

Death and Dying: Western Perspectives
Religious Studies 2N03
Online Course – Tentative Outline
Winter 2019
Conestoga College, McMaster School of Nursing

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Teaching Assistant: TBA **Email:** TBA

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge that Conestoga College is on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. It is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River. McMaster University is located on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the “Dish With One Spoon” Wampum agreement.

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Drawing on theoretical perspectives and evidence from religious studies, anthropology and related fields, this course examines death and dying in Western contexts, focusing on social, cultural and biomedical themes.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

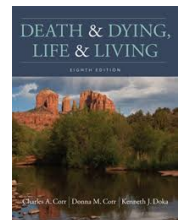
1. To provide students with an introductory overview of selected aspects of the human experiences of death, dying and bereavement.
2. To ensure that learners engage in analytical, reflective and critical thought regarding their own and others’ attitudes toward death, dying and bereavement.
3. To explore death related themes in various medias including movies, literature, documentaries, news, music, art and/or the Internet.
4. To acknowledge and express personal attitudes about death and dying and how they might impact one’s professional work.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIAL

- 1) Corr, C., Corr, D. & Doka, K. (2019). *Death & dying, life & living* (8th ed.). Boston: Cengage.
- 2) Other resources available on Avenue to Learn.
Select one of the following options:
- 3) Kalanithi, P. (2016). *When breath becomes air*. New York: Random House.
- 4) Gawande, A. (2014). *Being mortal: Medicine and what matters in the end*. Toronto: Doubleday Canada.

EVALUATION OF GRADES

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| Participation | 20% |
| Online Quizzes | 25% |
| Book Review | 20% |
| Movie Review Case Study | 35% |



PARTICIPATION (20%): Participation in the discussion forum is critical for maximizing learning experiences in any distance education course. In this course students are required to be part of an online community of learners who collectively interact through discussion. The instructor will facilitate discussions; however, the instructor will not necessarily address every post. In general, I might share a related idea, intervene if the discussion digresses, or connect student comments together to enhance student learning. Post as early as possible in the week so that people will have time to respond to your contributions. Be respectful of other people’s ideas, opinions and beliefs. It is fine to disagree but please respect others’ rights to think differently. Discussions will be checked daily during the week and occasionally on weekends. *Weekly* grades will be assessed according to the following rubric.

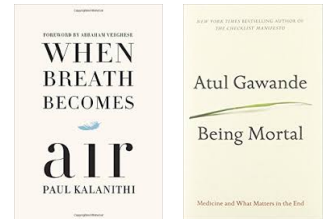
Participation Rubric

| Criteria | Excellent 1 point | Good .75 point | Acceptable .5 point | Unacceptable .25 or 0 points |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Frequency | Participates 3 or more times <i>throughout</i> the week. | Participates a minimum of 2 times <i>throughout</i> the week. Includes an initial posting. | Participates by writing an initial posting. | Limited or no participation. Further effort is required. |
| Initial Posting | Posts well developed assignment that fully addresses and develops all aspects of the task. <i>Initial posting is 250-300 words.</i> | Posts well developed assignment that addresses all aspects of the task but lacks full development of concepts. Initial posting is less than 250 words. | Posts adequate assignment with superficial thought and preparation; does not address all aspects of the task. Initial posting is less than 250 words. | Posts no assignment. |
| Follow-up Postings | Demonstrates analysis of others’ posts; extends meaningful discussion by building on previous posts. <i>Each posting is a minimum 125 words.</i> | Elaborates on an existing posting with further comment or observation. Posting is a <i>minimum 125 words.</i> | Posts shallow contribution to discussion; does not enrich discussion. | Posts no follow-up responses to others. |
| Content Contribution | Posts factually correct, reflective and substantive contribution; advances discussion. | Posts information that is factually correct; lacks full development of concept or thought. | Repeats but does not add substantive information to the discussion. | Posts information that is off-topic, incorrect, or irrelevant to discussion. |
| Reference and Support | Uses references to readings, audio-visual material or personal experience to support comments. | Incorporates some references from readings, audio-visual material or personal experience. | Uses personal experience but does not reference readings or other supporting material. | Includes no references or supporting experience. |
| Clarity and Mechanics | Contributes to discussion with clear, concise comments formatted in an easy to read style that is free of grammatical or spelling errors. | Contributes valuable information to discussion with minor clarity or mechanics errors. | Communicates in friendly, courteous and helpful manner with some errors in clarity or mechanics. | Posts long, unorganized or rude content that may contain multiple errors or may be inappropriate. |

~adapted from Barbara Frey’s “Rubric for Asynchronous Discussion Participation”

ONLINE QUIZZES (25%): There will be 11 quizzes in total. These are straightforward multiple-choice quizzes based on the required weekly readings from *Death & dying, life and living* by Charles Corr, Donna Corr and Kenneth Doka. Each quiz will contain 20 questions. You will be given 25 minutes to complete the quiz. Quizzes will be available at the start of the respective module and are due before the start of the next module. Please see the course schedule for due dates.

BOOK REVIEW (20%): For the review, you are to choose either Atul Gawande's *Being mortal* or Paul Kalanithi's *When breath becomes air*. Your review should be approximately 1000-1250 words (double-spaced, 1 inch margins). Please see the "Template for Book Review" for further instructions and expectations on Avenue to Learn. The review is due on February 10th by 11:59 PM. Please submit your review to the appropriate drop box on Avenue to Learn.



MOVIE REVIEW CASE STUDY (35%): For this assignment, you will be reviewing *The Shack* (2017) directed by Stuart Hazeldine. You may choose to either purchase, rent or stream a copy. The movie review should be approximately 2500 words (double-spaced, 1 inch margins). Please see the "Template for Movie Review" for further instructions and expectations on Avenue to Learn. The review is due by April 8th, 11:59 PM. Please submit your review to the appropriate drop box on Avenue to Learn.



ASSIGNMENT STYLE GUIDE: All graded assignments should be written using APA. For APA style and format please utilize <https://apa.conestogac.on.ca>.

Although you may find that it is helpful to read others' reviews of your selected book, please be sure that you do not inadvertently copy or plagiarize someone else's ideas. To avoid plagiarism, please review McMaster University's Academic Integrity policy: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/students/typeofad/plagiarism/index.html>

LATE SUBMISSIONS/EXTENSIONS: Students who cannot meet an assignment deadline are required to consult with the course instructor. This consultation must occur before the assignment is due. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day, and will not be accepted more than 5 days after the due date unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.



Stephan Lochner, *Last Judgment*, c. 1435. Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne.

COURSE LECTURES, READINGS, AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIAL AND DUE DATES

required readings are Chapters from Corr, Corr & Doka unless otherwise noted below

| MODULE | DATE | REQUIRED READINGS | DUE DATES |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Module 1 Course Introduction: Education about Death, Dying and Bereavement | January 7 | Preface, xxvi-xxviii Chapter 1, pp. 2-16 | Discussion forum and Quiz #1 due by January 13, 11:59 PM |
| Module 2 Changing Attitudes toward Death | January 14 | Chapter 2, pp. 19-44 Chapter 3, pp. 45-64 | Discussion forums and Quiz #2 due by January 20, 11:59 PM |
| Module 3 Perspectives on Death: Cultural and Historical | January 21 | Chapter 4, pp. 65-98 Chapter 5, pp. 99-128 | Discussion forums and Quiz #3 due by January 27, 11:59 PM |
| Module 4 Medicalized Death | January 28 | Chapter 6, pp. 131-152 Chapter 7, pp. 153-180 | Discussion forum and Quiz #4 due by February 3, 11:59 PM |
| Module 5 Grief, Mourning and Bereavement | February 4 | Chapter 8, pp. 181-210 Chapter 9, pp. 212-255 | Discussion forum and Quiz #5 due by February 10, 11:59 PM Book Review due by February 10, 11:59 PM |
| Module 6 Funeral and Body Disposition | February 11 | Chapter 10, pp. 256-282 Chapter 11, pp. 283-317 | Discussion forum and Quiz #6 due by February 17, 11:59 PM |
| Module 7 Developmental Issues I | February 25 | Chapter 12, pp. 322-358 Chapter 13, pp. 359-392 | Discussion forum and Quiz #7 due by March 3, 11:59 PM |
| Module 8 Developmental Issues II | March 4 | Chapter 14, pp. 393-420 Chapter 15, pp. 421-441 | Discussion forum and Quiz #8 due by March 10, 11:59 PM |
| Module 9 Suicide | March 11 | Chapter 16, pp. 445-483 Chapter 17, pp. 484-513 | Discussion forum and Quiz #9 due by March 17, 11:59 PM |
| Module 10 Medical Assistance in Dying | March 18 | Chapter 18, pp. 514-545 Cursory Reading: (1) Third interim report on medical assistance in dying in Canada, pp. 1- 12. (2) Bill C-14, pp. 1-18. | Discussion forum and Quiz #10 due by March 24, 11:59 PM |

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| <p>Module 11 The Meaning and Place of Death in Life I</p> | <p>March 25</p> | <p>Chapter 19, pp. 546-561</p> <p>Additional Readings: (1) Soskice, J. (2012). Dying well in Christianity. In C. Harold & K. Stajduhar (Eds.), <i>Religious understandings of a good death in hospice palliative care</i> (123-143). Albany: State University of New York Press.</p> | <p>Discussion forum and Quiz #11 due by March 31, 11:59 PM</p> |
| <p>Module 12 The Meaning and Place of Death in Life II</p> | <p>April 1</p> | <p>Additional Readings: (1) Waugh, E. (2012). Muslim perspectives on a good death in hospice and end-of-life care. In C. Harold & K. Stajduhar (Eds.), <i>Religious understandings of a good death in hospice palliative care</i> (77-98). Albany: State University of New York Press.</p> <p>(2) Ravvin, N. (2012). Tradition and change in Jewish ideals regarding a 'good' death. In C. Harold & K. Stajduhar (Eds.), <i>Religious understandings of a good death in hospice palliative care</i> (99-122). Albany: State University of New York Press.</p> | <p>Movie Review Case Study due by April 8, 11:59 PM</p> |

University Policies

1. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.
Academic

dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

2. TURNITIN.COM LANGUAGE FOR COURSE OUTLINES

In this course, we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity

3. LANGUAGE FOR AVENUE TO LEARN OR OTHER ON-LINE COMPONENTS

In this course, we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course.

The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

4. ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.

5. POLICY FOR MODIFYING A COURSE:

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check her/his McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

6. E-MAIL COMMUNICATION POLICY:

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all email communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account.

This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion. Email

7. MCMASTER STUDENT ABSENCE FORM:

The McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) (<http://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>) is a self-reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report MEDICAL absences that last up to 5 days and provides the ability to request accommodation for any missed academic work (that is less than 30% of the course grade). Please note, this tool cannot be used during any final examination period. You may submit a maximum of ONE Academic Work Missed request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation. If you are absent for more than 5 days, exceed one request per term, are absent for a reason other than medical, or have missed work worth 30% or more of the final grade, you MUST visit your Faculty Office. You may be required to provide supporting documentation. This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence.