

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI



VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Te Kura Mahinga Tangata

Sociology and Social Policy

SOSC 306

Special Topic:

Sociology of Dying & Death

Course Outline

CRN 1643 : 24 POINTS : TRIM 3, 2009

Teaching dates: 16 November – 12 February 2010

COURSE COORDINATOR: DR ALLISON KIRKMAN

Room 1013, Murphy Building

Tel: (04) 4635676

Email: allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz

LECTURES: TUES 10AM – 12NOON & FRI 10 – 11AM; KK LT 301

COURSE COORDINATOR

Allison Kirkman
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OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday 1 - 2pm

LECTURE TIMES

Tuesday, 10am – 12 noon and
Friday, 10 - 11am

TUTORIAL TIMES

Tba

OTHER CONTACT INFORMATION

Head of School:

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information related to the course will be available on the Blackboard website at <http://www.blackboard.vuw.ac.nz>. If you have technical problems with Blackboard please contact the ITS service desk, ITS-ServiceDesk@vuw.ac.nz.

The School website can be found at: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/sacs>.

On the same page you will also find *Sociolog*, a chronicle of reflections written by SOSC/SPOL staff and postgraduate students.

COURSE CONTENT

This course will explore sociological perspectives on dying and death. Topics will include: societal and cultural attitudes toward death and dying, the relationship of gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity and age to dying and death, technologies and rituals relating to dying and death. Special attention will be paid to dying and death in New Zealand.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course aims to introduce you to sociological approaches to the study of dying and death.

By the end of the course students should:

- ✓ be able to identify societal and cultural attitudes toward death and dying
- ✓ be able to critically evaluate sociological perspectives on death and dying
- ✓ be able to critically analyse the influence of gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity and age on dying and death
- ✓ be able to critically evaluate research methodologies for studying death and dying
- ✓ be able to apply knowledge of death and dying to New Zealand society

TUTORIAL PROGRAMME

There are 4 tutorials for this course. These are voluntary and will focus on discussion of the lecture material, the assessment and the readings for the course.

COURSE MATERIAL FOR SOSC 306

Each student should buy Student Notes from the Student Notes Distribution Centre on the ground floor of the student union building, since ready access to and familiarity with its contents will be required throughout the course.

Students are able to order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz, or e-mail enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz regarding orders and enquiries. Books can be couriered to students or alternatively they can be picked up from the shop after being notified of availability. Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays). Phone: 463 5515.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

University guidelines stipulate that a trimester course at 300-level should require between 16 to 18 hours per week, including class time, of student work.

LECTURE PROGRAMME

While attendance at lectures is not compulsory, students are expected to regularly attend lectures, and will be advantaged if they do so.

Week 1	<i>Introduction</i>
17 November	Introduction to the course
17 November	Film – What is death?
20 November	How we die – the New Zealand picture
Week 2	<i>How and when we die</i>
24 November	The age of dying
24 November	Documentary – Deadly Business
27 November	Intensive care and dying
Week 3	<i>How and when we die</i>
1 December	Organ donation (Dr Rhonda Shaw)
1 December	Documentary – Life, death and a living transplant
4 December	Sudden death
Week 4	<i>Care while dying</i>
8 December	Social death and dementia
8 December	Documentary
11 December	Cancer and hospice care
Week 5	<i>Care while dying</i>
15 December	HIV/AIDS
15 December	Film - The Story of the Quilt
18 December	Researching dying and death
<i>21 December – 4 January Mid-trimester break</i>	
Week 6	<i>Bereavement and remembering</i>
5 January	Managing grief and remembering
5 January	Documentary - Only human : life after death
8 January	Preparation for Project- Examining cemeteries
Week 7	<i>No lectures – Project data gathering</i>
12 January	No lectures – Project data gathering
15 January	No lectures – Project data gathering
Week 8	<i>The funeral industry</i>
19 January	Disposal of the body

