



Sungkyunkwan University (SKKU) International Summer Semester (ISS) 2017
"New Experience, New Engagement"

Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Good Life and Good Death

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SHORT COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is intended to contribute to an appreciation of one's life through understanding one's relationship with death on personal and societal levels. Taking cross-cultural perspectives, we will examine the diversity of death-related encounters, attitudes, and societal interpretations of life and death. Examining the variegated meanings in different social institutional spheres, such as ethics, politics, mass media, and family from a comparative perspective, the course helps students recognize that death and bereavement are deeply embedded in social and cultural structures. The course also examines how we learn about death, the typical ways in which our attitudes and beliefs are shaped, and how death and bereavement affect children, adolescents, adults, and older adults. The goal of this course is to engage in a constructive process of self-discovery by examining diverse cultural traditions of death and mourning rituals. Even though the overall framework concerns death-related topics, the majority of subjects addressed in the course will provide a unique opportunity to promote an appreciation of life and living, as well as a marvelous diversity of cultural meanings.

READING MATERIALS

DeSpelder, L. A., & Strickland, A. L. (2015). *The last dance: Encountering death and dying* (10th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

- Kastenbaum, R. (1993). Reconstructing Death in Postmodern Society. *Omega: Journal of Death and Dying*, 27(1): 75-89.
- Garbarino, J. (1993). Challenges We Face in Understanding Children and War: A Personal Essay. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 17: 787-793.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

The format of learning is a seminar in which we will operate as a study group, and class discussions will be the core of the course. You are thus expected to take central roles in framing and leading our critical reviews of readings and films we watch as well as engaging in class discussions and activities.

Reading and Participation in Seminar: You are expected to complete the readings assigned each day and make an oral presentation of your understanding of the issue(s) and question(s) of the topic area at the daily seminar session. Your participation and preparation will be graded.

Your Lossography: You are to review your experiences with loss and death during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Based on your review, you are to write an essay of approximately 3-4 typed pages, highlighting an important loss event in your lives and making connections to your attitudes/beliefs today. I will collect, collate, and bind your essays. Then I will have you read one another's lossographies, and you will be expected to report on both the experience of reading others' essays and the writing of your own. Detailed instructions on this exercise will be discussed in class.

Religious Belief on Life & Death: You are also to choose a religious belief system (either your own or one that interests you) and learn about it by reading or speaking with a religious leader to answer the following questions:

1. How does the belief system define concepts of life and death? How are the two definitions related?
2. What are the notions of religious belief surrounding the destination of the body or human soul (spirit) after death?
3. How is the belief system reflected in the death rituals performed for the dead body?
4. What sort of consolation and support is offered to the survivors of the deceased? Describe mourning rituals set for those who desire to honor the dead.

I learned paper: This paper is designed to function as a review of your learning during the term. You are encouraged to recall the various topics covered in the course and organize them sequentially. You are to choose at least three personal learnings and three learnings of broader social import. For example, a personal learning could involve a new understanding of previously unresolved or unsettled issues related to a family member's illness or death. A learning of social import could involve a greater awareness of the options for terminal care and a desire to expand the choices available to the community. Each learning type must be supported by examples from the readings, class discussions, activities, field trips, and films. It is important for you to identify, with specific examples, the sources and extent of your learnings. The paper should be written in the form of "I" statements: I learned, I relearned, I noticed, I was surprised, I can see, I feel, I tuned into, I got a handle on, and so on. In summary, this paper is a course review, eliciting your learnings most useful to you.

Term Paper: In addition to three written essays, each of you will choose a topic of your own interest for your term paper project and create an annotated bibliography for your first assignment. Based on the bibliography you submit, I will select one article for the class to read, and you will present it orally in the designated class time. During the first class period, I will go over what you should expect from the class and explain your first assignment.

Your term paper will be written in APA style. It will use a minimum of seven scholarly sources that include books, the textbook, scholarly journal articles and documents. Items taken off of the internet, interviews, newspaper report, and popular magazines may be used, but they do not count as scholarly sources. The paper will be a minimum of 7-10 double-spaced, typed pages (12 fonts on 8 1/2" by 11" white paper, with one inch margins on all sides). Your research paper should be the final product of your investigation on the chosen topic based on your interest. You must develop a clear introduction, a title that reflects what the paper is actually discussing, cite of all sources, use each source in the body of the paper, develop a complete bibliography, and write at least seven pages of text (refer to guidelines for written work below). A completed draft is due on Monday, July 17. It is important to remember that I will be grading you on the quality of what you do, not the quantity (refer to the grading rubric attached). Your paper will not be returned.

