

**AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**End of Life Issues**  
**HPRS 1303**

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**Professor:**  
**Phone:**  
**Email address:**  
**Office Hours:**  
**Course Time:**  
**Section #:**

\*THE MORE TIME SPENT IN THIS COURSE, THE BETTER THE GRADE.\*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**I. INTRODUCTION:**

This course is designed to introduce the students to concepts associated with loss, grief, death and dying. The course includes introductory information about the denial of death in society, grief responses, communication strategies, care and support of the dying and of the surviving family, physical dying processes, and common legal issues associated with end of life decisions and options and ethical dilemmas commonly seen in the health care arena today.

**II. PLAN OF INSTRUCTION:**

**MANDATORY:**

- The Death of Ivan Ilyich by Leo Tolstoy (purchase at any local bookseller) – if possible, find a copy with the Forward by Ronald Blythe.
- Course Guide for HPRS 1303 - "Death and Dying".
- You are encouraged to monitor current news resources, such as newspapers, news magazines, online news sources, news and topical discussions on TV, for developing and changing ethical and legal issues related to death and dying in America and the world. Such reading provides a basis for personal awareness and individual contributions to class discussions.

**III. SCAN COMPETANCIES:**

Recently, the U.S. Department of Labor established the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) to examine the demands of the workplace and whether the nation's students are capable of meeting those demands.

### **How SCAN Competencies are incorporated into a Death and Dying course:**

#### **SCANS COMPETENCIES:**

Recently, the U.S. Department of Labor established the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) to examine the demands of the workplace and whether the nation's students are capable of meeting those demands.

SCANS Competencies are incorporated into this Death and Dying course through:

#### Resources

Manages time by completing Death and Dying assignments by their due dates. (1.1)

Uses the LRS and common informational sources as valuable resources. (1.3)

#### Interpersonal

Participates as a member of a team when doing group activities and exercises. (2.1)

Students are given the opportunity to teach other students in group discussions and presentations on particular topics. (2.2)

Medical information is obtained to better service and educate clients. (2.3)

#### Basic Skills

All basic skills are used in learning and applying Death and Dying information to better service the patients and families. (6.1 - 6.6)

#### Thinking Skills

All thinking skills are used in Death and Dying by students preparing for individual and group work, discussions of case studies and assigned readings, and general class discussions. (7.1 – 7.6)

#### Personal Qualities

Death and Dying students will demonstrate accountability and responsibility by completing assignments and group activities in timely manner. (8.1)

Students should have increased confidence regarding loss, grief, death and dying issues and skills by the completion of this course. (8.2)

## **IV. LEARNING ACTIVITIES:**

A. Instructional methodology includes lecture presentations, group discussions and group activities, guest speakers, field trips, written journal entries, and individual student presentations. Content for presentation and discussion arise from faculty presented topics, an in-depth course guide of reference materials, and a reading assignment of Leo Tolstoy's masterpiece The Death of Ivan Illyich.

B. You are encouraged to monitor current news resources, such as newspapers, news magazines, online news sources, news and topical discussions on TV, for developing and changing ethical and legal issues related to death and dying in America and the world. Such

reading provides a basis for personal awareness and individual contributions to class discussions.

#### **IV. COURSE RATIONAL:**

This course is designed to give all health occupations students will gain an increased awareness of loss, death, dying, and grief as they may encounter it in their professional lives, and they will be exposed to skills and techniques that facilitate communication and therapeutic interactions with clients and family members. Additionally, personal insight into their own attitudes and concerns regarding these topics is intended as an outcome for the course.

#### **V. COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Identify the general population's and your personal values and attitudes concerning loss, grief, death, and dying.
- Discuss physical aspects of death and the dying process, and physical care of the dying patient.
- Recognize usual grief behaviors in adults and children and initiate appropriate interventions.
- Discuss the nature of grief experienced by professionals working with dying patients and their families, and coping strategies used by these professionals.
- Discuss current end-of-life issues from diverse ethical and legal perspectives.
- Discuss the role of spiritual support and religious practices in coping, bereavement, and death rituals.
- Identify the contribution memorialization, funerals, cemeteries and grave markers make to the grieving process.
- Discuss the Hospice concept of care for the dying person and their family.

#### **VI. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**Attendance:**

Attendance for class and field trips is required. Absences from class periods will impact the course grade.

- Absences of 4 class periods will result in a grade no higher than a B.
- Absences of 5 class periods will result in a grade no higher than a C.
- Absences of 6 classes will result in a grade no higher than a D.
- Absences of 7 classes or more will result in a grade of F.

Definition of an "absence" is missing more than one hour of the class.

An absence can accrue due to arriving late or leaving early.