19 January	Documentary -
22 January	Burial and cremation
Week 9	<i>Cultural attitudes toward death</i>
26 January	Tangihanga
26 January	Documentary - Funeral of the Māori Queen
29 January	Culture and rituals associated with death
Week 10	<i>Celebrities and death</i>
2 February	The media and death
2 February	Documentary
5 February	The media and death
Week 11	<i>Current issues</i>
9 February	Euthanasia and end of life care
12 February	Review of course - Final project due

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is internal and involves three pieces of work. The first is an assignment based on your own experiences, the second is an essay based on the course and readings and the third is a project based on your own 'field work'.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE ABOUT HUMAN ETHICS

For the three items of assessment you must not undertake any research that involves any interviews, surveys, questionnaires or contact with anyone who works in the area of dying and death (e.g., police, hospital workers, hospice workers, funeral industry workers) or who has experienced this personally (e.g., friends and family). For these methods which involve human participants you need Human Ethics Committee approval and this has not been sought for the assessment for this course. Failure to comply with this will result in a fail grade.

Assignment 1 **Word Limit: 1500**

Weighting: 20%

Due: 4pm, Friday, 4 December

Identify an issue or situation that you have experienced that relates to either dying or death. This may be a personal experience or it may be something you have encountered through the media. Describe the situation or issue and then discuss how you would analyse this from a sociological perspective.

Essay 2**Word Limit 2500****Weighting: 30%****Due: 4pm, Tuesday, 5 January**

Some sociologists have argued that the medicalisation of dying and death in societies like New Zealand has resulted in death becoming privatised and silenced, whereas others argue that death has been transformed into a public event. Discuss the reasons why these two views have developed and critically evaluate the evidence for both views.

Project**Word Limit 5000****Weighting: 50%****Due: 4pm, Friday, 12 February**

For this project you should keep a field notes journal for at least a one-week period. In this journal you are to write on dying and death-related events, activities and representations that you encounter. These can include newspaper articles, obituaries, death notices, news items, magazines, television programmes, advertising, internet or a visit to a cemetery. At the completion of the week, or a longer period if you wish, you are to write an analysis of at least 2500 words relating the journal entries to a sociological understanding of dying and death. The submitted project will consist of the field notes journal accompanied by the analysis. Further information about the project will be provided in class on the 8th January.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND ASSESSMENT

The forms of assessment will assist you to achieve the learning objectives outlined above and to develop skills in dealing with the study of the sociology of dying and death.

In the first assignment students are able to demonstrate their ability to identify the social contexts in which dying and death take place in New Zealand

In the second essay students are able to demonstrate their knowledge of a range of sociological theories and concepts related to dying and death

The project allows students to reflect on dying and death in contemporary society, demonstrate their knowledge of sociological concepts, and apply these in a New Zealand context.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENT

To gain a pass in this course, students must:

- ▲ Submit the assignment, essay and project.

PENALTIES FOR LATE SUBMISSION

Late submissions for student assignments in all Sociology and Social Policy undergraduate courses are subject to a penalty. The exact deduction will be calculated on the basis of one half mark per day late for each 10 marks, i.e. 1 mark will be deducted each day for an assignment worth 20% of the total course mark.

Note: assessment work will not be accepted for marking more than 7 days after the due date or 7 days after an approved extension date. Work must still, however, be submitted to meet the mandatory course requirements.

You are advised to always keep a copy of any work you submit for assessment.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

The AVC (Academic) website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates. This website can be accessed at:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet

- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

ADDITIONAL READINGS

The following list provides further readings. 3DL refers to those books on 3 day loan.

The following two books provide an introduction to the sociology of dying and death (there is a chapter from both in the Book of Readings):

Howarth, G. (2007). *Death and Dying: A Sociological Introduction*. Cambridge, Polity Press. 3DL

Seale, C. (1998). *Constructing Death: The Sociology of Dying and Bereavement*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press. 3DL

General

Many introductory texts on sociology have a section on death and dying. Three are listed here. The first (Furze et al. is an Australasian text).

Furze, B., Savy, P., Brym, R. J., and Lie, J. (2008) *Sociology in today's world*. South Melbourne, Vic., Cengage Learning Australia.

Bilton, T.[et al.] with J. Stanyer and P. Stephens. (2002) *Introductory sociology*. New York, Palgrave.

