Course Meeting
Room
Final Exam: Final project in place of exam

Professor:
Office:  
Office Hours:
E-mail

Required Readings
- *Death and Dying in America*
  Fontana and Keene (2009)
- Other readings will be posted to
  WebCampus

Course Descriptions/Objectives:
The main goal of this class is to provide students with an overview of concepts central to the sociological consideration of death and dying. While death is often considered a biological event, the interactions which surround the phenomenon are ripe with culturally symbolic meaning. We will collectively review and assess this meaning by considering our normative, taken-for-granted assumptions about what death “is”, where these norms originate from and how they may be changing in the contemporary context. By exploring death from a sociological perspective, we will attempt to unravel the social layers that encompass mortality.

The course will focus on those topics most relevant to the scholarly consideration of death. Though we may think of death as one of the most intimate and private aspects of our lives, sociologists pull back from the personal perspective to see the “big picture” of how death is situated in society. From this perspective, scholars note a variety of accomplishments and limitations to how we currently manage the “reoccurring crisis” of human death. We will find that how death is “done”, or is socially accomplished changes across time and place. While dying is universal to all humans, the cultural norms surrounding death are ever-shifting and relative to social contexts.

Through the discussion of these topics, students will achieve a general competency in issues relating to end-of-life matters. This class will be of interest to all who will encounter death through their professional endeavors as well as those who find the topic intellectually interesting for other reasons.

-This course will emphasize the following University Undergraduate Learning Outcomes:

**Intellectual Breadth and Lifelong Learning:**
Demonstrate the ability to place problems in personally meaningful contexts, reflect on one’s own understanding, through active discussion and participation, writing assignments, and tests.

**Communication:** Learning to communicate effectively using the common genres and conventions for writing, and demonstrate this through course writing assignments. In class discussion will also be used to facilitate effective communication skills.

**Multicultural Awareness:** Respond to diverse perspectives linked to identity, including age, ability, religion, politics, race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality, both in American and international contexts.

**Citizenship and Ethics:** Acquire and demonstrate knowledge of political, economic, and social institutions.
**Class Format**
We will follow a discussion/lecture format with a strong emphasis on in-class participation, class discussion and group-work. Multimedia resources will also play an important part in presenting material for the course. Readings and media resources are to supplement lectures and discussions, not replace them. *Success in the course requires you to attend and closely engage the topics covered during each class.*

**Expectations for Attendance & Participation**
Learning requires you to take an active role in the process. So, you must come to class prepared and ready to participate. You should drop this class immediately if you anticipate that you will often be late or absent. **Those who consistently come to class and are clearly engaged may receive the benefit of the doubt on borderline final grades. In other words, if you’re on the borderline of two grades, I’ll likely bump you up to the higher grade if you have excellent attendance and participation.**

I’m reasonable and flexible concerning absences due to official university activities or compelling personal matters. Illness, family emergencies, religious holidays, and major personal and university related conflicts are bases for excused absence from class. If you anticipate a conflict (e.g., an important university activity, religious observance, or a job interview) speak to me in advance and be prepared to provide evidence. After unanticipated absences, you should inform me and provide documentation in a timely fashion when you return. Matters of illness require a brief note from a doctor or nurse confirming that you were ill or under care on the specific day(s) that you missed; on office stationary with the person’s phone number (a simple appointment slip or card is not sufficient).

**Classroom Environment**
In order to facilitate a safe and pleasant learning environment, we must all maintain a respectful tone when addressing one another and pay attention to whoever is speaking. I have no formal rule regarding the use of technology in the classroom but will intervene if it is becoming a distraction to me and/or your classmates.

**Reading Expectations**
I expect that you will always complete assigned readings prior to lecture and discussion. I will assume that you are prepared to discuss the readings for the week. If I see that the class is failing to prepare, we may have additional quizzes or assignments at my discretion. My advice is to just read, think, attend class, and discuss.

**Evaluation**

**Assignments**
Each assignment is worth 100 points (4x100=400). Details for each assignment will be handed out in class.

**Late work**
*Late work will receive no more than half credit.*

**Exams:**
The only exam for this course is the Mid-Term exam. The exam will be worth 250 points and will be comprised of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank questions and essay questions.

**Course Project:**
In place of a final exam, each student will complete a research project of their choosing pertaining to death and dying culture, whether in contemporary or historical contexts.

