PSY 332 – DEATH & DYING  
Winter Interim Session, 2014-2015  
COURSE SYLLABUS

INSTRUCTOR: Rosann M. Ross, M.A., L.P.C., N.C.C.  
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OFFICE HOURS: I will answer emails within 24-48 hours after receiving them. Please put “PSY 495” in the subject line when emailing.

CLASS INFORMATION:  
Prerequisite: None  
Location: Cyberspace


COURSE OBJECTIVES:
1. To describe an overview on the economical, legal, psychological, and historical aspects of the process of dying.  
2. To examine the similarities and differences of reactions to death and dying through the textbook readings.  
3. To recognize different social and cultural attitudes towards death & dying.  
4. To discover a sensitivity to one’s own losses and the losses of others by completing the workbook exercises and loss timeline.  
5. To explore some of the diverse literature that discusses death & dying, near death experiences, and the question of a life after life.

EVALUATION:
1. Three multiple choice exams (40 points each) 120 points  
2. Loss Timeline/Paper 20 points  
3. Four workbook exercises @ 10 points each 40 points  
4. “I Learned” Paper 20 points

TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE 200 points

Grading
You can view your up-to-date grades anytime in the student tools area on Blackboard. This course is letter-graded plus/minus A-F. The point percentage cutoffs are as follows:

91-100% = A  
89-91% = A-  
86-88% = B+  
82-85% = B  
79-81% = B-  
76-78% = C+  
72-75% = C  
69-71% = C-  
66-68% = D+  
62-65% = D  
59-61% = D-  
<58% = F

COURSE FORMAT:  
This course is offered online through Blackboard. A common misunderstanding about online learning is that it is “self-paced” and that there are no specific schedules or guidelines. However, as in your face-to-face classes, there are schedules and deadlines that must be met. An excellent time management tip is to set aside a specific time to attend this online course. It has been calculated that the number of hours in class and expected hours outside of class is based on a formula: A 3-credit class is three hours in class per week, and another 2-3 hours for each credit outside of class. In other words, for this 3-credit course, you should expect to spend a total of 9-12 hours per week completing the work assigned in the syllabus. The Course Schedule provides the sequence of events and timing.
Exams
The three exams will be available in “Course Materials” on UNC’s Blackboard. Each exam consists of multiple choice questions and is worth 40 points. Each exam will be available at 12:00 a.m. on the dates listed in the course outline. **YOU MUST COMPLETE EACH EXAM BY 12:00 NOON ON THE DUE DATE LISTED. NO LATE EXAMS WILL BE ACCEPTED. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP TRACK OF THE EXAM DUE DATES!** Please note that the last exam is due on Friday, January 9.

**EXAM SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam</th>
<th>Available</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>Wednesday, December 24</td>
<td>Saturday, December 27 at NOON</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>Wednesday, December 31</td>
<td>Saturday, January 3 at NOON</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 3</td>
<td>Wednesday, January 7</td>
<td>Friday, January 9 at NOON</td>
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Because the longer that you are on-line taking an exam, the greater is the chance for a technical problem, please be certain that you are fully prepared to take the exam. The time limit for each exam is 90 minutes. You cannot start an exam, stop, and then go back later to finish it. Again, do not open an exam until you have thoroughly studied the material and are ready to complete the exam in one 90-minute period.

Exams are open-book, but consulting with anyone during an exam is prohibited. That is, you may not work collaboratively with a classmate or anyone else when taking an exam. Also, although the exams are open-book, you will be responding to 40 items in 90 minutes. There will not be much opportunity to look up information in your text or notes.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

Please be sure that you are familiar with how to submit Assignments; I will be collecting all of the assignments through the course shell Assignment link. After you open your course, from the Control Panel, choose the Assignment link. **Click on the help button at the top of the page for information on how to submit your paper.**

**LOSS TIMELINE/PAPER:**

“Any loss that causes a significant change to our lives is a life loss.**

Death is the most obvious life loss, whether it be the death of parents, grandparents, children, relatives, friends, neighbors, or colleagues.

But other losses can be wrenching enough to cause the pain of grief. These life losses might include the loss of a relationship, job, pet, home, family farm or business, mobility, health, or memory.

And of no less significance, though perhaps less tangible, is the loss of some aspects of our belief system, such as loss of innocence, trust, respect, dignity, hopes, dreams, faith, or religion. Theses, too, are life losses . . .

