



**Self-Paced Degree Program
PSY 321-WA Death and Dying
Web-Based Syllabus**

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: James Christoff

UIU Faculty Email: christoffj@uiu.edu

Telephone Number: 435-229-4646

Availability: I am available by phone: Sunday - Saturday between the hours of 8:00 AM – 9:00 PM PST.

If I do not answer my phone, leave a message with your name and phone number, and I will get back to you as soon as I am able.

I review e-mails on a daily basis and will get back to you within 24 hours – unless I am traveling for work, on vacation, or out for some type of an emergency.

Course Description

Credits: 3 semester credits

Catalog Course Description: This course offers a multidisciplinary view of death and dying in individuals, families, and across cultures. This course will explore personal and societal attitudes, social practices, and institutions that facilitate and constrain grief and mourning.

Prerequisites: ENG 101

Session Information: Refer to myUIU for your official term enrollment period.

You have six months from the beginning date of your enrollment to complete this course. You should start working on your course immediately upon enrollment and be prepared to submit unit one (1) within the first 60 days of the enrollment period to avoid a potential administrative withdrawal.

Credit Hours:

As a requirement of HLC Accreditation, all UIU courses, regardless of meeting schedule or instructional mode, follow the Federal Credit Hour Definition. As such, each credit hour earned at UIU is equivalent to a minimum of 45 hours of student engagement.

For more information on how specific instructional modes meet this requirement, please see *UIU's Policy Guidelines for Instructional Time Expectations*: [UIU Policies](#).

Course Materials

It is the student's responsibility to make sure they have access to all required course materials by the start of the session.

Required Textbook:

DeSpelder, L.A., & Strickland, A.L. (2020). *Last dance: Encountering death and dying* (11th Ed.). California: McGraw-Hill. ISBN: 978-1-260-13074-4

Gawande, A. (2014). *Being mortal: Medicine and what matters in the end*. California: Picador. ISBN: 978-1-250-07622-9

Course Objectives

1. Understand different cultural beliefs and practices surrounding death and dying.
 2. Analyze and interpret theories of death and dying.
 3. Recognize, analyze, and articulate the differences in how individuals throughout the lifespan process and understand death differently.
 4. Recognize and identify various mechanisms of death (e.g., childbearing loss, suicide, violence, illness).
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Program Student Learning Outcomes

Psychology

4. Program Outcome: Awareness of Sociocultural Diversity and Societal Inequality
 - SLO: Students will recognize, understand, and respect the complexity of sociocultural and international diversity as it relates to psychology.

Human Services

4. Program Outcome: Awareness of Individual and Relationship Dynamics
 - SLO: Students will recognize, understand, and respect the complexity of relationships, including interacting professionally with individuals, families, and groups when working in the human services field.
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Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

The course consists of 4 units. All course materials will be available and all work should be turned in for grading. You should not go onto another Unit without completion of the prior unit. Even though you do not attend a regular classroom in the traditional sense and keep up with a set schedule of assignments, it is important to maintain a regular schedule, if possible, to complete all course work. It is too easy to set work aside and decide to do it later.

Assignments:

Student Autobiography

Student Autobiography is the first assignment in Unit 1. This assignment is graded and worth 20 points. Since we may never have the opportunity to meet face to face, I would like to know a little bit about you. Please provide the following information and tell me about yourself (i.e. - your educational aspirations, employment, family, hobbies). Submit this autobiography along with your other assignments in 'Unit 1'.

Essay Questions

There are 32 essay questions, eight for each Unit (1-4). Each essay question is worth 15 points. Each question response should be a minimum of 3-4 paragraphs, or one page in length, typed and double spaced.

Media Portrayals of Death Paper (25 points)

The purpose of this assignment is for you to reflect critically on how different forms of media portray death and dying.

Each student will write a brief 3-page paper thoughtfully analyzing how the media influences our perceptions of death. A minimum of 2 outside references should be used in this paper and proper APA style should be utilized to cite these sources.

This paper will be submitted along with your other assignments in Unit 1.

The Culture of Death (75 points)

The purpose of this assignment is to strengthen your research and writing skills and increase your cultural awareness outside of Anglo-American culture.

