

Northeastern State University
College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Department of Geography and Sociology
Tahlequah, OK

INSTRUCTOR:

Ande Kidanemariam, Assistant Professor. Office: SH 329
Office Hours: MWF 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.; TT 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.; and by appointment at other times.
Telephone: 918 456 5511 ext. 3526
Fax: 918 458 2390
E-mail: Kidanema@nsuok.edu

Course Title And Number:

Class Days & Time:

Soc 4813 - Death and Dying

9:30 a.m.-10:45 a.m. T TH (SH 207)

PREREQUISITES:

NONE

CATALOG DESCRIPTION OF COURSE:

A study of the ramifications of death; the experiences and rights of the dying; the significance of those who mourn; the meaning to society of the reality and symbolism of death

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS: (Required textbooks)

Death, Mourning and Caring, 1997, by Robert Marrone

COURSE PURPOSE:

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the sociology of death and dying and the concomitant processes of mourning, bereavement and grief.

We will examine in great details how attitudes toward death have been changing from a historical perspective: the medicalization of our understanding of death related issues; the invisibility of death; the removal of death and dying from the community and its relocation in hospitals and similar institutions, and the removal of rituals and rights of passage from the community and their relocation in the private world of individuals who have been *bereaved*. While on the one hand

popular culture (cinema, movies, tv shows, music etc.) seems to be imbued and infused with pervasive scenes and sounds of death and dying, natural death, on the other hand, appears to be highly privatized and sanitized. What explains such apparent contradictions?

We will explore the micro and macro causes and forces at work in the transformation of death from *visibility* to *invisibility* along with the psycho-social and sociological models and theories of death and dying.

EXPECTED COURSE OUTCOMES:

The goal of education about death and dying is to:

- contribute to general education as a basis for personal development and responsible social participation
- gain a historical perspective of current death practices, and
- learn about demographic, psychological, sociological, and economic factors which contribute to how death is dealt with and processed.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES:

The class format will consist of lectures, group discussions, class presentations/in-class writing assignments, field trips, guest speakers and video shows.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES: (Attendance/Punctuality)

Active class participation is an integral part of this course. In order to enhance your ability to participate in class, you should read all assigned materials/chapters prior to coming to class. Also, you must attend class regularly. Makeup exams or other assignments will be allowed only for university excused absences and in the case of some extreme extenuating circumstances such as illness and death in the family for which you have to provide verification.

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES:

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the date indicated when the assignment is given. Over due assignments will be downgraded by 25% every day they are past due.

STUDENT EVALUATION:

In this course, you will be evaluated on the basis of the following:

Exams - There will be three exams including the final. The exams will consist of multiple-choice, identification, matching and short-essay questions.

Each exam will be worth 100 points (a total of 300 points).

Writing Assignments- There will be several writing assignments, including field trip reports,

individual writing projects, and group “mini papers” worth 50 points. Detailed instructions on written assignments will be given later in the semester.

Grading Scale

The three exams and the several mini-papers all account for a total of 350 points. Final grades will be computed on total points accumulated throughout the semester. Grades will NOT be curved. Your scores will convert into letter grades as follows:

90 - 100 (315 - 350) = A

80 - 89 (280 - 314) = B

70 - 79 (245 - 279) = C

60 - 69 (210 - 244) = D

59 and lower (209 and lower) = F

Dropping a Course with a “W” - Students are advised that the last date during the semester when they may drop a course with an automatic “W” will be **Friday, Nov. 8, 2002.**

ADA COMPLIANCE:

If any member of the class feels that he/she has a disability and needs special accommodations of any nature whatsoever, the instructor will work with you and the University’s Office of Student Affairs to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure that you have a fair opportunity to perform in this class. Please advise the instructor of any such disability and the desired accommodations at the first class attended.

Tentative Class Schedule

DMC= Death, Mourning, and Caring

Week 1 (Aug. 20 -22)

Introduction to course; The personification of death; Attitudes toward death (ch.1)

Week 2 (Aug. 27-29)

Cross-cultural and Historical Perspectives of death - Death in America - Causes and types of death - DMC, Chap 2; class lecture

Week 3 (sept. 3-5)

Dying and the Near-death Experience DMC, chp. 3 ; Socio-cultural Influences and Theoretical models of death - Class Lecture

Week 4 (Sept. 10 -12)

The Work of Mourning - DMC, Chap. 4

Week 5 (sept. 17-19)

Death, Dying and the Child - Chap. 5

Thursday, Sept. 19 **Exam One**

Week 6 (24- 26)

Death, Suicide, and Young Americans - DMC, chap.6

Week 7 (Oct. 1-3)

Death, Adulthood, and a Parent's Tears- DMC, chap.7

Week 8 (Oct. 8-10) Aging, Mourning, and the search for Meaning - DMC, Chap. 8

Week 9 (15) Chap. 8 ... cont..

Oct.(17 - 18) **Fall-Break- No Class**

Week 10 (Oct. 22-24) Caring for the Dying - chap. 9

Week11 (oct.29-31) Preparing for death: Anxieties, Issues, and Tasks- DMC, chap. 10

Thursday, Oct. 31 **Midterm Exam**

Week 12(Nov. 5-7) Honoring the Dead and Comforting the Living - chap. 11

Week 13 (Nov.12-14) Perspectives on Death:Cross-cultural and Historical - Lecture

Week 14 (Nov. 19-21) Models of Grief - Lecture

Week 15 (Nov.26) Last Rites: Funerals and Body Disposition - Lecture

**Week 16 (Dec. 3-5) The Law and Death - Lecture; Risks of Death in the Modern World-
Lecture**

Final Exam: Thursday, Dec. 12, 2002 (9:00 a.m.)