GENERAL STUDIES COURSE PROPOSAL COVER FORM

Copy and paste current course information from Class Search/Course Catalog.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College/School</th>
<th>College of Integrative Sciences and Arts</th>
<th>Department/School</th>
<th>Faculty of Leadership and Integrative Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prefix:</td>
<td>IDS</td>
<td>Number:</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
<td>Death and Dying: An Interdisciplinary Approach</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Units:</td>
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Course description: Applies integrative and interdisciplinary tools, methods, knowledge and skills to examine ideas, issues and institutions as they change over time.

Is this a cross-listed course? No  If yes, please identify course(s):

Is this a shared course? No  If so, list all academic units offering this course:

Note: For courses that are crosslisted and/or shared, a letter of support from the chair/director of each department that offers the course is required for each designation requested. By submitting this letter of support, the chair/director agrees to ensure that all faculty teaching the course are aware of the General Studies designation(s) and will teach the course in a manner that meets the criteria for each approved designation.

Is this a permanent-numbered course with topics? Yes

If yes, each topic requires an individual submission, separate from other topics.

Social and Behavioral Sciences (SB)  Mandatory Review: Yes

Eligibility: Permanent numbered courses must have completed the university’s review and approval process. For the rules governing approval of omnibus courses, contact Phyllis.Lucie@asu.edu.

Submission deadlines dates are as follow:

For Fall 2021 Effective Date: October 2, 2020  For Spring 2022 Effective Date: March 5, 2021

Area proposed course will serve:

A single course may be proposed for more than one core or awareness area. A course may satisfy a core area requirement and more than one awareness area requirements concurrently, but may not satisfy requirements in two core areas simultaneously, even if approved for those areas. With departmental consent, an approved General Studies course may be counted toward both the General Studies requirement and the major program of study. It is the responsibility of the chair/director to ensure that all faculty teaching the course are aware of the General Studies designation(s) and adhere to the above guidelines.

Checklists for general studies designations:

Complete and attach the appropriate checklist

- Literacy and Critical Inquiry core courses (L)
- Mathematics core courses (MA)
- Computer/statistics/quantitative applications core courses (CS)
- Humanities, Arts and Design core courses (HU)
- Social-Behavioral Sciences core courses (SB)
- Natural Sciences core courses (SQ/SG)
- Cultural Diversity in the United States courses (C)
- Global Awareness courses (G)
- Historical Awareness courses (H)

A complete proposal should include:

- Signed course proposal cover form
- Criteria checklist for General Studies designation being requested
- Course catalog description
- Sample syllabus for the course
- Copy of table of contents from the textbook and list of required readings/books

Proposals must be submitted electronically with all files compiled into one PDF.

Contact information:

Name: Judy Grace  E-mail: judy.grace@asu.edu  Phone: 480-965-2495

Department Chair/Director approval: (Required)

Chair/Director name (Typed): Kevin Ellsworth  Date: 3/29/2021

Chair/Director (Signature):  

Rev. 10/2020
Rationale and Objectives

Social-behavioral sciences use distinctive scientific methods of inquiry and generate empirical knowledge about human behavior, within society and across cultural groups. Courses in this area address the challenge of understanding the diverse natures of individuals and cultural groups who live together in a complex and evolving world.

In both private and public sectors, people rely on social scientific findings to consider and assess the social consequences of both large-scale and group economic, technological, scientific, political, ecological and cultural change. Social scientists' observations about human interactions with the broader society and their unique perspectives on human events make an important contribution to civic dialogue.

Courses proposed for a General Studies designation in the Social-Behavioral Sciences area must demonstrate emphases on: (1) social scientific theories, perspectives and principles, (2) the use of social-behavioral methods to acquire knowledge about cultural or social events and processes, and (3) the impact of social scientific understanding on the world.

