

FCS 4820 DEATH AND DYING – Fall 2012

Instructor: Dr. M. Meadows, CFCS, CFLE

E-mail: mlmeadows@eiu.edu (correspondence will occur during office hours)

Office: 1431 Klehm Hall, 217-581-6349

Office hours: Monday 3:00-4:00pm, Tuesday 8:00-9:00am and 12:00pm-1:00pm (in Child Development Laboratories), Thursday 1:00pm-3:00pm

Text: DeSpelder (2009). *The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying*. California: MCGraw Hill.

Course description: The purpose of this course is to acquaint students with the issues and implications of death and dying in their own and in other lives. It is based on the premise that death education helps one to live more fully and serve others in a more meaningful way. This course will enable students in fields such as education, social work, counseling, psychology, and the health and medical services to better relate to those they serve.

Course objectives: The students will:

- become familiar with personal as well as social attitudes toward death and dying;
- examine the process of how one develops a mature concept of death through developmental sequencing and external factors;
- develop an understanding of how dying can be made more a more meaningful part of the human experience;
- develop an understanding of the medical and personal consequences of life threatening illness and how their impact can be lessened;
- examine the structure, symbolic content, and function of funeral rituals as they pertain to the change in status of both the deceased and the survivors;
- identify the definitions of behavioral and emotional phenomena surrounding grief and the implications for survivors;
- develop an awareness of age-related losses from childhood through adulthood and explain how age and coping styles influence individual responses to loss;
- examine the complex ethical questions and choices that have arisen in conjunction with the technological advances in medicine;
- develop an awareness of the legalities that impinge on death and dying and thus increase one's range of choices available for decision making;
- examine suicide from a psychosocial perspective and develop ways of responding appropriately to someone who is contemplating suicide; and
- examine various religious, philosophical, and parapsychological views of what follows death.

Methods of evaluation:

Note: Assignments prepared out of class are required to be typed using a 12 point font with one –inch margins, double-spaced, and proof-read by the student. Evaluations may be based, in part, on the appearance of the work, including grammatical or typographical errors. APA style is to be used and used correctly. Students may be assured of confidentiality when submitting any assignment. Eastern Illinois University is committed to the learning process and academic integrity that is defined in the Students Conduct Code (1.1). To encourage original and authentic written work, any written assignment created in this course may be submitted for review to *Turnitin.com* and will become a searchable document with the *Turnitin*-protected and restricted database. Any concerns, questions, or comments must be addressed to instructor within one class period after the assignments are graded and returned to the student. Grade appeals will not be entertained after that point. You may be assured of confidentiality when submitting any assignment.

Assignments should not show more than 15% material obtained from another source (excluding references and direct quotes) as per Turnitin's originality reports. The use of originality reports are strongly recommended and are explained within the HELP files (upper right corner) of the Turnitin home page. Assignments should not show more than 25% material obtained from another source when direct quotes are considered. Assignments over 15% originality (25% when considering direct quotes) will be graded based on original material. For example – if an assignment worth 100 points contains 40% source material 40% (40 points) will automatically be lost. Loss of points will not occur for 15% or 25%.

Late assignments will be accepted with the loss of one letter grade per class period (Example: paper due on Monday and turned in on Friday will lose two letter grades).

In-class assignments and group work:

Students will periodically engage in group discussions and provide brief written or oral reports to the class. In addition, students may be required to write very brief response papers to subjects of discussions, films, or speakers. In-class assignments cannot be made up under any circumstances. These assignments will be completed during class and will be worth a variety of points for a total of 300 points. Extra credit opportunities will be provided to make up the points for one in-class assignment.

Opinion paper:

Students will complete an opinion paper based on one of the following topics:

- life planning issues
- terminal illness
- suicide
- death of a child
- loss of a child prenatally
- multicultural aspects of death and dying
- generational aspects of dying
- violent death

The paper is an on-depth exploration of the chosen topic. Great personal freedom will be allowed in the construction of the paper. At least six references must be cited in undergraduate work and eight references in graduate work. References should be limited to professional journal articles dated 2005 or later. Paper should be three to five pages in length for undergraduate students and five to seven pages in length for graduate students. APA style must be followed.

Undergraduate students - 200 points Graduate students - 250 points

Film review:

This assignment is designed to examine the concepts, issues, and dilemmas related to death and dying through the use of contemporary film. The student will watch and review two films, either alone or with a group of classmates (group discussion is sometimes more fruitful than individual viewing). Separate reviews should be completed for each film viewed. Review should be two to three pages in length and include the following: a) short summary of the film or video; b) relationship of the main theme to death and dying; c) whether the ideas in the film support or run counter to class lectures, readings, and discussions.

100 points each for a total of 200 points

Resource List: (GRADUATE STUDENTS ONLY)

Graduate students will prepare a 15 item, annotated resource list pertaining to death and dying. Possible resources include, but are not limited to: World Wide Web pages, Books, Academic Journals, Magazines from the popular press, Organizations, Agencies

50 points

Grading scale:

Undergraduate students:

A = 630-700 points

Graduate students:

A = 720-800

B = 559-629 points
C = 488-558 points
D = 417-487 points
F = 416 points or below

B = 639-719
C = 558-638
D = 477-557
F = 476 points or below

*******If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services at 581-6583.**