PubH 3040: Dying and Death in Contemporary Society: Implications for Intervention

Fall, 2016

(2 credits)

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Introduction to the Course

Course Description

This course provides basic background information on concepts, attitudes, ethics, and lifestyle

management related to dying, death, grief, and bereavement. The emphasis is on preparing teachers, community health professionals, and other helping professionals for educational activities in this area. This is an online version of a course that has been taught for more than thirty years at the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus.

Educational Purpose

Students in this course will learn the basic themes and constructs of dying and death. Topics include grief, mourning, suicide, death education, and the dying process. The issues related to death and dying in the United States today will also be discussed. Since dying and death are topics that are not normally talked about in day-to-day conversation, it is hoped that students will become more comfortable confronting these issues in both their professional and personal lives.

Prerequisites

You must have Junior or Senior status, or instructor consent. Credit will not be granted if credit has been received for PubH 5040 or 6040.

What Will You Get Out of this Course?

This survey course covers a broad range of topics within the field of dying and death. It will expose you to major theories, many important researchers and authors, and suggestions for further study in the field.

Above all, this course will give you "permission" to think about a wide range of death topics that you probably haven't thought much about. Therefore, your greatest learning will come in the area of personal growth, which cannot be measured by conventional testing measures.

You may be using this course as your opportunity to think about these issues. The Modules will help you walk through various topics, but that is just a start. In this course, you will do both academic and personal work. From one, you will receive a grade from the University. From the other, you will find meaning that will last a lifetime.

History of this Course

Professor Robert Fulton in the Department of Sociology started the first credit-based college course on death at the University of Minnesota in the late 1960s. "Sociology of Death" paved the way for the numerous courses in this field that are taught throughout the United States today.

A few years later, Professor Robert Slater from the Department of Mortuary Science, Professor Helen Slocum from the College of Education, and Professor Delphie Fredlund from the School of Public Health designed a survey course in the area of death for students in those three fields. This course covered many of the topics that are covered today: grief, dying, suicide,

funeralization, and death education. The course's strength came from the perspectives and interaction of the three fields of study, both from the faculty perspective as well as that of the students. Very few courses in this field are cross-disciplinary and draw from such a wide range of student majors.

At that time, the reasons for teaching about death were the same as they are today. Prior to the time we started teaching this course, however, death had been a natural part of everyday life. Children and adults were routinely involved in death rituals as people around them died. This generally is no longer the case.

Over the years, the teaching personnel have changed due to retirements. At the time of Professor Fredlund's retirement in the late 1970s, Jim Rothenberger joined the teaching faculty from the School of Public Health. The College of Education chose not to replace Professor Slocum. When Professor Slater retired from the Department of Mortuary Science, first Professor Burger and then Professor Mathews filled in. Since July of 1998, the course has been listed only in the School of Public Health. Enrollment has increased, with more than 75 students per year taking either the classroom or the distance-learning version.

Although Professor Rothenberger died in 2008, we are dedicated to continuing his commitment to educating others about this very important subject. From 2009 to 2011, Jolynn Gardner brought her own expertise concerning death education to this course and Ellen (Orchard) Koski brought her own insight to the course until 2012. Sarah Logan continued in this tradition and helped make this course a thought provoking and rewarding experience for students in 2013 and 2014. Ellen Koski began instructing again in 2015 and will continue this strong legacy of sharing the important and powerful messages delivered in PubH 3040.

Course Materials

Required Materials

Textbook

- Corr, C. and Corr, D. (2011). *Death & dying, life and living,* 7th ed. Belmont, CA: Thomas Wadworth.

The primary author of your text, Chuck Corr, is one of the giants in the area of death education. He has received numerous awards for both his research and his service to the field. His text is the most thorough, up-to-date, best-footnoted, and most academically respectable survey text

available. It is a book that you will probably want to keep for your library. Graduate and undergraduate students will find it a rich resource for further inquiry.

> To order course materials that are available through the University of Minnesota Bookstores, go to the **Search** page at the University of Minnesota Bookstores Web site, and use the option to "Search for Books by Department, Course, or Author."
> Or you may call **612-625-6000** or **1-800-442-8636** and ask for ODL book service.

Media Programs

Modules 1, 3, 6, 9, 11, 12, and 13 assign various media programs, in addition to reading assignments. For Modules 1, 9, and 13 you will listen to audio programs that were originally broadcast over University of Minnesota radio when it was KUOM Radio. They contain interviews with individuals who expand upon the themes presented in your textbook. Access the audio programs from the **Audio Programs** link on the course home page or from the **Audio Program** link of each Module that assigns them. For Module 3 you will view a speech on grief by Maria Shriver, and for Modules 6 and 11 you will view videos about hospice and legal issues. Access the video programs from the **Video Programs** link on the course home page or from the **Video Program** link of each Module that assigns them.

