



School of Education and Behavioral Sciences  
Psychology

## **PSY/RE/PH 463 Psychology of Death & Dying**

Online (Asynchronous)

Credits: 3      Section: 90 & 91      Term: Spring DUG 2025

### **Instructor Information**

**Instructor:** Darren Iwamoto, EdD, LMHC

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**Phone:** (808) 739-4604

**Office Location:** Behavioral Sciences 105A

**Office Hours:** MW 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

**Virtual Office:** <https://chaminade.zoom.us/j/96611840543>

**Virtual Office Hours:** MW 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

### **School & Department Information**

#### **School of Education and Behavioral Sciences**

Office Location: Behavioral Sciences 105

Phone: (808) 735-4751

### **Course Description & Materials**

#### **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. (EN 102, COM 101, PSY 101)

#### **Time Allocation**

This is a three-credit hour course requiring 135 clock hours of student engagement, per the official CUH Credit Hour Policy (as shown above). Students enrolled in this course are anticipated to spend on average of 9 hours per week engaged in this course. This includes 24

hours studying for your mid-term and final exams, 1 hour and 15 minutes to complete your mid-term exam, 2 hours to complete your final exam, 8 hours to complete your essay assignment, 28 hours to research and complete your capstone paper, 14 hours researching and writing your discussion responses, 7.5 hours responding to your peers, and approximately 50.25+ hours of additional class engagement (e.g., assigned readings and videos). A disaggregated breakdown of class engagement can be found in your Canvas classroom under Modules.

### **Required Materials**

Kastenbaum, R. & Moreman, C. M. (2024). *Death, Society, and Human Experience* (13<sup>th</sup> Ed.). New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group

### **Recommended Items**

(For NUR students) Norlander, L. (2019). *To comfort always* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Indianapolis, IN: Sigma Theta Tau International

### **Canvas** (<https://chaminade.instructure.com>)

The Canvas classroom will contain your gradebook, course assignments, exams, and resources.

## **Learning Outcomes**

### **General Education Learning Outcomes (GLO)**

- **Apply Marianist values and integrate a global awareness through a project-based learning approach.**

### **Psychology Minor Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)**

- 1. Identify some of the key concepts, principles, and overarching themes in psychology.**
- 2. Apply the scientific method and critical thinking to evaluate psychological research.**
- 3. Exhibit effective writing skills within the context of the field of psychology.**

### **Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)**

Upon completion of PSY/RE/PH 463, students will:

1. Identify key concepts, principles, and overarching themes pertaining to death and dying. (PSY - PLO1; PH - PLO 4).
2. Design an interdisciplinary approach (psychology, religion, philosophy, science, etc.) to death and dying in the context of a helping profession (e.g., Nursing, Counseling). (PSY - PLO 1; PH - PLO 3; RE - PLO 1).

3. Recognize the cross-cultural approaches to death and dying. (PSY - PLO 1; RE - PLO 2).
4. Identify the differences between perceptions and experiences regarding death, dying, grief, and bereavement, from the context of life span development. (PSY - PLO 1).

### **Marianist Values**

This class represents one component of your education at Chaminade University of Honolulu. An education in the Marianist Tradition is marked by five principles and you should take every opportunity possible to reflect upon the role of these characteristics in your education and development:

1. Education for formation in faith.
2. Provide an integral, quality education.
3. Educate in family spirit.
4. Educate for service, justice and peace, and integrity of creation.
5. Educate for adaptation and change.

PSY/RE/PH 463 Psychology of Death and Dying is guided by the Marianist Educational Value of Educate for Adaptation and Change. Father Chaminade said, “never has change been done and never will it be done without difficulty.” As Chaminade University prepares all students for life, service, and successful careers, change is inevitable and for many, the passing of our loved ones can be the most difficult change of them all. This class will help us get a deeper understanding of life’s unavoidable transition, death and dying, through the lens of a family member, friend, and service provider. In addition, this value guides this course through its focus on the development of:

1. Flexible thinking;
2. Being respectful of differences;
3. Critical thinking; and
4. Open-mindedness.

This will be found in our weekly discussions and in our Capstone paper.

