

Dying, Death, and Loss  
 HUD 344 Spring, 2012  
 Section 2 (Course #3356),  
 HUD 544 (Course #3359)  
 TuTh 3:30 – 4:50 MAC 237

Dr. Illene Noppe Cupit  
 MAC C325, Ext. 2703; E-Mail: cupiti@uwgb.edu

Office Hours: MW: 11:00 – 1:00 pm; Th: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. These hours may be interrupted by various university-related commitments. If you are coming from out of town, please check with me before coming in.

Course Web Site: All students registered for this course will have access to the course D2L site.

### **Course Description and Goals:**

For many of you, this will be a first experience with death education. This course will attempt to illuminate an often hidden, but significant dimension of human development. We will study death and dying from a number of disciplinary perspectives, and examine the research findings on a variety of topics, such as grief, attitudes toward death, and the process of dying. Exploring death is an intensely emotional as well as intellectual experience. The material in this course is designed to meet a number of goals that will help students to approach death and dying with greater understanding and personal insight. Students completing this course should be able to:

- ❖ Recognize some of the taboos surrounding death language so that they can read and discourse upon death rationally with greater confidence.
- ❖ Begin the process of developing their personal philosophies regarding **both** life and death.
- ❖ Recognize how aspects of death vary within and between cultures.
- ❖ Understand the universal and individual dynamics of grief.
- ❖ Be sensitive to developmental issues related to death, dying, and grief.
- ❖ Discuss the ethics of death and dying in a rapidly changing society.
- ❖ Recognize the professionalization of the field in terms of death education and bereavement counseling.
- ❖ Understand and use APA style.
- ❖ Write more effectively and work toward fulfilling the General Education Student Learning Outcomes of communicating effectively through writing and learning about the impact that social institutions and values have on individuals and groups in a culture.

❖ Work toward fulfilling the following Learning Outcomes of Human Development as they apply to the study of death and dying:

- Use library facilities and computerized databases to locate pertinent information.
- Present material effectively in class participation and in individual and group oral presentations.
- Learn to evaluate alternative approaches to promoting optimal human development.
- Have the ability to apply information gained in the major toward future career and personal goals.
- Understand and be able to apply key components of cultural diversity (e.g., social class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation).
- Use APA style effectively when writing papers

### **Required Books:**

Corr, C.A., Nabe, C.M., & Corr, D.M. (2013). *Death and dying, life and living*. (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth. **(CC)**

Any manual, handbook, pamphlet or handout on APA style, Sixth Edition. For those of you who are seriously considering becoming a Human Development or Psychology major, you may want to consider purchasing the Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Materials on the use of APA style appear on the D2L site for this course.

### **Electronic Readings:**

Basler, B. (2004). Green graveyards—a natural way to go. *AARP Bulletin*.

Bliatout, B.T. (1993). Hmong death customs: Traditional and acculturated. In D.P. Irish, K.F. Lundquist, & V.J. Nelsen (Eds.). *Variations in dying, death, and grief*. Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis. (pp. 79-100).

Byock, I. (2002). The meaning and value of death. *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, 2, 279-288.

Dickinson, G.E. & Hoffman, H.C. (2010). Roadside memorial policies in the U.S. *Mortality*, 15, 154-167.

Doka, K. (2007). Challenging the paradigm: New understandings of grief. In G.E. Dickison & M.R. Leming (Eds.), *Annual editions: Dying, death and bereavement. 2012-2013* (pp. 174-180).. NY: McGraw-Hill.

Goldman, L. (2004). Counseling with children in contemporary society. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 168-187.

Neimeyer, R.A. & Currier, J.M. ((2009). Grief therapy. Evidence of efficacy and emerging directions. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 18, 352-356.

O'Rourke, M. (February 1, 2010). Good grief. *The New Yorker*.

Plopper, B.L., & Ness, M.E. (1993). Death as portrayed to adolescents through Top 40 rock and roll music. *Adolescence*, 28, 793-807.

Sofka, C. J. (2012). The net generation: The special case of youth. In C.J. Sofka, I. Noppe Cupit, & K.R. Gilbert (Eds.), *Dying, death, and grief in an online universe*. New York: Springer.

Song, J., Bartels, D.M., Ratner, E.R., Alderton, L., Hudson, B., & Ahluwalia, J.S. (2007). Dying on the streets. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 22, 435-441.

### **Additional Readings Found Under “Death in the News” on D2L website**

#### **Course Requirements (Maximum number of earned points = 570):**

**Writing Emphasis:** Because this is a writing emphasis course, your written assignments will be evaluated both on content and quality of writing. In addition to the content, therefore, your grades will be based on the organization and development of ideas, clarity of expression, coherence between sentences and paragraphs, and proper use of English. Students are encouraged to visit the Writing Center.