Required Readings

Modules 4, 9, 10, and 11 assign online readings. Direct links to these readings are provided below as well as in the Modules in which they are assigned.

Module 4

Catkins Keidel, G. (2002). Burnout and compassion fatigue among hospice caregivers. *American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Care*, *19*(3), 200–205.

Module 9

Minnesota Department of Health. (2007). *Suicide Prevention* (fact sheet)*.*
Rickgarn, Ralph. (2001). *The Issue is Suicide.*

Suggested Reading

Health and Human Services, Department of. *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Suicide.*

Module 10

Song, J., Bartels, D. M., Ratner, E. R., Alderton, L., Hudson, B., & Ahluwalia, J. S. (2007). Dying

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on the streets: Homeless persons' concerns and desires about end of life care. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 22(4), 435–441.

Module 11

University of Minnesota Extension Service. (2009). *The Minnesota Health Care Directive*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

Digital Coursepack

The Digital Coursepack aggregates all course materials: textbook, library resources, weblinks, even pay-per-use items. This is the result of a collaboration between CCE and Wilson Reserves to leverage library resources, abide by copyright clearance requirements, and leverage creative commons resources.

Library Resources

Search discipline-specific resources, access your library account, or chat with a librarian directly from this Moodle block.

Webcam / Microphone - Headset

Prepare to collaborate online in video by ensuring you have a functional webcam designed for video calls and a headset-microphone to assure good audio quality.

Technical Requirements

Browsers

To ensure that all features of this course site work properly, use the recommended browsers and configure them properly (to allow pop-ups, for example).
- For best results, Moodle recommends using the Mozilla Firefox browser.
- This course also incorporates Google applications which work best using the Google Chrome browser. It is helpful to install more than one browser on your computer.

Course Technologies

This course uses the following technologies:

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vt	[Voicethread](#)
	[Google+ Hangout](#)
	[Google Drive (docs, slides, forms, drawings, etc)](#)

Student Help

STUDENT HELP Student Help Site	**Student Help** Access the many support resources made available to you by the university.

Learning Outcomes

Course-level Outcomes (CO)

This course supports the following course and

- [ODL program-level Outcomes](#)

	Course-level Outcomes (CO)
1	Discuss in detail basic themes and constructs of death and dying, including grief, mourning, suicide death education and the dying process

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2	Acknowledge and express personal attitudes about death and dying and how they might impact one's professional work
3	Identify several different attitudes people have about death and dying
4	Identify areas of similarity and difference between several major cultures in the United States and how they deal with death and dying
5	Discuss in detail several things that an individual can do pre-death to better help prepare for their own death and to ensure that their wishes are known

Course Schedule

Modules run from Monday through Sunday. All assignments are due by 11:55 p.m. Sunday at the end of the week in which they are assigned. For more information, see your Moodle course site.

Module / Week	Dates	Topic	Learning Activities
1	9/5/16 - 9/11/16	**Getting Started** **Introduction: Death as a Public Health Issue**	Update Your Moodle Profile Introduce Yourself in VoiceThread Assignment: Survey Module 1 Forum Module 1 Quiz
2	9/12/16 - 9/18/16	**Death Across Cultures**	Assignment: Obituary Assignment: Set up time with funeral director Module 2 VoiceThread Module 2 Quiz
3	9/19/16 - 9/25/16	**Introduction to Grief**	Module 3 Forum Module 3 Quiz Module 3 Course Feedback
4	9/26/16 - 10/2/16	**Complicated Grief and Professional Grief**	Assignment: Funeral Home Interview Module 4 Forum

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			Module 4 Quiz
5	10/3/16 - 10/9/16	**Grief and Death Across the Lifecycle**	Module 5 VoiceThread Module 5 Quiz
6	10/10/16 - 10/16/16	**Coping with Dying**	Assignment: Health Care Directives Module 6 Forum Module 6 Quiz
7	10/17/16 - 10/23/16	**Midcourse Exam**	Module 7 VoiceThread Module 7 Quiz Module 7 Course Feedback
8	10/24/16 - 10/30/16	**Funeralization**	Module 8 Forum Module 8 Quiz
9	10/31/16 - 11/6/16	**Suicide**	Assignment: Your Will Assignment: Book/Movie Review Choice Module 9 Forum Module 9 Quiz
10	11/7/16 - 11/13/16	**Ethical Issues**	Module 10 Forum Module 10 Quiz
11	11/14/16 - 11/20/16	**Legal Aspects of Death and Dying**	Module 11 VoiceThread Module 11 Quiz
12	11/21/16 - 11/27/16	**Death Education**	Module 12 Forum Module 12 Quiz
13	11/28/16 - 12/4/16	**Course Summary**	Module 13 Forum Module 13 Quiz
14	12/5/16 - 12/11/16	**Final Exam**	Module 14 Quiz

Assignment Guidelines

Assignment guidelines are located in the **Assignments Summary** document in the **Essential Information** section of your Moodle site.

Grading

Grading Table

The following table summarizes the requirements and grading of the assignments in this course. The specific instructions for each activity are included in the appropriate forum, assignment, or quiz.

Learning Activity	Total Points	% of Grade
VoiceThread/Forum Discussions (12 Total; Modules 1-11: 10 pts. initial and 5 pts. response, Module 12: 15 pts.)	180	24%
Assignment: Survey (10 points)	10	2%
Assignment: Obituary (40 points)	40	5%
Assignment: Funeral Home Interview (Set up time with funeral director: 25 pts., Essay: 75 pts.)	100	14%
Assignment: Health Care Directives (75 points)	75	10%
Assignment: Your Will (75 points)	75	10%
Book/Movie Review (Choice: 0 pts, Paper: 100 pts., Course Reflection: 20 pts.)	120	16%

Quizzes (14 Quizzes, 10 points)	140	19%
Total	**740**	**100%**

Late Submissions

Submission of late work is limited to one week past the original due date and will be penalized. If an exam or assignment is submitted within the one-week grace period, one full letter grade will be deducted from the score.

Permission to submit late work for full credit must be requested prior to a quiz or assignment's original due date and will be determined on an individual basis.

Requests to complete exams quizzes or assignments past the one-week grace period will be denied unless proof of reasonable extraordinary circumstances is provided. Extraordinary circumstances are such things as hospitalization, serious car accidents, and major illnesses. They do not include excuses such as "working too much," "took too many credits," and so forth. The extraordinary circumstances must be verifiable.

Make-up Work for Legitimate Absences

You are responsible for informing your instructor as soon as possible of missed classes for legitimate reasons and provide documentation of the reason for absence. Reasonable and timely accommodations will be arranged.

Withdrawals

Week 10 is the last week to withdraw without your college's approval. For details check the Cancel/add & refund deadlines page.

Incompletes

An "Incomplete" requires prior approval from the instructor for extraordinary circumstances. Contact your instructor if you need to arrange an incomplete.

Grade Distribution

Percentage Achieved	Course Grade	Definition of Grades and Workload Expectations
93-100	A	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to

		meet course requirements.
90-92	A-	
87-89	B+	
83-86	B	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
80-82	B-	
77-79	C+	
73-76	C	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
70-72	C-	
67-69	D+	
60-66	D	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
0-59	F	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed

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		and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an 'I' (see also I). Academic dishonesty: academic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for a course shall be grounds for awarding a grade of F or N for the entire course.
	S	Achievement that is satisfactory, which is equivalent to a C- or better (achievement required for an S).
	I	Assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances, e.g., hospitalization, a student is prevented from completing the work of the course on time. Requires a written agreement between instructor and student. http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/GRADINGTRANSCRIPTS.html

For more information on UMN Grade Distribution, please see Grades and Grade Basis.

Expected Student Academic Work per Credit

UMN defines one undergraduate credit as equivalent to 42-45 hours of learning effort distributed across a semester (including all classroom and outside activities).

UMN defines one graduate credit as exceeding 45 hours of learning effort distributed across a semester (including all classroom and outside activities).

Please review the UMN Policy on Expected Student Academic Work per Credit.

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Students Rights and Responsibilities

Student Rights

Students can expect:
- The instructor will return email and phone communications within 2 days unless otherwise announced in the course; email is typically checked Monday-Friday during the hours of 9am-5pm
- Discussion participation will be graded within 7 days of the due date
- Assignments will be graded within 7 days of the due date
- NOTE: If there will be a delay in grading due to unforeseen circumstances, students will be notified as soon as possible.

Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for:
- Reading any assigned reading as stated in the weekly Module Overviews
- Reviewing the web-page resources posted in the Moodle course site for each week
- Reading all discussion postings in the weekly modules as assigned
- Posting weekly discussion postings as assigned
- Assuring that their computer is compatible and working to engage effectively in this online course
- Uploading assignments before or on the assigned due date/time

Academic Policies and Accommodations

[Academic Policies](#)

[Academic Accommodations](#)

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Syllabus subject to change

This syllabus may change as needed to support the student learning outcomes for this course.