Revised April 2014
ASU--[SB] CRITERIA

A SOCIAL-BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES [SB] course should meet all of the following criteria. If not, a rationale for exclusion should be provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Identify Documentation Submitted</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1. Course is designed to advance basic understanding and knowledge about human interaction.</td>
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<td>2. Course content emphasizes the study of social behavior such as that found in:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- ANTHROPOLOGY</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- ECONOMICS</td>
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<td>- CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY</td>
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<td>- HISTORY</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Course emphasizes:</td>
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<td>a. the distinct knowledge base of the social and behavioral sciences (e.g., sociological anthropological).</td>
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<td>b. the distinct methods of inquiry of the social and behavioral sciences (e.g., ethnography, historical analysis).</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4. Course illustrates use of social and behavioral science perspectives and data.</td>
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THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF COURSES ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE [SB] AREA EVEN THOUGH THEY MIGHT GIVE SOME CONSIDERATION TO SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE CONCERNS:

- Courses with primarily arts, humanities, literary or philosophical content.
- Courses with primarily natural or physical science content.
- Courses with predominantly applied orientation for professional skills or training purposes.
- Courses emphasizing primarily oral, quantitative, or written skills.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Prefix</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>General Studies Designation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IDS</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>Integrative Perspectives on Change: Topic: Death and Dying: An Interdisciplinary Perspective</td>
<td>SB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explain in detail which student activities correspond to the specific designation criteria. Please use the following organizer to explain how the criteria are being met.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria (from checksheet)</th>
<th>How course meets spirit (contextualize specific examples in next column)</th>
<th>Please provide detailed evidence of how course meets criteria (i.e., where in syllabus)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Advance understanding of human interaction</td>
<td>This interdisciplinary course is designed to encourage students to advance their knowledge of human perceptions and practices of death and dying. The course examines relationships such as cultural practices and taboos of death, burial practices, and the variety of grieving practices we as humans display. Current practices are &quot;explained&quot; by looking at past practices and attitudes, including environmental, religious, historical, cultural, and social groups.</td>
<td>C-1 Yellow in syllabus/examples/excerpts: Course Description: This three-credit course asks you to read and reflect on death and dying from several perspectives: psychological (death work internally): culturally/anthropologically (customs of a group of people); economically (the costs of end-of-life care and burial); religious (how the world religions view death and the afterlife); sociologically (your family and friends). Your work should draw its support from your concentration courses, which will also provide you with resources to start your search for more information. Your text also provides good recommendations for further reading. In your mini-papers, you are asked to explore your topic within the context of this statement: How did we get to where we are today in this practice or belief? What is the influence of this historical practice on what we do today?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Objective: To describe historical and contemporary attitudes and beliefs about death and loss in order to understand your own and the cultural attitudes and beliefs of others. Modules/Assignments encourage students to be objective in examining the practices of others, currently and historically.</td>
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| 2. Course emphasizes social behavior such as examples found in sociology, history, cultural anthropology, and psychology |

Students will consider practices associated with death and dying within these considerations: How did we get to where we are today in this practice or belief? What is the influence of this historical practice on what we do today? For example, why do Scottish (and other groups) men wear kilts? What do we know about their environment and living needs that would cause the men to wear what we might consider short and not very protective coverings? |

