



COURSE SYLLABUS
PSY 463 PSYCHOLOGY OF DEATH AND DYING
SUMMER EVENING 2019 (2019SSE)
JULY 8, 2019 -SEPTEMBER 17, 2019
ONLINE

Course Code: Psy 463-90-2
Course Title: Psychology of Death and Dying
Term & Year: Summer Evening 2019

Instructor: Kacie Cohen, NCC, LMHC
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Office: Behavioral Science #105
Office Hours: 4:00-5:20pm Mon-Fri By appointment only

Required Text: Kastenbaum, R. (2012), *Death, Society, and Human Experience* (11th Ed.). New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group

Catalog Course Description

The scope of this course is an exploration into the domain of death and dying. The focus of the course will be a psychological, philosophical, theological, ethical, biological, social and scientific inquiry to the nature of death. Topics to be examined include nature of death, life after death, assisted suicide, right to die, suicide, bereavement, death system, death counseling, death in society, Eastern approaches to death, and issues of death and dying within the context of nursing. Our focus on death will be guided by concepts derived from evolutionary theory, the stress response and stress management. Fulfills interdisciplinary course requirement. Cross-listed as PH/RE 463.

Program Linking Statement – Psychology

This course develops and assesses the skills and competencies for the program student-learning outcome of Specific Focuses in Psychology. In addition, this course also addresses the program student learning outcomes of 1) Scientific Method and its Application in the Field of Psychology and 2) Cross-Cultural Psychology.

Program Linking Statement – Religion

This course develops and assesses the skills and competencies for Religious Studies: Intellectual Tradition - world religions; Moral and Spiritual - engagement for personal growth, application to real world situations, fundamental questions of ultimate meaning, meaning of morality and



moral decision making; and Religion and Culture - awareness of uniqueness of Hawaii and Pacific Rim, religions and cultures interaction affecting values.

Student Learning Outcomes

Student will demonstrate an understanding of:

1. how evolutionary theory, the stress response and stress management provide an integrated approach to the issue of death and dying.
2. an interdisciplinary approach (psychology, religion, philosophy, science, etc.) to death and dying.
3. cross-cultural approaches to death and dying.
4. children's experiences and perceptions regarding death.
5. how society addresses death/the death system.
6. death and dying within the context of nursing.
7. developmental/biological aspects of death.
8. counseling, spirituality and death.
9. the relationship between ethics, the medical profession, technology and death and dying.
10. how this course can be addressed from each of the 5 Marianist educational values.

Questions to Ponder During the Course of the Semester

1. Does our society deny death?
2. Is there life after death?
3. Does culture impact on how we view death?
4. Why do we die?
5. If there were no death, how would society be affected?
6. Who decides who lives and who dies?
7. What is the function of religion relative to the concept of death?
8. How are evolutionary theory and the stress response relevant to the concept of death?



Assessment

Assignments:

Weekly Chapter Discussion Questions/Activities
Final Examination
Death, Dying, Bereavement, & the Media Paper
Cross-Cultural Differences in Death and Dying

Points:

135 Points
60 points
25 points
25 points

Total Possible Points

245 points

Grading Scale

A = 90% - 100%

B = 80% - 89%

C = 70% - 79%

D = 60% - 69%

F = 59% and below

The instructor will determine the final grade for all students based on the above Grading Scale. The instructor will enforce the following class policies:

- All assignments will be due in Canvas by 11:59 pm on the due date specified on this syllabus.
- No late assignments will be accepted once this class has ended.
- Late assignments up until 11:59 pm of the last day of class will be accepted with a 50% point deducted regardless how late it has been submitted and regardless of reason.
- All assignments must be completed within the time frame of this class. No work will be accepted after the last class of the term. No Incomplete grades will be issued.

Attendance

Student is expected to actively participate in course room discussions. Student should notify their instructor when illness or circumstances prevents them from actively participating in class for periods longer than one week.

Federal regulations require continued attendance for continuing payment of financial aid. If attendance is not continuous, financial aid may be terminated. When illness or personal reasons necessitate continued absence, the student should officially withdraw from all affected courses. Anyone who stops attending a course without official withdrawal may receive a failing grade.



Academic Honesty:

Academic honesty is an essential aspect of all learning, scholarship, and research. It is one of the values regarded most highly by academic communities throughout the world. Violations of the principle of academic honesty are extremely serious and will not be tolerated.

