

GENERAL STUDIES COURSE PROPOSAL COVER FORM

Course information:

Copy and paste **current** course information from [Class Search/Course Catalog](#).

College/School College of Integrative Sciences and Arts Department/School Faculty of Leadership and Integrative Studies

Prefix: IDS Number: 312 Title: Death and Dying: An Interdisciplinary Approach Units: 3

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

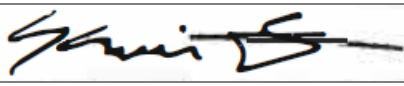
Proposals must be submitted electronically with all files compiled into one PDF.

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): 

Arizona State University Criteria Checklist for

SOCIAL-BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES [SB]

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

Proposer: Please complete the following section and attach appropriate documentation.

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.					
YES	NO		Identify Documentation Submitted		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Course is designed to advance basic understanding and knowledge about human interaction.	Syllabus, Assignments		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Course content emphasizes the study of social behavior such as that found in: <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 40%; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANTHROPOLOGY • ECONOMICS • CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY • HISTORY </td> <td style="width: 60%; text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">Sociology</td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANTHROPOLOGY • ECONOMICS • CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY • HISTORY 	Sociology	Syllabus, Assignments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANTHROPOLOGY • ECONOMICS • CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY • HISTORY 	Sociology				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Course emphasizes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the distinct knowledge base of the social and behavioral sciences (e.g., sociological anthropological). <li style="text-align: center;">OR b. the distinct methods of inquiry of the social and behavioral sciences (e.g., ethnography, historical analysis). 	Syllabus, assignments, instructions, course materials		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Course illustrates use of social and behavioral science perspectives and data.	Syllabus, assignments, instructions, course materials		
		THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF COURSES ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE [SB] AREA EVEN THOUGH THEY MIGHT GIVE SOME CONSIDERATION TO SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE CONCERNS:			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses with primarily arts, humanities, literary or philosophical content. 			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses with primarily natural or physical science content. 			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses with predominantly applied orientation for professional skills or training purposes. 			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courses emphasizing primarily oral, quantitative, or written skills. 			

Course Prefix	Number	Title	General Studies Designation
IDS	312	Integrative Perspectives on Change: Topic: Death and Dying: An Interdisciplinary Perspective	SB

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.

Criteria (from checksheet)	How course meets spirit (contextualize specific examples in next column)	Please provide detailed evidence of how course meets criteria (i.e., where in syllabus)
1. Advance understanding of human interaction	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 "explained" by looking at past practices and attitudes, including environmental, religious, historical, cultural, and social groups.	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?

		<p>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.</p> <p>Modules/Assignments encourage students to be objective in examining the practices of others, currently and historically.</p>
<p>2. Course emphasizes social behavior such as examples found in sociology, history, cultural anthropology, and psychology</p>	<p>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?</p>	<p>C2-Red in examples/syllabus:</p> <p>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)</p>

		<p>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)</p> <p>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)</p> <p>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)</p> <p>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)</p>
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<p>3. Course emphasizes basic understanding of human behavior as examined through social and behavioral sciences</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>C3-Blue</p> <p>Initially, students take a Fear of Death assessment that foreshadows the areas covered in the course. They discuss and share their first remembrances of an important death. Exercise on death work as attributed to Kubler-Ross</p>
<p>4. Course emphasizes use of behavioral science perspectives and data</p>	<p>The course uses social and behavioral science perspectives such as observation and ethnography, historical inquiry, and other qualitative methods.</p>	<p>C-4 Green</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 for 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?

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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 tocisa@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](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 \(Links to an external site.\)](#)) 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 \(Links to an external site.\)](#)) 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.) (Links to an external site.)

Directives by State [Link](#) (Links to an external site.) (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. It could be that the Egyptian pharaohs started 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.) (begravningsrys). (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](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 \(https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/film-analysis/\)](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 (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 (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> (Links to an external site.) You may not 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> (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 \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

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#.XnJHpqhKieM> (Links to an external site.)

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6023469/> (Links to an external site.)

<https://justacenter.org/> (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 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, their 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



BALLANTINE BOOKS / NEW YORK

Contents

- INTRODUCTION 3
- 1 DEATH: *Can't Live with It, Can't Live Without It* 7
- Is Death Necessary? 8
 - Death Across Cultures 11
 - Philippe Ariès and *Western Attitudes Toward Death* 14
 - Geoffrey Gorer and "The Pornography of Death" 15
 - The Good and Bad News About Immortality 16
 - America: Paradise Regained? 17
 - "The Wild Honeysuckle" 18
 - The Fellow in the Bright Nightgown 19
 - Death Fear 22
 - The Evil Dead 26
 - Death Anxiety Scale 27
 - Never Say Die 28
 - "*Timor Mortis Conturbat Me*" 29
 - I ♥ Death 30
 - Agony to Extinction: The Death Process 31
 - How Do You Know When You're Dead? 32
 - Our Bodies, Our Deaths 33
- Putrefaction: A Handy Guide 36
- "Ghastly Gropings in the Decay of Graves" 37
- What a Way to Go 38
- A Grim Fairy Tale 39
- 2 BE PREPARED 41
- "The Good Death": Achievable Goal or Contradiction in Terms? 42
 - Mortuary Hall of Fame: Elisabeth Kübler-Ross 44
 - Ars Moriendi* 45
 - Death at the Dinner Table: Talking About the Inevitable 46
 - Did Lincoln Dream of His Own Death? 48
 - Wills: Last and Living 49
 - "Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?" 52
 - Wacky Wills 53
 - Tending to the Terminally Ill 54
 - "Deathing" 56
 - Quality of Death: The Hospice Experience 56

The Right to Die 65
Famous Last Words 67

3 FUNERAL FACTS 71

Burial: It's Only Human 72
Ritual Burials: So Easy Even a Caveman
Could Do It 75
The Wacky World of Funeral Customs 76
God Is in the Details: Religion and
Burial 78
A Brief History of the American Funeral
Industry: Making a Big Production
of Death 82
Funeral Favors 85
It's a Tough Job but Someone's Got
to Do It 86
From Furniture Maker to Undertaker 88
NFDA 89
The Funeral Home Experience 90
Funeralspeak 92
Mortuary Hall of Fame:
Howard Raether 92
Step into My Parlor 94
Pre-need: Pro or Con? 95
GPL 96
SCI: The 800-Pound Funeral Gorilla 97
Coffins and Caskets: What's the
Difference? 99
Coffins for the Big-Boned 99
Unsung Heroes of the Death Industry:
Almond Fisk 100
DIY Coffins 101
Rent-a-Casket 103

Unsung Heroes of the Death Industry:
Roy F. McCampbell 113

Embalming: Don't Try This at Home 113

How to Beat the High Cost of
Embalming (Hint: Skip It) 116

American Hearses: Going in Style 117

Hearses for the Harley Crowd 120

Hearse Clubs: For Connoisseurs of Fine
Vintage Funeral Coaches 122

Funerals: The Consumer's Last Rights 124

FCA, USA 126

Scams and What to Do About Them 127

Funerals for the YouTube Age 129

Bereavement Fares 129

A Meal to Die For 130

Eat, Drink, and Be Buried 131

Eulogies 132

Wake Me When It's Over 134

Oh, and Never Ever Wear New Shoes
to a Funeral 135

Hand of Glory 136

Living Funerals 136

The Dead Beat 137

Greetings from the Grave 140

Obit for an Obituarist 141

4 GRAVE MATTERS 143

From Mass Grave to Memorial Park:
The Rise of the Modern Cemetery 144
Take Me Out to the Graveyard 150
Ten Cemeteries to See Before You Die 151
Legends of Père Lachaise 159

5 CR
AN
PO
To B
Crea
CAN
Ash
The
L

- The Only Travel Book You'll Ever Need
(Assuming You Spend All Your Vacation
Time Visiting Cemeteries) 161
- Cemetery Shopping Tips 163
- The Ultimate Cemetery Locator 165
- Gravedigging: A Dying Art 165
- Written in Stone 167
- Stone Love 170
- Finally! A Magazine Addressed to the
Needs of Taphophiles 171
- The Tombstone of Tomorrow—Today 171
- Buried Alive 172
- The *Lebenswecker*: If *This* Doesn't Wake
You Up, Nothing Will 175
- "One Summer Night" 176
- The Undead: Fact or Fiction? 178
- Pet Cemeteries 178
- Gladstone, Michigan: Pet Casket Capital
of the World 180
- In Memoriam: Fluffy 181
- Corpse-Napping: Ransoming the Dead 182
- Burke and Hare: Making a Killing from
Corpses 184
- Digging Up the Goods 185
- Necrophilia 185
- "The Unquiet Grave" 187
- 5 CREMATION, CRYONICS,
AND OTHER POSTMORTEM
POSSIBILITIES 189**
- To Burn or Not to Burn? 190
- Cremation: Then and Now 193
- CANA 195
- Ashes to Art 196
- The Perfect Final Resting Place for Snack
Lovers 196
- Fly Me to the Moon 197
- Sleeping with the Fishes 198
- Ashes Aweigh 199
- The Eternal Alumni Club 201
- Hair Today, Memorial Gemstone
Tomorrow 201
- Keith, Coke, and Funerary Cannibalism 203
- Cryonic Preservation: Cooling Your Heels
(Along with the Rest of Your Anatomy)
for a Few Millennia 204
- Ted Williams: Dead Head 207
- Green Burials 208
- Ecopods: Designer Coffins for the Save-the-
Earth Crowd 210
- How to Make a Mummy 211
- You, Too, Can Be a Mummy (and So
Can Fido) 212
- 100 Percent All-Natural Mummies 215
- 6 LOSS AND HOPE 217**
- The Hour of Lead 218
- Grief and Mourning 221
- Dr. Lindemann and the Inferno 222
- Condolence Letters 223
- Grief Dreams 225
- The Victorians: Fetishists of Death 227
- Widow's Wear 228
- Hairwork Jewelry 231
- Hold That Pose 232
- Victorian Postmortem Photography:
A How-to Guide 234
- Widow Sacrifice 235
- When Grief Is a Relief 236
- Grief Goodies 239
- Where Do the Gone Things Go? Children
and Death 239

CONTENTS

- "In Childhood" 243
 Kids and Pet Loss 244
 Death Comes to Mr. Rogers's
 Neighborhood 245
 APLB 245
 The Undiscovered Country: Where Do
 We Go from Here? 246
 "The Indian Burying Ground" 249
 Heaven as Home 251
 The Corpse Brides 251
 The Light at the End of the Tunnel 252
 The Near-Death Scenario 253
- 7 DEATH CAN BE FUN! 255**
 Death in the Movies 256
 Death Lit 101 259
 Death's Poet Laureate 262
 Death's Playlist 263
 A Death Song That Could Make Even
 John Wayne Cry 264
 Lullabies: Ditties of Death 265
 Six Feet Under: Must-See TV for
 Morticians 265
 Magazines You Are Unlikely to Find in
 Your Doctor's Waiting Room 266
- Sick Jokes 267
 "The Hearse Song" 268
 Memento Mori 268
 Memento Mori Calendars 270
 Days of the Dead 271
 Strange but True 273
 Death: King of Terrors or Really Fun
 Hobby? 273
 Bluelips: Your One-Stop Online Shopping
 Site for Those Hard-to-Find Mortuary
 Novelty Items 275
 Build-a-Corpse: Fun for the Whole
 Family! 275
 Mortuary Museums 276
 Death Ed 280
 And Following Our Midafternoon Séance,
 There'll Be Lanyard Braiding at the Arts
 and Crafts Center 282
 Cemetery Fun 282
 Love and Death 283
 The Bride Wore Black 283
 The Last Word 284
- ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 287**
INDEX 289