Each student will select a culture different from Anglo-American culture and research the death and dying rituals, practices, burial methods, and beliefs in the afterlife, and will write a 5-page paper comparing and contrasting how these practices are similar and/or different from Anglo-American culture. **Students CANNOT use traditions already covered in the textbook.**

Each research paper **MUST include a minimum of 4 peer reviewed journal articles written in the last 10 years. NO websites, textbooks, or other outside sources are allowed.** You must find peer-reviewed, scientific studies associated with your chosen topic. Any paper not using the appropriate sources will automatically receive a score of zero for the paper.

This Paper will be submitted along with your Unit 3 Assignments

Being Mortal Paper (100 points)

The purpose of this assignment is to strengthen your critical thinking and analysis skills by relating *Being Mortal* to course content.

Each student will analyze the interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects discussed in *Being Mortal*, and relate them to course content referenced in the textbook. Students should include at least **5** paraphrased citations from *Being Mortal* and at least **5** paraphrased citations from the textbook. The paper should be written in APA style and be **6 pages** long. Absolutely NO quotes should be used in the paper (paraphrased content only).

This paper will be submitted along with your Unit 4 Assignments.

Exams:

Midterm Examination:

There is a Midterm Exam after Unit 2. The exam is open book and consists of 50 multiple choice questions. The Midterm Exam covers Chapters 1-8. You will have 90 minutes to complete each exam.

Final Examination:

There is a Final Exam after Unit 4. The exam is open book and consists of 50 multiple choice questions. The Final Exam covers Chapters 9-15. You will have 90 minutes to complete each exam.

QUESTIONS & FEEDBACK

You will receive your graded units within approximately three weeks from the date you submit them. If there is a delay, please call Upper Iowa University. After receiving the graded unit, review and contact me immediately with any questions.

GRADING CRITERIA

The course letter grade will be based on the following grading criteria.

Activity	Points
Student Autobiography	20
4 Unit Essay Questions (120 pts. Per Unit x 4 Units=480)	480
Media Portrayals of Death (25 pts)	25
Culture of Death (75 pts.)	75
Being Mortal Paper (100 pts.)	100
Midterm Exam (50 items /Chs. 1-8 /2 pt. each=100)	100
Final Exam (50 items /Chs. 9-17 /2pt. each = 100)	100
Total Points	900

GRADE SCALE

Letter Grade	Percent	Points
A	93-100%	837-900
A-	90-92%	810-836
B+	87-89%	783-809
B	83-86%	747-782
B-	80-82%	720-746
C+	77-79%	693-719
C	73-76%	657-692
C-	70-72%	630-656
D+	67-69%	603-629
D	63-66%	567-602
D-	60-62%	540-566
F	0-59%	0 – 539

Course Schedule

Course units and exams should be completed in the order they are shown below. Completing units/exams out of sequence could result in a loss of points and a reduced grade.

The appropriate unit cover sheet must be included with your assignment.

Unit	Topics of Study	Activities	Assessments
Unit 1	Chapter 1 Attitudes Toward Death: A Climate of Change Chapter 2 Learning About Death: Socialization Chapter 3 Perspectives on Death: Historical and Cultural Chapter 4 Death Systems: Mortality and Society	Review your syllabus Read: About Your Instructor Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4 Formulate a timeline for the course	Unit 1: Student Autobiography Essay Questions Media Portrayals of Death Assignment
Unit 2	Chapter 5 Health Care Systems: Patients, Staff, and Institutions Chapter 6 End-of-Life Issues and Decisions Chapter 7 Facing Death: Living with Life-Threatening Illness Chapter 8 Last Rites: Funerals and Body Disposition	Read Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 Review your timeline, confirm you are on schedule	Unit 2 Essay Questions
MIDTERM	Midterm Chapters 1-8	50 Multiple Choice Questions 2 pts. each	

Unit	Topics of Study	Activities	Assessments
Unit 3	Chapter 9 Survivors: Understanding the Experience of Loss Chapter 10 Death in the Lives of Children and Adolescents Chapter 11 Death in the Lives of Adults Chapter 12 Suicide	Read Chapters 9, 10, 11, and 12 Review your timeline, confirm you are on schedule	Unit 3 Essay Questions Culture of Death Paper
Unit 4	Chapter 13 Risks, Perils, and Traumatic Death Chapter 14 Beyond Death / After Life Chapter 15 The Path Ahead: Personal and Social Choices	Read Chapter 13, 14, and 15 Review your timeline, confirm you are on schedule	Unit 4 Essay Questions Being Mortal Paper
FINAL	Final Exam Chapters 9-15	50 Multiple Choice Questions 2 pts. each	

Course Expectations

Email

Upper Iowa University employees and students are issued an UIU email account (doej@uiu.edu). University email communications will only be sent to UIU email address. Faculty and staff are not obligated to respond to students using non-UIU email accounts.

