University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

MASTER SYLLABUS-Annotated Template

HLT 420: Health and Society Capstone

Cluster Requirement 5A

Death and Dying (specific topics will vary)

**Course Overview**

**This course will give students the opportunity to:**

1. Examine the “end of life” and “death and dying” from several angles: the individual perspective, the public health perspective, the social perspective (individuals, families, communities, societies), and the professional perspective;

2. Consider the intersections between gender, race, ethnicity, religion, economic status, and political outlook;

3. Synthesize multicultural perspectives from the social sciences and humanities;

4. Investigate questions about death and dying – broadly considered – through readings, films, and written exercises.

**University Studies Rationale – Cluster Requirement 5A Capstone**

**WHAT IS A CAPSTONE COURSE ???**

At UMassD, certain courses are “capstone” courses. They fulfill the University Studies 5A graduation requirement. This means they are approved courses that give students the opportunity to integrate their learning and produce an original expression of knowledge or understanding. In these courses, students demonstrate mastery of both written and oral communication.

**Learning Objectives**

**University Studies 5A Requirement - Capstone Learning Objectives**

Upon completion of the capstone study, students will be able to:

1. Synthesize the knowledge and skills gained within major courses, independently complete a research-based project or creative work and integrate the results of both in an open-ended project or experience (projects within the major are encouraged). (Research Paper/Project for HLT 420)
2. Identify the value of a liberal arts education and the importance of the major field of study, a general education curriculum, and the relationship between them. (Journal for HLT 420 and “Talking About Death”)
3. Demonstrate advanced information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing. (Research Paper and “Talking About Death”)
4. Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, the results of the project or experience. (Research Paper, “Talking About Death”, Journal, Oral Recorded Presentation Analyzing an Artefact)

**HLT Program Learning Objectives:**

Students who have successfully completed this course will have demonstrated their ability to:

* apply perspectives of various disciplines from the social sciences and humanities to the analysis of the social, cultural, economic, political, and economic factors that impact the health status, needs, and behaviors of diverse populations.
* develop an understanding of how theoretical frameworks and research from multiple disciplines can be used to find innovative and practical solutions to health-related problems;

**Course Specific Learning Objectives**

Students who have successfully completed this course will have demonstrated their ability to:

* locate, define, and examine rituals and practices as they impact matters of death and dying within diverse cultures and populations.
* analyze, from historical and cultural perspectives, how religious and spiritual traditions influence law, policy, and politics concerning end-of-life decisions.
* identify controversies about death and dying, within micro- and macro-cultural context, and to learn to engage in responsible debate about these controversies.
* identify, define, and analyze violence of many kinds – in fact and in media – as a public health vector of death and dying.

**Examples of Texts and/or Reading Assignments**

Kastenbaum, R. and Moreman, C. M. (2018). *Death, Society, and Human experience*, 12th Edition.

**Examples of Learning Activities and Assignments**

1. keep a semester-long, weekly journal to reflect upon the issues under discussion; the journal assignment will be posted on myCourses, and all journals will be submitted through myCourses in the Assignment portal;
2. complete all readings and participate in discussion;
3. write a library research paper OR brief, original research project (2000 words not including footnotes) on topics relevant to the course
4. create and present a 10-12 minutes recorded presentation of an analysis of a work of fiction or creative non-fiction about an aspect of death and dying

**Outcome Map**

**0. Learnring Outcome**

**Teaching and Learning Activities**

**(Student Work Product)**

1. Synthesize the knowledge and skills gained within major courses, independently complete a research-based project or creative work and integrate the results of both in an open-ended project or experience (projects within the major are encouraged).

Weekly journal, Individual research, “Talking About Death” independent project, weekly class discussions

(Research Paper/Project for HLT 420, “Talking About Death”)

1. Identify the value of a liberal arts education and the importance of the major field of study, a general education curriculum, and the relationship between them.