### **Native Hawaiian Values**

Education is an integral value in both Marianist and Native Hawaiian culture. Both recognize the transformative effect of a well-rounded, value-centered education on society, particularly in seeking justice for the marginalized, the forgotten, and the oppressed, always with an eye toward God (Ke Akua). This is reflected in the ‘Olelo No’eau (Hawaiian proverbs) and Marianist core beliefs:

1. Educate for Formation in Faith (Mana) E ola au i ke akua (‘Ōlelo No‘eau 364) May I live by God.
2. Provide an Integral, Quality Education (Na’auao) Lawe i ka ma‘alea a kū‘ono‘ono (‘Ōlelo No‘eau 1957) Acquire skill and make it deep.
3. Educate in Family Spirit (‘Ohana) ‘Ike aku, ‘ike mai, kōkua aku kōkua mai; pela iho la ka nohana ‘ohana (‘Ōlelo No‘eau 1200) Recognize others, be recognized, help others, be helped; such is a family relationship.
4. Educate for Service, Justice and Peace (Aloha) Ka lama kū o ka no‘eau (‘Ōlelo No‘eau 1430) Education is the standing torch of wisdom.
5. Educate for Adaptation and Change (Aina) ‘A‘ohe pau ka ‘ike i ka hālau ho‘okahi (‘Ōlelo No‘eau 203) All knowledge is not taught in the same school

## Course Activities

### Discussions

*Discussion Question Response* - Based on the video, your readings, and your thoughts on the subject, please respond to the discussion question in no less than **200 words** in length. Post your discussion response directly to Canvas. **Do not post as an attachment.** This will make it easier for everyone to see your response. List your sources at the bottom of your post using APA formatting.

*In addition, you will ask at least one (1) question based on the respective chapter(s), videos, and/or readings, for your peers to respond to after responding to the respective discussion question.*

*Participation Requirement* - Participation (responses to your peers) is very important as it contributes positively to the overall learning of the class. Participation is reviewed for both quantity and quality. For example, "I agree" or "I don't agree" without elaboration or explanation does not constitute participation because it does not add new information to the discussion. In order to earn full participation points, your responses must be related to the discussion question and include new ideas or personal perspectives. For full participation credit you are required to contribute a total of two substantive responses each week.

*Following are guidelines for weekly discussion grades:*

- *Excellent* = The posting and comments are accurate, original, relevant, well supported, teaches us something new or offers a new perspective, and is ***well written***. Grade of 10 indicate substantial learning presence to the course and the stimulation of additional thought about the issue under

discussion. At least one (1) question was written for your peers to respond to.

- *Above Average* = The posting and comments lack at least one of the above qualities but is above average in quality. Grade of 8 here indicate that the comments make reasonable contributions to our understanding of the issue being discussed. At least one (1) question was written for your peers to respond to.
- *Average* = The posting and comments lack 2 or 3 of the required qualities. Comments which are based upon personal opinion or personal experience often fall within this category. These comments typically receive a grade of 5. (Note: some discussion postings will specifically ask for personal opinion or experience and, thus, do not fall into this category). These postings may not fully address the discussion question at hand. No question was submitted for your peers to respond to.
- *Minimal* = The posting and comments present little or no new information or does not contribute to the overall discussion board. Postings may not be complete and/or are poorly written. However, grade of 3 here indicate that the comments may provide some social presence to a collegial atmosphere. No question was submitted for your peers to respond to.
- *Unacceptable* = The posting or comments add no value or meaningless value to the discussion, are poorly written, or do not address the question at hand. Grade of 1 will be provided. No question was submitted for your peers to respond to.

## Exams

You will be given a mid-term and a final exam. The final exam will be a comprehensive exam covering the entire text.

The Final Exam will include questions pertaining to the Marianist Educational Values.

Please note that Canvas will shut down the Mid-Term and Final Exam at 11:59 pm on the due date as specified in Canvas, regardless of how far you are into the exam. Subsequently, please plan ahead and give yourself ample time so this does not become an issue for you.

## Essays

Your Last Lecture Essay

What would you say if you had the opportunity to deliver a final lecture to the people who meant the most to you, especially if you knew that you had only months to live? Randy Pausch, former Carnegie Mellon University professor, gave such a talk titled, “Really Achieving Your

Childhood Dreams” because he wanted to leave this legacy for his young children. While you may never have to face such a situation as Randy Pausch did, the numerous themes (life lessons) throughout the lecture (and book) are overarching and universal.