There are no "excused" absences.

Confirmation of EMS Rideout conflicts must be provided from the ACC PMT Program faculty.

Email and phone contact will be used when possible to communicate class schedule changes.

Each student is responsible for keeping faculty informed of changes in email addresses and / or phone or pager numbers.

**Grade Contracts:**

Grade will be by contract. The requirements and criteria for each grade are specified below. Each student will submit a completed "Grade Contract Form" specifying a grade. I will determine class participation and attendance, timely submission of required work, and the quality and adherence to criteria of completed assignments. I reserve the right to lower the grade based on the individual student's inability to meet the established criteria. Students may renegotiate their contract for a decrease in grade only.

Academic Dishonesty will result in immediate withdrawal from the course.

**Contract Options:**

- **"C"**: Class Attendance and Participation in Discussions and Activities
- **"B"**: Class Attendance and Participation in Discussions and Activities  
Journal: all entries submitted on time

- **"A":** Class Attendance and Participation in Discussions and Activities  
Journal: all entries submitted on time  
1 Class Presentation

### **Criteria for class assignments:**

#### **Class Participation:**

- It is assumed each class registrant desires to actively gain from this class, therefore, attendance is expected and participation in class discussions is anticipated.
- Maximum personal and professional growth will be attained in this course through both expressing of personal views and listening to differing ideas from classmates. It is expected that each individual will participate by both sharing and encouraging others to share.
- Contributions to class discussions should reflect assigned class preparation, and inclusion of additional information gained from optional readings or in pursuit of personal interests.
- Maintaining an open mind regarding differing views of members of the class is mandatory for gaining increased awareness of the multifaceted nature of issues and beliefs associated with the class topics.
- Class discussions are to reflect courtesy, respect, and receptivity of ideas being expressed. Disrespect will not be tolerated, and could result in instructor initiated withdrawal from the class.

#### **Journal Entries:**

- Journals will be kept throughout the semester.
- Journals are mechanisms through which individuals can articulate personal thoughts and feelings in a safe and confidential manner.
- These journals are treated as confidential and read only by the instructor.

- Entries should include general comments on subjects of interest, tangential subjects brought to mind by class discussions, personal experiences or specific reactions to topics discussed in class.
- Journals must be legible.
- **Each entry is expected to be a minimum of 1 page typed single space or 2 pages either double spaced or hand written. An entry is required for each week.**
- The journals are not intended to be summaries or an evaluation of speakers or classes, but can reflect some in-depth personal views on the topics and ideas expressed within the classes.
- Journals will be retained by the professor unless alternative arrangements are made.
- Due dates are listed on the Course Calendar; submission and acceptance of late journals must be approved prior to the due date.

**Class Presentations:**

Presentations will provide the class with new and current information on relevant topics, and allow for individual interests to be shared with the class. Professional presentations to colleagues are inherent in many health related positions, and this opportunity will enhance self confidence and skill in meeting these in-service type commitments to coworkers.

- A fifteen minute oral presentation to the class will be done on a topic pre-approved by the professor.
- Presentations may be done in pairs (for a total of 30 minutes) or individually depending upon the topic selected.
- Presentation topics may be identified within current new or ethical dilemmas, topics not covered in the course content as listed on the Course Calendar, or other related subjects suggested by a student.
- Sign-up sheets will be available by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> class period.
- Topics of choice must be established and assigned a presentation date by the March 7<sup>th</sup> class period.

Changes in topic or presentation date must be pre-approved by faculty.

- Failure to designate a topic and establish a presentation date March 7<sup>th</sup> will result in a course grade no higher than a B.
- Copies of notes, reference documents, class handouts, and other related materials used to enhance the presentation are to be handed to faculty at the end of the presentation.

**Criteria for "Satisfactory" on Class Presentations:**

- Stays within the designated time frame, plus or minus 5 minutes, as allocated.
- Addresses the intended topic incorporating relevant information for persons dealing with issues of loss, grief, death, and dying.
- Reflects outside reading from approved professional journals or literature. Readings should be current within the last 5 years. Contact me if you wish to consider using sources older than 5 years.
- Is delivered in a professional manner. Eye contact should be made, and reading of the presentation directly from a script is to be avoided.
- Is done on the scheduled day. Extenuating circumstances necessitating rescheduling of presentations must be cleared by me at least one class period in advance.
- Turns in copies of notes, handouts, etc. to the instructor after the presentation.
- Visual aids are encouraged but not mandatory for successful presentations. Handouts for the class are encouraged, and can be duplicated by the instructor if given sufficient time prior to the presentation.
- The use of a "guest speaker" in lieu of doing a presentation personally is not an option. See me if you have such a guest you feel would be appropriate for the class.