Description:

This course allows students the opportunity to discuss a topic that we all contemplate but seldom talk about. Lectures and small-group discussions explore a wide-range of issues related to dying, death, and grieving including the development of attitudes toward death, the psychosocial context of dying today, the mental life of the dying person, hospice care, euthanasia, suicide, trauma, and adjustment to loss.

Prerequisite / Co-requisite:

AK/AS/SC/PSYC 1010 6.00 or AK/PSYC 2410 6.00, with a minimum grade of C. Degree credit exclusions: AK/PSYC 3290 3.00 (before Summer 2002), AK/AS/SC/PSYC 4250 3.00, AK/NURS 4790B 3.00.

Course Director:

Dr. Stephen Fleming
Department of Psychology
Faculty of Health
Office: 211 BSB
Phone: 416.736.2100 x33229 (voice)
E-mail: sfleming@yorku.ca

Secretary: Barbara Thurston
Office: 283 BSB
Phone: 416.736.2100 x66253
E-mail: bthurst@yorku.ca

TA:
Linda Moradzadeh
E-mail: lindamo@yorku.ca

Moodle: All of the required material (syllabus, exam dates, etc.) is on the course Moodle website. Major course announcements, readings, and e-mail correspondence is also accessed through Moodle. If you are enrolled, make sure you’ve created a Moodle account and joined the course.
**Time and Location:**

Monday 11:30 – 14:30 VH 'C'

**Organization of the Course:**

The course involves formal lectures, invited guests, film and video, and the opportunity for experiential learning. The required readings are central to the course. Topics to be considered are:

- the development of attitudes toward death and dying
- the psychosocial context of dying today
- euthanasia and end-of-life decisions
- AIDS
- hospice or palliative care
- suicide
- trauma and loss
- vicarious trauma

**Course Text:**


Please note: There is no course kit to be purchased. All materials for the course can be found on Moodle.

**Topics and Readings:**

1. **Introduction**  
   Required: Chapter 1.  
   Recommended: Chapters 2, 3, & 4.

2. **Children, adolescents, and death.**  
   Required: Chapters 12 & 13.  
   Fleming & Balmer article (Moodle).

3. **Hospice**  
   Required: Chapter 8.

4. **Dying Person**  
   Required: Chapters 6 & 7.  
   Recommended: Chapters 5 & 20.  
   Please read and bring a copy of the Fleming-Balmer article to this class.
5. Euthanasia
   Required: Chapters 16 & 18.

6. Suicide
   Required: Chapter 17.

7. Trauma and loss
   Required: Chapters 9, 10, 11, 14, & 15.
   Recommended: Chapter 19.

8. Vicarious trauma

Evaluation:

   Essay/Project: 30% (Due November 2)
   Mid-term examination: 35% (October 22)
   Final examination: 35% TBA

*Essay/Projects* may have a number of formats, e.g., in the past, students have submitted:

- an original piece of research
- a critical review of the literature
- slide/tape presentations
- a children's book explaining the holocaust
- an analysis of death in children's books
- a survey of the portrayal of death in art
- an assessment of death in contemporary folk music, and
- a diary of personal reaction to loss.

York students are subject to the York University Policy for Research Involving Human Participants. In particular, students proposing to undertake research which involves human subjects (e.g., having students complete a questionnaire, etc.) are required to submit an Application for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants at least one month before you plan to begin the research. If you are in doubt as to whether this requirement applies to you, contact the Course Director immediately.

Although procedural guidelines are difficult to establish for some projects, one can be quite specific when it comes to a critical review of the literature (the most common option). Initially, select a topic for your essay and confirm it with the course director. Consult with the reference librarian and familiarize yourself with computerized searches. Keep in mind this paper is to reflect the published research on your topic, therefore, whenever possible consult primary as opposed to secondary sources. This means referring to manuscripts published in refereed journals (not popular magazines,
newspapers, or on the internet). Further information is available on Moodle. In addition to reviewing and summarizing knowledge related to your topic, it is important that you critically comment on what you've read. Interact with the research and exercise your critical thinking; I'm interested in your reflections and comments on the material. The length of the paper is to be 2500 – 3000 words.

Remember:

1. familiarize yourself with the various forms of plagiarism and view the Faculty of Health’s videotape on academic honesty (http://www.yorku.ca/health/teaching-and-learning.html)

2. be aware of the penalties for academic dishonesty and complete the student quiz (cf Moodle)

2. submit your essay/project in hard copy (in class or drop it off at my secretary's office (be sure to keep a copy of your paper); and

3. for late papers, there will be a penalty of 1 mark per day to a maximum of 5 marks.

Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be entertained by the Course Director but will require supporting documentation (e.g., an attending physician statement.).

For students wishing to submit a project in another format, individual guidelines will be established during consultations with the Course Director. It is also recognized that, depending on the nature of the project, due dates may have to be altered.

There are two examinations each worth 35% of the final grade. Examinations are based on material presented in lectures and the required readings from the text. The format of the examinations will be multiple-choice and short answer questions.

**Missed Examinations:**

According to University Policy, medical problems or exceptional circumstances are the only legitimate reasons for missing an exam. If this should occur, you must contact the teaching assistant or the course director within 48 hours. If you do not speak to a person directly you must leave a message. Clearly state your name, your student number, the course's name and number, and a number/time at which you can be reached. If you are unable to contact someone during this 48-hour period, documentation accounting for the delay must be provided. Documentation verifying the reason for the missed exam (see below) must be provided prior to sitting the make-up examination. Failure to provide appropriate documentation will result in a grade of 0 on the exam.
Examinations missed for medical reasons must be supported by an Attending Physician Statement or a Statement by a Psychiatrist, Psychologist, or Counsellor. The Attending Physician Statement must include (i) the full name, mailing address and telephone number of the physician, the nature of the illness and its duration, and an indication of whether the illness and/or medication prescribed would have seriously affected your ability to study and perform over the period in question.

Examinations missed on the grounds of exceptional non-medical circumstances must be supported by appropriate documentation, i.e., a death certificate, obituary notice, automobile accident report, airline/train/bus tickets/receipts for emergency travel (with date of booking on the ticket), etc. Receipts from emergency travel must indicate destination, departure and return dates.

In the case of a missed exam, you must be prepared to sit the make-up within two weeks of the original examination date. It is your responsibility to check with the course director or the TA as to the date/time of the make-up. A conflict in another course during the time of the make-up is not an acceptable reason for missing the make-up (unless there is an exam in that course at that time). There will be no second opportunity for a make-up. In addition, students who miss a final examination need to complete the Final Exam/Assignment Deferred Standing Agreement (see the Resources tool on Moodle). Upon receipt of all documentation, a date for a deferred exam will be set.

Grading:

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+= 9, A = 8, B+ - 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.). (For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar).

Access/Disability:

Students with disabilities (whether physical, medical, systemic, learning or psychiatric) may need accommodation in teaching style, evaluation methods, and other course requirements. Students are encouraged to notify the Course Director of their needs in a timely manner to arrange for academic accommodation.

Student Conduct:

Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship characterized by courtesy and mutual respect and to refrain from actions disruptive to such a relationship. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the instructor to maintain an appropriate academic atmosphere in the classroom, and the responsibility of the student to cooperate in that endeavour. Further, the instructor is the best person to decide, in the first instance, whether such an atmosphere is present in the class. A
statement of the policy and procedures involving disruptive and/or harassing behaviour by students in academic situations is available on the York website

Religious Observance Days:

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making accommodations for observances of special significance to adherents. Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for in-class test or examination pose such a conflict for you, contact the Course Director within the first three weeks of class. Similarly, should lab, practica, workshop, etc., assignments scheduled later in the term pose such a conflict, contact the Course Director immediately. Please note that to arrange an alternative date or time for an examination scheduled in the formal examination periods (December and April/May) students must complete an Examination Accommodation Form which can be obtained online at http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/exam_accommodation.pdf

It is recommended that students consult the following websites and be familiar with the their content:
Academic integrity:
http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity

Breach of academic honesty: