

## IDIS 392 End of Lifespan

*“The most wondrous thing in the world is that all around us people can be dying, and we don’t believe it can happen to us!”* Yudhistara

**Course Faculty:** Susan Scholtz, RN, PhD  
Associate Professor of Nursing  
**Class Hours:** MWF 4 11:30 am-12:20 pm  
**Location:** Comenius Hall 213  
**Office Hours:** MW 9:00 am-11 am; By appointment as needed  
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### Catalog/Course Description:

**Course Description:** Advances in medical technology have enabled individuals to live longer lives, orchestrate their own healthcare, and participate in end of life decisions. Inherent within end of life issues are cultural decisions, ethical issues, Anticipatory grief, palliative care, loss, and bereavement.

This course will use a holistic approach to examine cultural considerations/rituals, religious influences, loss, grief, socioeconomic challenges, end-of- life physical concerns across the lifespan. Preparing for and caring for the individual/family at the time of death will be explored.

**Course Objectives:** Upon completion of the course, the student will:

1. Explore theories and concepts related to grief, bereavement, mourning, and loss across the lifespan.
2. Describe ethical and moral dilemmas inherent within the context of end of life care.
3. Discuss the dimensions of cultural beliefs and the influence of spirituality within the context of palliative care.
4. Contrast anticipatory grief, loss, mourning, and bereavement across the lifespan.
5. Examine coping mechanisms utilized by individuals at the end of life.
6. Synthesize concepts/theories from psychology and religion to address authentic case studies relative to end of life issues.

### Required Texts:

DeSpelder, L. A. & Strickland, A. L. (2009). *The last dance: Encountering Death and Dying*. (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

### Required Readings on Reserve:

Corr, C.A., Nabe, C.M. & Corr, D. (2009). *Death & dying: Life & living*. (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). California: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Ferrell, B. R. & Coyle, N. (2006). *Textbook of palliative nursing*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). New York: Oxford University Press.

\*Additional course related readings will be required.

**Inclement Weather: College policy will be followed relative to inclement weather. Please check the College web-site or call (610) 625-7995 for any announcements relative to weather and the cancellation of class.**

**Learning Disability Accommodations:** Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for support of learning disabilities and/or ADHD should contact Mrs. Laurie Roth, Director of Learning Services, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Students who wish to request accommodations for support of other disabilities should contact Dr. Ron Kline, Director of the Counseling Center, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the appropriate disability support provider on campus.

**Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is the use of someone's work and the misrepresentation of the work as your own. Examples of plagiarism is failure to properly cite an author's work; using the author's words/thoughts as one's own; purchasing a paper from a professional service; using illustrations without citation etc. If uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism, it is the student's responsibility to seek clarification from the professor, librarian, or the Writing Center. Because of the no tolerance policy, ignorance of the policy is not acceptable. If there are grounds for suspicion of plagiarism, the assignment will be forwarded to the Dean for Academic Affairs. Please review Moravian College's policy on academic honesty found in the Student Handbook. Infractions will be subject to the consequences outlined in the Student Handbook.

**Projected Graded Course Requirements:**

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| 1. Midterm/ <i>A Lion in the House</i>  | 15% |
| 2. Final/Collage  | 15% |
| 3. Reflective Thinking Dialogue/<br>The Journey from the Time of Death Through<br>Interment | 20% |
| 4. The Portrayal of Death in Film/Paper<br><i>The Bucket List</i>                           | 30% |
| 5. Student Facilitated Forum  | 20% |
| ❖ Portrayal of Death in Children's Literature/Films   |     |
| ❖ The Stigmatized Death   |     |
| ❖ Cultural Diversity Related to Death and Dying   |     |
| ❖ Ethical Issues related to End of Life Care  |     |
| ❖ Burial Rites and Rituals/Religiosity  |     |

**Class Attendance:** The student is expected to attend and participate in all classroom activities/Assignments. Unannounced attendance will be taken and extra credit/merit will be earned for regular attendance.