For this essay, you will practice the Characteristics of a Marianist Education Core Value of Family Spirit by composing your own “last lecture” that imparts at least three (3) life lessons that you have learned and the ones you want to “leave” to those that you care most about. This essay will focus on the life lessons that you have learned so far and how you have demonstrated resiliency, determination, and empathy despite the obstacles you may have encountered. If you have not encountered any obstacles and/or hardships, think about the ones you may potentially face moving forward in your educational and professional journey. Make sure you are comfortable with sharing about the issues that you write about. Use Randy Pausch’s lecture as a model of what words of wisdom you could leave for others.

To help you get started, here are four (4) life lessons that Randy Pausch highlighted in his lecture (you are NOT restricted to these):

- Carpe diem – seize the day, live in and for the moment.
- Remember, when going through life, never to lose the wonder of childhood.
- Never let brick walls or obstacles enclose or confine you.
- Reach beyond the known and stretch out of the comfort zone.

Your paper will follow the following format:

- Title Page (Title of the assignment, class, and your name)
- Introduction
  - A brief introduction of yourself
  - Answer the question, how has your perceptions and experiences regarding death, dying, grief, and bereavement change over the course of your life span development (e.g., child, adolescent, young adult, etc...)?
- Life Lessons
  - Life Lesson 1
  - Life Lesson 2
  - Life Lesson 3
- Conclusion (Concluding reflection/thoughts)
- Reference page (if applicable)

This is not a formal paper, so writing in first person is fine. If you use any resources, you should cite them using APA style. Your “last lecture” should be a minimum of 4 full pages using 12 pt font with 1” margins. You must include a title page and a reference page, if applicable. Your title page and reference page do not count towards the minimum 4 full pages requirement.

## Capstone

This capstone project will integrate concepts and beliefs from the disciplines of Philosophy, Psychology, and Religion, and apply it to a project-based paper that is guided by the Characteristics of a Marianist Education Core Value of Family Spirit.

Scenario: You are a health care provider (e.g., nurse, counselor) and you were asked by the family of a grieving individual to assist with their emotional struggle resulting from the death.

Your paper will consist of the following components.

1. Introduction
  - a. You will select an individual from a movie, book (fiction or non-fiction), or television series, that has experienced a death of someone that person was very close too.
    - i. Introduce the individual who is grieving
    - ii. Provide the “backstory” of the individual that is grieving
    - iii. Explain the relationship the grieving individual had with the person who died.
    - iv. Explain how that person died – Was it sudden? Was it anticipated?
    - v. Explain what the individual is experiencing as a result of the death (e.g., their thoughts, feelings, emotions, and behaviors).
2. Philosophical perspective on death and dying
  - a. Summarize western philosophical perspectives on death and dying
  - b. Summarize eastern philosophical perspectives on death and dying
3. Cultural/Religious perspective on death and dying
  - a. Summarize western cultural/religious perspectives on death and dying
  - b. Summarize eastern cultural/religious perspectives on death and dying
  - c. Summarize atheists’ perspective on death and dying
4. Psychological perspective on death and dying
  - a. Summarize Existential Psychology’s perspective on death and dying
  - b. Summarize the Kubler-Ross Model on the 5-stages of grief
5. Intervention
  - a. Develop an interdisciplinary approach (philosophical, religious, and psychological) to support the individual who is having difficulty with the grieving and bereavement process.
  - b. Your approach will be unique to that individual’s situation, context, and background.
  - c. How would you support that individual’s thoughts, feelings & emotions, and behaviors?
    - i. Use the information you gathered about philosophy, religion, and psychology to support your approach.

This paper will be at least 5 pages of content (excluding title page and reference page) in paragraph form (no outlines or bullet points), double-spaced, 1” margins, utilize headers (Introduction, Philosophical Perspective, Cultural/Religious Perspective, Psychological Perspective, and Intervention), and should have a cover page.

Your paper will use a minimum of 8 credible sources (e.g., peer-reviewed journal articles, credible Internet websites, etc...)

APA formatting is preferred, but I will also accept MLA.

Your paper will be uploaded to Canvas as a .doc, .docx, or .pdf format. I will accept Google Docs, but if you share it with me, ensure that the security on that Google Doc allows me to access it. My email address is [diwamoto@chaminade.edu](mailto:diwamoto@chaminade.edu).