Macionis, J.J., and Plummer, K. (2002) *Sociology :a global introduction*. New York, Pearson Education.

Classics in the Sociology of Dying and Death

Durkheim, E. (1951). *Suicide, a study in sociology*. Glencoe, Ill., Free Press.

Glaser, B. G. and A. L. Strauss (1965). *Awareness of dying*. Chicago, Aldine. 3DL

Glaser, B. G. and A. L. Strauss (1968). *Time for dying*. Chicago, Aldine. 3DL

Glaser, B. G. and A. L. Strauss (2007). *Time for dying*. New Brunswick, NJ, Aldine. 3DL Transaction.

Sudnow, D. (1967). *Passing On: The Social Organisation of Dying*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall. 3DL

Death and Dying

Blackmore, S. J. (1993). *Dying to live: near-death experiences*. Buffalo, N.Y., Prometheus Books. 3DL

Carr, D. (2003). "A "Good Death" for Whom? Quality of Spouse's Death and Psychological Distress among Older Widowed Persons." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 44 (June): 215-232.

Charmaz, K., Howarth, G., and Kellehear, A. (eds) (1997) *The unknown country : experiences of death in Australia, Britain, and the USA*. New York, St. Martin's Press.

Clark, D. (ed) (1993) *The sociology of death: theory, culture, practice*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishers/The Sociological Review.

Davies, D. J. (2005). *A brief history of death*. Malden, MA Blackwell. 3DL

DeShazer, M. K. (2005). *Fractured borders: reading women's cancer literature*. Ann Arbor University of Michigan Press. 3DL

Dickenson, D. and M. L. Johnson (1993). *Death, dying and bereavement*. London;Newbury Park, Calif., Sage Publications in association with the Open University. 3DL

Green, J. W. (2008). *Beyond the good death: the anthropology of modern dying*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press. 3DL

Hockey, J., Katz, J. and Small, N. (eds) (2001). *Grief, Mourning and Death Ritual*. Buckingham, Open University Press. 3DL

Howarth, G. (2000) Dismantling the boundaries between life and death, *Mortality* 5(2): 127-138.

Kearl, M. C. (1989). *Endings: a sociology of death and dying*. New York, Oxford University Press. 3DL

Kellehear, A. (1990). *Dying of cancer: the final year of life*. Chur [Switzerland]; New York, Harwood Academic Publishers. 3DL

Kellehear, A. (2006). *A social history of dying*. New York, Cambridge University Press. 3DL

Timmermans, S. (1998). "Social Death as a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: David Sudnow's Passing On Revisited." *The Sociological Quarterly* 39(3): 453-472.

Cultural and Ethnic Diversity

Irish, D. P., K. F. Lundquist, et al. (1993). *Ethnic variations in dying, death, and grief: diversity in universality*. Washington, DC Taylor & Francis. 3DL

Jackson, C. O. (1977). *Passing: the vision of death in America*. Westport, Conn., Greenwood Press. 3DL

Jalland, P. (2006). *Changing ways of death in twentieth-century Australia: war, medicine, and the funeral business*. Sydney, UNSW Press. 3DL

Leach, M. M. (2006). *Cultural diversity and suicide: ethnic, religious, gender, and sexual orientation perspectives*. New York, Haworth Press. 3DL

Parkes, C. M., Laungani, P. and Young, B. (eds) (1997). *Death and bereavement across cultures*. London, Routledge.

Robben, A. C. G. M. (2004). *Death, mourning, and burial: a cross-cultural reader*. Malden, MA Blackwell.

Rosenblatt, P. C., Walsh, R. P. and Jackson, D.A. (1976). *Grief and mourning in cross-cultural perspective*. New Haven, Conn., HRAF Press. 3DL

Intensive Care

Baird, R. M., and Rosenbaum, S. E. (eds) (2003) *Caring for the dying: critical issues at the edge of life*. Amherst, N.Y., Prometheus Books.

Hadders, H. (2007) Dealing with the dead patient at the intensive care unit, *Mortality* 12(3): 207-222.

