

# DYING AND SUFFERING ACROSS CULTURES: SEMINAR ON CARE AT THE END OF LIFE

KNOX COLLEGE

KNP3502HS

Winter 2020

**INSTRUCTOR:** Esther E. Acolatse

esther.acolatse@utoronto.ca

Phone (416) 978-2793

Day: Wednesdays 11-1pm

Location (TBA)

## Course Description:

**Seminar on Care at the End of Life:** This course will provide an opportunity for students to discuss and reflect on the contemporary realities of medical practice which challenge some basic assumptions as to when death occurs and when is a person “dead”. In addition, students will examine contemporary efforts to rediscover old wisdoms concerning care for dying patients and ways in which communities of faith might reclaim some of the ancient practices of *ars moriendi*, the “art of dying.” Students examine the phenomena of chronic illness, suffering and dying from a variety of historical, biblical, theological, pastoral care, medical-physiological, psychosocial from a cross cultural perspective. Students also examine contemporary modalities of care for persons at the end of life, including tertiary palliative care, the hospice movement and ancillary “death with dignity” organizations. Course goals include developing the student’s ability to care for persons with chronic and terminal illness in ways that are shaped by a variety of theological and religio-cultural understandings of suffering, dying and death. To do so with integrity, students will also explore dimensions of what constitutes health and wholeness, as well as grief and mourning and burial rituals from various religio-cultural perspectives.

## Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Describe the cultural practices surrounding the care of the dying and the treatment of dead bodies associated with contemporary American and other cultures.

**Outcome Criteria:** Evidence of ability to describe the cultural practices surrounding the care of the dying and the handling of dead bodies associated with contemporary American and other cultures.

**Evaluation:** Classroom discussion, paper.

2. Describe some of the typical physiological events surrounding the dying process.

**Outcome Criteria:** Evidence of ability to describe some of the typical physiological events surrounding the dying process.

**Evaluation:** Classroom discussion and or paper.

3. Articulate a working theology of death and dying from the perspective of his/her own faith tradition with an understanding of how the students' theology will affect faithful care at the end of life.  
**Outcome Criteria:** Evidence of ability to articulate a theology of death and dying.  
**Evaluation:** Classroom discussion, paper and or funeral presentation.
  
4. Recognize and understand religious ideas and practices of patients and their families at the end of life. Specifically emphasize recognition of one's own responsibility for sustaining persons through their religious practice  
**Outcome Criteria:** Evidence of ability to sustain individuals and families in their religious practices at the end of life.  
**Evaluation:** Classroom discussion and Presentation.
  
5. Describe the history of the notions of a "good death" and the "art of dying" across cultures and religious traditions and apply this knowledge when assisting patients as part of end of life care.  
**Outcome Criteria:** Evidence of ability to describe the history of the notions of a "good death" and the "art of dying."  
**Evaluation:** Classroom discussion, paper.
  
6. Describe those healing, socio-cultural and liturgical practices of the Christian community upon which faithful practices of care for the dying might be built.  
**Outcome Criteria:** Evidence of ability to describe and perform those social and liturgical practices of the Christian community upon which faithful practices of care for the dying might be built.  
**Evaluation:** Classroom discussion, paper, Service of Healing/Funeral Service
  
- a Integrate knowledge of the impact of the therapist's self and issues in family of origin on the therapeutic process (1.4a)
- b Recognize how the therapist's values and attitudes, both in and out of awareness, may impact diverse clients and how emotional and behavioural patterns in regard to pain and suffering may influence therapeutic relationship (1.4b, c).
- c Recognize instances where the therapist's life experiences may enhance or compromise therapeutic effectiveness.

### **1.5 Integrate knowledge of human and cultural diversity.**

- a Integrate knowledge of human diversity.
- b Recognize how oppression, power and social injustice may affect the client and also the therapeutic process.
- c Adapt the therapist's approach when working with culturally diverse clients.
- d Recognize barriers that may affect access to therapeutic services.
- e Identify culturally-relevant resources.

