

Sociology 480(G):001 Death and Dying
Fall 2018 W 1-3:45 PM

Professor and Department Head:

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Email Address: deannkalich@louisiana.edu (Please send emails that are professional in nature. It is not instant messaging so please be sure to address me at the beginning, sign all emails, and include your class name and section number.)

Available Office Hours

MWF 10-12, T 2-330, or BY APPOINTMENT

Course Description: The study of death and dying addresses questions central to life and living, though many of the questions are not fully answerable through the classroom medium. This is because it is a personal journey we each make in our own time and way. Yet since we are not merely individuals, but social beings living in community with others, we also make this journey collectively. The collective crises and cultural responses to these crises make up the sociological subject matter for this course. As individuals, you will make up the rest.

Course Objectives:

- *Identify and sociologically evaluate varying responses to death, dying and bereavement
- *Identify and demonstrate culturally competent practices in end-of-life and bereavement care
- *Explain and solve processing and problems of death
- *Identify and evaluate controversial end of life issues
- *Examine professional issues in thanatology
- *Create and present a multimedia synthesis of core concepts

Required Course Materials:

1. Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom (Required –available free on Moodle)
2. Required Articles and Lectures – Available free on Moodle
3. Video purchase or rental via Amazon (2-3 videos at a maximum rental cost of \$20 total) Titles will be announced as appropriate during specific course modules and most will be available free during class. If you need access outside of class, you would need to pay.

*If a physical impairment prevents you from having full access and making full use of any of these materials, contact me so that appropriate arrangements be considered in line with UL Accessibility Policies.

Work and Time Requirements

Assignments will be posted and due every week during the course. Failing to complete assignments by the due date or producing low quality assignments will negatively affect your grade. Completing all assignments will require an estimated minimum of 7 to 8 hours per week, depending on your level of familiarity with social science, your general academic preparation, and your study habits. The estimated amount of time may be higher at the beginning of the semester. Plan your schedule accordingly. Procrastination is strongly discouraged. Do not wait until the last moment to submit an assignment or take a quiz. Academic or technical issues may

arise and you will have no time to properly address them. Such issues will not excuse late or deficient work product.

Class Participation: Class attendance and participation are essential to do well in this senior level seminar. For this course, you are expected to ATTEND, and to PARTICIPATE (in experiential exercises including short writing assignments, field trips, guest speeches, presentations, and other activities deemed appropriate). Participation points will be earned at a maximum rate of **10 points per day for 10 designated days for a total of 100 points**. These points will be determined based on the quality of performance on homework writing assignments, quizzes on material presented in class, and verbal discussions during in-class exercises. **Field Trips and Presentation Days are mandatory components of this class and though they do not count as part of the participation points you earn, absences on these days will result in forfeiture of the entire 100 point participation grade. (Note: All field trips are scheduled during our assigned class days/times.)**

Missed/Late Work: If you are absent due to illness or legally mandated attendance elsewhere or if you fail to complete a graded assignment (writing, quiz, project, or exam) by the due date, and this absence is unexcused or you do not present your excuse by the **VERY NEXT** day that you return to class, then your grade is a **zero** on the activity/assignment. If you have an excused absence (medical or legal documentation), you will have one week to make up the missed work with an alternate assignment that will be given. Students with more than 2 unexcused absences are advised to drop the course.

Late exams will be docked one letter grade for each 10 minutes late.

Late papers or presentations will be docked one letter grade for each day late.

Research Project and Presentation, Students will randomly draw from a list of unique topics provided by the instructor. From this, students will be expected to complete a typewritten research project and give a 6 minute oral presentation of their project to the class. Written Research Project points will be earned at a maximum of 80 points; Oral Presentation points will be earned at a maximum of 20 points, for a total of 100 points. See separate Moodle document “Project Topics” for details.

Exams: There will be three exams, worth 100 points each. The exams will be in the form of 2 essay questions on materials for that section of the course. The exam will be held online on Moodle, and will become available at 4 PM on the Wednesday of exam day and will remain available until 1 PM the following Wednesday. Once you access the exam questions, you will have exactly two hours to compose, type and submit your answers via Moodle. Students should type and save their answers in a separate Word document as they proceed through the questions in order to have a back-up copy of their submission. Prior to the expiration of the 2 hour time frame, students should copy and paste their responses into Moodle OR submit the entire separate Word document as an attachment to the Moodle exam. Failure to back up your answers could be catastrophic. It is the student’s responsibility to follow instructions. Failure to do so could result in a score of ZERO. Be sure to give yourself enough time to complete the exam before it closes.

Answers are graded on the use of class materials, including lectures, discussions, field trip information, guest speeches, readings, writing assignments, videos, project presentations by your fellow students, and experiential exercises. I suggest that you organize your readings and notes (YES YOU SHOULD TAKE NOTES) on activities in this class **from the beginning of the term** to help you prepare for the exams and to aid in best demonstrating how much you learned in this class.

Capstone Project Presentation: Students will create and present a multimedia capstone project worth 100 points. The objectives of the Capstone project are aimed at demonstrating synthesis of core course concepts. Projects should illustrate the intersectionality of life and living with death and dying to the student as person and professional. It should also share values clarification from experiential writing and group exercises, while implementing "365grateful" at the personal/individual level. Students should work to evaluate mindful meditation as a life and death practice, to evaluate the life lessons in "Tuesdays with Morrie", to evaluate selected core teachings of Mitch Albom, Thich Naht Hanh, and Hailey Bartholomew and reflect those evaluations in their MULTI-MEDIA Capstone Project Presentation. See separate Moodle document "Capstone Project" for more details. **I will show you in class a sample capstone project that earned an A in a previous semester.**

Grade scale: 90-100 =A; 80-89 =B; 70-79 =C; 60-69=D; 59 and below =F.

Graduate Students: In order to earn graduate credit, graduate students will complete the same course requirements as undergraduates but with an additional writing component for the Capstone Project. The written component will include a 20 page typewritten elaboration of the synthesis presented in multimedia form (and submitted on DVD-due on December 5) and will make all appropriate in-text and reference citations to academic sources of core concepts applied. The written synthesis is worth an additional 200 points for a total of 800 points in the course.

Class cancellation:

If a class cancellation will occur, I will post the cancellation to our Moodle News Forum and email the same announcement to each of you. In addition, my assistant will post a sign on the doors to our classroom. If an exam or homework due date is changed it will be posted on the Moodle course site. It is your responsibility to check the site on a daily basis.

Instructor responsibilities:

As your instructor, I commit to communicating openly and frequently with you about this class. I will maintain a professional, safe learning environment adhering to the policies of the university. You can expect a reply to communication, be it via email, through online discussions, voicemail or in person, within 24-48 business hours.

Syllabus Changes:

As your instructor, I retain the right to make changes based on the timeline of the class, feedback from learners and/or logistical issues and will inform you as soon as a change is made.