

Course Code	HP4274 / HP7235
Course Title	The Last Dance: Psycho-Socio-Cultural Perspectives on Death, Dying and Bereavement
Pre-requisites	HP1000 Introduction to Psychology HP1100 Fundamentals of Social Science Research HP2300 Developmental Psychology
No of AUs	4 AUs

Course Aims

The study of death and dying is concerned with questions that are rooted at the core of human experience. Individuals who set out to increase their knowledge of mortality are embarking on life's most important exploration, a journey of personal discovery and spiritual awakening. This course provides an interdisciplinary overview of the major psycho-socio-cultural perspectives, theories and clinical practices on death and dying from a global viewpoint with a critical focus on the Asian experience.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- 1) Identify and discuss the foundational knowledge on death, dying and bereavement as well as issues concerning spirituality and meaning of life
- 2) Analyze and articulate the psychological, social and cultural impact of death and loss among different ethnic groups with a focus on the Asian experience
- 3) Identify and explain the impact of mortality on individuals, families and societies through the lens of developmental, social, and community psychology
- 4) Apply practical-skills for working with individuals, families and communities facing the challenges of death, dying and bereavement
- 5) Develop self-reflection on their personal beliefs, attitudes and experiences with death and loss to develop compassion and appreciation of life and personhood

Course Content

Through interactive lectures, experiential workshops and creative group projects, students will be offered an opportunity to examine the psychological, socio-spiritual, ethical and political issues of mortality through a range of cultural lenses. Such exploration will facilitate insights, reflections and personal growth for enhancing students' capacity in dealing with the inevitability of morality, while equipping them with the core intellectual skills and values for living a meaningful and purposeful life.

Assessment (includes both continuous and summative assessment)

Component	ILO Tested	Related Programme LO or Graduate Attributes	Weighting	Team/ Individual	Assessment Criteria / Rubrics
1. Public Health Palliative Care Project	The final paper and presentation	This component aims to enhance all 5 Graduate Attributes of the NTU framework, including	50%	Team & Individual	Appendix 1

	<p>aims to test all 5 learning objectives</p>	<p>communication, creativity, character, competence and civic-mindedness.</p> <p>Communication is a significant aspect of the assignment as students will develop their writing skills and oral presentation skills.</p> <p>Creativity is encouraged as students synthesize and think critically about theories, concepts and empirical research relevant to any topic of their choice that is related addressing a social issue concerning death, dying and bereavement.</p> <p>Character is nurtured through a team-based learning approach which requires self-initiation, determination, leadership, as well as respect and appreciation of diversity.</p> <p>Competence is enhanced through setting self-imposed deadlines, as well as the processes of appraising current literature relevant to a pressing social issue on life and mortality, identifying gaps in research, and developing a novel programme to address it.</p>			
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		Civic-mindedness is nurtured through developing a deeper understanding of a specific issues on death, dying and bereavement faced by humankind in the 21 st centuries, while engaging in a public health palliative care intervention to address it.			
2. Continuous Assessment 1 (CA1): Flipped Classroom Presentation	1, 2, 3	Creativity, Competence & Communication	20%	Team & Individual	Flipped classroom presentation are graded by: a) quality of concise review of the assigned reading materials in relations to theories covered in class (30%); b) critical discussion on lessons learnt and how such learning can be applied in real life contexts (30%); c) ability to develop and implement an experiential activity to deepen learning for the class (30%); and 4) time-management and clarity in presentation (10%).*
3. CA2: In-Class Quiz 1 & 2	1, 2, 3	Competence	20%	Individual	Multiple Choice and

					Multiple Answers Questions
4. CA3: Bi-weekly Reflective Journal	4, 5	Character, Competence & Communication	10%	Individual	1 mark for each submission and 1 mark for each peer review, totally 20 marks (%).
Total			100%		

*Note: To do well on the team assessment, it is necessary for you to demonstrate positive interdependence and teamwork. In principle, you will receive the same marks as your team. However, your individual score may vary based on feedback about your contributions to the group project.

Formative feedback

Feedback is central to this course. Students will receive verbal feedbacks from the course instructor about their flipped classroom presentations immediately upon the conclusion of each presentation. Students will also be provided with feedbacks and advice on their chosen topic for their final group project through recurrent meetings and discussions with the instructor throughout the academic semester, while as both written and verbal feedbacks will be provided for both the final group project written reports and oral presentations. Finally, students will receive written feedbacks for each of their bi-weekly reflective journal through peer review.

Learning and Teaching approach

Approach	How does this approach support you in achieving the learning outcomes?
Interactive Seminars	The course will be conducted in a manner that combines elements of both a lecture and seminar. This approach supports you in achieving the learning outcomes by encouraging individual learning as well as interactive, team-based learning involving debates and discussions. Both the lecture materials and discussions aim to encourage you to think critically about issues concerning death, dying and bereavement as well as the practices of empathy compassion in the face of mortality, while scrutinizing both the contributions and limitations of existing theories and research.

Reading and References

Students are required to purchase the following textbook:

DeSpelder, L.A., & Strickland A.L. (2015). *The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying* (10th Edition). New York: McGraw Hill Education.

Students are required to complete additional readings via books and academic journals that reflect the themes covered in class. Students are also required to read news or magazine article, as well as view news clips and short videos, before each class to engage in flip classroom activities. All course materials are accessible through NTULearn.