1. **Exams (3) Exams 1 & 2 are worth 115 points. Exam 3 is worth 80 points:** During the semester two exams will be given. The last exam (this exam is the ONLY exam that is totally multiple choice) will be given during the final exam period and approximately 20% of the questions on this exam will reflect material from the entire course. Exams 1 & 2 will include both multiple choice and essay questions. Questions on the exams come from material in the lectures, discussions, and readings. The essay portion of exams 1 & 2 will be completed on D2L and is open book. Approximately one week prior to each exam, exam information will become available on the D2L course site.
2. **Thanatology Project:** A list of projects will be provided to the class. Students are expected to complete one of these projects, which is worth up to **170 points**. The short project will conform to APA style and presented in a *virtual poster session*. Projects must be completed by the due date. More detailed guidelines will be forthcoming.
2. **Speed Debating:** Each student must participate in a debate. Debate participation is worth up to **70 points**. A debate team will consist of 4 or 5 students. The dates and topics of debates are listed below, and it is first-come first-served. I will try to accommodate your first or second choices and the teams will be formed on the basis of these preferences. These debates will be in-class presentations; one class period will be devoted to preparation for the debates with the remaining preparation to take place out of class. Each debate will last for 15 – 20 minutes. Debate guidelines are found at the end of this syllabus.
4. **Class Participation (20 points):**  
Your contributions to in-class discussion is valued and noted, Ways to earn participation points:
  - Speak up in class! There are so many issues that have no right or wrong answers when it comes to death and dying. Your informed opinions matter!
  - Ask questions of guest speakers.
  - Provide feedback on individual projects.
  - Earn extra points via perfect attendance (see below) and apply to participation points.
- 5 **Attendance Policy:**

Although there are no penalties for missing most classes, there are classes that require attendance. These are for the exams and the final (please do not schedule vacation dates during this time), and dates that assignments are due. **Any student who misses 1/3 or more class sessions (10) will receive a failing grade for the course.** In addition, 6 extra points will be added to

the final exam or the participation grade for perfect attendance during the semester. Students will choose one of these options at the beginning of the semester (you will have another opportunity to choose at the conclusion of the course). The **ONLY** excused absence for this extra credit option is a school-related function or a major family emergency. A sign-up sheet will be circulated at the beginning of each class.

6. **Grading: Based on 570 points: A = 90 – 100% (513+ pts); AB = 86 – 89% (490 + pts); B = 80 – 85% (456 + pts); BC = 75- 79% (428 + pts); C = 65 – 74% (370 + pts); CD = 60 – 64% (342 + pts); D= 55 - 59.9% (313 + Pts); F= 312 points or less.**

### **Class policies**

1. Honor Code Policy: All work for this course is based upon the assumption that students are applying the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. In order to affirm this practice, I am requiring that **all written work** include the following statement, which must be signed and dated. Your affirmation should appear on the back side of the last page of your paper. Papers without this affirmation will not be graded

**"I affirm that this paper reflects my own work and writing."**

*Signature, Date*

2. Attendance is expected for each class session. See section on "Class Participation."
3. You are expected to hand in all work on time at the beginning of class. Late papers may be accepted by the discretion of the professor; in these cases a grade penalty will be imposed. Makeup exams will not be given except for extreme circumstances.
4. Late submissions of essays to the D2L website will only be accepted (with a point deduction) under emergency conditions.
5. For graded assignments no handwritten work will be accepted.
6. Please note the date of the exams and plan your vacation times accordingly.
7. If you are having problems at any point in time with the above requirements, please don't hesitate to see me.
8. Please turn off cell phones, iPods, messaging devices and other electronic gear during class.
9. As required by federal law and UW-Green Bay policy for Individuals with Disabilities, students with a documented disability who need accommodations must contact the Disability Services Office at 465-2841. Reasonable accommodations can be made unless they alter the essential components of the class. Contact the instructor and Disability Services Coordinator in a timely manner to formulate alternative arrangements.

**TOPIC: INTRODUCTION: THINKING ABOUT DEATH**

DATE	READINGS	COMMENTS
Jan. 24 (Tu)	Introduction to Course	
Jan. 26(Th)	CC: Chapter 1, 2 ADEC Web Site: <a href="http://www.adec.org">www.adec.org</a>	Bring in a recent picture of yourself
Feb. 1 (Tu)	CC: Chapter 3 Reading: Song et al. (2007)	Review Project Guidelines

**TOPIC: THE DEATH SYSTEM AND CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES**

DATE	READINGS	COMMENTS
Feb. 3 (Th)	CC: Chapter 4	Indicate debate choices
Feb. 7 (Tu)	Organize Debate Teams Popular music & death. Reading: Plopper & Ness (1993)	Bring in lyrics (and music if you wish) of a popular songs about death.
Feb. 9 (Th)	CC: Chapter 5 Hmong Perspectives on death Reading: Bliatout (1993)	Pick project topic