Weekly journals, weekly class discussions, “Talking About Death” independent project

(Journal for HLT 420 and “Talking About Death”)

1. Demonstrate advanced information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing.

Bibliography, research paper, footnotes, weekly class discussions

(Research Paper and “Talking About Death”)

1. Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, the results of the project or experience.

Weekly journals, weekly class discussions, in-class presentations

(Research Paper, “Talking About Death”, Journal, Oral Recorded Presentation Analyzing an Artefact)

**Sample Course Outline**

**SCHEDULE**

**Week 1: Overview and Introductions**

Why study death and dying in a program about health and well-being?

**CHOOSE PAPER TOPIC FROM LIST (send email to Dr. Cheyne)**

**Week 2: Learning the basics of psychodynamic theory; review of sociological theories; edge theory**

**Reading:**

K & M text. Chapter 1, As We Think About Death

https://www.brainpickings.org/2012/11/22/fiona-apple-janet-letter/

Case studies

**Week 3:** **What is death? What does death mean in different cultures?**

**Reading:**

K & M text. Chapter 2, What is death? What does death mean?

Case studies

**Week 4:** **Denial or Adaptation: The Death System**

**Reading:**

K & M text. Chapter 3, Denial or adaptation: The death system

Case studies

**TALKING ABOUT DYING – SEGMENT 1 SUGGESTED DEADLINE**

**Week 5: Dying: Transition from life**

**Reading:**

K & M text. Chapter 4, Dying: Transition from life

Fielding, J. and Withers, B. (2015). *Northside hollow*. Wellfleet, MA: Harbor Stage Company.

**Week 6: Hospice and Palliative Care**

**Reading:**

K & M text. Chapter 5, Hospice and Palliative Care.

Virtual visits with Palliative care physician and hospice staff.

**Week 7: FILM**

**RESARCH PAPER/PROJECT DUE.**

**Week 8: End-of-Life Issues and Decisions in different legal systems**

**Reading:** K & M text. Chapter 6, End-of-Life Issues and Decisions

Case studies

**Week 9: Suicide**

**Reading:** K & M text. Chapter 7, Suicide.

Wickersham, J. *The suicide index* (selection)

Jamieson, K. R. *Night falls fast: Understanding suicide* (selection)

Case studies

**TALKING ABOUT DYING – SEGMENT 2 SUGGESTED DEADLINE**

**Week 10: Violent Death: Murder, Terrorism, Genocide, Disaster, and Accident**

**Readings:** K & M text. Chapter 8, Violent death: Murder, terrorism, genocide, disaster, and accident.

Oreskes and Conway. *The collapse of western civilization*.

Case studies

**Week 11: Euthanasia, Assisted Death, Abortion, and the Right to Die**

**Reading:** K & M text. Chapter 9, Euthanasia, assisted death, abortion, and the right to die

Case studies

**Week 12: Death in the World of Childhood**

**Reading:** K & M text. Chapter 10, Death in the world of childhood.

Viorst, J. *The tenth good thing about Barney*. Talking about death with children.

**TALKING ABOUT DYING – SEGMENT 3 SUGGESTED DEADLINE**

**Week 13: Bereavement, Grief, and Mourning**

**Reading:** K & M. Chapter 11, Bereavement, grief, and mourning

Gordon, N. (2018). *Nine night*. London: Nick Hern Books.

**Week 14: Funeral Responses**

**Reading:** K & M text, Chapter 12. Funeral Responses.

Case studies

**FINAL ANALYSIS OF AN ARTEFACT DUE**

HLT 420: Health and Society Capstone

Cluster Requirement 5A

Death and Dying (specific topics will vary)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Death and dying are natural phenomena that every human being and every society confront. This course offers students a safe, multi-disciplinary space in which to consider the physical process of death, its emotional impact, as well as the ways society manages loss of life and the physical remains. Questions include: How do different societies and cultures imagine and manage death? What rituals and practices pertain to death and dead bodies? How do people in different cultures grieve? How do health professionals play a role in the process of dying and of grief? How can we ameliorate people’s experiences with death? What role do the arts, history, law, literature, and social science play in reflecting and influencing society’s constructs of death and dying? How do different societies respond to mass death? What public health issues are raised by death from domestic violence, gender-based violence, suicide, homicide? Is there a difference between “end of life”, “death” and “dying”?

This course examines the “end of life” and “death and dying” from several angles: the individual perspective, the public health perspective, the social perspective (individuals, families, communities, societies), and the professional perspective. It considers the intersections between gender, race, ethnicity, religion, economic status, and political outlook. Synthesizing multicultural perspectives from the social sciences and humanities, students will investigate questions about death and dying – broadly considered – through readings, films, and written exercises.

This course meets the capstone requirement for Health and Society majors. It must be passed with a C- or better to count towards this degree requirement.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

HLT Program Learning Objectives:

Students who have successfully completed this course will have demonstrated their ability to:

* apply perspectives of various disciplines from the social sciences and humanities to the analysis of the social, cultural, economic, political, and economic factors that impact the health status, needs, and behaviors of diverse populations.
* develop an understanding of how theoretical frameworks and research from multiple disciplines can be used to find innovative and practical solutions to health-related problems;

Course specific learning objectives – students who have successfully completed this course will have demonstrated their ability to:

* locate, define, and examine rituals and practices as they impact matters of death and dying within diverse cultures and populations.
* analyze, from historical and cultural perspectives, how religious and spiritual traditions influence law, policy, and politics concerning end-of-life decisions.
* identify controversies about death and dying, within micro- and macro-cultural context, and to learn to engage in responsible debate about these controversies.
* identify, define, and analyze violence of many kinds – in fact and in media – as a public health vector of death and dying.

**WHAT IS A CAPSTONE COURSE ???**

At UMassD, certain courses are “capstone” courses. They fulfill the University Studies 5A graduation requirement. This means they are approved courses that give students the opportunity to integrate their learning and produce an original expression of knowledge or understanding. In these courses, students demonstrate mastery of both written and oral communication.

**Capstone Learning Objectives – University Studies 5A Requirement**

Upon completion of the capstone study, students will be able to:

1. Synthesize the knowledge and skills gained within major courses, independently complete a research-based project or creative work and integrate the results of both in an open-ended project or experience (projects within the major are encouraged). (Research Paper/Project for HLT 420)
2. Identify the value of a liberal arts education and the importance of the major field of study, a general education curriculum, and the relationship between them. (Journal for HLT 420 and “Talking About Death”)
3. Demonstrate advanced information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing. (Research Paper and “Talking About Death”)
4. Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, the results of the project or experience. (Research Paper, “Talking About Death”, Journal, Oral Recorded Presentation Analyzing an Artefact)

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Kastenbaum, R. and Moreman, C. M. (2018). *Death, Society, and Human experience*, 12th Edition.

**All other readings** will be provided either in class, on myCourses, or on reserve in the Carney Library.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

The humanities and social sciences value writing, reflection, research, citation, open discussion, and debate. The course includes these assignments:

1. keep a semester-long, weekly journal to reflect upon the issues under discussion; the journal assignment will be posted on myCourses, and all journals will be submitted through myCourses in the Assignment portal;
2. complete all readings and participate in discussion;
3. write a library research paper OR brief, original research project (2000 words not including footnotes) on topics relevant to the course
4. create and present a 10-12 minutes recorded presentation of an analysis of a work of fiction or creative non-fiction about an aspect of death and dying
5. adherence to attendance and other class policies as set by the instructor.

**Grade Break Down**:

Journal (14 entries) 15 %

Research Paper/Project (2000 words, not including footnotes or bibliography) 20 %

Oral Recorded Analysis of Artefact (10-12 minutes recorded presentation) 20 %

Preparation, Participation, Oral Presentations for Class Discussion 20 %

Talking About Death 25 %

**ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Journal: the first is due Week 2 – and continuing throughout the semester. (14 journal entries)

I am asking you to keep an intellectual journal of your thoughts, feelings, and connections you make between the material you are learning in class and your other courses, what you have learned over the many courses you’ve taken in your major, what is happening in your life, your community, in the country, in the world. The journal assignment is not structured, substantively, except for three criteria:

a. it must not be your class notes

b. it must be at least two pages (word-processed), 500-600 words each week, not including footnotes

c. it must be a synthesis of what you are learning and connections to what you observe in the social world

d. it must use footnotes to indicate sources for ideas that are not your own

As you will see as we proceed through the readings and discussions, your reflexive writing will help you to become more adept at the work of the course, as you begin to recognize and describe your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors related to the topics we discuss.