Student is responsible for promoting academic honesty at Chaminade by not participating in any act of dishonesty and by reporting any incidence of academic dishonesty to an instructor or to a University official. Academic dishonesty may include theft of records or examinations, alteration of grades, and plagiarism.

Questions of academic dishonesty in a particular class are first reviewed by the instructor, who must make a report with recommendations to the Dean of the Academic Division. Punishment for academic dishonesty will be determined by the instructor and the Dean of the Academic Division and may range from an 'F' grade for the work in question to an 'F' for the course to suspension or dismissal from the University. See Student Handbook for more information:

<https://chaminade.edu/current-students/>

Students with Disabilities

Chaminade will provide assistance for any student with documented disabilities. Any student who believes he/she may need accommodations in this class must contact the Counseling Center at **735-4845** (in back of the Security office) in order to determine if the student meets the requirements for documented disability in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is important to contact them as soon as possible so that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Title IX Statement

Chaminade University of Honolulu (CUH) recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. Sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse will NOT be tolerated at CUH. If you have been the victim of sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse, we encourage you to report this matter promptly. As a faculty member, I am interested in promoting a safe and healthy environment, and should I learn of any sexual misconduct, physical and/or psychological abuse, I must report the matter to the Title IX Coordinator. Should you want to speak to a confidential source you may contact the following:

- Chaminade Counseling Center | **808 735-4845**.
- Any priest serving as a sacramental confessor or any ordained religious leader serving in the sacred confidence role.



Description of Class Assignments, Activities, and Assessments:

- **Weekly Canvas Question Responses**

Each week you will be assigned to read through chapters from the text. Based on your readings you will be asked to respond to weekly questions/scenarios. Your responses should be approximately **200 words** in length. **Reference to your textbook or a credible source(s) is required** to achieve full points. **APA formatting is required. List your sources at the bottom of your post.**

- **Death, Dying, Bereavement, & the Media Paper**

Numerous psychological studies have explored the link between media and behavior. In this case, you are going to examine the relationship between popular/mainstream stories and real-world grief.

Select a popular movie or book that has either a thematic component of grief, or the principal character has been bereaved (or is dying). The purpose is to examine the “media” portrayal of the griever of that particular type of loss/grief. You will evaluate the movie or book on the following:

Analysis:

- How accurately did the book/movie demonstrate the profile of that type of griever?
- How did the griever respond?
- How did others respond to the griever before, during, and after the event?
- What, if any, was the outcome for the griever?
- Did the griever receive help/demonstrate healing?
- Compare and contrast it with what we have learned in class about that “type” or profile of griever/type of loss.

Reflection:

- Put yourself into that character...do you think you (based on your personal experiences) would have responded differently? Why or why not?
- If you were a real-life griever of that type of loss, how do you think you would feel watching/reading this? How do you think your family/friends would respond?
- Do you think that the way in which it was handled/portrayed would help, or hinder, your healing process?



- If you were the director/author/screen-writer, knowing what you know about death, dying, and grief, what would you change?

*This paper will be 3 – 5 pages of content (excluding title page and reference page), double-spaced, 1" margins, and should have a cover page and a reference page. A minimum of 3 credible sources should be used to support your analysis and reflection.

- **Cross-Cultural/Religion Differences in Death and Dying Presentation**

For this assignment, you will identify a culture or religion that you most identify with and also select a culture or religion that is different from your own. In your presentation, you will compare and contrast the two cultures or two religions. Please expand on the similarities and differences of following questions/topics:

- Traditional beliefs about death
- Practices preparing for death
- What happens at the time of death?
- Practices after the death (e.g., funeral and burial)
- Role of the family
- Afterlife
- Opinion regarding organ donation
- Opinion regarding suicide
- Opinion regarding euthanasia

You will submit your presentation in Canvas. Your presentation should have a minimum of 8 slides and a reference slide that lists all your sources. This reference slide does not count towards your minimum 8 slides. Please feel free to add (this is not a requirement) audio or video(s) to your presentation.

- **Final Examination:**

You will be given a final examination. The final examination will be a comprehensive examination covering the entire text and student learning outcomes. The Final Examination will also include questions pertaining to the Marianist Educational Values.



Scientific Method Definitions

The **METHODS OF SCIENCE** are only tools, tools that we use to obtain knowledge about phenomena.

The **SCIENTIFIC METHOD** is a set of assumptions and rules about collecting and evaluating data. The explicitly stated assumptions and rules enable a standard, systematic method of investigation that is designed to reduce bias as much as possible. Central to the scientific method is the collection of data, which allows investigators to put their ideas to an empirical test, outside of or apart from their personal biases. In essence, stripped of all its glamour, scientific inquiry is nothing more **THAN A WAY OF LIMITING FALSE CONCLUSIONS ABOUT NATURAL EVENTS.**

Knowledge of which the credibility of a profession is based must be objective and verifiable (testable) rather than subjective and untestable.

SCIENCE is a mode of controlled inquiry to develop an objective, effective, and credible way of knowing.

The assumptions one makes regarding the basic qualities of human nature (that is, cognitive, affective, behavioral, and physiological processes) affect how one conceptualizes human behavior.

The two basic functions of scientific approach are 1) advance knowledge, to make discoveries, and to learn facts in order to improve some aspect of the world, and 2) to establish relations among events, develop theories, and this helps professionals to make predictions of future events.

Research Design in Counseling

Heppner, Kivlighan, and Wampold

A **THEORY** is a large body of interconnected propositions about how some portion of the world operates; a **HYPOTHESIS** is a smaller body of propositions. **HYPOTHESES** are smaller versions of theories. Some are derived or born from theories. Others begin as researchers' hunches and develop into theories.

The **PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE** decrees we can only falsify, not verify (prove), theories because we can never be sure that any given theory provides the best explanation for a set of observations.

Research Method In Social Relations

Kidder



THEORIES are not themselves directly proved or disproved by research. Even **HYPOTHESES** cannot be proved or disproved directly. Rather, research may either support or fail to support a particular hypothesis derived from a theory.

Scientific research has four general goals: (1) to describe behavior, (2) to predict behavior, (3) to determine the causes of behavior, and (4) to understand or explain behavior.

Methods In Behavioral Research; Cozby

In order to verify the reliability and validity of scientific research it is important to replicate the results. It is the preponderance of evidence that establishes/supports the theory.

<http://allpsych.com/researchmethods/replication.html>

Marianist Educational Values

Chaminade University is a Catholic, Marianist University. The five characteristics of a Marianist education are:

1. Educate for Formation in Faith

Catholic Universities affirm an intricate relationship between reason and faith. As important as discursive and logical formulations and critical thinking are, they are not able to capture all that can be and ought to be learned. Intellectual rigor coupled with respectful humility provide a more profound preparation for both career and life. Intellectual rigor characterizes the pursuit of all that can be learned. Respectful humility reminds people of faith that they need to learn from those who are of other faiths and cultures, as well as from those who may have no religious faith at all.

2. Provide an Excellent Education

In the Marianist approach to education, “excellence” includes the whole person, not just the technician or rhetorician. Marianist universities educate whole persons, developing their physical, psychological, intellectual, moral, spiritual and social qualities. Faculty and students attend to fundamental moral attitudes, develop their personal talents and acquire skills that will help them learn all their lives. The Marianist approach to education links theory and practice, liberal and professional education. Our age has been deeply shaped by science and technology. Most recently, information and educational technologies have changed the way faculty and students research and teach. At Marianist Universities, two goals are pursued simultaneously: an appropriate use of information technology for learning, and the enhancement of interaction between students and teachers. As Catholic, Marianist Universities seek to embrace diverse peoples and understand diverse cultures, convinced that ultimately, when such



people come together, one of the highest purposes of education is realized: a human community that respects every individual within it.

3. Educate in Family Spirit

Known for their strong sense of community, Marianists have traditionally spoken of this sense as “family spirit.” Marianist educational experience fosters the development of a community characterized by a sense of family spirit that accepts each person with loving respect, and draws everyone in the university into the challenge of community building. Family spirit also enables Marianist universities to challenge their students, faculty and staff to excellence and maturity, because the acceptance and love of a community gives its members the courage to risk failure and the joy of sharing success.

4. Educate for Service, Justice, and Peace

The Marianist approach to higher education is deeply committed to the common good. The intellectual life itself is undertaken as a form of service in the interest of justice and peace, and the university curriculum is designed to connect the classroom with the wider world. In addition, Marianist universities extend a special concern for the poor and marginalized and promote the dignity, rights and responsibilities of all people.

5. Educate for Adaptation to Change

In the midst of rapid social and technological change, Marianist universities readily adapt and change their methods and structures so that the wisdom of their educational philosophy and spirituality may be transmitted even more fully. “New times call for new methods,” Father Chaminade often repeated. The Marianist university faces the future confidently, on the one hand knowing that it draws on a rich educational philosophy, and on the other fully aware for that philosophy to remain vibrant in changing times, adaptations need to be made.

*Selected from Characteristics of Marianist Universities: A Resource Paper,
Published in 1999 by Chaminade University of Honolulu, St. Mary’s
University and University of Dayton*

Each of these characteristics is integrated, to varying degrees, in this course.

Tentative Course Schedule

Dates	Chapter Readings/Videos/Activities	Assignments Due (*All Assignments posted in Canvas)
Week 1	Chapter 1: Think About Death Chapter 2: What is Death? What Does it Mean?	-Chapter Questions and Response
Week 2	Chapter 3: Denial or Adaptation: The Death System Chapter 4: Dying: Transition From Life	-Chapter Questions and Response
Week 3	Chapter 5: Hospice and Palliative Care Chapter 6 End of Life Issues and Decisions	-Chapter Questions and Response
Week 4	*Cross-Cultural/Religion Differences in Death and Dying Presentation	-Completed Presentation uploaded to Canvas by due date
Week 5	Chapter 7: Suicide QPR Powerpoint	-Chapter Questions and Response
Week 6	Chapter 8: Violent Death: Murder, Terrorism, Genocide, Disaster, and Accident Chapter 9: Euthanasia, Assisted Death, Abortion, and the Right To Die	-Compassion and Choices Videos & Discussions: Brittany Maynard & Miguel Carrasquillo Response
Week 7	Chapter 10: Death in the World of Childhood Chapter 11: Bereavement, Grief, and Mourning	-Chapter Questions and Response -“What Chinese Philosophers can teach us about dealing with our own grief” Response”
Week 8	Chapter 12: The Funeral Process Chapter 13: Do We Survive Death	-Chapter Questions and Response
Week 9	Chapter 14: How Can We Help? Caregiving and Death Education Chapter 15 Good Life, Good Death? Trying to Make Sense of it All	-Chapter Questions and Response
Week 10	Final Examination * Death, Dying, Bereavement, & the Media Paper	-Final Exam found on Canvas -Completed Paper posted or uploaded to Canvas by due date



Rubric for Paper

Criteria	25-17 Points	16-9 Points	8-0 Points
Depth of Reflection	Response demonstrates an in-depth reflection on, and personalization of concepts, and/or readings in the course materials. Viewpoints and interpretations are insightful and well supported. Clear, detailed examples are provided, as applicable.	Response demonstrates a general reflection on, and personalization of, the concepts, and/or readings presented in the course. Viewpoints and interpretations are supported. Appropriate examples are provided, as applicable.	Response demonstrates a lack of reflection on, or personalization of, the concepts, and/or readings presented in the course. Viewpoints and interpretations are missing, inappropriate, and/or unsupported. Examples, when applicable, are not provided.
Required Components	Response includes all components and meets or exceeds all requirements indicated in the instructions. Each question or part of the assignment is addressed thoroughly. All attachments and/or additional documents are included, as required.	Response includes all components and meets all requirements indicated in the instructions. Each question or part of the assignment is addressed. All attachments and/or additional documents are included, as required.	Response excludes essential components and/or does not address the requirements indicated in the instructions. Many parts of the assignment are addressed minimally, inadequately, and/or not at all.
Structure	Writing is clear, concise, and well organized with excellent sentence/paragraph construction. Thoughts are expressed in a coherent and logical manner. There are no more than three spelling, grammar, or syntax errors per page of writing.	Writing is mostly clear, concise, and well organized with good sentence/paragraph construction. Thoughts are expressed in a coherent and logical manner. There are no more than five spelling, grammar, or syntax errors per page of writing.	Writing is unclear and disorganized. Thoughts ramble and make little sense. There are numerous spelling, grammar, or syntax errors throughout the response.
Evidence and Practice	Response shows strong evidence of synthesis of ideas presented and insights gained throughout the entire course.	Response shows evidence of synthesis of ideas presented and insights gained throughout the entire course.	Response shows no evidence of synthesis of ideas presented and insights gained throughout the entire course.