### **CRPO ENTRY- TO -PRACTICE COMPETIENCES:**

### **General Requirements:**

Class attendance and knowledge of readings and participation

### **Required Texts:**

Ariès, Philippe, (1985). *Western Attitudes Towards Death from the Middle Ages to the Present* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins.

Long, T.G. (2009). *Accompany Them with Singing. The Christian Funeral*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.

Parkes, Colin Murray et al; (1997) *Death and Bereavement across Cultures* New York: Routledge.

Tolstoy, Leo, (1993) "The Death of Ivan Ilych," available in *The Kreutzer Sonata and Other Short Stories*. New York: Dover.

Swinton, J and Payne, R. (2009) *Living Well and Dying Faithfully. Christian Practices for End-of-Life Care*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans

Wolterstorff, Nicholas (1987) *Lament for a Son*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans

**\*Articles marked with Asterisks will be on Quercus.**

### **Recommended Texts:**

Carroll, David, (1991) *Living with Dying: A loving Guide for Family and Close Friends*, New York, NY, Paragon House.

Holloway, K.F.C. (2002) *Passed On: African-American Mourning Stories*. Durham: Duke University Press

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Participation 20%**

1. Students will write their own obituary to be turned in to the instructor. The student may write the obituary as of now; or the student may choose to project themselves into the future and write their obituary at an older age. 10% **Due: January 15<sup>th</sup> 2020**
2. Students will interview 3 people **2 family members and 1 acquaintance** about their thoughts on death in general and their own death focusing on the death and dying issues covered in class, with emphasis on the religious themes. (See questionnaire on Quercus) and write a 2-3 pg. summary and reflection in their interactions. **30% Due February 12<sup>th</sup> 2020.**
3. Students will prepare Advance Directives paperwork and write a 1page reflection on the process. 10% **Due: March 4<sup>th</sup> 2020.**

4. Group Presentations – **30%** of course grade (Each student will be signed up for group on the second day of class.)

**5. All students Significant Learning: (4-5 Pages) April 8<sup>th</sup>**

A thoughtful and focused summary of the **core issues** that you have identified relative to your growth and development as a pastoral/spiritual caregiver to suffering and dying persons. This is an integrative paper in which you **make connections** among the **theoretical, practical** and **personal** components of the course. (**20%**)

### **Grading**

Your final grade will be based on the quality of your class participation and your four papers. Your papers will be graded on the basis of

- (a) accurate use of course readings, lectures and discussion,
- (b) thoroughness and clarity of thought
- (c) creativity and depth of insight.

A+ (90-100)

A (85-89)

A- (80-84)

B+ (77-79)

B (73-76)

B- (70-72)

Failure

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

**Course grades.** Consistent with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grading.htm>) or college grading policy.

### **Policies**

**Accessibility.** Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist. The University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the University's courses and programs.

**Plagiarism.** Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/content/handbooks>) and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871>). A student who plagiarizes in this course. Students will be assumed to have read the document “Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing” published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges ([http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library\\_Archives/Theological\\_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm](http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm))

**Email correspondence:** Multi-media presentations can be submitted electronically. Papers are accepted in hard copy only, preferably *on recycled or re-used paper*. Communication by email can ONLY take place through UTOR email accounts.

**Other academic offences.** TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>)

### **Weekly Reading Assignments:**

Please keep a journal on your reflections of the readings and your developing thoughts on death and your own mortality.

## I. ATTITUDES TO DEATH AND DYING ACROSS CULTURES

### Week One 01/08/20

#### Introduction to the course and to one another

#### How is death determined in contemporary contexts?

1. \*Krammer, *The Sacred Art of Dying*, pp1-25.
2. \* Bernat, On Noncongruence between the Concept and Determination of Death. *Hastings Center Report*, Nov-Dec 2013; 43:25-33.
3. \*Shah and Miller, "Can we Handle the Truth? Legal Fictions in the Determination of Death" *American Journal of Law & Medicine*, 2010;36:540-585. (Recommended, not required).

