

STUDENT WARNING: This course syllabus is from a previous semester archive and serves only as a preparatory reference. Please use this syllabus as a reference only until the professor opens the classroom and you have access to the updated course syllabus. Please do NOT purchase any books or start any work based on this syllabus; this syllabus may NOT be the one that your individual instructor uses for a course that has not yet started. If you need to verify course textbooks, please refer to the online course description through your student portal. This syllabus is proprietary material of APUS.

RELS250 Death and Dying

Course Summary

Course: RELS250 Death and Dying

Length of Course: 8

Prerequisites : none **CreditHours:**3

Course Description:

The course provides perspectives on death and dying. Students examine how death is beneficial and necessary for evolution as well as how the circle of life profoundly shapes cultural practices. Participants explore the media's impact on mortality and its portrayal. Participants analyze how to communicate death to the living. Students assess the bereavement and burial process in the United States. Topics include communicating death, the feeling of emptiness, the forgetfulness of life, living in the face of death, bereavement, organ donation, burial, religious meanings after death, and Nietzsche's God is dead. The course readings and classroom discussions will often focus on mature, difficult, and potentially challenging topics. As with any course in religion, particularly one focused on death, and dying, course topics are often personal and might present unique challenges for individual students. Readings and discussions might trigger strong feelings—anger, discomfort, anxiety, confusion, excitement, humor, or the like. If you sense you are struggling with the issues addressed, be sure to reach out to your personal and local systems of support (family, friends, chaplains, pastors, and even mental health professionals) so that you both contribute to and gain from the course as much as possible. (Prerequisite: none)

Course Scope:

Death and dying are part of life. No one is immune. Every person, eventually, must face his or her own mortality. Any person who lives in a relationship with others will likely bear witness, as a friend, colleague, or caregiver, to struggle and to death many times in life. The Death and Dying course takes us on a journey. While exploring how death — not just its physical, but its spiritual and emotional implications -- is intrinsic to the cycle of life, the course also posits death as not an event, but as an unfolding process.

Learning to communicate about death and with someone who is dying — along with understanding the feelings of emptiness, anger, and the complexity of grief are just part of what we will discover in our journey. Learning the forgetfulness of life, living and

facing death, along with managing bereavement are all part of death and dying. Decisions on whether or not to participate in organ donation, myriad cultural and religious burial traditions, and the religious meanings given to the space of "after death" — All these areas of death and dying are unavoidable.

This course offers enlightenment regarding coping with loss, dealing with grief, facing one's own death by offering philosophical, and religious tools available across traditions and cultures. Readapting and reframing life choices and value commitments enable us to more readily understand death and dying as a part of life's natural processes.

Objectives

CO1. Examine the complexities and benefits of death as they relate to evolution

CO2. Analyze how death is communicated to the living by individuals, communities and the media.

CO3. Explore how religious commitment and ritual offer practical and therapeutic practices for dealing with the dying process and grief

CO4. Describe how medical institutions impact death

CO5. Investigate the variables of living with death, including vacuity and loneliness among others.

Outline

Week 1:

This week we approach death and dying as an outsider as we mentally prepare ourselves for the tough conversations that lay ahead.

Learning Objectives:

- WO 1.1 Students will be able to identify the benefits of the evolution of death.
- WO 5.1 Students will be able to articulate Lawrence's meaning of death.

Readings:

Please see Readings & Resources.

Assignments:

Week 1 Discussion

Week 2:

This week we explore communication regarding death and how that may change based on whom we are communicating with.

Learning Objectives:

- WO 2.1 Students will be able to evaluate, integrate, and apply the media's impact on death.
- WO 2.2 Students will be able to identify problem-solving language strategies to communicate death to the living.

Readings:

Please see Readings & Resources.

Assignments:

Week 2 Discussion

Week 3:

This week considers mortality through the lens of Nietzsche's transformative approach to death.

Learning Objectives:

- WO 3.1 Analyze Nietzsche's statement God is dead regarding religion and death
- WO 5.2 Students will identify the phenomenological (consciousness) experiences associated with death
- WO 5.3 Students will be able to read and demonstrate comprehension of texts by Nietzsche and Freud.

Readings:

Please see Readings & Resources.

Assignments:

Week 3 Discussion

Assignment: Memorial Websites due by Sunday

Week 4:

This week we take a deeper look at suicide and suicide prevention.

Learning Objectives:

- WO 4.1 Students will be able to evaluate death in relation to medical facilities
- WO 4.2 Students will be able to identify the intricate complexities of suicide

Readings:

Please see Readings & Resources.

Assignments:

Week 4 Discussion

Week 5:

This week we take a new turn exploring the beginnings of life from the Christian perspective.

Learning Objectives:

- WO 3.2 Students will be able to identify the impact of beliefs of a higher being and the afterlife
- WO 5.4 Students will demonstrate the ability to apply living in the face of death

Readings:

Please see Readings & Resources.

Assignments:

Week 5 Discussion

Week 6:

This week we explore recent shifts in the way people process grief and bereave those that have been lost.

Learning Objectives:

- WO 2.3 Students will be able to apply appropriate information for societal problems in relation to grief and bereavement
- WO 3.3 Explore how religious commitment and ritual offers practical and therapeutic practices for dealing with the dying process and grief
- WO 5.5 Students will be able to apply appropriate information for societal problems in relation to grief and bereavement

Readings:

Please see Readings & Resources.

Assignments:

Week 6 Discussion

Week 7:

This week considers the role of organ donation in death.

Learning Objectives:

- WO 2.4 Students will demonstrate the ability to interpret burial practices
- WO 4.2 Students will be able to comprehend the meaning of organ recipient and organ donation

Readings:

Please see Readings & Resources.

Assignments:

Week 7 Discussion

Assignment: Organ Donation due by Sunday

Week 8:

This week explores the various religious beliefs regarding what, if anything, exists beyond death.

Learning Objectives:

- WO 1.3 Students will demonstrate the ability to apply how death has evolved as a topic in society
- WO 3.4 Students will be able to identify religious meanings to the afterlife

Readings:

Please see Readings & Resources.

Assignments:

Week 8 Discussion

Assignment: Bereavement Eulogy due by Sunday

Evaluation:

Discussions		70%
	Week 1	12.5%
	Week 2	12.5%
	Week 3	12.5%
	Week 4	12.5%
	Week 5	12.5%
	Week 6	12.5%

	Week 7	12.5%
	Week 8	12.5%
Assignments		30%
	Week 3	25%
	Week 5	25%
	Week 7	50%

Materials

All materials for this course are Open Access Electronic sources. Students can link to these within the Classroom or will be guided to them in tandem with weekly Lesson material.

Course Guidelines

Citation and Reference Style

You will follow the citation style that is common to your discipline/program (APA, Turabian, AP, or MLA). If you do not have a citation style, please use MLA style. For further assistance, you can use the APUS library or <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>.

Please note that no formal citation style is graded on discussion assignments in the School of Arts & Humanities—only attribution of sources (please see details regarding discussion communication below).

Tutoring

Tutor.com offers online homework help and learning resources by connecting students to certified tutors for one-on-one help. AMU and APU students are eligible for 10 free hours of tutoring provided by APUS. Tutors are available 24/7 unless otherwise noted. Tutor.com also has a SkillCenter Resource Library offering educational resources,

worksheets, videos, websites, and career help. Accessing these resources does not count against tutoring hours and is also available

Late Assignments

School of Arts & Humanities Late Policy

Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. As adults, students, and working professionals, I understand you must manage competing demands on your time. Should you need additional time to complete an assignment, please contact me before the due date so we can discuss the situation and determine an acceptable resolution.

Work posted or submitted after the assignment due date may be reduced by 10% of the potential total score possible for each day late up to a total of five days, including discussion posts/replies, quizzes, and assignments. Beginning on the sixth day late through the end of the course, late work, including discussion posts/replies, quizzes, and assignments, will be accepted with a grade reduction of 50% of the potential total score earned.

Turnitin

Assignments are automatically submitted to Turnitin.com within the course. Turnitin.com will analyze an assignment submission and report a similarity score. Your assignment submission is automatically processed through the assignments area of the course when you submit your work.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic Dishonesty incorporates more than plagiarism, which is using the work of others without citation. Academic dishonesty includes any use of content purchased or retrieved from web services such as CourseHero.com or Scribd. Additionally, allowing

your work to be placed on such web services is academic dishonesty, as it is enabling the dishonesty of others. The copy and pasting of content from any web page, without citation as a direct quote, is academic dishonesty. When in doubt, do not copy/paste, and always cite.

Artificial Intelligence

The use of Artificial Intelligence without letting the reader know what words were generated by the program is considered Academic Dishonesty. This includes not only papers but discussion posts as well. Having a computer program generate your posts or papers is just like paying someone else to write them and is cheating. Such cheating could be met with sanctions up to and including a zero on the posts/assignments with no chance to produce your own work. Do your own writing.

Text generated by any AI like ChatGPT must be treated like a quotation and properly formatted, cited, and referenced according to APA or MLA protocols treating the program as an author.

Submission Guidelines

Some assignments may have very specific requirements for formatting (such as font, margins, etc) and submission file type (such as .docx, .pdf, etc). See the assignment instructions for details. In general, standard file types such as those associated with Microsoft Office are preferred unless otherwise specified.

The student is responsible for ensuring all submitted work can be accessed and opened by the instructor.

Disclaimer Statement

Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of a particular group or class.

Communicating on the Discussion

Discussions are the heart of the interaction in this course. The more engaged and lively the exchanges, the more interesting and fun the course will be. Only substantive comments will receive credit. Although there is a final posting day/time after which the instructor will grade and provide feedback, it is not sufficient to wait until the last day to contribute your comments/questions on the discussion. The purpose of the discussions is to actively participate in an ongoing discussion about the assigned content.

“Substantive” means comments that contribute something new and important to the discussion. Thus, a message that simply says “I agree” is not substantive. A substantive comment contributes a new idea or perspective, a good follow-up question to a point made, offers a response to a question, provides an example or illustration of a key point, points out an inconsistency in an argument, etc.

As a class, if we run into conflicting viewpoints, we must respect each individual's own opinion.

Hateful and hurtful comments towards other individuals, students, groups, peoples, and/or societies will not be tolerated. Students must post a response to the weekly discussion prompt and post the required number of replies to other students – refer to the grading rubric and/or discussion instructions for specific expectations on the number of replies and requirements.

The main response to the discussion is due mid-week – refer to the grading rubric and/or discussion instructions for specific expectations. Late main response posts to a discussion may not be accepted without prior instructor approval. Replies must be posted in the week due and replies after the end of each week may not be graded.

Be sure to look for announcements for any deviations from these statements concerning discussions. Instructors do have leeway to modify requirements and timing.

University Policies

Please follow [this link for access](#) to the APUS Student Handbook.

APUS Mission Statement

American Public University System's mission is to provide high-quality higher education with emphasis on educating the nation's military and public service communities by offering respected, relevant, accessible, affordable, and student-focused online programs that prepare them for service and leadership in a diverse, global society.