Please submit ALL WEEKLY JOURNALS via the Assignments portal on myCourses.

2. Research Paper/Project

By September 12th, you need to choose a topic from the list provided for a research paper/project. This project is due on the last day of Week 7. You can sign up for a topic by sending an email to the instructor to indicate the topic you wish to research. Topics are first come, first served! Once a topic has been chosen, it is no longer available. You can also propose a topic not on the list after consulting with the instructor. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Use quotes and footnotes to indicate your sources and make sure you include the bibliography. The footnotes and bibliography are not counted in the word count! (Length – 2000 words, not including footnotes).

3. Oral Recorded Presentation Analyzing an Artefact

This 10-12 minute recorded oral presentation is the final project you will do for the capstone and it is due on the last day of class. The goal of this assignment is for you to study a cultural object (film, fiction, music, art, dance, performance) that represents death and dying in some way using the analytic tools (theoretical framework, concepts, disciplinary perspective) you develop in the course. The goal is for you to have the opportunity to learn and practice the theoretical framework and concepts before choosing a topic. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Use quotes and footnotes to indicate your sources and make sure you include the bibliography. (10-12 minutes recorded oral presentation)

4. Preparation and Participation in Class Discussion

You are expected to have prepared for class discussion by doing the homework. You are expected to be present and to participate in class discussion. This is a seminar and depends upon your contributions! There will be moments where you prepare short oral presentation to contribute to the seminar format built around collaborative knowledge-building.

5. Oral Presentation Work

Oral presentation work includes short oral presentations in class that stem from group work. It also includes more formal prepared presentations (in person or in a recorded format) about your two big writing assignments).

6. Talking About Death (3 segments, self-scheduled, due by the last day of class)

This is a practical piece of the course. You will choose three things that you will discuss, think about, and accomplish that help you practice talking about death. For each you will write a short summary documenting the conversation, the questions asked, answers, and your reflections about what you learned. At least one should involve talking with a professional who works with end of life situations (health care professionals, therapists, call-center workers, politicians or activists, clergy, organ donor programs, NGOs, funeral directors, insurance agents, emergency service workers, lawyers, military, etc.), asking 5 questions regarding their experience with death as professionals, planning for it, coping with it, helping others. The other two can be personal and also practical. Maybe you want to discuss advance directives with your doctor or your parents. Maybe you want to find out how to participate in the organ donor program. Maybe you want to know about how and why you can establish a will or how people prepare for donations after they die. Maybe you love animals and want to discuss with vets how people make decisions about death when it comes to animals. Maybe you want to understand how death intersects with food and you want to talk to the butcher at your supermarket or to a local fisherman about their perspective on how food and death are linked. Maybe you want to understand more about the question of right to die with dignity or volunteer work for a suicide prevention hotline. Maybe you come up with three interviews and conduct them and present the results. Remember, when you present the results, you are going to protect confidentiality. I am interested in your reflections and the questions you asked. We will discuss how to do this in an ethical manner!

NOTE ABOUT ATTENDANCE:

You should plan to attend class regularly. We meet only once a week, and you will miss substantial amounts of material if you are not there. I cannot accept emails that say something like, “Sorry I missed class. What did I miss?” (or worse, “Did I miss anything?”). If you must miss class, you are responsible for learning missed material. Of course, if you have to miss more than one class for illness or other unavoidable crisis, please see me and we can make a plan for your course work.

