

“Death is a mirror in which the entire meaning of life is reflected.” (The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying)

PSYC-208, Section 003 (Contemporary Topics)

Psychology of Death & Dying

by David King, PhD

Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00–3:20 PM in SWNG-222

This course explores a wide range of psychological and social issues related to **death, dying, and loss**, including death awareness, death anxiety, the development of attitudes towards death, stages of dying, the mental life of the dying person, grief and bereavement, adjustment to loss, the social and cultural contexts of death, religious factors in death and dying, palliative and hospice care, medically assisted dying (physician assisted suicide), trauma, and death work. Dialogue will consider the experiences of the dying, the bereaved, and those who work with them in formal and informal roles. The purpose of this course is to provide a primarily psychosocial perspective on these topics. **Course format:** *This course consists of lectures accompanied by frequent in-class discussions and activities aimed at stimulating critical thinking. The mode of delivery of this class is IN-PERSON. Lectures will be delivered live (in the classroom) ONLY and no lecture recordings or live-streams will be provided. Students will also be required to attend all exams in person.*



YOUR INSTRUCTOR David King, MSc, PhD (he/him/his)

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Office: Room 2011, Douglas Kenny (Psychology), 2136 West Mall

Website: www.davidbking.net

Virtual Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM, or by appointment, **via Zoom**. Drop in any time during these hours, or email me to schedule a meeting. **See Canvas homepage for Zoom link/meeting ID.** *In-person meetings are available upon request, but please note that my on-campus time is limited this term.*

YOUR TEACHING ASSISTANT Jackson Schumacher schumacher@psych.ubc.ca

To schedule a meeting (in-person or virtual), please email your teaching assistant directly.

REGARDING EMAIL: Please email us directly (not through Canvas) and include the course code in your subject line (PSYC-208-003). **Please allow at least 24 hours for a reply (48 hours on weekends/holidays)!**

COURSE PREREQUISITES

Education in psychology at the introductory level is recommended but not mandatory. Key psychological terms and concepts will be reviewed and defined in class as needed. Some general understanding of basic statistics and research methods may also be helpful. Most importantly, your maturity and sensitivity are required...

PLEASE NOTE. The topic of death is a difficult one, and a source of unease and discomfort for most people. People deal with death (including the death of loved ones and the thought of their own death) in very different ways. Some people avoid reminders of it altogether, while others may have committed themselves strongly to a specific belief or perspective on the topic. I will approach this course with as much frankness and honesty as I can, acknowledging diverse views whenever possible. This will sometimes necessitate the sharing of content (images, stories, etc.) that may be upsetting to some, as well as perspectives that may feel threatening to one's own views (whether shared by me or other students). **Respect for diverse opinions must be maintained at all times (i.e., it is okay to respectfully disagree).** For those currently in more sensitive positions, it is your responsibility to decide in advance if this is the right time for you to take this course.

Because death is a universally relevant topic, reflecting on your own thoughts and experiences regarding death is inevitable (and encouraged) in this course. We will be discussing such topics as loss and grief, suicidal ideation, death preparation, and the prospect of death. Although these are emotionally salient topics, this course is not intended to serve as an opportunity for personal or group therapy. Students who are currently experiencing significant grief or who have difficulty during the course should consult the list of health and wellness resources provided. **In light of these considerations and the sensitivities surrounding this topic, your utmost maturity is required in all interactions (both online and in person).**

COURSE WEBSITE / CANVAS

This course uses **Canvas** (<http://canvas.ubc.ca>) to make important class **announcements**, post lecture slides/notes, publish grades, and supply other relevant class material to students. A preliminary set of lecture slides/outlines (excluding most images and answers to discussion questions) will be posted online prior to each lecture. Slide outlines are intended as visual aids only; you should take your own notes using the slides as a guide. Please ensure that this course is registered in your *Canvas* account.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: All class announcements will be made through Canvas. Please ensure you are set up to receive notifications by email and/or mobile device. (See **Canvas**—Settings. Note that push notifications are recommended so that you do not miss any important announcements.)

