

**Course Code & No. - Section:** PSYC 335  
**Course Title (Credits):** Death and Dying  
**Term & Year:** Fall / 2015  
**Course Ref. No. (CRN):** 80254

**Instructor:** Dan Aalbers  
**Email:** daalbers@sierranevada.edu  
**Office:** TCES second floor but also check cafeteria and garden in good weather.  
**Office Hour:** Tuesday and Thursday 4:30 – 5:30 or by appointment

**Class Meeting Time:** MW 4:00 pm – 5:15 pm  
**Location:** TCES GCLAS 215

**Prerequisites (from Catalog):** PSYC 101  
**Corequisites (from Catalog):**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Exploration of attitudes, beliefs and behaviors associated with dying, death, and bereavement. Cross-cultural and multi-theoretical perspectives are applied to such issues as: terminal illness, suicide, burial rituals, and concepts of an after-life.

### **STUDENT OUTCOMES**

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will:

1. Be able to communicate an understanding of cross cultural differences in attitudes towards death, dying and bereavement
2. Be able to communicate an understanding of the literature and philosophies related to death, dying, and bereavement
3. Have gained an understanding the historical and economic influences of our culture's understanding of death and dying
4. Have gained an understanding of the ethical and legal issues surrounding end of life decisions.

### **METHODS OF ASSESSING STUDENT OUTCOMES**

Student outcomes will be assessed using the following: Essays, Student presentations, Participation

### **INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES**

This class will use lectures, inquiry learning, in-class discussions, videos, and self-directed study.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS**

1. *Death and Dying: A reader.* Earle, Komaromy and Bartholomew Eds. ISBN: 9781847875105
2. *The American Way of Death Revisited.* Jessica Mittford. ISBN 10: 0679771867 ISBN 13: 9780679771869

## **ATTENDANCE**

You are adults, the choice to come to class or not is yours. Know, however, that this you will not be able to succeed in this this class if you do not attend. Your essays will be graded, in part, on your ability to integrate points raised during class discussion. Also, you will be required to turn in a number of reaction papers which will also be based upon class discussions. Missing class is bad. But you are free to be bad.

## **CLASS REQUIREMENTS**

Reading: Students are expected to do the assigned reading before class meets to ensure preparation for discussions and learning activities. While you will not be penalized for not completing the reading, if you do not read the assignment, your will increase the burden carried by your classmates.

Participation: Students are expected to contribute to class discussions and to integrate the points raised in these discussions into their papers.

Research: You must complete one research project and present it to the class. The details will be discussed in class.

Introduction: You must come by during office hours to introduce yourself before the end of the term.

**IN WARM WEATHER WE MAY MEET OUTSIDE. PLEASE COME TO EACH CLASS WITH APPROPRIATE CLOTHING, SUNSCREEN AND ANYTHING ELSE YOU MIGHT NEED TO BE COMFORTABLE IN THE FOREST.**

Except in exceptional circumstances -- such as losing an arm in a snowboarding accident -- you are required to attend all exams and to show up for your presentation. Please see the section 'exceptional circumstances' at the end of this syllabus. The consequences that follow from not showing up for your presentation are dire indeed. Dire.

(Not that you would do that.)

## **INFORMATION LITERACY STATEMENT**

Using the library's resources effectively (not just the Internet) contributes to developing each of SNC's core themes by exposing students to high quality academic resources, diverse opinions, new ideas, and a future that includes building on a liberal arts education. In this course, you will be expected to utilize the library's resources (either on-site or remotely) as you complete your assignments.

## **SANCTIONS FOR CHEATING AND/OR PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is defined as, "passing off a source's information, ideas, or words as one's own by omitting to acknowledge the sources." This refers to all sources of information; including the Internet.

