Instructor: Susan Bluck, PhD.
Email: bluck@ufl.edu  Office: McCarty C 506
Course: DEP 4930 (1006)
Place: McCarty B, Room G108
Time: Tuesdays, Period 9-11 (4:05 pm – 7 pm)

Required texts/books: 
First two available at University Bookstore; Used Kastenbaum available at various sites online.
Others should be available used.
Required coursepack: Available at Target Copy. 1412 W. University Ave., Ph: 372-7436
Office hours: I am very happy and interested to meet with you!! Please feel free to contact me to set up an individual appointment. I am also happy to meet with groups of students preparing class presentations.

Course overview. Death marks the end of aging, the end of our life cycle. It comes to all of us, but it is something most of us spend little time thinking about. How are death and dying represented in the media, in literature, and in scientific research? How are they experienced in our own lives? This course examines death and dying in our society from multiple perspectives, using a variety of sources. We touch on medical and clinical issues, but largely take a psychosocial view of death. The class is run as a lecture/seminar and will involve in-depth reading, with lots of in-class interaction. A required textbook will be used to introduce students to basic theories and concepts surrounding death and dying. Original research articles examining different methods used to study death and dying, and what has been discovered about this process, are required reading. Death and dying will also be critically examined as represented in popular culture (e.g., films, popular books). Students are encouraged to learn about death and dying from these multiple sources and must be willing to examine their own beliefs and feelings about this...life and death....topic.

Required Reading: This class is reading intensive!! Students are responsible for all of the required reading. You must complete the assigned readings (both text/book and course pack articles) prior to class. I will sometimes review parts of the text in class lecture but much of the time you will be reading the text to build your own knowledge. Class discussion, participation and final exam performance depend on your completing the readings. Brief quizzes will be given for each week in which readings from the text are assigned.
Teaching philosophy and course objectives:

Philosophy.
I. Tell me and I will forget.
Show me and I may remember.
Involve me and I will understand.
   - Chinese proverb

II. “Scholars at the University of California at Berkeley have found that the volume of information generated in 2001 and 2002 from e-mail messages, government publications, business documents, web sites, cable programs, newspaper articles, and various kinds of scientific data has now exceeded all of the information produced throughout human history up until this point. The World Wide Web alone now reaches over a half-billion pages, and the volume is growing by more than 7 million pages daily. No wonder we can’t keep up with it all! In the flood of information, it’s helpful to step back and ask ourselves, ‘What are we doing as university educators?’ An answer: our job as teachers is NOT to provide ‘more information’ but rather to help students understand how to make sense of it all, which is another name not so much for knowledge but perhaps for wisdom. At still another level, we can call it ‘learning how to learn.’ Whatever we call it, we know what it is and what it always has been: opening the mind, learning to ask the right questions.”
   - Teaching Gerontology Newsletter

III. Death and dying is not something that any one of us can ever be an expert on. This class will however broaden our knowledge and understanding. Death is an emotional topic and one that brings out and sometimes challenges our feelings and values. Be prepared to share your own feelings and values, but also to accept other’s feelings and values concerning the spiritual, moral, legal, and political aspects of death and dying.

Objectives.
Through text, lectures, original research articles, literary and film sources, and community speakers, this course will introduce you to major issues and concepts relevant to death and dying. Specifically, the objectives of this course are:

1. To gain an awareness of death and dying as a personal, social, and psychological issue;
2. To appreciate how death and dying are experienced at individual, family, community and cultural levels;
3. To be introduced to research and research methods used to study death and dying.

Class Policies
Cell phones or other portable devices are not allowed in the classroom. Such devices must be kept in your knapsack, purse, etc., and not be taken out during class. Laptops are also not allowed in class as they are not needed during class. This class requires in-person listening, responding, and discussion.

University Policies
Academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, etc.) will not be tolerated and will be handled according to UF policy. Don’t even think about it. It could ruin your career. Students requiring accommodation should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities, 392-1261, ext. 143. That office will provide documentation to the Instructor concerning accommodation of student needs.
**Grading and Evaluation - Exams and Assignments:** The **Final Exam** will be short answers based on required readings, lectures, research presentations, guest speakers, and class discussions. The Final Exam will cover important constructs and major themes from across the semester, but will not focus on details from the text. There will also be eight **Text Reading Quizzes** throughout the semester. These will be multiple choice (7-8 questions) based directly on the week’s text readings. Besides the final exam and quizzes there will be several class assignments as outlined under “**Class assignments - Descriptions and due dates**” in this syllabus.

