obligates the student to be regular and punctual in class attendance." Since this is an online course, the student is expected to participate in class discussions (postings) and submit materials by the due dates. You are responsible for all course information, reading, class discussions, assignments, and exams. The course is designed so that students can work at their own pace EXCEPT there are specific deadlines for each section. If you are falling behind with a legitimate reason, please contact me about your situation. **You are responsible for your own work and your grade will be affected by lack of contribution to the course.**

WKU Policy on Plagiarism

To represent ideas or interpretations taken from another source as one's own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offence. The academic work of students must be their own. Students must give author(s) credit for any source material used. To lift directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage after having changed a few words, even if the source is cited, is also plagiarism. Student work may be checked using plagiarism detection software.

ALL work in the class must be **YOUR** work!

WKU Policy on Cheating

No student shall receive or give assistance not authorized by the instructor in taking examinations or in the preparation of an essay, laboratory report, problem assignment, or other project that is submitted for purposes of grade determination.

Students with Disabilities

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services (OFSDS), located in DUC A-200 of the Student Success Center in the Downing University Center. The OFSDS can be reached at (270) 745-5004 V/TDD. Please **do not** request accommodations directly from the instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office of Student Disability Services. 3

Class Policies

1. All class correspondence will be done via your official WKU email and blackboard. **It is your responsibility to check these regularly.**
2. You will need access to a computer with a reliable internet connection.
3. Technological problems are not an excuse for a late assignment or late test. If you experience computer problems or you do have problems with a WKU site or technology product, call the helpdesk at 270-745-7000 or log onto their website www.wku.edu/helpdesk. Then contact me via telephone or email with a case number and I will resolve the problem from my end if it is necessary.
4. Back-up all of your files and the course work you submit. Since we are dealing with the imperfections of cyberspace, unexpected errors can occur.
5. I am available to answer your questions via email, discussion board, or telephone. If you need to call me (745-5862), preferably during my office hour. If you reach my voicemail, leave your name, call back number, and question and I will return your call as soon as I can.
6. Usually I don't check my email during weekend. Thus, if you send me an email on Friday late afternoon, you may receive my response on Monday.
7. The penalty for plagiarism or cheating of any kind will be a zero for the assignment.

Assignments

1. Submit all your assignments using 12 font size, Times New Roman and double spacing your paper. **All submissions must be of .doc, .docx, or pdf.**
2. All assignments will be submitted via Blackboard. **Assignments submitted via email will NOT be accepted.**
3. Submissions are due by 11:30pm Central Time on the day they are due. **Late assignments will not be accepted!**
4. All assignments are described within the course sections.

Grading System

Grades are based on an accumulated point system. The following schedule will be used to figure the final grade based on points received for each requirement.

4 Article Summaries 15pts each 4 Discussions 15pts each 5 Assignments • Obituary 15pts • Two Movie Critiques 15pts each • One Book report 25pts • Funeral home visit 30pts 4 Tests – 100pts each = 400pts Total possible points – 620	A 558 - 620pts B 496 - 557pts C 434 – 495pts D 372 - 433pts F below 372
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Tentative Course Outline

	Section 1	
Chapter 1	Attitudes Toward Death: A Climate of Change	Jan 23 - 28
Chapter 2	Learning About Death: The Influence of Sociocultural Forces	Jan 29 –Feb 4
Chapter 3	Perspectives on Death: Cultural and Historical	Feb 5 - 11
	Exam 1	Feb 12 - 14
	Section 2	
Chapter 4	Death Systems: Mortality and Society	Feb 12 - 18
Chapter 5	Health Care: Patients, Staff, and Institutions	Feb 19-25
Chapter 6	End-of-Life Issues and Decisions	Feb 26 – Mar 3
Chapter 7	Facing Death: Living with Life-Threatening Illness	Mar 4 - 10
	Exam 2	Mar 11-13
	Section 3	
Chapter 8	Last Rites: Funerals and Body Disposition	Mar 11-17
Chapter 9	Survivors: Understanding the Experience of Loss	Mar 18-24
Chapter 10	Death in the Lives of Children and Adolescents	Mar 25-31
Chapter 11	Death in the Lives of Adults	Apr 1-7
	Exam 3	Apr 8-10
	Section 4	
Chapter 12	Suicide	Apr 8-14
Chapter 13	Risks, Perils, and Traumatic Death	Apr 15-21
Chapter 14	Beyond Death/ After Life	Apr 22 - 28
Chapter 15	The Path Ahead: Personal and Social Choices	Apr 29 – May 5
	Exam 4	May 6-8

Caveat

The above schedule and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.