**CLASS SESSIONS: TOPICAL OUTLINE**  
**Fall 2008**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
<b>Week 1</b>		
Aug 25 2008 Monday	<b>Course Overview</b> Reasons to take a thanatology (death awareness) course	Course syllabus, assignments, and activities to be reviewed.
Aug 27, 29 2008 Wednesday Friday	Examining Assumptions 1. Attitudes (Past, Present, Future) 2. Causes of Morbidity and Mortality 3. Dimensions of Thanatology 4. Life Extending Technology	<b>Read:</b> Despleder & Strickland Chapter 1: Be prepared to discuss exemplars of Table 1-3 Dimensions of Thanatology Complete Assignment #1 and forward to <a href="mailto:scholtz@moravian.edu">scholtz@moravian.edu</a> Instructor to complete same assignment and forward Complete Assignment #2 and Bring to Class on Wednesday
<b>Week 2</b>		
Sept 1 Labor Day	OFF	
Sept 3 Wednesday	The Meaning of Death Across the Lifespan 1. When Pregnancy Fails/Perinatal Loss 2. Attachment -> Detachment (John Bowlby) 3. Stillbirth 3. Understanding of Death in Children (Maria Nagy)	<b>Read:</b> Despleder & Strickland: Chapter 2 Resolve through Sharing Guest Speaker
Sept 5 Friday	4. The Dying Child 5. Palliative Care in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit/ Religious Influences on Birth, Death, Baptism, Organ Donation	<b>Read:</b> Ferrell and Coyle: Chapters 53 and 54
<b>Week 3</b>		
Sept 8 Monday	The Meaning of Death across the Lifespan 6. Bereavement/Grief in the Child and Parent 7. Adolescents and Loss	<b>Read:</b> Corr and Nabe: Chapter 13 <b>Read:</b> Despleder & Strickland: Chapters 10 and 11 <b>Learning Activity:</b> Student will identify a contemporary song from any genre with a focus on death.
Sept 10 Wednesday		
Sept 12 Friday	Portrayal of Death in Children's Media	<b>Student Led Forum #1</b> <i>Portrayal of Death in</i>

		<i>Children's Media/Loss of a Pet</i>
<b>Week 4</b>		
Sept 15, 17 Monday Wednesday  Friday	Cultural Considerations 1. African Traditions 2. Western Civilization 3. Native American Indians 4. Mexican 5. Asian 6. Islamic	<b>Read:</b> Despleder & Strickland Chapter 3  <b>Student Led Forum #2</b> Death and Dying: The Global Community
<b>Week 5</b>		
Sept 22, 24, 26 Monday Wednesday Friday	Ethical/Legal Dilemmas Associated with End of Life Care 1. Advance Directives 2. Living Wills 3. Medical Power of Attorney 4. Financial Power of Attorney	<b>Read:</b> Despleder & Strickland Chapter 5 Additional Readings TBA <b>Guest Speaker: TBA</b>  <b>Video: Ethical Dilemmas in End of Life Issues</b>
<b>Week 6</b>		
Sept 29 Monday	Holistic Care of the Dying Patient 1. Physical Problems of the Dying 2. Symptom Management of the Dying	<b>Read:</b> Despleder & Strickland: Chapters 6 and 7
Oct 1 Wednesday	3. Hospice	<b>Guest Speaker:</b> Hospice Nurse
Oct 3 Friday	4. Psychosocial Aspects of Last Rites 5. Findings at the Time of Death	<b>Read:</b> Despleder & Strickland Chapter 9 <b>Student Led Forum #3</b> Burial Rites and Rituals/Religiosity
<b>Week 7</b>		
Oct 6 Monday Oct 8 Wednesday  October 10 Friday	Fall Break ☺  <b>Midterm</b>  Pronouncement of Death Care of the Body Burial Rites and Rituals Death Certificate Autopsy	<b>Read:</b> Despleder & Strickland Chapter 8  Synopsis of <i>a Lion in the House</i> with Application to Theory  <b>Learning Activity:</b> Students will meet with a funeral director to gain insight related to the decision making occurring from the time of death through interment. Information will also be presented on care of the body (i.e. in the hospital)