Seymour, J. E., (2001) *Critical Moments – Death and Dying in Intensive Care*. Buckingham, Open University Press.

Seymour, J. E. (2000) Negotiating natural death in intensive care, *Social Science and Medicine* 51: 1241-1252.

Seymour, J. E. (1999) Revisiting medicalisation and 'natural' death, *Social Science and Medicine* 49: 691-704.

Hospice Care

Eschenbruch, N. (2006). *Nursing stories: life and death in a German hospice*. New York, Berghahn Books. 3DL

Froggatt, K. (1997) Rite of passage and hospice culture, *Mortality* 2 (2): 123-136.

Kubler-Ross, E. (1970). *On death and dying*. London, Tavistock. 3DL

Lawton, J. (1998) Contemporary Hospice Care: The Sequestration of the Unbounded Body and 'Dirty Dying', *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 20 (2): 121-143.

McNamara, B. (2004) Good enough death: autonomy and choice in Australian palliative care, *Social Science and Medicine* 58(5): 929-938.

Saunders, C. (1990). *Hospice and palliative care: an interdisciplinary approach*. Sevenoaks : Edward Arnold.

Remembering

Fowler, B. (2007) *The obituary as collective memory*. New York, Routledge.

Hallam, E and Hockey, J. (2001) *Death, memory and material culture*. Oxford, Berg. 3DL

Starck, N. (2006) *Life after death: the art of the obituary*. Carlton, Vic., Australia, Melbourne University Press.

Burial and Cremation

Davies, D. J. and L. H. Mates (2005). *Encyclopedia of cremation*. Aldershot, England Ashgate. 3DL

Grainger, H. J. (2005). *Death redesigned :British crematoria, history, architecture and landscape*. Reading Spire Books. 3DL

Prothero, S. R. (2001). *Purified by fire: a history of cremation in America*. Berkeley University of California Press. 3DL

End of Life Issues

Birnbacher, D. and E. Dahl, Eds. (2008). *Giving death a helping hand: physician-assisted suicide and public policy. An international perspective*. Dordrecht, Springer. 3DL

Hillyard, D. and Dombrink, J. (2001). *Dying right: the death with dignity movement*. New York Routledge. 3DL

Radley, A. and Payne, S. (2009) A sociological commentary on the refusal of treatment by patients with cancer, *Mortality* 14(4): 309-324.

Warnock, M. and E. Macdonald (2008). *Easeful death: is there a case for assisted dying?* Oxford, Oxford University Press. 3DL

Young, R. (2007). *Medically assisted death*. Cambridge Cambridge University Press. 3DL

Yount, L. (2007). *Right to die and euthanasia*. New York NY Facts on File. 3DL

New Zealand

Budge, P. (1988). *Te Omanga Hospice : the genesis*. Lower Hutt, P. Budge.

Davey, J. (1998) 'Death' in *Tracking Social Change in New Zealand*. Wellington, Institute of Policy Studies, 219-234.

Schafer, C. (2007) Post-mortem personalization: pastoral power and the New Zealand funeral director, *Mortality* 12(1): 4-21.

Schwass, M (2005). *Last words : approaches to death in New Zealand's cultures and faiths*. Wellington, Bridget Williams Books with the Funeral Directors Association of New Zealand.

Wood, S., P. Fox, et al. (2006). *Dying: a New Zealand guide for the journey*. Auckland Calico Pub. 3DL

Journals

Useful journals in the VUW Library are:

Sociology of Health and Illness

Social Science and Medicine

Journal of Near-Death Studies

Death Studies

Mortality

Office use only

Date Received:

School of Social and Cultural Studies

Te Kura Mahinga Tangata

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

CRIMINOLOGY

SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL POLICY

Assignment Cover Sheet

(please write legibly)

Full Name: _____
(Last name) *(First name)*

Student ID: _____ Course (eg ANTH101): _____

Tutorial Day: _____ Tutorial Time: _____

Tutor (if applicable): _____

Assignment Due Date: _____

CERTIFICATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I certify that this paper submitted for assessment is the result of my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged.

Signed: _____ Date: _____