#### Assignment Characteristics:

**Pedagogical Method - Project-based learning:** Students will be placed in the context of a health care provider (Nurse or Counselor) needing to support an individual suffering emotionally because of the death of another individual.

**X Factor Element - Cultural Diversity & Inclusivity:** Students will incorporate cultural and religious perspectives, based on their assessment of the individual they are supporting, into their approach that addresses the project-based scenario.

**Student Ideas - Interdisciplinary Project:** Students will integrate the concepts, theories, and perspectives from three disciplines, Philosophy, Psychology, and Religion to develop their approach that addresses the project-based scenario.

## Course Policies

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to actively participate in course room discussions. Students 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.

## Late Work

No late participation posts (replies to your peers) will be accepted regardless of reason.

Late work will be accepted (other than participation posts) up until the last day of the semester. All late work submitted will automatically receive a 50% reduction in points unless a special arrangement was made with the course instructor prior to the assignment's due date.

## Extra Credit

No extra credit will be assigned in this course.

## Changes to the Syllabus

While the provisions of this syllabus are as accurate and complete as possible, your instructor reserves the right to change any provision herein at any time. Every effort will be made to keep you advised of such changes, and information about such changes will be available from your instructor.

## Grades of Incomplete

No incomplete grade will be issued at the end of this course regardless of reason.

## Final Grades

Final grades are submitted to [Self-Service](#):

## Assessment

### Assignments:

Final Examination (CLO 1)

Mid-Term Examination (CLO 1)

Your Last Lecture Essay (CLO 4)

Capstone Paper (CLO 2, 3)

Discussion Question Responses & Participation (CLO 1, 2, 3, 4)

**Total Possible Points**

### Points:

200 points

100 points

25 points

75 points

280 points (14 x 20 pts)

**680 points**

## Grading Scale

A = 612 (90%) – 680 (100%)

B = 544 (80%) - 611 (89%)

C = 476 (70%) - 543 (79%)

D = 408 (60%) - 475 (69%)

F = 407 (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 as specified in this syllabus.

## Important Information

### 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.

Students are 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, in addition to more obvious dishonesty.

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 Academic Division and may include an “F” grade for the work in question, an “F” grade for the course, suspension, or dismissal from the University.

For the most up to date information, please refer to the [Academic Honesty Policy](#) on the Chaminade University Catalog website.

### Title IX and Nondiscrimination Statement

Chaminade University of Honolulu is committed to providing a learning, working and living environment that promotes the dignity of all people, inclusivity and mutual respect and is free of all forms of sex discrimination and gender-based violence, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. As a member of the University faculty, I am required to immediately report any incident of sex discrimination or gender-based violence to the campus Title IX Coordinator.

### Nondiscrimination Policy & Notice of Nondiscrimination

Chaminade University of Honolulu does not discriminate on the basis of sex and prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX and its regulations, including in admission and employment. Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to the University’s Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights, or both and contact information may be found at the [Chaminade University Title IX](#)

[Office Contact Information and Confidential Resources website](#). On-campus Confidential Resources may also be found here at [CAMPUS CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES](#).

The University's Nondiscrimination Policy and Grievance Procedures can be located on the University webpage at: <https://chaminade.edu/compliance/title-ix-nondiscrimination-policies-procedures/>.

To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please refer to the [Campus Incident Report form](#). Chaminade University of Honolulu prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. The NOTICE of NONDISCRIMINATION can be found here: [Notice of Nondiscrimination](#).

### **CUH Alert Emergency Notification**

To get the latest emergency communication from Chaminade University, students' cell numbers will be connected to Chaminade's emergency notification text system. When you log in to the Chaminade portal, you will be asked to provide some emergency contact information. If you provide a cellphone number, you will receive a text from our emergency notification system asking you to confirm your number. You must respond to that message to complete your registration and get emergency notifications on your phone.

### **Assessment for Student Work**

With the goal of continuing to improve the quality of educational services offered to students, Chaminade University conducts assessments of student achievement of course, program, and institutional learning outcomes. Student work is used anonymously as the basis of these assessments, and the work you do in this course may be used in these assessment efforts.

### **Student with Disabilities Statement**

Chaminade University of Honolulu offers accommodations for all actively enrolled students with disabilities in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act (2008).