**Course Policies: Please be responsible for following these to support our learning community.**

**OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY STATEMENT CONCERNING FEDERAL AND UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS AND COMPLIANCE ISSUES**

Please read this document that was developed by the Senate’s Student Faculty Academic Affairs Committee (SFAAC). It contains very important information concerning policies, protections, and accommodation. This will serve as the statement I will abide by as your professor and that will govern our course and classroom.

<https://www.umassd.edu/media/umassdartmouth/provost/omnibus_language_for_syllabi_-jan_11_2019.pdf>

**Electronics in the classroom**

Because they may distract many in the classroom, including your professor, please refrain from using *any* electronic devices during class. Please keep any such items off and put away. If you have a documented disability or other situation that warrants the use of a laptop or other device in the classroom, please speak with me. I reserve the right to ask you to leave class if you are disruptive with mobile devices or other electronics.

**Classroom etiquette**

**Our classroom is a safe space for discussing difficult things.** Please respect the contributions of your classmates, even if you do not agree. In fact, if you do not agree, please raise your hand and offer a different point of view to enrich the discussion for all, supporting your contribution with relevant and responsible sources. This includes differences of points of view from those of your professor. Analyzing a question from several perspectives is important.

If you must leave class early, please tell me before class begins. If you must leave class to go to the restroom, of course, please do so with as little disruption as possible when you leave and return. If you must leave class to answer a call or text, please leave with your things and we’ll see you at the next class.

**Email and MyCourses access**

For this course, you really must have access to both, and check them regularly. You must be familiar with myCourses as we will be using this for coursework

Usually, you can expect a response to an email within one regular working day after receiving your message, but sometimes this may extend up to 36 hours. On weekends and holidays, it may be 56 hours. If you have not received a reply within 24 hours, please send your message again. Please include a subject line that gives the course number and a brief subject. Messages without subjects rarely reach me because of the SPAM filter.

**Grade Scale**

F 0-59 D+ 67-69 C+ 77-79 B+ 87-89 A+ 98-100

D 63-66 C 73-76 B 83-86 A 93-97

D- 60-62 C- 70-72 B- 80-82 A- 90-92

**Academic Integrity**

All UMass Dartmouth students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity and scholarly practice. Academic integrity promotes the pursuit of truth and learning and respect for the intellectual accomplishments of others. These are values that are fundamental to the mission of this University. Such values are undermined by academic dishonesty. Therefore, the University does not tolerate academic dishonesty of any variety, whether as result of a failure to understand proper academic and scholarly procedure, or as an act of intentional dishonesty. Please note that a student found guilty of academic dishonesty is subject to severe disciplinary action. Such disciplinary action may include expulsion from the University. Refer to the Student Handbook for a discussion of academic integrity and to the Student Judicial Code for due process. Any breach of academic integrity in French 201 will be prosecuted.

**Academic dishonesty is defined as attempting to obtain academic credit for work that is not one’s own. Examples include (but are not limited to) the following:**

1. Copying another student’s answers on an examination;

2. Obtaining, or attempting to obtain, the answers to an examination in advance;

3. Submitting a paper that was written by someone else;

4. Submitting a paper that includes phrases, sentences and paragraphs that were copied verbatim, or almost verbatim, from a work written by someone else, without making this clear without indicating that these words were someone else’s through the use of quotation marks or other appropriate citation conventions;

5. Collaborating on a homework assignment when this has been expressly forbidden by the professor;

6. Using unauthorized materials in completing assignments or examinations;

7. Submitting the same paper for more than one class without the express permission of the instructors involved. This list of examples should not be considered exhaustive.

Remember that this definition of academic dishonesty also applies to information submitted in other forms as well as on paper. Submitting a project in which all or part of the project is someone else’s work and not acknowledging this fact, constitutes academic dishonesty. Submitting computer files that do not represent one’s own work is also considered to be academic dishonesty.

For all forms of academic dishonesty, students who knowingly allow other students to use their work are themselves considered to be academically dishonest. Examples would include students who knowingly allow other students to copy their exam answers, and students who give papers that they have written to other students so that the other students can submit them for credit.