		<p>through embalming/cremation) Based upon this experience students will write a reflection on: The Journey from the Time of Death Through Interment</p> <p>* Students have the option to attend as a class or to make individual arrangements.</p> <p>Additional Readings</p>
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<u>Week 8</u>		
Oct 13 Monday	Sudden Death/Stigmatized Death	<b>Read:</b> Despleder & Strickland Chapter 12
Oct 15 Wednesday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Suicide</li> <li>2. Risk Taking Behaviors</li> <li>3. Violence</li> <li>4. AIDS Related Death</li> </ol> Burial Rites and Religiosity	<b>Student Forum # 4:</b> Burial Rites and Religiosity
Oct 17 Friday	Sudden/Unexpected Loss	<b>Discuss:</b> Select Case Studies <b>Submit:</b> Reflective Thinking Dialogue: The Journey from the Time of Death Through Interment
<u>Week 9</u>		
Oct 20 Monday	The Grief/ Loss Process	<b>Read:</b> Despleder & Strickland Chapters 8 Additional Readings TBA
Oct 22, 24 Wednesday Friday	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Anticipatory Grief</li> <li>2. Uncomplicated Grief</li> <li>3. Complicated Grief</li> <li>4. Disenfranchised Grief</li> </ol>	<b>View:</b> <i>The Bucket List</i> <b>Submit:</b> The Portrayal of Death in Film/Paper Nov 3
<u>Week 10</u>		

Oct 27 Monday	Death in the Lives of Adults	<b>Read:</b> Despleder & Strickland Chapter 11
Oct 29 Wednesday	Death in the Lives of the Elderly	Readings TBA
Oct 31 Friday	Death and the Macabre	<i>Reflection: Portrayal of Death as Macabre/ The “Hallowed Eve”</i>
<u>Week 11</u>		
Nov 3 Monday	Death and Dying: Theory to Practice Ethical Issues: Euthanasia Assisted Suicide and Social Policy	<b>Read:</b> Corr and Nabe Chapter 18 <b>Prepare to discuss Religious Perspectives on Right to Die</b>
Nov 5 Wednesday	Ethical Issues: Theory to Practice	<b>Prepare to discuss the case of Terri Schiavo</b>
Nov 7 Friday	Death and Dying: Theory to Practice	<b>Prepare to discuss the case of Karen Quinlan and Nancy Cruzan (Landmark cases)</b>
<u>Week 12</u>		
Nov. 10 Monday	The Stigmatized Death	<b>Student Led Forum: The Stigmatized Death</b>
Nov 12 Wednesday	The Proverbial “Good Death’	
Nov 14 Friday	The After Life/Near Death Experience	
<u>Week 13</u>		
Nov 17 Monday	The After Life/The Near Death Experience	<b>Read:</b> Despleder & Strickland Chapter 14
Nov 19 Wednesday	The Secular Lens on Death and Dying/Immortality	Discussion based upon readings <b>Read:</b> Despleder & Strickland Chapter 14
Nov 21 Friday	Socioeconomic Burdens Related to End of Life Care issues 1. Cost of palliative care 2. Cost of futile care 3. Economic exhaustion of the family’s resources	<b>Read:</b> TBA
<u>Week 14</u>		
Nov 24 Monday	Life after a Loved Ones Death: Moving Forward Challenges faced by members of the interdisciplinary teams related to end of life	<b>Read:</b> Despleder & Strickland Chapter 15

	<p>issues</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the state of the art and science of caring for the dying?</li> <li>2. What direction do we take from here?</li> </ol>	<p><i>Synthesize</i> knowledge gained from this course to discuss your reflection/insights to the integral dilemmas inherent within end of life issues.</p>
<p><u>Week 15</u> Dec 1, 3, 5 Monday Wednesday Dec 5 Friday</p>	<p>Grief and the Holidays Old Traditions: New Beginnings Traditional Memorials/ New Traditions Support Groups</p>	<p><i>Learning Activity :TBA</i> <i>Student Presentation: Collage</i> <i>Case Studies: Application to Theory</i></p>
<p><u>Week 16</u> Dec 8 Monday Dec 10 Wednesday</p>	<p>The End of Life Collage  Course Evaluation</p>	<p><i>Student Presentation: Collage</i> <i>Case Studies: Application to Theory</i></p>