| C2-Red in examples/syllabus: |

Course Description: This three-credit course asks you to read and reflect on death and dying from several perspectives: psychological (death work internally): culturally/anthropologically (customs of a group of people); economically (the costs of end-of-life care and burial); religious (how the world religions view death and the afterlife); sociologically (your family and friends). Your work should draw its support from your concentration courses, which will also provide you with resources to start your research for more information. Your text also provides good recommendations for further reading. In your mini papers, you are asked to explore your topic within the context of this statement: How did we get to where we are today in this practice or belief? What is the influence of this historical practice on what we do today? (from Syllabus) |
| History: Course text and resources examine how history has provided foundations for current beliefs and practices related to dying and death, such as the influence of the Nile on Egyptian burial attitudes (from text, materials, course activities) |
| Sociology: Practices associated with death and dying are framed and even dictated by the groups we belong to, large small. Students have an opportunity to reflect on their own family and culture, and religion of origins as these compare to those of others. One of the later assignments can involve interviewing an older family member about his/her feelings about death. (from modules) |
| Psychology: Our feelings about death and dying are often influenced by first experiences with death, and other similar experiences with loss, death, the old, and the dying. In particular, students are asked to reflect on their first experiences with death and loss, death work (Kubler-Ross), and how those experiences impacted and shaped their current understanding. (Module materials and assignments) |
| Cultural anthropology: Students will read about how some ancient groups celebrated and honored dying and the dead. The disposal of remains is discussed (Module and course materials) |
| 3. Course emphasizes basic understanding of human behavior as examined through social and behavioral sciences | Students read, discuss, reflect, and write to analyze and value the diverse ways that our backgrounds, individual and collective histories, and psychology bring meaning to our current practices and attitudes. | C3-Blue
Initially, students take a Fear of Death assessment that foreshadows the areas covered in the course. They discuss and share their first rememberances of an important death. Exercise on death work as attributed to Kubler-Ross |
|---|---|---|
| 4. Course emphasizes use of behavioral science perspectives and data | The course uses social and behavioral science perspectives such as observation and ethnography, historical inquiry, and other qualitative methods. | C-4 Green
1. Observation of seniors/interview an older family member-involving interview and observation protocols (assignment)
2. Course Objectives (syllabus)
3. Students read about and identify cultural artifacts of death and dying, including those in their own cultures of origin (assignment, discussions). |
**Integrative Perspectives on Change**

Course Description:
Applies integrative and interdisciplinary tools, methods, knowledge and skills to examine ideas, issues and institutions as they change over time.
IDS 312 Death and Dying

Syllabus IDS 312

IDS 312: Interdisciplinary Topics: Death and Dying: An Interdisciplinary Approach

Instructor Information

Judy Diane Grace, Ph.D.

Judy.Grace@asu.edu (preferred contact-answered within 24 hours)

480-965-2495

Office Hours

Virtual, but I am glad to meet with you either face-to-face or by phone or by Zoom at a mutually agreed upon time.

Textbook

The textbook is Harold Schechter’s The Whole Death Catalog. The text is available in the University Bookstore at the Downtown campus and from many online vendors (where it will be considerably cheaper). It should cost no more than about $12.00 online. There is a Kindle edition. Additional readings/materials will be available through the Library web pages and from the course site.

Introduction

This three-credit course asks you to read and reflect on death and dying from several perspectives: psychological (death work internally): cultural/anthropologically (customs of a group of people); economically (the costs of end-of-life care and burial); religious (how the world religions view death and the afterlife); sociologically (your family and friends). Your work should draw its support from your concentration courses, which will also provide you with resources to start your search for more information. Your text also provides good recommendations for further reading. In your mini-papers, you are asked to explore your topic within the context of this statement: How did we get to where we are today in this practice or belief? What is the influence of this historical practice on what we do today? For example, why do Scottish (and other groups) men wear kilts? What do we know about their environment and living needs that would cause the men to wear what we might consider short and not very protective coverings?

This three-credit course asks you to read and reflect on death and dying from several perspectives: psychological (death work internally): cultural/anthropologically (customs of a group of people); economically (the costs of end-of-life care and burial); religious (how the world religions view death and the afterlife); sociologically (your family and friends). Your work should draw its support from your concentration courses, which will
also provide you with resources to start your search for more information. Your text also provides good recommendations for further reading. In your mini-papers, you are asked to explore your topic within the context of this statement: How did we get to where we are today in this practice or belief? What is the influence of this historical practice on what we do today? For example, why do Scottish (and other groups) men wear kilts? What do we know about their environment and living needs that would cause the men to wear what we might consider short and not very protective coverings? (duplicate from above)

You will be able to pursue your own interests from your concentration/major courses in addition to doing various assignments such as writing your own obituary.

This course is offered by the College of Integrative Sciences and Arts. For more information about the college, visit our website: https://cisa.asu.edu/. If you have questions or concerns, please send your inquiry to cisa@asu.edu.

