**PCC 850 SUFFERING AND DYING ACROSS CULTURES**

**Day: Thursday 11-1pm**

**Location: Online (Synchronous and Asynchronous)**

**Course Description:**

**Seminar on Care at the End of Life:** This course will provide an opportunity forstudents 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, paper.

3. Articulate a 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.

4. Recognize and understand religious ideas and practices of patients and their families at the end of life. Specifically emphasize recognition of ones 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

**General Requirements:**

1. Class attendance and knowledge of readings
2. Interview 3 persons on their views about death and dying using the “Questionnaire on Death” and focusing on the death and dying issues covered in class, with emphasis on the religious themes. Submit a 2-3 page summary of their views on ( February \*\*, 2022).

**Required Texts:**

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

Gilmour, P. (1999). *Now and at the Hour of Our Death* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications

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

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 in Course Files on Moodle.**

**Recommended Texts:**

Carroll, David, (1991) *Living with Dying: A loving Guide for Family and Close Friends*,

New York, NY, Paragon House.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Students will write their own obituary to be turned in to the instructor. The student may write the obituary as of now, as in a “sudden death”; or the student may choose to project themselves into the future and write their obituary at an older age.10% **Due: January 17th**

2.Students will interview 3 people about their views on death and write a 3 pg reflection on it. 10% **Due February \*\***

3.Students will prepare Advance Directives paperwork. 10% **Due: March \*\***

4.Paper: **--**A Philosophical/Theological/Spiritual Understanding of Death (30% of course grade). **Due: March \*\*** Guidelines are on Quercus

5.Group Presentations **–** 20% of course grade (Each student will sign up for group on the second day of class.) Guidelines on Moodle.

6. **All students Significant Learning**: **(4-5 Pages)—April \*\***

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

**Weekly Reading Assignments:**

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

1. **ATTITUDES TO DEATH AND DYING ACROSS CULTURES**

**Week One 01/10/19 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**  **Non- Western Attitudes Toward Death and Bereavement**

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

**Week Three Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Views on Death and Bereavement**

Parkes et al., pp. 98-165

**Week Four**  **Modern** **Western** **Attitudes to Death**

1. Ariès, *Western Attitudes Towards Death*
2. Parkes et al., pp.167-187

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

**Week Five**  **Suffering, Dying and Loss**

1. Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, pp15-63

2. \*Reich, “Speaking of Suffering: A Moral Account of Compassion” in S*oundings*, 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**  **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

**Week Seven 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. \*Verhey, *Reading the Bible in the Strange World of Medicine* Ch. 8 (Recommended)

4. \*Pew Opinion Polls Regarding American Religious Attitudes on Assisted Suicide

(Reading of the texts will guide our discussions and allow for thoughtful input)

**Week Eight** **Living Wills, Organ Donation and DNR Order**

1. Gilmour, P. *Now and at the Hour of Our Death* (Workbook)

2. \*Gilbert Meilaender “I want to Burden My Loved Ones”

3. \*Ramsey. P. “The Indignity of Death with Dignity” from the *Hastings Center Studies*. (May 1974): 47-62

**ASSIGNMENT:** **Prepare Advance Directives and write a page reflecting on the process - 10% of Grade**

**Week Nine** **READING WEEK**

**PASTORAL ISSUES IN CARE OF THE DYING AND BEREAVED**

**Week Ten**  **Visit to a Funeral Home.**

**ASSIGNMENT: Theology/Spirituality of Death Paper Due Today (**See Quercus for detailed guidelines on writing this paper. Guidelines employ General Christian language but can easily be translated into the language of your own religious tradition with its particular rituals and rites of passage as well as one’s denominational leanings.**)**

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 Eleven Loss and Bereavement of Children**

1. Wolterstorff, *Lament for a Son*
2. Parkes et al., *Death and Bereavement Across Cultures* pp. 192-205
3. Swinton and Payne, *Living Well, Dying Faithfully*, p. 139-164

**Week Twelve**  **Christian Funeral 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 Thirteen Cross Cultural Practices of Care at the end of Life**

Funeral for Death by Suicide & Death from Prolonged Illness

(Group presentations)

**Week Fourteen Cross Cultural Practices of Care at the end of Life**

Funeral for a Child & Funeral for Individual with No Community

(Group Presentations)