

## Psychology of Death and Dying (PSY 443.001)

Instructor: Christopher W. Shupe, MS/LAC

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Spring 2011: Monday 6:00pm – 8:45pm

UC 230 – Bringle Lake Campus

January 18, 2011 – May 11, 2011

**Course Description:** Studies the processes of dying and the influence of the threat of death on human behavior. Prerequisite: PSYC 2301.

### Required Text:

DeSpelder, L. & Strickland, A. (2011). *The Last Dance* (Ninth Edition). Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education. ISBN: 9780073532011

**Student Learner Outcomes:** Upon completion of this course, students will be able to...

1. Describe the psycho-social-physical aspects of dying and those affected by death.
2. Explain the cultural influences on the dying process.
3. Recognize the needs and tasks of the dying.
4. Examine the social and personal grieving process.
5. Explain how the dying process affects children, adolescents, adults and the elderly.
6. Manage the appropriate roles and relationships to assist those who are dying in coping with their final days.

### Schedule:

January 24 – Introduction: **Chapter 1:** Attitudes Toward Death: A Climate of Change

January 31 - **Chapter 2:** Learning About Death: The Influence of Sociocultural Forces

February 7 - **Chapter 3:** Perspective on Death: Cultural and Historical

February 14 - **Test #1, Ch. 1-3; Chapter 4:** Death Systems: Mortality and Society

February 21 - **Chapter 5:** Health Care: Patients, Staff, and Institutions

February 28 - **Lossography Paper Due, Chapter 6:** End-of-Life Issues and Decisions

March 7 - **Test #2, Ch. 4-6; Chapter 7: Facing Death:** Living with Life Threatening Illness

*March 14 – 18 No Classes, Spring Break – Have a Good Time!*

March 21 - **Chapter 8:** Last Rites: Funerals and Body Disposition

March 28 - **Chapter 9:** Understanding the Experience of Loss

April 4 - **Test #3, Ch. 7-9; Chapter 10:** Death in the Lives of Children and Adolescents

April 11 - **Chapter 11:** Death in the Lives of Adults

April 18 - **Chapter 12:** Suicide

April 25 - **Test #4 Ch. 10-12; Chapter 13:** Risks, Perils, and Traumatic Death

May 2 - **Chapter 14:** Beyond Death/After Life

May 9 – **Introspective Paper Due, Chapter 15:** The Path Ahead: Personal and Social Choices

May ?? – **Test #5, Ch. 13-15**

### Course Expectations:

- Students should turn off cell phones during class.
- Lap top use in the class is limited to note taking only.
- Written work must conform to APA format. Serious deficiencies in areas such as spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and coherent organization will result in lower grades. Students are encouraged to use the writing lab—or other available writing programs-- if writing problems emerge.

- Plagiarism (claiming the work of someone else as your own) will result in a grade of FAIL for the course.
- Where appropriate, the following criteria are used to evaluate assignments:

Effective use of knowledge: the integration of concepts, theories, models, and information from readings, lectures, and class discussions is used in a way that demonstrates integration and understanding.

The inclusion of personal points of view along with rationale, logic, and examples. Generalization of ideas, observations, concepts, and experiences are carefully supported with empirical data, conceptual work generated by authors, practitioners, or researchers.

Organization: thesis in introduction, smooth relationship between ideas and between paragraphs, and overall structure, integrative concluding section. Careful planning is evident in the organization.

Clarity: understandability, good style and form. Central ideas are concrete and clear.

Correct syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Sentences and paragraphs are clear, unified, and coherent.

- Students are reminded to retain a duplicate copy of all their written assignments prior to submitting them for grading in the event of accidental loss or destruction.

Students' interest, time, commitment to the course, as well as personal/professional development is highly valued. There is no substitute or make-up for attendance and participation. Missing more than two (2) scheduled class sessions will result in failing the course

Students are expected to have completed assignments for the course by the scheduled due date. If special circumstances arise, the instructor *may* grant an extension on the due date. This must be arranged with the instructor **prior** to the date the assignment is due. If students need help or have questions, they are encouraged to contact the instructor.

## **Assignments**

### **Lossography - due Week 6 (February 28<sup>th</sup>) -**

A Lossography is an essay that details the death and loss events in your life, along with your present understanding of how each experience has influenced your attitudes and beliefs. Begin by recalling your past experiences with death and dying. Note who in your life has influenced your attitudes toward death. See handout for ideas and direction. **The typewritten "Lossography" paper should be five to seven pages in length. Create a title for your paper that reflects your death experiences. Use this title on the cover sheet of the paper. Use headings in the paper to move through the topics addressed in the paper.**

Please make two (2) copies of these assignments – one to turn in and one to keep for your records. Think about some part of your paper you would be willing to share in class. Rubric is be provided.

**Introspective Paper – due Week 15 (May 9<sup>th</sup>) -**

This is an introspective paper, not a research paper. References are not required but if used should meet APA format. The length of the paper should be at least 5 pages but not more than 7 pages. The paper should be double-spaced with a 12 point font.

Two options are presented. Address only one question. **The choice is yours**. Give thoughtful consideration to one of these questions. Respond thoroughly and completely. Rubric is be provided.

Options:

- 1) Is death the end? Our response significantly affects both the way we live and the way we die. The warrior fighting for a holy cause may joyfully charge into battle without pause. Conversely, the person who feels that this existence is all there is, may seek a long fulfilling life. According to some beliefs, dying may be an honor and a salvation, or even a time for rejoicing. Thoughts may be based on spiritual beliefs that defy logic or proof. Each person may have their own very unique and perhaps strongly held feelings as to what, if anything, happens after death.
  - a. **Describe your personal feelings concerning life after death.**  
(Use headings in the paper to move logically through your thoughts.)
  
- 2) Time is what life is made of...Our physical existence is defined by the time interval between birth and death. As time passes, so do we.
  - a. **With only six weeks to live, how would you spend your time?**
    - i. Assume you have energy, money and mobility.
  - b. **List the milestones in your life.**

**Evaluation:**

**Five exams** will be given. **Each exam** is worth **100 points**.

The **Lossography Paper** is worth **100 points**.

The **Introspective Paper** is worth **100 points**.

**Grading:**

630-700 points = A

560-629 points = B

490-559 points = C

420-489 points = D

419 and below points = F

**Class Attendance:** The activities and information exchanged during class periods are extremely valuable in the learning process and therefore **attendance is strongly encouraged**. If you find it absolutely necessary to miss a class, **you must clear your absence** with instructor prior to the scheduled class meeting that you intend to miss.

**Conference:** Instructor does not have an on campus office but students may schedule time with the instructor as needed by e-mailing at [chris.shupe@tamut.edu](mailto:chris.shupe@tamut.edu).

**Disability Accommodation:** Students with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations through the A&M-Texarkana Disability Services Office by calling 903-223-3062.

**Academic Integrity:** Academic honesty is expected of students enrolled in this course. Cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, falsification of research data, plagiarism, and undocumented use of materials from any source, constitute academic dishonesty, and may be grounds for a grade of "F" in the course and/or disciplinary actions." For additional information see the university policy manual.

**A&M-Texarkana Email Address:** Upon application to Texas A&M University-Texarkana an individual will be assigned an A&M-Texarkana email account. This email account will be used to deliver official university correspondence. Each individual is responsible for information sent and received via the university email account and is expected to check the official A&M-Texarkana email account on a frequent and consistent basis. **Faculty and students are required to utilize the university email account when communicating about coursework.**