The assignments require class discussion so students are expected to read and otherwise prepare so that they can participate fully in class. Class attendance and participation are mandatory. You may be asked to think aloud or answer questions during class, to share your experiences, and to read or demonstrate things to the class. Always look ahead in the syllabus to see what readings or assignments are due for the next week. There are several small assignments that must be completed, and will be graded S/U (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory). For the more in-depth assignments, a letter grade will be given. You must be willing to work responsibly in groups as well as on your own.

Final grades will be based both on the assignments and on the exams as shown by the points system listed below. Late assignments are never accepted. There will be make-up exams only in documented emergency cases. The nature of this course and the material require that all grading is not of the “right” versus “wrong” answer type. Answers to questions concerning death and dying do not always have “correct” answers, so you will sometimes be graded on your thoughtfulness, insight, creativity, knowledge, and spoken and written ability to communicate.

**Class assignments - Descriptions and due dates.**

Your grade is based on the following assignments and exams. The grading criteria I use for assignments #3 & 4 appear on p. 5. The nature of some of these assignments requires grading of not only basic factual knowledge, but your ability to insightfully and creatively integrate materials and ideas. I don’t accept late assignments. All assignments MUST be typed and stapled. When citing references, use APA style, [www.library.cornell.edu/newhelp/res_strategy/citing/apa.html](http://www.library.cornell.edu/newhelp/res_strategy/citing/apa.html)

**Requirements**

1. S/U assignments

   These assignments are graded S/U and will be handed in during class. Attendance at class when this material is discussed is necessary to receive an S. Assignments cannot be handed in outside of class. S will be assigned if a student shows thoughtful, careful, completion of the assignment; If a U is assigned, only half points are given.

   Copy and complete Self-Inventory #2 and #3 from text: Due in class: September 4 (30 points).
   Group focus questions - individual student presentation: Due various dates (20 points).
   Film review 1, 11, 111: Due in class the day that film is shown (3 x 15 = 45 points).

2. Text reading quizzes x 8

   There is no midterm but there will be eight quizzes throughout the semester. Check ‘week by week’ for dates. First Quiz is September 4. These will be multiple choice, 7-8 questions, based directly on the week’s readings. These are simply to help you keep up with the reading. We will not discuss the answers in class.

**Evaluation**

1. S/U assignments 95 points

2. Text reading quizzes x 8 120 points
3. Group research presentation and individual write-up.  
**Due various dates** depending on your group number.  
**120 points**

Several research articles concerning aspects of death and dying are listed at the end of the syllabus and are necessary for this assignment. Students will work in groups and be assigned one of these articles on which they will give a presentation. Reviewing the main points of the article forms the core of the group presentation but the entire presentation should last about 50 minutes, and involve the class. That is, the group should think of creative ways to facilitate class discussion and to bring in other material on their topic to the class. For example, students in previous classes have reviewed and presented additional research articles, obtained handouts and information from community agencies, interviewed people and made a video of them, made up games or challenges to stimulate thinking about the topic, showed movie clips that demonstrated certain points, read poetry or literature that fit with the topic, had students do exercises to explore their feelings, etc. Feel free to do what you can to bring your topic to the class as interestingly as possible. You will also be asked to evaluate each of the other members of your own group in terms of their contribution to the presentation.

Each individual should also **hand in 4-5 double-spaced typed pages** (10 or 12 point font, .5 inch margins) describing the article, on the day that your group will be leading the discussion. This is not group work but your own individual write-up of the main points of the article and your critique of it, as well as *its relation to other material on this topic that we have covered in the course, and that you have looked up independently* (with references to at least 2 ’outside sources’). Grades will be based on both the group’s oral presentation and the individual written article critique.

4. RIP: Web memorials, newspaper obituaries, your own obit, poetry  
**Due: November 27, 4:05 pm, in class.**  
**85 points**

**Hand in written paper** (double-spaced typed pages, 10 or 12 point font, .5 inch margins) and be ready to discuss in class. Number of pages for this assignment will vary as you need to cut and paste info from websites/newspapers/poetry. *Just the text* will probably be about 5 pages to cover everything you need. Make sure that you thoroughly answer each part of the assignment. See points breakdown to give you a sense of how to use your efforts in completing this assignment.