Your grade will be based on your preparation for and participation in the daily seminar (25%); your lossography (15%); religious belief paper (15%); the *I learned* paper (15%); your oral presentation for the class (5%); and term paper (25%).

GRADING/DUE DATES:

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Date Due</u>
Lossography	15%	July 3
Religious Belief	15%	July 10
<i>I learned</i> Reflection Paper	15%	April 18
Research Paper	25%	April 25

Oral Presentation	5%	TBA
Participation/Attendance	25%	

Total	100%	

The final course grade for each student is based on the following grading scale:

Scale	60%>	59%<
Grade	Pass	Fail

COURSE SCHEDULE

– WEEK I –

Tuesday (27 June)

1. Get acquainted.
2. Learn about the course and know what are expected.
3. Learn what thanatology is.
4. Examine death anxiety and cultural assumptions about death

Read: “Reconstructing Death in Postmodern Society” by Robert Kastenbaum (1993) & The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying, pp. 5-47.

Wednesday (28 June)

1. How we learn about death: Agents of socialization.

Read: The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying, pp. 49-87.

Thursday (29 June)

1. Be acquainted with the diversity of death-related rituals and beliefs found in various cultures.
2. Understand the impact of various beliefs and practices and assess their value for survivors.
3. Learn the differences in death-related beliefs and practices in the Western and Asian societies.

Read: The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying, pp. 89-137

Friday (30 June)

Activity to study historical & cultural legacies shaping attitudes and practices relative to dying/death in Korea.

– WEEK II –

Monday (3 July)

1. Understand different approaches to the definition of death.
2. Examine the components of the death system in different cultures.

Read: The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying, pp. 139-173.

Due: Lossography

Tuesday (4 July)

1. Explore end-of-life issues and decisions
2. Discuss the ethical issues involved in euthanasia and the arguments for and against physician-assisted suicide.

Read: The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying, pp. 213 – 257

Wednesday (5 July)

1. Understand death by suicide
2. Identify the risk factors influencing suicide through the lifespan.

Read: The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying, pp. 447-487

Thursday (6 July)

1. Discuss the personal and social costs of life-threatening illness.
2. Understand patterns of coping with life-threatening illness.
3. Explore treatment strategies for individuals with life-threatening illness.

Read: The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying, pp. 259-293.

Friday (7 July)

Activities to explore the health care system in Korea and the options available for treatment.

– WEEK III –

Monday (10 July)

1. Learn the function of funeral rituals, including their psychosocial aspects.
2. Examine practices and costs of various mortuary and cemetery options.
3. Design a personally meaningful funeral ritual for oneself.

Read: The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying, pp. 295-339.

Due: Religious Belief

Tuesday (11 July)

1. Discuss different models of grief.
2. Explore the variables that influence grief.
3. Understand how bereavement may provide an opportunity for growth.

Read: *The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying*, pp. 341-383.

Wednesday (12 July)

1. Explore the emotional responses to miscarriage, abortion, stillbirth, neonatal death, sudden infant death syndrome, and the loss of the “perfect” child.
2. Learn ways of caring for the dying child.
3. Discuss the factors influencing grief in response to the death of an adult child.
4. Discuss the factors influencing the response to the death of a parent.

Read: *The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying*, pp. 417-445, & “Challenges We Face in Understanding Children and War: A Personal Essay” by James Garbarino (1993).

Thursday (13 July)

1. Understand risks, perils, and traumatic death, such as occupational stress, accidents, environmental pollution, violence, war, and AIDS and other emerging diseases

Read: *The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying*, pp. 489-529.

Friday (14 July)

1. Understand the views of immortality in some cultural traditions.
2. Explore religious views of life after death.
3. Discuss how beliefs about what follows death influence a person’s understanding of death and choices in daily life.

Read: *The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying*, pp. 531-567.

Due: Research Paper

– WEEK IV –

Monday (17 July)

1. Oral presentation of students’ research finding in class.
2. Reflect on good life and good death
3. Wrap-up

Due: *I learned* reflection paper

GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN WORK:

All written work for the course must be typed (12 font), double-spaced, on 8 1/2" by 11" white paper, with pages stapled, no folder, one inch margins on all sides. Papers should be neat and professional in appearance.