**Course Objectives**

Through readings, discussion, and other learning activities, by the end of the course, you will be able to:

1) To describe historical and contemporary attitudes and beliefs about death and loss in order to understand your own and the cultural attitudes and beliefs of others,

2) To describe the economics of death and dying including end-of-life care, hospice, and funeral and burial costs,

3) To examine objectively your own approaches/beliefs and rituals associated with death, especially what Kubler-Ross called Death Work and the sociology of dying and death in our culture,

4) To participate in an informed manner in one or more activities associated with death and dying such as writing an obituary, and

5) To appreciate discussions about dying and death as part of our own human nature.

**How To Be Successful In This Course**

Since this is a compressed course, you will need to keep up with the readings and the assignments on a regular basis. You may be using a new platform in Canvas to do your work, so please do not wait until the last minute to assess and start your work. As a colleague of mine reminds every student:

*If you are prone to procrastination, it is time to slay that dragon! Your life will be much easier, and you will be much more successful in this class if you habitually read the assignment and materials as early as you can in the module. That way you have time to review it, think about it, write, and then review that, to hopefully have your work done by the end of the module.*
If you fall behind, not only will your grades suffer, you may not be able to catch up: a waste of good money and time on your part. The whole course is open so you can plan. This syllabus is designed to give you a heads-up on what is coming … pay attention! ☺

Office Hours

As this is a completely online class, office hours are also virtual. Please post general questions to the "I was just wondering-questions about the course" discussion board where another member of the class may be able to help before I can respond. If it is of a personal nature, however, email contact is standard and effective. If for some reason these don’t meet your needs, we can schedule an online appointment at our mutual conveniences. If you are local, I am available to meet with you on campus. Zoom and phone office calls are encouraged.

In any event, please plan ahead. If you plan on doing work on the weekend, at least work or read enough ahead to see if you have questions. Don’t wait until the last minute. And please follow the guidelines discussed immediately below. Remember the beauty of the "I was just wondering" discussion board is you can help each other too. Check there first to see if your question is already answered, and, if it isn’t, post your question there (if it isn’t personal about your grade or whatever) as a peer may jump in an answer you before I even get to read it.

Email Reminder

Please make the subject line useful for me by including:

1. The class number – IDS 312
2. A word or two that captures the main point of your email.

If phone is the best way to contact you for a particular issue, please always include your phone number in the body of each email--also suggest times you plan to be at that number.

Please make a good effort to use the class website resource materials to find basic information before you post to the discussion board, call, or email. I put as much there for you as I can. Out of respect for your time (and mine) and to answer your questions ASAP, please start with your materials. After that, if you have a special situation or need clarity, by all means, post to the forum on the discussion board, or contact me. Go to announcements regularly to see if I’ve said something or if you can help a peer.

Late Work

Any assignment turned in after the deadline will lose 10% of its value per late day. Only under extraordinary and very well-documented circumstances will the late penalty be waived. Such situations must be brought to the instructor's attention immediately after they occur. No late work will be accepted after the last day of the course. Late work may not receive feedback,
Failure to plan your work is no excuse. However, students may find help for dire personal and medical issues through the student advocacy services office. This office provides guidance and support to students in resolving educational and personal challenges that may impede their academic progress. In assessing the penalties for late or missed work (if accepted), I rely on this office for information and authentication of a student’s situation. It is at my discretion that very late work be counted.

Students needing assistance in situations such as a death in the family, illness, accident, and other critical incidents are encouraged to utilize student advocacy services. They can be reached at ss-dpc@asu.edu or by phone at 602.496.1208. If you have a family or personal emergency, please contact the office of student advocacy immediately before contacting me.

**Grading System**

(NO +/- GRADING WILL BE USED)

168-151 (adjusted)= A  
150-134= B  
133-117= C  
116-101= D  
>100= E

**Units/Modules**

There will be 5 learning modules running through the seven and a half weeks of the term. All modules are available for your review at the start of the class. The learning module folders contain everything that you need to complete the units, such as readings summaries and assignment instructions. The assignments will vary depending on the topic. Assignments may be discussion board postings, finding resources such as articles, or formatted assignments depending on the topic.

**Mini-papers**

During the class, you will come across topics that you wanted to know more about—now is the opportunity. You must do three mini-papers by the end of this class. Find a fairly limited topic that relates to this course and write a short researched paper on how we got to the contemporary interpretation of the idea or practice.