**TOPIC: MEDICAL ETHICS**

DATE	READING	COMMENT
Feb. 14 (Tu)	CC: Chapter 16	Project Revisions Due Guest Speaker: Attorney Jeff Martinson, Martinson Law Firm
Feb. 16 (Th)	CC: Chapter 18	Project: Find two – four peer-reviewed sources
Feb. 21 (Tu)	CC: Chapter 18	Project Outlines Due
Feb. 23 (Th)	<b>Debate 1: Should the state of Wisconsin legalize assisted suicide?</b>  Conclusions of Medical Ethics	

**TOPIC: THE EXPERIENCE OF DYING**

DATE	READING	COMMENT
Feb. 28 (Tu)	CC: Chapter 6	
March 1 (Th)	CC: Chapter 7	
March 6 (Tu)	<b>Exam 1</b>	In-class Project Work-Turn in Revised Outlines
March 8 (Th)	<b>Debate 2: Should health care professionals withhold the prognosis from dying patients?</b>	
<b>March 10 – March 19 SPRING BREAK!</b>		

**TOPIC: FUNERALS, BEREAVEMENT & GRIEF**

DATE	READING	COMMENT
March 20 (Th)	CC: Chapter 9	
March 22 (Th)	Reading: O'Rourke	
March 27 (Tu)	CC: Chapter 8 (Hospice)	Guest Speaker: Unity Hospice
March 29 (Th)	Project Work Day	
April 3 (Tu)	CC: Chapter 10 Reading: Doka (2007)	
April 5 (Th)	<b>Debate 3: Is grief therapy effective?</b> Reading: Neimeyer & Currier ((2009)	
April 10 (Tu)	<b>Exam 2</b>	In-class project work
April 12 (Th)	Funeral Home Tour CC: Chapter 11 Reading: Basler (2004)	Proko-Wall Funeral Home 1630 E. Mason 468-4111

**TOPIC: DEVELOPMENTAL DIMENSIONS OF DEATH AND DYING**

DATE	READINGS	COMMENTS
April 17 (Tu)	CC: Chapter 12 Reading: Goldman (2004)	
April 19 (Th)	CC: Chapter 12—finish reading	Guest Speaker: Colleen Ducke, Child Life Specialist, St. Vincent Hospital
April 24 (Tu)	<b>Debate 4: Is social media and computer gaming an effective way to learn about and cope with death?</b> CC: Chapter 13 Reading: Sofka (2012)	
April 26 (Th)	CC: Chapter 14, 15	
May 1 (Tu)	CC: Chapter 14, 15	Projects Due - Upload in Discussions tab on D2L

**TOPIC: COMING TO THE END—**

Wrap up and Death Anxiety Revisited

DATE	READING	COMMENT
May 3 (Th)	CC: Chapter 19 Reading: Byock (2002)	Projects Due

Note: Scheduling of topics and requirements may be revised

**FINAL EXAM**

Section 1: May 10 (Thursday) 10:30 – 12:30

## Debate Guidelines

Each student must participate in a debate. A debate team will consist of 4 or 5 students. The dates and topics of debates are listed in the course outline. I will try to accommodate your first or second choices and the teams will be formed on the basis of these preferences.

These debates will be in-class presentations. Once the debate teams are formed there will be initial discussion of the topic in class with the debates with the remaining preparation to take place out of class. Each debate will last for a total of 30 minutes. Once you are assigned to a debate team, you have an obligation to that team and to the class.

These should be real debates: the two sides should not rehearse with each other beforehand. Each side starts off with 10 minutes presenting its case. During this first part, each side should highlight 3 crucial facts or arguments. Then each side has 10 minutes to reply to the arguments given by their opponents. We have 5 minutes of questions to the teams from other class members, and finally a quick summing up by each team. You should make your case by careful argument, but you can use visual aids to emphasize your points. You should not read a prepared statement, unless it is very brief.

In **preparing** for your debate, your team needs to meet at least several times, and needs to start planning at least a couple of weeks before the scheduled date. You may do research your textbook, readings, "Death in the News articles" or any additional sources that you find. Look at relevant statistics or philosophical or ethical arguments that are made by other people writing about your issue. You need to make sure that you give the class the essential facts in ways they can take notes from, since they may well be tested on them later on. The library and the Internet are good resources for much of the information you will need. If you have any questions about how to do your debate, where to find information, or are having serious problems with inter-group dynamics, please come to me and I will give you advice or help.

**Write-ups.** After the event, each team should submit a one-page outline of the main points of their debate as well as their sources. In addition, each student will fill out a form documenting their own contribution to the debate, an assessment of how the debate went, and address any criticisms that were made by other students in their feedback to the group. This form will be available on D2L and should be submitted within 24 hours following the debate.

**HUD 544 Additional Requirements**

1. In addition to the above, graduate students will be required to do both a Service Learning and research project.
2. Graduate students will be required to answer an additional essay on all three exams.
3. Graduate students shall read ten chapters from Berzoff, J. & Silverman, P.R. (Eds.) (2004). *Living with dying. A handbook for end-of-life healthcare practitioners*. New York: Columbia University Press. Students will write a brief summary of the chapter and discuss how what they have learned applies to social work practice.