Students are responsible for contacting Kokua Ike: Center for Student Learning to schedule an appointment. Verification of their disability will be requested through appropriate documentation and once received it will take up to approximately 2–3 weeks to review them. Appropriate paperwork will be completed by the student before notification will be sent out to their instructors. Accommodation paperwork will not be automatically sent out to instructors each semester, as the student is responsible to notify Kokua Ike via email at [ada@chaminade.edu](mailto:ada@chaminade.edu) each semester if changes or notifications are needed.

### **Kōkua ‘Ike: Tutoring & Learning Services**

Chaminade is proud to offer free, one-on-one tutoring and writing assistance to all students.

Tutoring and writing help is available on campus at Kōkua ‘Ike: Center for Student Learning in a variety of subjects (including, but are not limited to biology, chemistry, math, nursing, English, etc.) from trained Peer and Professional Tutors. Please check [Kōkua ‘Ike’s](#) website for the latest times, list of drop-in hours, and information on scheduling an appointment. Free online tutoring is also available via TutorMe. Tutor Me can be accessed 24/7 from your Canvas account. Simply click on Account > TutorMe. For more information, please contact Kōkua ‘Ike at [tutoring@chaminade.edu](mailto:tutoring@chaminade.edu) or 808-739-8305.

## Course Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Class Activity</b>	<b>Readings Due:</b>	<b>Assignments Due in Canvas:</b>
Week 1:	Welcome  Review Syllabus  Chapter 1 As We Think About Death	Chapter 1	Discussion Response for Chapter 1
Week 2:	Chapter 2 What Is Death?  Chapter 3 The Death System	Chapters 2 – 3	Discussion Participation for Chapter 1  Discussion Response for Chapter 3
Week 3:	Chapter 4 Dying	Chapter 4	Discussion Participation for Chapter 3  Discussion Response for Chapter 4
Week 4:	Chapter 5 Hospice and Palliative Care  Chapter 6 End-of-Life Issues and Decisions	Chapters 5 – 6	Discussion Participation for Chapter 4  Discussion Responses for Chapters 5 & 6
Week 5:	Chapter 7 Suicide  Chapter 8 Violent Death: Murder, Terrorism, Genocide, Disaster, and Accident	Chapter 7 – 8	Discussion Participation for Chapters 5 & 6  Discussion Responses for Chapters 7 & 8
Week 6:	Review for Mid-Term Exam (Chapters 1 – 8)  Work on Your Last Lecture Essay	Chapters 1 – 8	Discussion Participation for Chapters 7 & 8

Week 7:	Review for Mid-Term Exam (Chapters 1 – 8)  Work on Your Last Lecture Essay	Chapters 1 – 8	<b>Your Last Lecture Essay</b>
Week 8:	Mid-Term Exam (Chapters 1 – 8)		<b>Mid-Term Exam</b>
Week 9:	Chapter 9 Euthanasia, Assisted Death, Abortion, and the Right to Die  Chapter 10 Death in the World of Childhood	Chapter 9 – 10	Discussion Responses for Chapters 9 & 10
Week 10:	Chapter 11 Bereavement, Grief, and Mourning  Chapter 12 The Funeral Process	Chapters 11 – 12	Discussion Participation for Chapters 9 & 10  Discussion Responses for Chapter 11 & 12
Week 11:	Spring Break		
Week 12:	Chapter 13 Do We Survive Death?	Chapter 13	Discussion Participation for Chapters 11 & 12  Discussion Response for Chapter 13
Week 13:	Chapter 14 How Can We Help?	Chapter 14	Discussion Participation for Chapter 13  Discussion Response for Chapter 14
Week 14:	Chapter 15 Good Life, Good Death?	Chapter 15	Discussion Participation for Chapter 14

			Discussion Response for Chapter 15
Week 15:	Work on Capstone Paper		Discussion Participation for Chapter 15
Week 16:	Work on Capstone Paper Review for Final Exam (Chapters 1 – 15)		<b>Capstone Paper</b>
Final's Week	<b>Final Exam (Chapters 1 through 13)</b>		<b>Final Exam</b>  <i><u>(No assignments and exams will be accepted after 11:59 pm on Friday, May 2, 2025 regardless of reason; no incomplete grades will be issued regardless of reason.)</u></i>