#### ASSIGNMENT: Prepare your own obituary for the next class

### Week Two 01/15/20

#### A. Non- Western Attitudes Toward Death and Bereavement

Parkes et al., Parkes et al., *Death and Bereavement across Cultures*, pp. 3-97

### Week Three 01/22/20

#### B. Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Views on Death and Bereavement

Parkes et al., pp. 98-165

### Week Four 01/29/20

#### C. Modern Western Attitudes to Death

Ariès, *Western Attitudes Towards Death*

Parkes et al., pp.167-187

## II. CARE OF THE DYING: PRACTICAL, MEDICAL AND ETHICAL DIMENSIONS

### Week Five 02/05/20 Suffering, Dying and Loss

1. Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, pp15-63
2. \*Reich, "Speaking of Suffering: A Moral Account of Compassion" in *Soundings*, Spring 1989: 83-108.
3. Swinton and Payne, *Living Well and Dying Faithfully*. Chap 4
4. \*Cassell, E.J. "Nature of Suffering"
5. \*Castleden et. al. "Providers' Perceptions of Aboriginal Palliative Care"

### Week Six 02/12/20 Medicalization of Death vs. Christian Wholistic practices

1. \*Ford, "Mercy Killing at Golgotha"
2. \* Bishop, *The Palliating Gaze*, Chapter 9, p 253-278.
3. Swinton and Payne, Chapter 11 and 12, p 226-271

## **ASSINGMENT: Reflections on views on Death Due**

### **Week Seven SPRING BREAK**

### **Week Eight 02/26/20 Loss and Bereavement of Children**

Wolterstorff, *Lament for a Son*

Parkes et al., *Death and Bereavement Across Cultures* pp. 192-205

Swinton and Payne, *Living Well, Dying Faithfully*, p. 139-164

### **Week 9 03/04/20 Suicide, the Right to Die and Physician Assisted Suicide**

#### **Viewing and Discussion of Bill Moyer's "On our own Terms"**

1. Swinton and Payne, Chapter 10, p 205-225
2. \* Spring and Larson, *Euthanasia: Spiritual, Medical and Legal Issues in Terminal Health Care*, pp.85-103
3. \*Pew Opinion Polls Regarding American Religious Attitudes on Assisted Suicide  
(Note: These are background readings to guide our discussions and allow for thoughtful input as we watch the documentary)

**ASSIGNMENT: Prepare Own Advance Directives and write a page reflecting on the process - 10% of Grade** (These readings: 1. \*Gilbert Meilaender "I want to Burden My Loved Ones" 2. \*Ramsey. P. "The Indignity of Death with Dignity" from the *Hastings Center Studies*. (May 1974): 47-62, are to help guide your reflection on DNR and Organ donation etc.)

## **III. PASTORAL/ SPIRITUAL ISSUES IN CARE OF THE DYING AND BEREAVED**

### **Week Ten 03/11/20 Visit to a Funeral Home. (Rosar-Morrison Funeral Home and Chapel???)**

Please read the following to help guide and facilitate conversations at the Funeral Home

1. Holloway, K.C. *Passed On*, p. 103-149
2. Long, *Accompany Them with Singing*, p. 121-182

### **Week 11 03/18/20 Christian Funerals and other Rituals**

1. Long T.G. *Accompany Them with Singing*. The Christian Funeral. p 57-106, 183-196
2. \* Karen B. Westerfield Tucker, "Christian Rituals Surrounding Sickness"
3. \* \_\_\_\_\_, "Christian Rituals Surrounding Death"
4. \*Paul Waitman Hoon, "Theology, Death, and the Funeral Liturgy"

### **Week 12 3/25/20 Practicing Care at the End of Life Funeral for Death by Suicide**

Funeral for Death from Prolonged Illness  
Funeral for Individual with No Community  
(Group Presentations)

**Week 13**     **4/1/20 Practicing Care at the End of Life**

Funeral for a Child  
(Group Presentation)

**Conclusion: Final Ritual**

DRAFT