In short: do not cheat, plagiarize, copy without attribution, or exploit your peers. Please review the Student Handbook if you have any doubts about what constitutes inappropriate academic behavior, or see me.

I will assume you have read and understood this material. The sanction for plagiarism in this course will be, at least and depending upon severity, failure for the assignment with mandatory rewrite. Other sanctions are detailed on the website.

**Due Dates**

I strongly suggest you plan for and follow due dates for written work. No late work is accepted. If there is an extraordinary reason why you will have difficulty meeting a deadline, please see me as soon as you know there is a difficulty to see if we can devise a schedule to make things work. Vacation plans and exam conflicts in other courses are not acceptable excuses for late work.

**Syllabus and Schedule**

The following schedule tries to black out your work on the calendar. If, as the course proceeds, we need to adjust this, we will. If changes need to be made, you will be notified as soon as possible. Our goal is to keep you on track to accomplish everything and to foster your success in a learning environment that is fair to everybody, transparent, and appropriate for a university course.

**SCHEDULE**

**Week 1: Overview and Introductions**

Why study death and dying in a program about health and well-being?

**CHOOSE PAPER TOPIC FROM LIST (send email to Dr. Cheyne)**

**Week 2: Learning the basics of psychodynamic theory; review of sociological theories; edge theory**

**Reading:**

K & M text. Chapter 1, As We Think About Death

https://www.brainpickings.org/2012/11/22/fiona-apple-janet-letter/

Case studies

**Week 3:** **What is death? What does death mean in different cultures?**

**Reading:**

K & M text. Chapter 2, What is death? What does death mean?

Case studies

**Week 4:** **Denial or Adaptation: The Death System**

**Reading:**

K & M text. Chapter 3, Denial or adaptation: The death system

Case studies

**TALKING ABOUT DYING – SEGMENT 1 SUGGESTED DEADLINE**

**Week 5: Dying: Transition from life**

**Reading:**

K & M text. Chapter 4, Dying: Transition from life

Fielding, J. and Withers, B. (2015). *Northside hollow*. Wellfleet, MA: Harbor Stage Company.

**Week 6: Hospice and Palliative Care**

**Reading:**

K & M text. Chapter 5, Hospice and Palliative Care.

Virtual visits with Palliative care physician and hospice staff.

**Week 7: FILM**

**RESARCH PAPER/PROJECT DUE.**

**Week 8: End-of-Life Issues and Decisions in different legal systems**

**Reading:** K & M text. Chapter 6, End-of-Life Issues and Decisions

Case studies

**Week 9: Suicide**

**Reading:** K & M text. Chapter 7, Suicide.

Wickersham, J. *The suicide index* (selection)

Jamieson, K. R. *Night falls fast: Understanding suicide* (selection)

Case studies

**TALKING ABOUT DYING – SEGMENT 2 SUGGESTED DEADLINE**

**Week 10: Violent Death: Murder, Terrorism, Genocide, Disaster, and Accident**

**Readings:** K & M text. Chapter 8, Violent death: Murder, terrorism, genocide, disaster, and accident.

Oreskes and Conway. *The collapse of western civilization*.

Case studies

**Week 11: Euthanasia, Assisted Death, Abortion, and the Right to Die**

**Reading:** K & M text. Chapter 9, Euthanasia, assisted death, abortion, and the right to die

Case studies

**Week 12: Death in the World of Childhood**

**Reading:** K & M text. Chapter 10, Death in the world of childhood.

Viorst, J. *The tenth good thing about Barney*. Talking about death with children.

**TALKING ABOUT DYING – SEGMENT 3 SUGGESTED DEADLINE**

**Week 13: Bereavement, Grief, and Mourning**

**Reading:** K & M. Chapter 11, Bereavement, grief, and mourning

Gordon, N. (2018). *Nine night*. London: Nick Hern Books.

**Week 14: Funeral Responses**

**Reading:** K & M text, Chapter 12. Funeral Responses.

Case studies

**FINAL ANALYSIS OF AN ARTEFACT DUE**