



## North Central State College

**MASTER SYLLABUS** | **2025-2026**

A. Academic Division: Liberal Arts

B. Discipline: Human and Social Work Services

C. Course Number and Title: HMSC 1190 Death and Dying

D. Assistant Dean: Laura Irmer

E. Credit Hours: 3

F. Prerequisites: None

G. Last Course/Curriculum Revision Date: Fall 2023      Origin date: 03/26/2020

H. Textbook(s) Title:  
*The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying*  

- Author(s): DeSpelder, Strickland
- Copyright Year: 2019
- Edition: 11<sup>th</sup>
- ISBN: 9781260130744

I. Workbook(s) and/or Lab Manual: None

J. Course Description: This course will focus on why and how people experience loss, death and grief. We will investigate the ideas of Kubler-Ross and others and expand our exploration to include the Eastern and Judeo-Christian perspectives. In addition, we will consider a variety of sources of grief (death, divorce, alcoholism, birth of a handicapped child, life-threatening illnesses, etc.) and how people react to such events.

K. College-Wide Learning Outcomes:

College-Wide Learning Outcome	Assessments -- How it is met & When it is met All listed assignments are graded
Communication – Written	
Communication – Speech	
Intercultural Knowledge and Competence	Cultural Perspective Project; week 5; Intercultural Knowledge and Competence VALUE Rubric
Critical Thinking	
Information Literacy	
Computation	

L. Course Outcomes and Assessment Methods:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student shall:

Outcomes	Assessments – How it is met & When it is met
1. To accept death and loss as natural parts of one's life.	Exams, written assignments, and class activities – regularly throughout the semester
2. To explore the meanings of loss, death, and grief in a cultural and spiritual/religious framework	Exams, written assignments, and class activities – regularly throughout the semester
3. To discuss the various interpretations of the death state.	Exams, written assignments, and class activities – regularly throughout the semester
4. To discuss his/her own personal orientation to death and loss.	Exams, written assignments, and class activities – regularly throughout the semester
5. To describe the death system, i.e., how society responds to death and loss.	Exams, written assignments, and class activities – regularly throughout the semester
6. To discuss how people view and experience dying.	Exams, written assignments, and class activities – regularly throughout the semester
7. To explain the elements or phases of the grieving process.	Exams, written assignments, and class activities – regularly throughout the semester
8. To compare one's attitude toward death and one's attitude toward life.	Exams, written assignments, and class activities – regularly throughout the semester
9. To investigate how grief and healing can occur.	Exams, written assignments, and class activities – regularly throughout the semester

M. Recommended Grading Scale:

NUMERIC	GRADE	POINTS	DEFINITION
93–100	A	4.00	Superior
90–92	A-	3.67	Superior
87–89	B+	3.33	Above Average
83–86	B	3.00	Above Average
80–82	B-	2.67	Above Average
77–79	C+	2.33	Average
73–76	C	2.00	Average
70–72	C-	1.67	Below Average
67–69	D+	1.33	Below Average
63–66	D	1.00	Below Average
60–62	D-	0.67	Poor
00–59	F	0.00	Failure

N. College Procedures/Policies:

North Central State College believes that every student is a valued and equal member of the community.\* Every student brings different experiences to the College, and all are important in enriching academic life and developing greater understanding and appreciation of one another. Therefore, NC State College creates an inclusive culture in which students feel comfortable sharing their experiences.

Discrimination and prejudice have no place on the campus, and the College takes any complaint in this regard seriously. Students encountering aspects of the instruction that result in barriers to their sense of being included and respected should contact the instructor, assistant dean, or dean without fear of reprisal.

\* *Inclusive of race, color, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, national origin (ancestry), military status (past, present or future), disability, age (40 years or older), status as a parent during pregnancy and immediately after the birth of a child, status as a parent of a young child, status as a foster parent, genetic information, or sexual orientation*

**Important information regarding College Procedures and Policies can be found on the syllabus supplement located at**

<https://ncstatecollege.edu/documents/President/PoliciesProcedures/PolicyManual/Final%20PDFs/14-081b.pdf>



- A. Academic Division: Liberal Arts
- B. Discipline: Human and Social Work Services
- C. Course Number and Title: HMSV 1190 Death and Dying

- D. Course Coordinator: Teresa Alt, MSW  
Assistant Dean: Dr. Steve Haynes

Instructor Information:

- Name: Alicia Gobble MSW, LSW
- E-Mail Address: [agobble@ncestatecollege.edu](mailto:agobble@ncestatecollege.edu)  
Office Hours by Appointment, via email/Zoom.

- E. Credit Hours: 3
- F. Prerequisites: None
- G. Syllabus Effective Date: Spring 2026
- H. Textbook(s) Title:

*The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying*

- Author(s): DeSpelder, Strickland
- Copyright Year: 2019
- Edition: 11<sup>th</sup>
- ISBN: 9781260130744

- I. Workbook(s) and/or Lab Manual: None
- J. Course Description: This course will focus on why and how people experience loss, death and grief. We will investigate the ideas of Kubler-Ross and others and expand our exploration to include the Eastern and Judeo-Christian perspectives. In addition, we will consider a variety of sources of grief (death, divorce, alcoholism, birth of a handicapped child, life-threatening illnesses, etc.) and how people react to such event
- K. College-Wide Learning Outcomes:

College-Wide Learning Outcome	Assessments -- How it is met & when it is met <b>All listed assignments are graded</b>
Communication – Written	Discussion Posts
Communication – Speech	Discussion Posts on lectures and documentaries
Intercultural Knowledge and Competence	Cultural Perspective Project
Critical Thinking	Discussion Posts, Cultural Perspective Project, Death Career Project
Information Literacy	Discussion Posts on readings and documentaries
Computation	Reflective Final

L. Course Outcomes and Assessment Methods:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student shall:

Outcomes	Assessments – How it is met & When it is met
1. To accept death and loss as natural parts of one's life.	Written assignments and class activities – regularly throughout the semester
2. To explore the meanings of loss, death, and grief in a cultural and spiritual/religious framework	Written assignments and class activities – regularly throughout the semester
3. To discuss the various interpretations of the death state.	Written assignments and class activities – regularly throughout the semester
4. To discuss his/her own personal orientation to death and loss.	Written assignments and class activities – regularly throughout the semester
5. To describe the death system, i.e., how society responds to death and loss.	Written assignments and class activities – regularly throughout the semester
6. To discuss how people view and experience dying.	Written assignments and class activities – regularly throughout the semester
7. To explain the elements or phases of the grieving process.	Written assignments and class activities – regularly throughout the semester
8. To compare one's attitude toward death and one's attitude toward life.	Written assignments and class activities – regularly throughout the semester
9. To investigate how grief and healing can occur.	Written assignments and class activities – regularly throughout the semester

M. Topical Timeline (Subject to Change):

Assignment details can be accessed via your online learning platform.

Topics	Assignments
Module 1 Weeks 1-6 Introduction to Course Socio-Cultural Influences on Contemporary Death Cultural and Historical Perspectives on Death and Dying Life After Death: Perspectives on Afterlife/Spirituality	View Lectures Do Discussion Posts View Documentary Cultural Perspectives Project  <b>Due by 2/1/26 at 11 pm</b>
Module 2 Weeks 7-12 Complicated Grief Adolescent and Childhood Grief Loss in Older Adulthood Non-death loss	View Lectures Do Discussion Posts View Documentary  <b>Due by 2/15/26 at 11 pm</b>

Module 3 Weeks 12-15 Hospice Living with a life-threatening illness Caring for the dying Careers in Deathcare	View Lectures Do Discussion Posts View Documentary Final Project: Death Career Project Final Reflection <b>Due by 3/6/26 at 11 pm</b>
---	--

N. Course Assignments:

1. Discussion posts: Each module will use discussion posts, and will encourage students to reflect upon the module themes. Depending on the length of each module there may be 1 or 2 discussion posts
2. Cultural Perspective Project: students will pick a death ritual that is different from their own and either write a 3-5 paper on that tradition or record a brief video on the ritual
3. Death Career Project: students will pick a career in field of death-care. This assignment is 2-3 pages and should include a description of the career and reflection upon whether this would be a “fit” for you.
4. Final Reflection Project: Students will describe how their thoughts on death and dying have evolved as a result of the course. This final reflection can be presented in paper format, as a PowerPoint presentation, or through another creative outlet, as discussed with the professor.

*\*Additional resources, articles, and book recommendations will be provided throughout the semester. Documentaries will be provided via email to students to view on their own time. Students will be encouraged to share thoughts and insights about the documentaries in their discussion posts.*

O. Recommended Grading Scale:

NUMERIC	GRADE	POINTS	DEFINITION
93–100	A	4.00	Superior
90–92	A-	3.67	Superior
87–89	B+	3.33	Above Average
83–86	B	3.00	Above Average
80–82	B-	2.67	Above Average
77–79	C+	2.33	Average
73–76	C	2.00	Average
70–72	C-	1.67	Below Average
67–69	D+	1.33	Below Average
63–66	D	1.00	Below Average
60–62	D-	0.67	Poor
00–59	F	0.00	Failure

P. Grading and Testing Guidelines:

Cultural Perspective Project	20%
Discussion Posts	40%
Death Career Project	20%
Final Reflection	20%

**Total: 100**

Q. Examination Policy:

*Missed exams can be rescheduled with proper documentation.* Arrangements to make up the exam must be initiated by the student and will be made with the instructor. The instructor will arrange the make-up exam either through the college make-up exam service, during office hours or another arranged day and time.

*Exams missed without proper documentation* will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis at the instructor's discretion. Make-up exams to be scheduled with the instructor based on the instructor's schedule or through the make-up exam service. A 10% grade reduction will be applied to late exams.

*The Cultural Perspective Project and Journal Summaries are due in class on the scheduled due date.* If these are turned in late, it will result in a **10%-point** reduction on the grade. They will not be accepted seven (7) days past the original due date without proper validating documentation. *Reaction Papers* must be turned in on the scheduled due date and will not be accepted past the due date.

R. Class Attendance and Homework Make-Up Policy:

Both attendance and participation is a mandatory tool for learning. Attendance and participation in class discussion/activities are expected. If the student has an emergency or other issue, contact the instructor.

If the student misses class, they are responsible for the topics discussed that day and for securing all handouts, notes, and for completing assignments as scheduled.

Attendance and participation is worth 10% of final grade. Points will be deducted after three (3) class absences, regardless of student circumstances, if the class meets twice a week. Points will be deducted after two (2) class absences, regardless of student circumstances, if the class meets once a week.

S. Classroom Expectations:

1. Arrive on time
2. Be prepared
3. Be respectful of others (instructor, speakers, classmates) during discussions in class
4. Give full attention to whoever is speaking
5. Maintain confidentiality as students share personal information
6. Remain open to diversity
7. No use of phone - answering calls or texting during class. Please keep phone on vibrate
8. Food and drinks will be allowed. Please be aware of smell, noise and distraction to others

T. College Procedures/Policies:

**Important information regarding College Procedures and Policies can be found on the [syllabus supplement](#) located at**

<http://catalog.ncstatecollege.edu/mime/download.pdf?catoid=5&ftype=2&foid=3>