## **THE HONOR CODE**

Our faculty believes students must be held to high standards of integrity in all aspects of college life to promote the educational mission of the College and to encourage respect for the rights of others. Each student brings to the SNC community unique skills, talents, values and experiences which, when expressed within the community, contribute to the quality of the educational environment and the growth and development of the individual. Students share with members of the faculty, administration and staff the

responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment conducive to learning and personal development, where actions are guided by mutual respect, integrity, responsibility and trust. The faculty and students alike must make diligent efforts to ensure high standards are upheld by their colleagues and peers as well as themselves. Therefore faculty and students accept responsibility for maintaining these standards at Sierra Nevada College and are obligated to comply with its regulations and procedures, which they are expected to read and understand.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATING THE STUDENT HONOR CODE**

SNC students and faculty share the responsibility for maintaining an environment of academic honesty. Thus, all are responsible for knowing and abiding by the SNC Faculty/Student Honor Code published in the current SNC Catalog. Faculty are responsible for presenting the Honor Code and the consequences of violating it to students at the start of their classes AND for reporting all incidences of academic dishonesty to the Provost. Students are responsible for knowing what constitutes cheating, plagiarism and fabrication and for refraining from these and other forms of academic dishonesty. Violations of the Honor Code become part of a student's academic record.

1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Student receives a zero for assignment/exam and counseling with faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Student fails course and receives counseling with faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.

3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Student is expelled.

## **GRADING POLICY**

1. Reaction Papers: 15 points possible

You will be required to turn in ten reaction papers worth 15 percent of your grade. Papers are due at the end of class on each Monday.

2. Essays: 45 points possible.

- a. Essay one – 10 pts
- b. Essay two – 15 pts
- c. Essay three – 20 pts

3. Student presentations: 40 points possible. Expect to speak for 15 minutes. Students who sign up for the first two presentation times will receive an automatic 5 points on their presentation

- a. 30 points – in class presentation
- b. 10 points – final write up

Total number of points possible: 100

## **ADA ACCOMMODATIONS**

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, students with a documented disability are eligible for support services and accommodations. If a student

wishes to request an accommodation, please contact the Director of Academic Support Services, Henry Conover, at (775) 831-1314 (x7534), [hconover@sierranevada.edu](mailto:hconover@sierranevada.edu), or go to the OASIS offices on the third floor of Prim Library during the first week of the semester.

Please inform me as soon as possible if you have a professionally diagnosed and certified disability. Be sure to obtain the proper paperwork and inform me of any required accommodations at least 72 hours *before* scheduled exams, quizzes, papers, assignments, etc. Depending on the type of accommodation, time may be required for me to meet your needs (e.g., private room for exams).

### THE SNC EMAIL SYSTEM

The SNC email system is the official communication vehicle among students, faculty members and administrative staff. It is designed to protect the confidentiality of student information as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 Act (FERPA). Students should check their college email accounts daily during the school year.

Students have a right to forward their SNC e-mail to another e-mail account (for example, @hotmail or @gmail). However, confidentiality of student information protected by FERPA cannot be guaranteed for SNC e-mail forwarded to an outside vendor. Having email redirected does not absolve a student from the responsibilities associated with official communication sent to his or her SNC email account.

### CLASS SCHEDULE

| DATE | TOPIC   | READING                          | ASSIGNMENTS/<br>ACTIVITIES | OTHER |
|------|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| 8/17 | Syllabus & Introduction                       |                                  |                            |       |
| 8/19 | Dying in Tibet                                | Handouts /<br>Video              |                            |       |
| 8/24 | Dying in Sicily, Tana<br>Toraja, Teshi Ghana, | Readings                         |                            |       |
| 8/26 | The American way of<br>death 1                | Mitford Chpts<br>1-10            |                            |       |
| 8/31 | The American way of<br>death 2                | Mitford Chpts<br>11- 20          |                            |       |
| 9/2  | The hospice movement 1                        | readings                         | <b><i>Essay 1 due</i></b>  |       |
| 9/7  | The hospice movement 2                        | readings.<br>Chapters 5, 6,<br>7 |                            |       |
| 9/9  | The hospice movement 3                        | Chapter 8, 9,<br>10              |                            |       |
| 9/14 | The hospice movement 4                        | Readings                         |                            |       |
| 9/16 | Is death changing?                            | Readings                         |                            |       |
| 9/21 | Assisted Suicide 1                            | readings                         |                            |       |
| 9/23 | Assisted Suicide 2                            |                                  |                            |       |