Here are some ideas—feel free to develop your own interests:

- How has reading about the evolution or change in the Western tradition of death influenced your thinking about death? How do you feel about having a body in your house for several days? What do you do when the ground is too cold and hard to dig? What do zoos do with large animals when they die? Why did “cavemen” and other ancestors bury their dead? Why has our culture’s attitude toward hospice changed? What about cremation and other alternative disposition of bodies?
An artifact of death in Western culture is often the color black. In Eastern traditions, it is often white. In other cultures, it is yellow. Why are the colors different, and why did those colors become associated with death? Does your religion or tradition have a “color preference”?

Why are women often assigned the task of washing bodies for burial in non-industrialized cultures? Are there parallels to the preparations made by the ancient Egyptians?

How effective are advance directives and living wills (see examples at Five Wishes at http://www.agingwithdignity.org/ )

Where did the custom of taking off one’s hat when a funeral passed come from? What other customs have a rational history?

Why are bodies “dressed” in special clothes for death practices?

What aspect of your religion’s death customs do you find intriguing? What is its origin? Why does it interest you?

Why do some religions require a “quick” burial?

Peter Berger (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_L._Berger (Links to an external site.)) says that religion has been secularized, that while our religious views shape how we view death, the worldly context in which we live also has a tremendous impact. How has your own worldly view altered your religious view of death?

Burials customs and options vary greatly even within our culture. Look at the examples in Chapters 3 and 5 and find one you want to explore further.

Why do the periods of mourning vary in at least two religious traditions? Why are certain time periods selected?

What is the relationship between bad luck practices (not walking under a ladder) and death?

Why does the Nile mirror the Egyptian understanding and practice of death?

What is the connection between some aspects of Jewish burials and those of the North American Apaches?

What are eating habits associated with funerals? Why did India have to pass legislation to protect vultures from the hormones ingested by cows? What is a funeral casserole?

What cultures do not forbid cannibalism and why?

Examples from modules:

Course Introduction

This three credit course asks you to read and reflect on death and dying from several perspectives: historical (the logistics of death overtime); psychological (death work internally); cultural/anthropologically (death customs of a group of people); economically (the costs of end-of-life care and burial); religious (how the world religions view death and the afterlife); sociologically (your family and friends).

Module 1: Learning Materials

Readings
Readings for this module include Chapters 1 and 2 from your text and these articles (all very short):

These readings provide you with a sample of thought about death and attitudes toward death. They are meant to give you a context for reflecting on your own attitudes and experiences. They may also suggest topics for the short papers you will need to do for the course.

1. **Historical Changes in Western Tradition**
   
   (see text note p. 14)-a bit heady but demonstrates that there have been significant reflection and research into death work as death has moved from typical to more atypical and from public to private, from family and community centered to an industry that deals with death for us.

2. **When to Die** (Links to an external site.)

3. **Problems with Longevity** (Links to an external site.)

4. **The Origin of Death** (Links to an external site.) (see text note p. 11 --right above the section titled: Death Across Cultures")

5. **Eastern vs. Western** (Links to an external site.)

Discussion Board directions.

1. Your name and major and years at ASU.
2. Your first remembered experience with death and/or loss. You need not provide details, just tell us your approximate age and the nature of the loss--a friend moving away, the loss of a pet, the death of a grandparent, the death of a character on a TV show, etc. These are all losses, and from our losses, we learn how to deal with the big D--our own death, the loss of our self.

Module One Assignment

Are You Ready - Conclusion

Please take the Death Anxiety Scale survey (specific section title of the chapter) on pages 27-28 in your text). You do not need to share your results with anyone, but it will help you decide how ready you are and where you need to begin your death work

Module One Assignment

Are You Ready - Conclusion

Please take the Death Anxiety Scale survey (specific section title of the chapter) on pages 27-28 in your text). You do not need to share your results with anyone, but it will help you decide how ready you are and where you need to begin your death work.

Module One Discussion Board Directions:
Your first remembered experience with death and/or loss. You need not provide details, just tell us your approximate age and the nature of the loss—a friend moving away, the loss of a pet, the death of a grandparent, the death of a character on a TV show, etc. These are all losses, and from our losses, we learn how to deal with the big D—our own death, the loss of self.

**Module One Discussion Board Directions:**

Imagine that you are an astronaut. In six months, you will begin the lengthy five-year journey to Mars to begin colonization of the planet. You are making your bucket list, those things which you want to do before you leave your known world of shopping malls, traffic jams, and movie theaters. You have been selected for this journey because you have no immediate family to leave for so many years. Make a short bucket list of five things you need to do (besides turn off the water in your house) that you need and want to do based on the assumptions that you may not come back and that if you do return, things will have changed significantly. In addition to spending time with friends and family, there will be certain places to visit and things to do. The astronaut Scott Kelly (Link) who lived on the space station for a year said he missed a bath. When he got home, he walked directly into a pool, clothes and all, to feel the water engulf him.

Be sure to tell us why you have chosen those tasks.

**Learning Activities from Module 2**

**Module Two Discussion Board directions:**

For this discussion, I'd like you to find out the cost of a funeral or a burial available to you. You can either go to a mortuary’s website and get some prices, call and ask for a price list, or contact an organization like the Neptune Society (Link) for costs of an alternative burial (see chapter 5). An increasing trend is donating a body to science. There are several providers for this choice, but here is one: sciencecare.com. (Links to an external site.)

Post a summary of what you found and the source.* You should make comments from what you have observed, such as that the funeral home priced coffins from highest to lowest with an emphasis on the higher end. You might encounter some death speak as described in your text (p. 92 "Death Speak").

You might want to look at this report on the cost of dying: Link (Links to an external site.)
When you have identified the provider of your last arrangements, you will probably want to include this in your obit (see next assignment) -- (see pages 137-140 "the Dead Beat"). Obits usually contain the arrangements and service information as provided by the funeral home.

*Be sure to provide a source URL or other identification of your source for the funeral costs.

Some people use advance directives and other legal documents to provide directions on end-of-life choices.

Here are some internet resources on advance directives:

https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/advance-care-planning-healthcare-directives (Links to an external site.)
Directives by State Link (Links to an external site.)
https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/financial-legal/free-printable-advance-directives/ (Links to an external site.)

Discussion Board instructions:

Many funeral homes have a section of their web page (or in their planning booklets) on why you should write your own obituary. Here is one example:
https://www.penwellgabeltopeka.com/Blog/6227/WriteYourObituary

When you have identified the provider of your last arrangements, write an obit for yourself (see pages 137-140 "the Dead Beat"). Obits usually contain the arrangements and service information as provided by the funeral home. Some families include photos, some current, some a "before" or at a significant occasion like a wedding or graduation. You may wish to review the obituaries in your local paper. You will notice that some obits talk about the person's accomplishments, while others focus on the family. Just a note: obits cost, so you might want to think about length. But do yourself justice and write at least 150 words that describe your contributions to society.

Discussion 2.3- What Strikes You as Unusual?

For this post, you can use a real-life experience, one you have read about in a book, saw in a movie, or comment on something from the textbook. Describe and comment on what you have experienced (directly or indirectly) as being a very unusual and perhaps unsettling death ritual or funeral practice. If could be that the Egyptian pharaohs starting building their tombs immediately after they became pharaohs, or that there are ancient English/Scottish customs about sin eaters who consume food over a corpse (Sin Eaters (Links to an external site.)). Some cultures serve special foods such as the South African Funeral Rice (Links to an external site.) (begrafnisrys). (Funeral foods might make a good topic paper.) Even in American funeral traditions, sweets are often served to change the taste in our mouths, and many of us know about green bean mess casseroles.

Module Two Assignment: Mini-paper Topics:
• How has reading about the evolution or change in the Western tradition of death influenced your thinking about death? How do you feel about having a body in your house for several days? What do you do when the ground is too cold and hard to dig? What do zoos do with large animals when they die? Why did “cavemen” and other ancestors bury their dead? Why has our culture’s attitude toward hospice changed? What about cremation and other alternative disposition of bodies?

