

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

APRIL 2005

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF DEATH AND DYING

Anthsci 175 HumBio 106

Professor: Dr. Ronald Barrett

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This service-learning seminar course combines a real-world hospice volunteer experience with an examination of human death and dying from cross-cultural perspectives. All students will be trained as hospice volunteers and assigned a patient for weekly visits as part of the course. Lectures begin with an overview on how people die: the processes of decline in major illnesses. We will survey funerary traditions from a variety of cultures and compare the social, spiritual, and psychological roles that these rituals play for both the living and the dying. We will critically analyze controversial issues regarding brain death, suicide, and euthanasia. We will examine cultural attitudes towards death; and how the denial and awareness of human mortality can shape social practices and institutions. Finally, we will consider issues regarding the quality of life, the burden of care, and hospice traditions around the world.

Note: This will be a service-learning course with enrollment restricted to 12 students.

Assigned Readings:

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| * Justice, C. (1997) | Dying the Good Death: The Pilgrimage to Die in India's Holy City.
(0-7914-3262-9) |
| * Kastenbaum, R. (2002)
(0205381936) | Death, Society, and Human Experience (8 th ed.) |
| * Lawton, J. (2000) | The Dying Process: Patient's Experiences of Palliative Care.
(0-415-22679-1) |
| * Nuland, S. (1993) | How We Die: Reflections on Life's Final Chapter.
(0-679-74244-1) |
| * Roach, M. (2003) | Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers. (0-393-32482-6). |
| * Tolstoy, L. (1981) | The Death of Ivan Ilych (0-553-21035-1) |

Note: Permissions to use this material must be obtained directly from the author.

Additional Readings on Coursework Reserve.

Grading:

Hospice Practicum	Training, patient visits, and journal.	30%
Research Paper	10 pages plus class presentation	35%
Class Participation	Class, process sessions, and online	15%
Short Quizzes		20%

Lecture Schedule

Sept 27	Course Introduction and Overview. a) Kastenbaum: Chap 3.
Sept 29	Selection Interviews
Oct 4	The Hospice Movement a) Kastenbaum: Chap. 6 b) Lawton: Chaps 1 and 2 c) Coursework Reserve: Mor et al (1988) d) Coursework Reserve: Saunders (1976)
Oct 6	Hospice Training: The Bereavement Process
Oct 8	Palliative Care a) Kastenbaum: Chap 5 b) Lawton: Chaps 4 and 5 c) Coursework Reserve: Hahn (1997)
Oct 11	Hospice Training: Pain and Symptom Management
Oct 13	How We Die: The physical process of dying a) Nuland: Chaps 1-5.
Oct 18	How We Die: The physical process of dying II a) Nuland: Chaps 9-12.
Oct 20	Brain Death a) Kastenbaum: Chaps 3 and 7

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d) Coursework: Furman (1977)

Nov 29

Student Presentations

Dec 1

Course Wrap-Up

Dec 6

Final Paper Due

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