The focus of this assignment is for you to do a bit of ‘research’ on how individuals memorialize their loved ones. One way this is commonly done is through newspaper obituaries. More recently however, people have set up memorial websites for their loved ones. Visit at least 3 memorial websites for *individual* persons (not ones for groups of people), and list the site addresses as well as the name of the individual being memorialized. Cut and paste some info from each website to give a good sense of what it is like. Compare and contrast the 3 websites. Also, get a newspaper and look at the more traditional obituaries listed. Make copies of 3 obits to hand in with your assignment. Compare, and contrast these three newspaper obituaries. Once you have viewed both types of obits (web and newspaper) compare these different media and how they work for memorializing the dead.

The next part of the assignment is more personal. Where would you like your own obit to appear (newspaper or web) and why? Write your own obituary, and find a poem that you think you would like to have read at your funeral. Explain why you chose this poem.

5. Final exam, in class **December 4.**  
**80 points**

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**Total** 500 points
### Grading criteria for assignments #3-4.

**Assignment #3: Group research presentation and individual write-up**

In class group presentation (individually graded)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Review of article and critique</td>
<td>_____/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outside sources</td>
<td>_____/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>_____/15</td>
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<td>Ability to stimulate class discussion/involvement</td>
<td>_____/10</td>
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Individual write-up (handed in; individually graded)

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Review of article</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRITIQUE</td>
<td>_____/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of outside sources (at least two sources)</td>
<td>_____/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formatted list of references (APA style)</td>
<td>_____/5</td>
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</table>

**Total** _____/120

**Assignment #4: RIP: Web memorials, newspaper obituaries, your own obit, poetry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 memorial websites visited; site info and names, url submitted</td>
<td>_____/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare and contrast the 3 memorial sites</td>
<td>_____/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 newspaper page obits submitted</td>
<td>_____/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare and contrast the 3 newspaper obits</td>
<td>_____/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare website to newspaper obits/memorials</td>
<td>_____/15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where would you like your own obit to appear and why?</td>
<td>_____/5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write your own obit</td>
<td>_____/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submit a reading/poem/song, with reference, for your memorial service</td>
<td>_____/5</td>
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<td>Why did you choose this poem?</td>
<td>_____/10</td>
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**Total** _____/85
### Grades

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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>89.00 – 89.99</td>
<td>445 – 449 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.00%-88.99%</td>
<td>435-444 points</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>79.00 – 79.99%</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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### Keeping Track of Your Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points you earned/Points possible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. S/U assignments</td>
<td>/95 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Text reading quizzes x 8</td>
<td>/120 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Group research presentation and individual write-up</td>
<td>/120 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. RIP Assignment</td>
<td>/85 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Final exam</td>
<td>/80 points</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>/500 points</strong></td>
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Death and Dying - Week by Week

August 28: Introduction to each other and to death…
Review syllabus
Why are we here? Class introductions
Film: Surviving Death

Assignment for September 4: Do Self-Inventory #1-4 from Kastenbaum Chapter 2. Bring a photocopy of Self-Inventory 2 and 3 to hand in during class.
Reading for September 4: Kastenbaum text, Chapter 2.

September 4: Thinking about death
Text reading quiz - Answers
Lecture
Self-Inventory 2 & 3: Discussion and hand in.
Studs Terkel reading
Organization of small groups for discussion/presentations.

Assignment for September 11: Next week’s theme is “People killing people.” For next week part of your homework is to visit a memorial for Sept 11 and be ready to talk about your feelings then…and now, about the terrorist attacks. You can find multiple memorial sites for Sept 11 on the web to prep for class, but particularly watch the video on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mv0VKMw-KcA&search and the slide show at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ROZHPFJ-8M (Can’t cry hard enough). What are your emotional reactions? What do you think of these quite different approaches to memorializing 911?

Reading for September 11: Kastenbaum text, Chapter 1 & Chapter 9.

September 11: September 11 and beyond: people killing people
Text reading quiz - Answers
Lecture: September 11
Student’s stories of 911
Lecture: Murder and violence
Studs Terkel reading, p. 45 (in class)

Reading for September 18: Kastenbaum text, Chapter 8.

September 18: Suicide: people killing themselves
Text reading quiz - Answers
Film: Harold and Maude
Film review 1 in class and Discussion

Assignment for September 25: Think about whether you are in favor of, or against, legalizing assisted suicide. What are the pros and cons?
Reading for September 25: Kastenbaum text, Chapter 10; Coursepack article: Should older adults have the right to commit suicide? and two Newspaper articles: The right to die, and Karen’s last day.
September 25: Euthanasia and the right to die  
Text reading quiz - Answers  
Lecture: The 'right to die'  
Group Research Presentation #1: The right to commit suicide  

Reading for October 2: Final Gifts, pp. 1 - 112; Coursepack: End of life care and the effects of bereavement on family caregivers of persons with dementia.  