Course Policies and Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to complete all assigned pre-class readings and activities, attend all classes punctually and complete all scheduled assignments and tests by due dates. Students are expected to take responsibility to follow up with course notes, assignments, and course related announcements for classes they have missed. Participation is expected in all discussions and activities. No make-up exam or extension will be given without a signed letter from a doctor or head of a university-sponsored extra-curricular program documenting illness. All exams missed will have a zero grade. As Psychology students, the guidelines of the American Psychological Association on referencing and citation are expected to be followed (see APA Publication Manual, 6th Edition).

Academic Integrity

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behaviour. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honour Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust and Justice are at the core of NTU's shared values.

As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty. You need to actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to the [academic integrity website](#) for more information. Consult your instructor(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

Course Instructors

Instructor	Office Location	Phone	Email
Andy Hau Yan HO	HSS-04-03	63168943	andyhyho@ntu.edu.sg

Planned Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	ILO	Readings/ Activities
1	<u>Introduction and Overview</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">An overview of class guidelines and syllabus, with a discussion of flipped classroom activities, practices of mindful classroom, and public health palliative care projects. Initiation of personal exploration of death and morality.	1	NA
2	<u>Developmental Life-Course Perspective for Understanding Death</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">An exploration of the expression of attitudes towards mortality in language, literature, arts, mass media, and education systems; while emphasizing the learning and socialization of death and dying through the developmental life course.	1, 2	• Chapter 1 & 2 of Required Textbook
3	<u>Evolving Attitudes on Death in Sociocultural Psychology</u>	1, 2, 3	• Chapter 3 of Required Textbook

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comparative analysis of the social, cultural and organizational discourses of death attitudes and beliefs and their impact on individuals' and families' experiences with death and dying across the centuries. Meanings of good deaths in the Asian context are explored. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Flipped Classroom Article</i>: Lin, J., & Akhileswaran, F. (2011). Dying the Good Death. [ST]
4	<u>Death Systems and the Governance of Mortality</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A critical examination of the evolving definition, institutionalization and management, coupled with an in-depth review of the modern hospice movement as well as the recent expansion of public health palliative care. 	1, 2, 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4 & 5 of Required Textbook • <i>Flipped Classroom Article</i>: Ly, T.H. (2016). What it would take so that more spend their last days in dignity? [Channel NewsAsia]
5	<u>I Died Today: An Intimate Encounter with Mortality</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A group-based, integrative experiential learning programme that provides students with the unique opportunity to reflect upon their own deaths and the meaning of life, so as to enhance their emotional capacity, empathy and authenticity when working patients, families and communities facing dying, loss and bereavement. 	4, 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiential Immersion
6	<u>Advance Care Planning and End of Life Decision Making</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An in-depth analysis of patient self-determination, advance medical directives and advance care planning. Exploration of different advance care planning programme around the world with a focus on the Singaporean experience. 	1, 2, 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 6 of Required Textbook • <i>Flipped Classroom Article</i>: Tai, J. (2017). Dying at home is what many want, but few do. [ST]
7	In-class Quiz 1 & Course Review	-	-
8	<u>Impact of Life-limiting Illness and the Imperative of Dignity in Care</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A systematic examination of the personal, social and spiritual meaning of life-threatening illness, coping with treatment, as well as the experience of living with dying. The imperative of dignity in palliative care and long term care is discussed. 	1, 2, 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 7 & 11 of Required Textbook • <i>Flipped Classroom Article</i>: Hum, A. (2014). Help dementia patients live and die with dignity [ST]
9	<u>The Psychology of Death among Children and Adolescents</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An in-depth examination of the experience of loss and mortality among children and adolescents, highlighting those concerning the deaths of parents and siblings, as well as those related to serious illnesses among children. The 	1, 2, 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 10 of Required Textbook • <i>Flipped Classroom Article</i>: Wong KH (2015) Toddler brings grief and much joy [ST]

	contemporary practices and issues of pediatric hospice and palliative care are explored.		
10	<p><u>Experience and Narratives of Grief and Bereavement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A critical review on models of grief and experiences of bereavement, highlighting the importance of last rites and mourning rituals, as well as contemporary research on bereavement resilience, grief counseling and expressive therapies for posttraumatic growth, meaning-making and transformation. 	1, 2, 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 8 & 9 of Required Textbook • <i>Flipped Classroom Article</i>: Sulaeman (2017) Heartache and less rational decision making after patient's death [ST]
11	<p><u>The Psychology of Suicide and Traumatic Death</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A conceptual review of the explanatory theories and models of suicide and suicide prevention; with an exploration of experience of traumatic death and management of crisis and disasters. 	1, 2, 3, 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 12 & 13 of Required Textbook • <i>Flipped Classroom Article</i>: Wee, V., Samsudin N., & Bhandari P. (2012) Elderly Suicide: An absence of hope and heart. [AWARE Singapore]
12	<p><u>Spiritual Inquires on Existence and Immortality</u></p> <p>An exploration over the meaning of life and death that highlights a social discourse on spirituality and existentialism via various cultural and religious lens. Secular concepts of immortality, near-death experiences, as well as those concerning the raising notion of Singularity are discussed.</p>	1, 3, 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 14 & 15 of Required Textbook • <i>Flipped Classroom Article</i>: Grossman, L. (2011). 2045: The Year Man Becomes Immortal. [Times Magazine]
13	Group Presentation for Final Research Project	1-5	-