As a university student you are expected to know common English usage. Strive for correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Publications that might be helpful to you include Writing Papers in Psychology, by Rosnow & Rosnow, Elements of Style, by Strunk and White, the Publication Manual of the A.P.A., and Writing About Social Science, by L.J. Cuba. Proofread your work before handing it in!

If you quote or summarize the work of others, you must cite your references. Plagiarism is illegal and inappropriate, and can result in failure. The APA manual should be used as your guide for citations and references.

Grading Rubric

When you are doing in-class exams, I will not take writing into account, but when you are submitting papers, you are expected to draft and re-draft until you produce a clear, and fully literate communication. The following grading rubric will be used to evaluate your written work.

Criteria (100 percent)	A: 90-100%	B: 80-89%	C: 70-79%	D: 60-69%
Style (20%)	The paper begins, flows, and ends effectively. The introduction, body and conclusion are sound. The paper is well organized and unified with coherent ideas and sentences that relate to the main topic. The ideas are arranged logically to support the thesis. Uses appropriate, direct language: the writing is compelling; the sentences are well phrased and varied in length and structure. Paragraphs are well-structured, excellent	The paper begins, flows, and ends effectively. The introduction, body and conclusion are adequate. The paper is well organized and unified with sentences that relate to the main topic. The ideas are arranged logically to support the thesis. Paragraphs are well-structured, excellent use of headings, organization and flow. The sentences are well phrased and varied in length and structure. There are occasional violations in the writing, but	Has partial or inadequate introduction and conclusion. The writing is not organized logically. Ideas are expressed, but making little sense. Reader can figure out what writer probably intends but may not be motivated to do so. Some sentences are awkwardly constructed, and represent an occasional distraction for the reader. Paragraphs are unstructured, headings are missing, lacks general	The paper has an inadequate introduction and conclusion. The writing is not arranged logically. Frequently, ideas fail to make sense and are not expressed clearly. Reader cannot identify a line of reasoning. Errors in sentence structure are frequent enough to represent a major distraction for the reader. Paragraphs are unstructured, headings are missing, lacks general organization and

Criteria (100 percent)	A: 90-100%	B: 80-89%	C: 70-79%	D: 60-69%
	use of headings, organization and flow.	they do not represent a major distraction or obscure meaning.	organization and flow.	flow.
Content (50%)	<p>Responds fully to the assignment; information clearly and effectively supports a central purpose or thesis and displays a thoughtful analysis of the topic. The reader gains insights. The paper is directed towards and meets the needs of a defined audience, which are professionals familiar with the high level of reasoning. Provides compelling arguments, evidence, examples and details. The use of supporting detail is embedded in a context of discussion.</p>	<p>Responds in a competent manner to the assignment; information provides firm support for a central purpose or thesis and displays evidence of a basic analysis of the topic. The paper demonstrates overall competency as well as some originality, creativity, or genuine engagement with issues at hand. The paper is directed towards and meets the needs of a defined audience, which are professionals familiar with the high level of reasoning. Provides adequate supporting arguments, evidence, examples and details. The use of supporting detail is embedded in a context of discussion.</p>	<p>Responds adequately to the assignment; information are vaguely linked to thesis. Analysis is basic or general. The purpose is not clear. Completes rather than engages in the assignment.</p> <p>Does not provide adequate supporting arguments, evidence, examples and details.</p>	<p>The paper does not adequately respond to the assignment. The paper does not successfully identify a thesis. Analysis is value or not evident.</p> <p>The paper does not provide adequate supporting arguments, evidence, examples and details. Paragraphs may “string together” quotations without a context of discussion.</p>
Punctuation and grammar (15%)	The paper is free of errors in grammar, punctuation, word	There are few minimal errors in grammar,	The writing has numerous errors in grammar,	Errors in grammar, punctuation, word choice, and spelling

Criteria (100 percent)	A: 90-100%	B: 80-89%	C: 70-79%	D: 60-69%
	choice, and spelling.	punctuation, word choice, and spelling.	punctuation, word choice, and spelling.	are so numerous that they obscure the meaning of the passage.
Format (15%)	The paper correctly acknowledges and documents sources (in APA style, but a brief and abbreviated system of cites can be accepted).	The paper correctly acknowledges and documents sources (in APA style, but a brief and abbreviated system of cites can be accepted).	The paper incorrectly or partially acknowledges and documents sources. Although occasional references are provided, the writer relies on unsubstantiated statements. The reader is confused about the source of ideas.	The paper incorrectly or partially acknowledges and documents sources. Although occasional references are provided, the writer relies on unsubstantiated statements. The reader is confused about the source of ideas.