

DEATH AND DYING: WESTERN EXPERIENCE

Winter 2020

Instructor: Sherry Smith
Email: smithsa9@mcmaster.ca
Lecture: Online

Office: Online Course
Office Hours: By appointment

Contents

Course Description	3
Course Objectives	3
Required Materials and Texts	3
Class Format	3
Course Evaluation – Overview.....	3
Course Evaluation – Details.....	3
Participation (20%), due weekly.....	3
Online Quizzes (25%), due weekly	4
Book Report (20%), due February 24, 11:59 PM	4
Essay (35%), due April 7, 11:59 PM	4
Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings	4
Module 1 (January 6 – 12).....	4
Module 2 (January 13 – 19).....	4
Module 3 (January 20 – 26).....	5
Module 4 (January 27 – February 2).....	5
Module 5 (February 3 – 9).....	5
Module 6 (February 10 – 16).....	5
Module 7 (February 24 – March 1).....	5
Module 8 (March 2 – 8).....	5
Module 9 (March 9 – 15)	5
Module 10 (March 16 – 22)	6
Module 11 (March 23 – 29)	6
Module 12 (March 30 – April 5).....	6
Course Policies.....	6
Submission of Assignments	6
Grades.....	6

Late Assignments	7
Absences, Missed Work, Illness.....	7
Avenue to Learn.....	7
Turnitin.com	7
University Policies	8
Academic Integrity Statement	8
Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities	8
Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy.....	8
Course Modification	8

Course Description

Drawing on theoretical perspectives and evidence from religious studies, anthropology and related fields, this course examines death and dying in Western contexts, focusing on social, cultural and biomedical themes.

Course Objectives

- To provide students with an introductory overview of selected aspects of the human experiences of death, dying and bereavement.
- To ensure that learners engage in analytical, reflective and critical thought regarding their own and others' attitudes toward death, dying and bereavement.
- To explore death related themes in various medias including movies, literature, documentaries, news, music, art and/or the Internet.
- To acknowledge and express personal attitudes about death and dying and how they might impact one's professional work.

Required Materials and Texts

- Corr, C., Corr, D. & Doka, K. (2019). *Death & dying, life & living* (8th ed.). Boston: Cengage.
- Doughty, C. (2015). *Smoke gets in your eyes: And other lessons from the crematory*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Other resources available on Avenue to Learn.

Class Format

This course is delivered online.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Participation—20%, due weekly
2. Online quizzes—25%, due weekly
3. Book Report—20%, due February 24, 11:59 PM
4. Essay—35%, due April 7, 11:59 PM

Course Evaluation – Details

Participation (20%), due weekly

Participation in the discussion forum is critical for maximizing learning experiences in any distance education course. In this course students are required to be part of an online community of learners who collectively interact through discussion. The instructor will facilitate discussions; however, the instructor will not address every post. In general, I might share a related idea, intervene if the discussion digresses, or connect student comments together to enhance student learning. Post as early as possible in the week so that people will have time to respond to your contributions. Be respectful of other

people's ideas, opinions and beliefs. It is fine to disagree but please respect others' rights to think differently. Discussions will be checked daily during the week and occasionally on weekends. *Weekly grades* will be assessed according to the rubric available on Avenue to Learn.

Online Quizzes (25%), due weekly

There will be 11 quizzes in total. These are straightforward multiple-choice quizzes based on the required weekly readings from *Death & dying, life & living* by Charles Corr, Donna Corr and Kenneth Doka. Each quiz will contain 20 questions. You will be given 25 minutes to complete the quiz. Quizzes will be available at the start of the respective module and are due before the start of the next module. Please see the course schedule for due dates.

Book Report (20%), due February 24, 11:59 PM

For this assignment, you will be reading Caitlin Doughty's *Smoke gets in your eyes: And other lessons from the crematory*. This will be a modified written assignment in that you are not required to compose the report in a formal way. Please see the "Template for Book Report" for further instructions and expectations on Avenue to Learn.

Essay (35%), due April 7, 11:59 PM

For this assignment, you will be reviewing either *The Shack* (2017) directed by Stuart Hazeldine or *The Lovely Bones* (2009) directed by Peter Jackson. These videos are available for online viewing through Conestoga Library (Criterion on Demand). The movie review is a formal essay should be approximately 2500 words (double-spaced, 1-inch margins). Please see the "Template for Movie Review" for further instructions and expectations on Avenue to Learn.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Module 1 (January 6 – 12)

Course Introduction: Education about Death, Dying and Bereavement

Readings: Corr, Corr, Doka – Preface xxvi-xxviii; Chapter 1

Notes: Discussion forum and Quiz #1 due by January 12, 11:59 PM

Module 2 (January 13 – 19)

Changing Attitudes toward Death

Readings: Corr, Corr, Doka – Chapters 2 & 3

Notes: Discussion forums and Quiz #2 due by January 19, 11:59 PM

Module 3 (January 20 – 26)

Perspectives on Death: Cultural and Historical

Readings: Corr, Corr, Doka—Chapters 4 & 5

Notes: Discussion forums and Quiz #3 due by January 26, 11:59 PM

Module 4 (January 27 – February 2)

Medicalized Death

Readings: Corr, Corr, Doka—Chapters 6 & 7

Notes: Discussion forum and Quiz #4 due by February 2, 11:59 PM

Module 5 (February 3 – 9)

Grief, Mourning and Bereavement

Readings: Corr, Corr, Doka—Chapters 8 & 9

Notes: Discussion forum and Quiz #5 due by February 9, 11:59 PM

Module 6 (February 10 – 16)

Funeral and Body Disposition

Readings: Corr, Corr, Doka—Chapters 10 & 11

Notes: Discussion forum and Quiz #6 due by February 16, 11:59 PM

Module 7 (February 24 – March 1)

Developmental Issues I

Readings: Corr, Corr, Doka—Chapters 12 & 13

Notes: Book Report due by February 24, 11:59 PM & Discussion forum and Quiz #7 due by March 1, 11:59 PM

Module 8 (March 2 – 8)

Developmental Issues II

Readings: Corr, Corr, Doka—Chapters 14 & 15

Notes: Discussion forum and Quiz #8 due by March 8, 11:59 PM

Module 9 (March 9 – 15)

Suicide

Readings: Corr, Corr, Doka—Chapters 16 & 17

Notes: Discussion forum and Quiz #9 due by March 15, 11:59 PM

Module 10 (March 16 – 22)

Medical Assistance in Dying

Readings: Corr, Corr, Doka—Chapter 18; Cursory readings of *Bill C-14*, pp. 1-18 and *Fourth Interim Report on Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada*, pp. 3-12

Notes: Discussion forum and Quiz #10 due by March 22, 11:59 PM

Module 11 (March 23 – 29)

The Meaning and Place of Death in Life I

Readings: Corr, Corr, Doka—Chapter 19; Soskice, J. (2012). Dying well in Christianity. In C. Harold & K. Stajduhar (Eds.), *Religious understandings of a good death in hospice palliative care* (123-143). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Notes: Discussion forum and Quiz #11 due by March 29, 11:59 PM

Module 12 (March 30 – April 5)

The Meaning and Place of Death in Life II

Readings: Waugh, E. (2012). Muslim perspectives on a good death in hospice and end-of-life care. In C. Harold & K. Stajduhar (Eds.), *Religious understandings of a good death in hospice palliative care* (77-98). Albany: State University of New York Press; Ravvin, N. (2012). Tradition and change in Jewish ideals regarding a 'good' death. In C. Harold & K. Stajduhar (Eds.), *Religious understandings of a good death in hospice palliative care* (99-122). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Notes: Discussion forum due by April 5, 11:59 PM & Movie Review Case Study due by April 7, 11:59 PM

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

The book report and movie review case study are to be submitted online to the appropriate drop box on Avenue to Learn. The movie review case study is to be written using APA.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+

MARK	GRADE
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

Students who cannot meet an assignment deadline are required to consult with the course instructor. This consultation must occur before the assignment is due. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day and will not be accepted more than 5 days after the due date unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

I do not allow for make-up work allowances for missed assignments, quizzes or participation unless it has to do with accommodating students registered through SAS.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Turnitin.com

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please to go www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable

notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.