

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

- A. Department Information:
Division: Humanities and Social Science
Department: Philosophy/Religious Studies
Course ID: RELIG 180
Course Title: Death and Dying
Units: 3
Lecture: 3 Hours
Prerequisite: None.
- B. Catalog and Schedule Description:
A study of dying, death, and bereavement. Medical, ethical, legal, philosophical, and religious considerations will be explored (also offered as PHIL 180).

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: One

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- A. Create and articulate a historical, cultural, and/or intellectual matrix within which the religious and philosophical concerns and the questions of death and dying can be placed;
- B. Critically evaluate selected primary sources relating to death and dying (these primary sources can be, but are not limited to, dialogues, aphorisms, essays, sermons, theological treatises, credal formulae, novels, short stories, and non-textual primary sources such as music and visual art forms);
- C. Respond critically, analytically, and/or synthetically in writing to issues dealing with death and dying (these issues can be, but are not limited to ethical, epistemological, psychological, legal, and social issues surround death and the process of dying);
- D. Apply the ideas and concepts related to death and dying to contemporary experience.

IV. CONTENT:

- A. Dying Well
B. Beyond the Age of Medical Miracles
C. Types of Death
 1. Dying hard
 2. Death as a Blessing
 3. Tough Love
D. Bearing the Burden: the new family
E. Hospice
F. Midwives of Death
G. Assisted Dying
H. Ethical Issues
I. Social Issues
J. Psychological Issues
K. Legal Issues
L. Religious Issues
 1. Fear of Death as Fear of Nothingness
 2. Acceptance of Death: Stoicism?
 3. Life Beyond Death
 a. Belief in Personal Immortality
 1. Resurrection of the body
 2. Immortality of the soul
 3. Reincarnation

- b. Absence or Rejection of Belief in Personal Immortality
 - 1. Atman/Brahman
 - 2. Anatman
 - 3. Survival after Death

V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. Lecture
- B. Discussions (class and group)
- C. Audio-Visuals
- D. Reading of texts, both secondary and primary
- E. Writing tasks appropriate for the material
- F. Computer Tutorials (if applicable)

VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Reading: Read the Tibetan Book of the Dead. Note the stages in death and dying in that text. Be able to compare and contrast the vision of death and dying (and rebirth) in the Buddhist text with your experience in a Western culture.
- B. Writing, critical thinking: Identify the stages of grieving death as delineated by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. After noting the similarities and differences with the Tibetan Book of the Dead and with Gilgamesh's grieving for Enkidu, evaluate the adequacy of each style for "postmodern" America using your own experience as well as information gleaned from researching contemporary philosophy and religious studies.

VII. METHODS OF EVALUATION:

- A. Methods of evaluation will vary from instructor to instructor, but may include multiple choice tests, or sentence completion tests. In addition, written components such as essay tests, writing tasks (i.e. journals, summary reviews, interpretive essays, and/or term projects) will be included. Telecomputing can include downloading and uploading reading and writing tasks, on-line discussion, and computer tutorials. Grading may be comparative within a class or may be based on an absolute scale.
 - 1. Sample objective test question: In the classic text, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, the dead person has a choice
 - a. to die again
 - b. to be reincarnated in a lower life form
 - c. to be reincarnated in a higher life form
 - d. to merge with the light
 - e. none of the above
 - 2. Sample subjective test question: Rehearse the classical Hindu theory of reincarnation, comparing that view to contemporary Christian and/or Jewish theories of death and post-death experience.
- B. While the frequency of evaluation will depend on the type of evaluation (i.e. "objective" or written), evaluation will take place periodically throughout the semester with enough frequency to be sufficient to measure student progress and will be sensitive to the various learning styles of students. The minimum evaluation will consist of at least two evaluative instruments (papers, projects, portfolios, or tests) chosen by the instructor of record for the class).

VIII. TYPICAL TEXT:

- A. Longaker, Christine. Finding Death and Finding Hope: A Guide to the Emotional and Spiritual Care of the Dying. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1997.
- B. Pojman, Louis P. Life and Death: Grappling with the Moral Dilemmas of Our Time. Boston: Jones and Bartlett, Publishers, 1992.

- C. Webb, Marilyn. The Good Death: The New American Search to Reshape the End of Life. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1997.

IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:

Supplementary material may include handouts, primary sources, maps, study guides, computer disks, and/or software.