• An artifact of death in Western culture is often the color black. In Eastern traditions, it is often white. In other cultures, it is yellow. Why are the colors different, and why did those colors become associated with death? Does your religion or tradition have a “color preference”?

• Why are women often assigned the task of washing bodies for burial in non-industrialized cultures? Are there parallels to the preparations made by the ancient Egyptians?

• How effective are advance directives and living wills (see examples at Five Wishes at http://www.agingwithdignity.org/ )

• Where did the custom of taking off one’s hat when a funeral passed come from? What other customs have a rational history?

• Why are bodies “dressed” in special clothes for death practices?

• What aspect of your religion’s death customs do you find intriguing? What is its origin? Why does it interest you?

• Why do some religions require a "quick" burial?

• Peter Berger (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_L._Berger (Links to an external site.)) says that religion has been secularized, that while our religious views shape how we view death, the worldly context in which we live also has a tremendous impact. How has your own worldly view altered your religious view of death?

• Burials customs and options vary greatly even within our culture. Look at the examples in Chapters 3 and 5 and find one you want to explore further.

• Why do the periods of mourning vary in at least two religious traditions? Why are certain time periods selected?

• What is the relationship between bad luck practices (not walking under a ladder) and death?

• Why does the Nile mirror the Egyptian understanding and practice of death?

• What is the connection between some aspects of Jewish burials and those of the North American Apaches?

• What are eating habits associated with funerals? Why did India have to pass legislation to protect vultures from the hormones ingested by cows? What is a funeral casserole?

• What cultures do not forbid cannibalism and why?

Module Four Discussion Board directions:

How is being scared related to our uneasiness about death? Do scary movies bring up our fears? Are the subjects of the film (age, gender, situation) relevant to how we react and think about the film?
This assignment asks you to discuss a movie you consider scary.

Think back to October when many Halloween-themed and scary movies were on TV or were streamed. Some streaming channels have ample examples as do TV channels (SciFi and Chill). Pick a movie and discuss the aspects of death as portrayed in the film that made it scary. It might be the color--overuse of black, for example. Pick one that causes horripilation! Choose at least three characteristics to mention. Connect at least one to a concept discussed in your text (and cite that connection). Do not give us plot summaries as we can find those on our own. You might want to ignore the psychotronic movies as they often do not have depth.

If you have kids, you have plenty of opportunities to share this assignment with them.

For those of you interested in how films handle pandemics, Vulture has posted a list Link (Links to an external site.) Or at (https://www.vulture.com/2020/03/best-pandemic-movies-on-netflix-hulu-prime-and-more.html) (Links to an external site.)

Here is another list of "classics" dealing with pandemics Link (Links to an external site.) Or at https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/race/see-classic-movies-pandemics-1285144 (Links to an external site.) Here are some ideas on analyzing movies: Link (https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/film-analysis/) (Links to an external site.)

YouTube: Symbolism In Film (Links to an external site.)

**Learning Materials from Module Three**

Module Three Readings

Re-read chapter 4 in your text.

Read chapter 6 in your text.

Your text introduces you to the concept of death work (pages 42-44, 220). While made popular by Kubler-Ross, the concept is very old. Your text author reminds you of the poetry and other art forms of loss as well as other manifestations of death work such as writing condolence letters. The main point of these discussions is to convince you that the various losses you have experienced are clues to how you will work through preparing for your own death.

You will not have time to read Kubler-Ross' work (although I highly recommend it), so
here is Wikipedia’s summary: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elisabeth_K%C3%BCbler-Ross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elisabeth_K%C3%BCbler-Ross) (Links to an external site.)

Note that this summary points out other losses other than a death.

Here’s a detailed discussion of her stages [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C3%BCbler-Ross_model](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C3%BCbler-Ross_model) (Links to an external site.)

Kubler-Ross was a physician. Many in her profession found her work unfounded. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07481189308252605](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07481189308252605) (Links to an external site.) You may nor agree with her stages or her general approach, but it is the basis for many reforms in the treatment of the terminally ill and has influenced the hospice movement (see your text pp. 56-8)[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hospice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hospice) (Links to an external site.)

