



Instructor
Rev. Esther E. Acolatse, Ph. D

PCC 850B SUFFERING AND DYING ACROSS CULTURES (Seminar on Care at the End of Life)

Day: Thursday Th 9:00 am-12:00 pm Location: Online (Synchronous 9-11 and Asynchronous—Discussion on Moodle)

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, 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 and discussion posts
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 the concept of death and dying.
3. A Growing Theology of Death paper based on course readings and learning
4. Group Funeral Service Presentation
5. Significant Learning Paper

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.