Make a list of all the significant losses you have experienced in your life. Note, as closely as you can, the year in which each occurred . . . draw a line and mark it off at five-year intervals. Now chart your losses chronologically along the line. There are many ways to chart or draw your lifetime experience with loss so that you will be able to see it over your whole lifetime. Be creative and feel free to choose a way that works best for you.

When you are finished, look for patterns on your chart. What is the first loss you remember? Notice if there are any periods when more than one loss occurred about the same time or were grouped in the same segment. You also might like to add any major decisions or changes in your life at the time of, or as a result of, a particular loss.”


This is an opportunity for you to understand your history of losses, especially those that caused you emotional pain, and how they might be affecting your life today. Recent losses or unresolved losses from many years before can continue to cause pain. Be aware of what emotions are being aroused and record them as you review your timeline. After you understand your losses in terms of your life’s history, synthesize your findings into a 2-3 page, double-spaced paper. **DUE: Saturday, 12/20/2012 by 12:00 NOON**

**WORKBOOK EXERCISES:**

**Exercise #1: Questionnaire: You and Death**

Answer the questions in the link under Assignments. When you are finished, please submit a 1-2 page summary of what you learned about your beliefs/feelings about death and dying. Submit your paper to the Assignment link in Blackboard. **Due Wednesday, December 17 at 12:00 p.m.**

**Exercise #2: Thoughts About Death**

Please type your answers to each question in a Word Document, and submit your paper to the Assignment link in Blackboard. **Due Friday, December 19 at 12:00 p.m.**

**Exercise #3: Death Fears**

Answer the questions in the link under Assignments, then write a 1-2 page paper on your experience in completing this questionnaire. Submit your paper to the Assignment link in Blackboard. **Due Saturday, December 27 at 12:00 p.m.**

**Exercise #4: Questionnaire: Funeral Planning**

Please type your answers to each question in a Word Document, and submit your paper to the Assignment link in Blackboard. **Due Friday, January 2 at 12:00 p.m.**
“I LEARNED” PAPER:

This paper is designed to be a review of what you have learned throughout the course about death & dying. Recall the various topics covered in your readings and assignments, and organize them sequentially. Choose at least three personal “learnings” and three “learnings” of a broader social type. For example, a personal “learning” could involve a new understanding of previously unresolved or unsettled issues related to a family member’s illness or death, while a broader social learning experience could involve a greater awareness of the options for terminal care and a desire to expand the choices available to the community. Each “learning” should be supported by examples from readings and the assignments. The paper should be written in the form of “I” statements: “I learned, I re-learned, I noticed, I was surprised,” etc. The paper should be 2-3 pages in length, typed double-spaced. Due Thursday, January 8, 2015, by 12:00 p.m.

EXTRA CREDIT

You can receive 5 points of extra credit by filling out the exit survey posted under Course Materials, and available during the last week of the semester. You will be asked about your experience in PSY 332 such as: Did you learn a lot? Were you satisfied with the delivery of the course? Would you recommend the course to other students? This is an important aspect of delivering online classes as it helps me to improve the course.

Communication between Student and Instructor

Students are encouraged to stay in contact with the instructor to ensure that all questions are answered and all assignments are clearly understood. The following procedures are recommended for communicating with me:

- Use the “General Class Questions” forum in the Discussion Board to ask any questions that you may have regarding assignments, course requirements, etc., especially if the answer will benefit the entire class.
- Send an email to me to ask questions about private issues, such as a score that you received on an exam or assignment. When sending an email, always include “PSY 332” in the subject line of the message.
- I will post important information, such as revised deadlines or reminders of tasks that need to be done, on the Announcements page of UNC’s Blackboard Page or through an email. Check the Announcement Page in Blackboard and your email daily.

NOTES

Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services at 351-2289.

Academic Dishonesty

All work done for PSY 495 must be your own work. Students who cheat and/or plagiarize will receive an “F” for the course. The University of Northern Colorado’s Student Code of Conduct (www.unco.edu/dos/pdf/StudentCodeofConduct.pdf) and Honor Code (www.unco.edu/dos/communityStandards/honor_code/index.html) strictly prohibit any form of academic misconduct. Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and knowingly or recklessly encouraging or making possible any act of plagiarism, cheating, or fabrication. Academic misconduct is an unacceptable activity in scholarship and is in conflict with academic and professional ethics and morals. All incidents of alleged plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will be investigated and violations of academic integrity will result in a consequence that may be as severe as an F in the class and a recommendation for expulsion. For more information on plagiarism and appropriate paraphrasing, please see: http://www.unco.edu/dos/academicIntegrity/students/index.html

Diversity Statement

The College of Education and Behavioral Sciences (CEBS) supports an inclusive learning environment where diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, appreciated and recognized as a source of strength. We expect that students, faculty and staff within CEBS will be accepting of differences and demonstrate diligence in understanding how other peoples’ perspectives, behaviors, and world views may be different from their own. Furthermore, as stated by UNC, “The University will not engage in unlawful discrimination in…educational services against any person because of race, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, or veteran status. It is the University’s policy to prohibit discrimination in…educational services on the basis of sexual orientation or political affiliation.” (See http://www.unco.edu/hr/AEEO_TitleIX.htm <http://www.unco.edu/hr/AEEO_TitleIX.htm> ). Please visit the CEBS Diversity and Equity Committee website for more information on our commitment to diversity (http://www.unco.edu/cebs/diversity).
**Login at Blackboard:**

- Point your web browser to:  [http://unco.blackboard.com/](http://unco.blackboard.com/)
- Click on login (There is additional information on the gateway page for logging in.)
- Your **username** is the first 8 characters of your UNC email address (e.g., boop1234 or BOOP 1234).
- Your **password** is your student number (Bear Number).
- **Communication in this class will be through your Bear Mail account.**

The email address added to the Blackboard system will be “your name” @Bears address. Contact User Support at 970-351-4357 for problems and questions. Once you get logged in, you will see (starting December 15) your Blackboard course page with PSY 332 listed under “Courses in which I am participating.” You will need to click on the link to get into the course.

**Blackboard Help**

To succeed in this class, you must be proficient in the use of Blackboard. To receive help with Blackboard, go to [http://www.unco.edu/blackboard/student_help.htm](http://www.unco.edu/blackboard/student_help.htm), or call the Help Desk at 351-4357 or 1-800-545-2331.

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**COURSE OUTLINE ON PAGE 4**
COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK 1 – December 15 – December 20

READ:  
Chapter 1 – Attitudes Toward Death: A Climate of Change  
Chapter 2 - Learning About Death: The Influence of Sociocultural Forces  
Chapter 5 – Health Care Systems: Patients, Staff and Institutions

ASSIGNMENTS DUE:  
Workbook Exercise #1 – Wednesday, December 17, by 12:00 p.m. NOON  
Workbook Exercise #2 – Friday, December 19, by 12:00 p.m. NOON  
Loss Timeline/Paper – Saturday, December 20, by 12:00 p.m.

WEEK 2 – December 21 – December 27

READ:  
Chapter 7 – Facing Death: Living with Life-Threatening Illness

ASSIGNMENTS DUE:  
Workbook Exercise #3 – Saturday, December 27 by 12:00 p.m.

EXAM 1 (Chapters 1, 2, 5, 7)  
Available: Wednesday, 12/24 Due: Saturday, 12/27 by 12:00 p.m.

WEEK 3 – December 28 – January 3

READ:  
Chapter 6 – End of Life Issues and Decisions  
Chapter 8 – Last Rites: Funerals and Body Disposition  
Chapter 10 – Death in the Lives of Children and Adolescents  
Chapter 11 – Death in the Lives of Adults

ASSIGNMENTS DUE:  
Workbook Exercise #4 – Friday, January 2 by 12:00 p.m.

EXAM 2 (Chapters 6, 8, 10, 11)  
Available: Wednesday, 12/31 Due: Saturday, 1/3 by 12:00 p.m.

WEEK 4 – January 4 – January 9

READ:  
Chapter 9 – Survivors: Understanding the Experience of Loss  
Chapter 13 – Threats of Horrendous Death  
Chapter 14 – Beyond Death/After Life

ASSIGNMENTS DUE  
“I Learned” paper - Thursday, January 8, by 12:00 p.m.

EXAM 3 (Chapters 9, 13, 14)  
Available: Wednesday, 1/7 Due: Friday 1/9 by 12:00 p.m.