**Assigned point-values for the course:**
Assignments 3 x 400 =1200pts  
Exams 1 x 250 =250pts  
Term Paper 1 x 350 =350pts

**Total points for the course=1,000 points**

**How I Calculate Grades-**
100-93% = A  
92-90% = A-  
89-87% = B+  
86-83% = B  
82-80% = B-  
79-77% = C+  
76-73% = C  
72-70% = C-  
69-67% = D+  


66-63% = D
62-60% = D-
59% & below = F

Extra Credit
Extra credit assignments will consist of short exercises with small point values. Extra credit should not be considered a substitute for assigned work as these points will not be enough to make a major change in a final grade.

Office Hours
My office hours are Mondays 11:30-12:30pm and Tuesdays from 11-1pm and by appointment. If you intend to visit, it is best to let me know in person, by phone, or by e-mail. Just make an appointment with me, or you may simply knock on my door. If you want to discuss material pertaining to the course or are having any problems with the material please contact me.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Campus Advocacy Resource and Empowerment (CARE) Line: If you are experiencing (or have experienced) interpersonal violence The CARE Line is a 24-hour campus crisis hotline available to victims/survivors of interpersonal violence, as well as their family and friends. Trained volunteer advocates provide support, education, resources, and referrals to on and off campus services for crimes of sexual assault, domestic or dating violence, and stalking. 895-0602.
Rape Crisis Center: 888-366-1640.
And if you experience violence on campus you can (and you should if possible) report it to campus police: 895-3668.
Student Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): We all have much going on in our lives these days, and integrating our lives and education can be challenging. CAPS offers many resources along with trained clinicians to help you work through problems commonly experienced by students of all ages and backgrounds. Located in the Student Recreation & Wellness Center 702-895-3627. More about programs and services at http://www.unlv.edu/srwc/caps

*This syllabus is subject to change

Course Schedule

Week 1 - 8/29
Introductions (the course, death and dying, sociology)

Week 2 - 9/5-*(no class on 9/5)
Death, Culture and History (“Nacerima” reading)

Week 3 - 9/12
Contemporary Death Norms/ Death in the USA (Chpt. 1 and 2)

Week 4 - 9/19
End of Life Institutions (Chpt. 3,4 and 5)

Week 5 - 9/26
The social construction of the end of life (Sudnow, Lofland, Glaser and Strauss, Charmaz)

Week 6 - 10/3
Stratification at the end of life

Week 7 - 10/10
Mid-Term Exam
Week 7 - 10/17
Death professionals-(Chapter 8)

Week 8 - 10/24
Grief and bereavement-(Chapter 9)

Week 10 - 10/31
Global Death (Chapter 6 and 7)

Week 11 - 11/7
Death Reform

Week 12 - 11/14
End of life Planning and you

Week 13 - 11/21
Looking forward/ The future of death (Chpt. 10)

Week 14 - 11/29
Putting it all together/ closing discussion

Week 15 - 12/5
Study week/ work on projects

Finals Week-12/12
Final projects due by 10am on 12/12/16

UNIVERSITY POLICY

Academic Misconduct—Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV’s function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the Student Academic Misconduct Policy (approved December 9, 2005) located at: https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct.

Copyright—The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves with and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)—The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, http://drc.unlv.edu/, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

Religious Holidays Policy—Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab
work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit: http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531.

Transparency in Learning and Teaching—The University encourages application of the transparency method of constructing assignments for student success. Please see these two links for further information:

https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning

https://www.unlv.edu/provost/transparency

Incomplete Grades—The grade of I—Incomplete—can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student’s control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester for undergraduate courses. Graduate students receiving “I” grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

Tutoring and Coaching—The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit http://www.unlv.edu/asc or call 702-895-3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of the SSC (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TEB second floor.

UNLV Writing Center—One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student’s Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/.

Rebelmail—By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students’ Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV’s official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students’ e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always @unlv.nevada.edu. Emailing within WebCampus is acceptable.

Final Examinations—The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur at the time and on the day specified in the final exam schedule. See the schedule at: http://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars.

Students may consult with a librarian on research needs. For this class, the Subject Librarian is (https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians_by_subject). UNLV Libraries provides resources to support students’ access to information. Discovery, access, and use of information are vital skills for academic work and for successful post-college life. Access library resources and ask questions at https://www.library.unlv.edu/.