October 2: Final Gifts 1: Caring for the dying, learning from the dying  
Guest Speaker: Susie Lyons, MSW, LCSW, Palliative Care Consult Team, VA Hospital  
Final Gifts Discussion Groups: Focus questions - student presentations (Student #1)  
Group Research Presentation #2: Bereavement in Caregivers  

Reading for October 9: Final Gifts, pp. 113 - 231; Coursepack: Children, Adolescents, & Death: Myths, Realities, & Challenges  

October 9: Final Gifts II … and Children and death  
Final Gifts Discussion Groups: Focus questions - student presentations (Student #2)  
Guest Speaker: Dr. Bob Beland, Death in Children’s Literature  
Group Research Presentation #3: Children, Adolescents, & Death  

Reading for October 16: Kastenbaum text, Chapter II  

October 16: Death in childhood: losing a child  
Text reading quiz - Answers  
Guest Speaker: Gay Hale, Compassionate Friends Support Group  
Film: Founding of the Compassionate Friends  
Lecture: The dying child  

Reading for October 23: Kastenbaum text, Chapter 5; Tuesdays with Morrie, pp. 1 - 40  

October 23: Adulthood. Dying I “The curriculum”  
Text reading quiz - Answers  
Lecture: Dying.  
Reading from Tuesdays with Morrie - student to be selected  
Tuesdays Discussion Groups: Focus questions - student presentations (Student #3)  

Reading for October 30: Tuesdays with Morrie, pp. 41 – 129; Coursepack: A good death: a qualitative study of patients with advanced AIDS  

(If you like…) Bring used clothes/household article donation to class next week to support Hospice through their "Hospice Attic Upscale Resale" store…300 NW 8th Avenue, Gainesville.  

October 30: Dying II “A ‘Good’ Death?”  
Reading from Tuesdays with Morrie - student to be selected  
Tuesdays Discussion Groups: Focus questions - student presentations (Student #4)  
Group Research Presentation #4: What is a “good death?”
Reading for November 6: Tuesdays with Morrie, pp. 130 – 192; Coursepack: Of wealth and death: materialism, mortality salience, and consumption behavior.

November 6: Dying III….”Thinking about dying; planning to die.”
Guest Speaker: Shirley Bloodworth, RN, End of Life Issues and Advanced Directives
Reading from Tuesdays with Morrie - student to be selected
Tuesdays Discussion Groups: Focus questions - student presentations (Student #5)
Group Research Presentation #5: Of wealth and death.

Reading for November 13: Kastenbaum, Chapter 13

November 13: Remembering the dead: disposing of the body
Text reading quiz - Answers
Film: Death, An Overview
Film review 11 in class and Discussion with Dana Lucas, Lic. Funeral Director, Embalmer, State Anatomical Board
Lecture: The funeral process
Final exam information and hand-out.

November 20: No Class. Happy Thanksgiving!

Reading for November 27: Kastenbaum, Chapter 14
Assignment Due November 27: ‘RIP Assignment.’ Come to class prepared to discuss your paper, read your obit, etc.

November 27: Do we survive death?
Text reading quiz – Answers
Student discussion/hand-in: ‘RIP Assignment’
Film: Beyond Life and Death
Film review 111 and Discussion

December 4: Final exam.
RIP assignment feedback will be handed back in class.
Group research presentations: List of research articles in the course pack

Group #1 Research Presentation: The Right to Commit Suicide

Readings: Should older adults have the right to commit suicide? AND The right to die, and Karen’s last day (newspaper articles).

Group #2 Research Presentation: Bereavement in Caregivers

Reading: End of life care and the effects of bereavement on family caregivers of persons with dementia.

Group #3 Research Presentation: Children, Adolescents, & Death

Reading: Children, adolescents, & death: myths, realities, and challenges.

Group #4 Research Presentation: What is “a Good Death?”

Reading: A good death: a qualitative study of patients with advanced AIDS.

Group #5 Research Presentation: Of Wealth and Death.

Reading: Of wealth and death: materialism, mortality salience, and consumption behavior.

Note: There is one article in the course pack that is not assigned as required reading for this class. Feel free to use it as an ‘external source.’

************************************************************************

Group research presentation

I am in Group ____.

Below, list the names and email addresses of your ‘groupmates’ including your own name. Everyone in your group should list the names in the same order. That is, everyone needs to agree on who is Person 1, Person 2, Person 3, etc in your group.

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<tr>
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