

# **Sociology 419.07: Special Topics in Medical Sociology**

## **Sociology of Hospice and Palliative Care: An Interdisciplinary Approach (Winter 2009)**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Bruce Arnold  
**OFFICE:** SS 912  
**OFFICE HOURS:** TBA  
**PHONE:** 220-6508.  
**CLASS:** Wednesday 5:00PM – 7:50PM  
**ROOM:** SS 012

\* Instructor does not use e-mail for course related correspondence.

\* For student study resources see ¶ <http://soci.ucalgary.ca/18/jfstud.htm><sup>1</sup>

\* Some changes may be made to course deadlines, timing, format, and content by the instructor.

\* Concerns about evaluations and grades must be first put in writing, including the grounds and rationale for said concerns, and submitted to the instructor in advance of a meeting being scheduled.

Death and dying is around us always. So are its myths and taboos. Death and dying is a multi-dimensional embodied process that unfolds within specific contexts, social norms, involving a wide variety of persons. This course integrates medical & psychosocial end-of-life considerations. General topics will include, but not be limited to; (1) History of hospices and palliative care and “Total Pain”; (2) Symptom and pain management; (3) Dying, death and the life-course; (4) Communication and decision-making; (5) Spiritual and cultural considerations; (6) Grief, bereavement, and funeral rites.

Medicine demonstrates its passion and its potential in the vigorous, technological fight against disease, and it has been remarkably successful. Because of this, and public health measures, people in the developed world are living longer. (1) Unfortunately, there is a downside to these successes. Instead of dying quickly of acute illnesses, people tend to die at the end of long chronic illnesses, often with physical and emotional suffering, debility, and dependence. And, this extended dying process involves the development of many types of pain and suffering, commonly referred to in palliative medicine as “total pain.” (2) Patients, their families, friends, and their healthcare professionals are embedded in this process and attempts to manage and relieve its intensity. (3) However, many of the more rewarding developmental processes associated with end-of-life are often overlooked. All of the above will be introduced and explored during this course drawing from palliative medicine, social psychology, religious studies, philosophy, and sociological literatures. Course goals include:

- Development of critical (not just to criticize) and reflexive thinking skills
- Identification and application of asking “good” questions

- Integrating clinical examples with academic course readings
- Identifying difficulties and solutions for integrating interdisciplinary issues
- Working individually and in teams to address course goals
- Considering the interdependent dynamics of the dimensions of agency, structure, and culture.

**Pedagogy:** This course is organized as an upper level seminar using **“inquiry based learning.”** (See Blackboard for more information) Students are required to come to each class prepared to discuss and integrate required and supplemental readings, clinical cases, and participate in experiential mortality course related exercises. Students will be called upon regularly in each class to participate in the learning process (see participation grade). Formal classes begin on Wednesday, January 14<sup>th</sup> and presentation and research teams will be organized during the first class. See Blackboard for required readings for the first class – please come prepared to discuss them.

**Required Field Trips:** Students are also required to arrange their schedules to attend and participate in two evening field trip, one to a local hospice and another to a local funeral home, which may not offered during class time. Please be aware of the locations, topics, and format of these required field trips when selecting to enroll in this course

(1) The first field trip will be during class time Wednesday January 28<sup>th</sup> and will consist of a tour of a **local hospice** followed by a lecture by hospice staff and student team presentations.

(2) The second field trip will be one evening in March (date unknown at this time) at a local funeral home and will include a *“complete”* tour of the facility and a lecture by their staff on culture and death rituals. The goal of this course it provide students with an interdisciplinary knowledge base that will improve their own quality of life, be better prepared to offer compassionate care to terminally ill persons, and consider a career (or volunteering) in a health care profession related field.

**Evaluations:** All components of this course must be completed to receive a passing grade. Deadlines are deadlines.

Mid-term Exam – 20% February 25<sup>th</sup> (second ½ of Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> class)

Team Reading Presentation – 10% TBA

Team Research Presentation – 40% April 1<sup>st</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>

Final Quiz: 10% Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup> (in class)

Participation: 20%

**Exams:** The *two examinations* (not cumulative) will include multiple choice and short answer questions drawn from all materials presented in class, readings, class discussion, presentations, and field trips. The final quiz will include questions drawn from the team assigned research presentation and course materials covered since the short-notice examination.

**Team Research Presentation (40%):** For the professional *research presentation* of 20-30 minutes, students are expected to work in a team environment on a course related research topic chosen in consultation with the instructor. A 3 page point-form outline of the presentation will be submitted to the instructor and all students at the beginning of class. Arrangements can be made for teaching aids to assist in presentations when necessary (e.g. PowerPoint). A team grade will be assigned to each team member. *All team members must provide an equal part of the in-class presentation to receive a grade. All team members must be present and participate in the presentations.* Team members who are unable to keep up-to-date with other team members may be given an alternative research assignment for presentation. More information will be given in class. Be prepared to make a research topic decision early in the term.

**Participation (20%):** Students are expected to be fully prepared to contribute to all classes. Students will be asked throughout the course to thoughtfully comment on specific readings and or issues discussed in class. Again, this is for students to learn how to apply course material and issues and so all students are on “the same page” and are therefore better prepared to learn from the classes and be better equipped for exams and research projects. This course employs a seminar and inquiry based learning format.

**Team Reading presentation (10%):** Students will be asked to briefly summarize KEY course issues in an assigned reading(s) and clearly connect them to class issues, with a brief course related analysis, and resulting question for the class (about 15 minutes). Students will distribute a 2 page outline of their presentation to the instructor and all students at the beginning of their presentation. More instructions and details for this presentation will be given in class during January.

**Required texts: \***

Psychosocial Issues in Palliative Care. Mari Lloyd-Williams (Ed.). Oxford University Press. 2008. Second Edition.

What Dying People Want: Practical Wisdom for the End of Life. David Kuhl, M.D. Public Affairs-Perseus Books. 2002.

\* Some required palliative-hospice care web sites will be assigned during the course.

Continued enrollment is seen as informed consent and agreement to all course conditions including confidentiality of any and all personal course related comments made in class during this course.

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**USRI**

*At the completion of this course each student will be asked to complete a Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) form.*

***Exam Policies:*** *You must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take an exam. All requests for deferral of an examination due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferred exams may be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. If you have missed an exam for a legitimate reason, you will be able to write a “make up” exam as close to the original exam as possible. The date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferred exam. Deferred exams will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.*

***Ethics Research:*** *Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.*

***Academic Misconduct:*** *cheating is regarded as a serious academic offense. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar, which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.*

***The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP)*** *legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor’s office or the Department main office. Term assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor’s office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.*

***Safewalk:*** *The University of Calgary provides a “safe walk” service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the “Help” phones located around Campus.*

### ***Academic Accommodation***

*Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, telephone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. **It is a student’s responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.***