|        |   |                                  |                        |                                     |
|--------|---|----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 9/28   | Suicide                                     | readings                         |                        |                                     |
| 9/30   | Bereavement                                 | Readings                         | <i>Essay 2 due</i>     |                                     |
| 10/5   | Psychoanalysis, Death, Depression and War 1 | readings                         |                        |                                     |
| 10/7   | Psychoanalysis, Death, Depression and War 2 | readings                         |                        |                                     |
| 10/12  | Existentialism 1                            | Readings                         |                        |                                     |
| 10/14  | Existentialism 2                            |                                  |                        |                                     |
|        |   |                                  |                        | Midterm grades filed with Registrar |
| 10/20  | PTSD  | Chapter1, readings               |                        |                                     |
| 10/22  | HIV-AIDS                                    | Chapter 18, Chapter 10, Readings | <i>Essay 3 due</i>     |                                     |
| 10/27  | Research Ethics                             |                                  |                        |                                     |
| 10/29  | TBD   |                                  |                        |                                     |
| 11/3   | TBD   |                                  |                        |                                     |
| 11/5   | TBD   |                                  |                        |                                     |
| 11/9   | Student Presentations                       |                                  |                        |                                     |
| 11/11  | Student Presentations                       | ,                                |                        |                                     |
| 11/16  | Student Presentations                       |                                  |                        |                                     |
| 11/18  | Student Presentations                       |                                  |                        |                                     |
| 11/30  | Student Presentations- Inya                 |                                  |                        |                                     |
| 12/2   |   |                                  | <i>Final Paper Due</i> |                                     |
| 12/25* | Final Date to be announced.                 |                                  |                        | Semester ends                       |

**This is not a final or complete document. The policies, dates, and assignments are subject to change.**

**The Mission Statement:**

**Sierra Nevada College graduates will be educated to be scholars of and contributors to a sustainable world. Sierra Nevada College combines the liberal arts and professional preparedness through an interdisciplinary curriculum that emphasizes entrepreneurial thinking and environmental, social, economic and educational sustainability.**

**The Core Themes:**

**Liberal Arts**

**Professional Preparedness**

**Entrepreneurial Thinking**

**Sustainability**

**Exceptional circumstances:**

1. If you cannot come to the exam for any reason, you must call or send me an email within 48 hours of the missed deadline. Please include your name, the course name, a telephone number and time at which you can be reached. If you are unable to call or email during this 48-hour period, subsequent documentation accounting for the delay must be provided.

2. A make-up opportunity will be provided at the end of the term. Missed make-ups must be supported by appropriate documentation (see point 3 below).

3. Appropriate documentation verifying the circumstances for the missed deadline must be provided at the time of the make-up exam. Failure to provide appropriate documentation will result in a grade of F on the missed assignment.

\_\_\_\_ A. Deadlines missed on the grounds of medical circumstances must be supported by an Attending Physician's Statement or a Statement by a Psychologist or Counselor. The attending Physician's Statement must include (i) the full name, mailing address and telephone number of the physician, (ii) state the nature of the illness and its duration (i.e. specific dates covered), and (iii) an indication of whether the illness and/or medication prescribed would have seriously affected your ability to study and perform over the period in question.

\_\_\_\_ B. Deadlines missed on the grounds of non-medical circumstances must be supported by appropriate documentation, i.e., death certificates, obituary notice, automobile accident reports, airline/train/bus tickets/receipt for emergency travel (with date of booking on ticket), etc.

4. The make-up opportunity may take a different form than that of the original exam.

5. I'm sorry to hear about your arm.