Professional Writing and Speaking Guidelines

Communications in class and online should follow the Student Conduct and Discipline, Respect for the University Environment, and Code of Student Responsibility in the [Student Handbook](#) (pg. 20 and 21). Respect the opinions of others using appropriate language and communications.

University Policies

Library Resources

As a student of Upper Iowa University, library resources (online journal databases, e-books, newspaper access, citation help, etc.) are available. If travel to the campus is not feasible, you can access the library through the University's website. Go to: www.uiu.edu/library. If you need assistance locating information or using the library's resources, please contact the library at library@uiu.edu, Phone: 563-425-5270.

To use any of the materials listed on the site, you can log in using your myUIU username and password. If you need help with your myUIU login credentials, please contact the UIU Help Center Desk at helpdesk@uiu.edu, Phone: 563-425-5876.

Withdrawal (W)

If a student decides to withdraw from a course before the end of an enrollment period, the student's charges, financial aid, tuition assistance, and/or veteran benefits could be affected. All students should consult with the Business Office and Financial Aid Office to understand the financial impact of withdrawing prior to initiating the withdrawal process.

Tuition adjustments are independent from academic and financial aid deadlines. Upon receiving a request for withdrawal, using the number of lessons submitted as compared to the total due, a refund of tuition is made according to the following guideline.

On or before the first day of the enrollment period* 100%

After the first lesson through 10% of the enrollment period 90%

After the first 10% through the first 25% of the enrollment period 50% After the first 25% of the enrollment period 0%

*Enrollment is measured by the number of assignments to be submitted during a six-month period of time, as determined by the University, during which semester credits are earned toward graduation. The refund/repayments shall be calculated using the percentages noted above as determined using the number of assignments completed and the number of assignments yet to be submitted.

For example, if a student submitted 2 of 17 assignments, they completed 11.76% of the class assignments. The student would be refunded 50% of the tuition cost.

For students from Wisconsin, Maryland, Georgia, Oregon, or Arizona, state laws apply. For students enrolled through the cpacredits.com program, no refund is allowed after the first two weeks.

Students who withdraw from a course prior to submitting the first assignment, or who are administratively withdrawn for non-submission of assignments, will be charged an administrative fee of \$99.

Course withdrawal may impact financial aid eligibility. A financial aid counselor is available to discuss this decision.

Upper Iowa University is required to use a pro rata schedule to determine the amount of Title IV aid the student has earned at the time of withdrawal. If financial aid funds have been released to the student because of a credit balance on the student's account at Upper Iowa University, the student may be required to repay some or all of the amount released to the student. This policy is subject to federal

regulations. Contact the Financial Aid Office for details.

Withdrawing from a course in progress may result in significant student account charges. Consult with the Business Office before withdrawing. For more information on financial aid implications, go to uiu.edu/financialaid.

Administrative Withdrawal (AW)

A grade of AW (administrative withdrawal) is recorded for any course from which a student is administratively withdrawn. **At least one complete assignment/unit must be received and verified by the instructor within the first 60 days of the enrollment period or the student will be administratively withdrawn from the course.** Students who are administratively withdrawn for non-submission of assignments, will be charged an administrative fee of \$99. Students through the cpacredits.com partnership follow the withdrawal policy listed above. Non-Attendance (NA): Never attended grades are not applicable to the Self-Paced Degree Program.

EXTENSION

Students that are enrolled in self-paced courses will be allowed to request one four-month extension and receive an 'X' (extension grade) at the end of their original six-month enrollment period if:

- A minimum of one assignment has been received for grading per guidelines **AND**
- All course units and exams are not completed and submitted **OR**
- A course withdrawal has not been initiated

Extension grade details:

- When the extension is granted and an "X" grade is issued, the student will receive a four-month enrollment period to complete the course.
 - Students do not have the option to withdraw from a course after the initial six-month enrollment period.
 - An 'X' grade posted to the student's official record will be replaced with a final letter grade; however, the extension will remain on the official transcript as a notation.
 - If the course is not completed by the end of the extension period, the instructor will assign a final grade (A-F) based on work completed in relation to the total course requirements.
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- After that point, only re-enrolling and repeating the course in its entirety may earn credit.

Note: Students are not reported as enrolled during the extension period and are not eligible for student loan deferment. No more than one extension will be granted.

The fee for a self-paced extension is \$99 per course. To request an extension, the "Self-Paced Course Extension Request" form must be completed and returned to the Self-Paced department. The form can be found at <https://my.uiu.edu> (Academics Tab under Student Forms). The request for an extension and payment must be submitted no earlier than one month before the end of the course and no later than a week before the end of the course. Please see the Academic Catalog for more information regarding the Incomplete/Extension guidelines. **If you do not request and pay for an extension, a final grade will be issued for the course based on coursework received by the original course end date.**

If you do not wish to use the extension option and will not be able to finish your Self-Paced class by the original six-month end date, you can submit a course withdrawal form before the course end date

if you wish to withdraw from the course. The number of lessons submitted as compared to the total due determines the amount of the course refund. Please see the Academic Catalog for more information on the refund policy.

Academic Accommodations

It is the policy of Upper Iowa University to ensure equal access to educational and co-curricular activities to students with disabilities as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. A student seeking accommodations should contact the Director of Disability Services (DDS) as early in the session as possible. In order to receive accommodations, students must disclose their disability to the DDS by completing a *Voluntary Disclosure Form*, as well as providing appropriate documentation.

The *Voluntary Disclosure Form* is available in the DDS office or online at [Disability Services](#). Students will be given a *Request for Accommodations Contract* during their initial appointment with the DDS.

This appointment will be in person for Fayette campus students and over the phone for center, online, and self-paced students. It is the student's responsibility to provide the instructors with a copy of the *Request for Accommodations Contract* (for Center or online students, these contracts are emailed out to instructors by the DDS for the student). Additionally, students should work cooperatively with their instructors throughout the session to make sure that appropriate accommodations are being made. You can contact the DDS at (563) 425-5949, disabilityservices@uiu.edu, or stop by the office in the Student Center, Office of Student Life, Room 229.

Academic Misconduct Policy

Cheating, academic dishonesty, and plagiarism constitute a violation of the offender's own integrity, as well as the integrity of the entire University; they will not be tolerated. Violators will receive sanctions based on the level of academic misconduct.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- The use of unauthorized books notes or other sources in the giving or securing of help in an examination or other course assignments.
- The copying of other students' work or allowing others to copy your work. The submission of work that is not your own or allowing others to submit your work as theirs.
- The submission of the same work for two or more classes without the approval of instructors involved.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Sharing academic materials knowing they will be used inappropriately.
- Accessing another person's work without permission.
- Providing false or incomplete information on an academic document.
- Changing student records without approval.
- Obtaining and using texts or other materials intended for instructor use only.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

- The presentation of another's published or unpublished work as one's own.
- Taking words or ideas of another and either copying them or paraphrasing them without proper citation of the source.
- Using charts, graphs, statistics or tables without proper citation.

Levels of Academic Misconduct and Sanctions

The faculty member teaching the course has the primary responsibility for resolving allegations of academic dishonesty, though egregious violations will be resolved by the School administration, the Academic Misconduct Board, or some combination thereof. The final decision on the level of a violation rests with the Academic Misconduct Board. Options for resolving an alleged case of academic dishonesty range from dismissing the allegation with no negative sanction to being expelled from the university ([Academic Misconduct Policy: Table 1](#)). A negative sanction is defined as an action taken by the faculty member that affects the student's grade for the assignment or his or her cumulative grade for the course. Anytime academic misconduct is detected, the procedures outlined in [Academic Misconduct Policy: Table 1](#) should be followed. The incident will be maintained in a searchable database maintained by the Office of Academic Affairs.

Copyright Statement

In recognition of the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code), Upper Iowa University reminds both faculty members and learners that a willful infringement of the law may result in disciplinary action. The University library has available materials discussing the "fair use" concept, along with criteria and guidelines for reproduction and use of copyrighted materials.

This syllabus is subject to change.

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