**Module 3: Discussion Board directions:**

**Artifacts of Death and Grieving**

The artifacts of grieving are all around us. When a national figure such as Sen. McCain dies, American flags are flown at half-mast for a number of days. We are often given items from a beloved one’s belongings as mementos of that person. Your text discusses the wearing of funeral jewelry, which often contained hair or bone parts from a person. Religious services often provide memorial cards containing appropriate prayers and pictures of the deceased.

An artifact is often regarded as an item that reminds us of the deceased. One popular one is a videotape of songs and images familiar to the deceased or even including clips of the deceased.

Identify one such artifact in your personal or professional life and discuss if it helped you move through the grieving process into acceptance of loss. It can be a popular figure or a friend or family member. There is an exhibit at the Smithsonian in Washington, DC, devoted to such mementos from President Lincoln’s assassination. When a movie or TV star dies, there is often a block of that star's reruns aired.

You might want to revisit your text’s examples in the last part of chapter 6.

**Learning Activities from Module 5**

**Module Five Assignment directions:**

This is the original assignment—see below for alternatives.

Visit a center/environment where seniors are cared for, where services are provided, either formally or informally. It can be a senior center, a nursing home (if you have access), a hospital (if you have access), or a church or community activity aimed at seniors. (Seniors are often defined as anyone over 55, but you are more likely to find clusters of seniors if you look for places such as senior centers, care homes, the Social Security Office, and retirement communities. Most malls have walking programs for
seniors. The walkers often stay and have coffee at the end before going home. The YMCA and other gyms have Silver Sneakers, an exercise program designed for seniors. You might even eat at the "Early Bird" sessions at a local restaurant or shop at a grocery store on Senior Day.) Feel free to personalize this by using your church or temple resources.

Here is an example of a video that could be used to do this assignment remotely (search for more!): Link

Once there, answer the following questions and post a summary on the discussion board with your observations:

1. What kind of situation is this--a class in learning the internet held at the public library? A dining room at a care home? A medical facility? A public place that markets to seniors?
2. How long were you there?
3. How would you describe the general health of the group? Are they independently mobile? How many staff or volunteers are there to help--what is the ratio of seniors to caregivers?
4. What is your assessment of the group? Are they engaged in what they are doing or experiencing? Are they passive? Would you say they are happy?
5. What is your reaction to your visit? What did you learn?

Feel free to add additional observations.

Alternative assignment--four choices: (I think you will find these interviews positive)

Choice A: Interview a senior and discuss their attitudes about death and dying. This can be a grandparent or a neighbor. You should know the person well enough to have this level of conversation. and be sure to mention it is for a class project. This can be done over the phone or via Skype.

You should have at least three questions in mind when you start the interview but go with the flow. Follow their lead--you may be surprised to see where it leads.

Here are some resources for you:

https://www.dyingmatters.org/page/TalkingAboutDeathDying (Links to an external site.)
https://medpharm.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20786190.2018.1475882#.XnJHpghKieM (Links to an external site.)
Choice B: Interview someone who is very ill or who has had cancer or some other serious disease. Again, you should know them well and let them know this is a class assignment. Phone or Skype is a good option.

Your task is to describe how they are coping or coped. You might ask about the way they were told about being seriously sick—the doctor's approval. You can also ask about treatment they received. For people who have been cured of cancer, there fear of another occurrence can be very intimidating.

Again, plan out a few questions, but let them determine where to go. The resources above will also help you on this.

For either option, write up your interview in an essay format, certainly capturing the content but also analyzing or commenting on what you see and hear that relates to what you have been thinking about this term.

Choice C: Write a fourth mini-paper using an original topic—not one of the suggestions—this is only worth 20 points, so write about 100-125 words with two sources.

Choice D: If you know someone who works in a care environment, you can submit a few questions (3-5) about the experiences there using ideas from the course. Ask that they write down the answers in an email or fax to you. Keep it simple as these folks are very busy these days. Thanks.
The WHOLE DEATH CATALOG

A Lively Guide to the Bitter End

Harold Schechter
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