STUDENT RESOURCES: Many valuable resources can be found on the course home page in Canvas, including the most recent version of the syllabus, the exam study guide, sample assignments and grading rubrics (as applicable), additional health and wellness resources, and important links.

COURSE MODULES: Course content will be presented in 12 modules, each corresponding to a different lecture (presented over multiple days/classes) and assigned readings. See the course schedule in the syllabus and the **Modules** tab in Canvas.

LIBRARY ONLINE COURSE RESERVES: This menu tab can be used to access all **Additional Readings**.

DISCUSSIONS / EXTERNAL LINKS: Discussions may be participated in or created at your discretion. External links and discussions posted in Canvas should be considered "bonus content" and are for your interest only.

GENERAL DISCUSSION BOARD: This should be used for general and **non-urgent** questions and discussions related to course requirements and/or course content (in place of Piazza). I will be monitoring it regularly.

REQUIRED READING – (1) TEXTBOOK & (2) ADDITIONAL READINGS

1. YOUR 'TEXTBOOK – DYING AND DEATH IN CANADA (4th Ed., 2021, University of Toronto Press) by Herbert C. Northcott & Donna M. Wilson

There are 3 formats to choose from, depending on your preference...

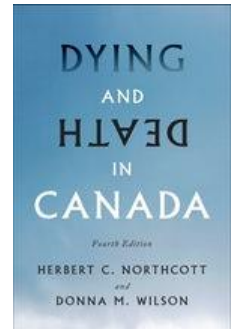
1. Paperback (9781487509279) | 2. E-Book (9781487509293) | 3. E-Book PDF (9781487509286)

Different e-book options are available through the publisher's website at the following link:

PUBLISHER SITE: <https://utorontopress.com/9781487509279/dying-and-death-in-canada-fourth-edition/>

OLDER EDITIONS: It is **not** recommended that you use previous editions of the book.

Please see the course schedule at the end of the syllabus for chapter assignments.



2. ADDITIONAL READINGS (ACADEMIC ARTICLES)

Additional readings are assigned on a weekly basis. They include mainly peer-reviewed articles which intend to further enhance textbook content and explore psychosocial factors specifically in greater detail. All additional readings are available directly through the course website in Canvas. Click on the course link, and then go to **Library Online Course Reserves** to access the readings. Readings are listed in order as follows:

1. Park, Y. C., & Pyszczynski, T. (2019). Reducing defensive responses to thoughts of death: Meditation, mindfulness, and Buddhism.
2. Wong, P. T. P., Reker, G. T., & Gesser, G. (1994). Death Attitude Profile—Revised: A multidimensional measure of attitudes toward death.
3. Copp, G., & Field, D. (2002). Open awareness and dying: The use of denial and acceptance as coping strategies by hospice patients.
4. Bonanno, G. A., et al. (2002). Resilience to loss and chronic grief: A prospective study from preloss to 18-months postloss.
5. Habarth, J., et al. (2017). Continuing bonds and psychosocial functioning in a recently bereaved pet loss sample.
6. Mitima-Verloop, H. B., Mooren, T. T. M., & Boelen, P. A. (2019). Facilitating grief: An exploration of the function of funerals and rituals in relation to grief reactions.
7. Pereira, V., Faísca, L., & de Sá-Saraiva, R. (2012). Immortality of the soul as an intuitive idea: Towards a psychological explanation of the origins of afterlife beliefs.
8. Harris, D. L. (2009). Oppression of the bereaved: A critical analysis of grief in Western society.
9. Bristowe, K., Marshall, S., & Harding, R. (2016). The bereavement experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or trans people who have lost a partner: A systematic review, thematic synthesis and modelling of the literature.
10. Rieger, D., & Hofer, M. (2017). How movies can ease the fear of death: The survival or death of the protagonists in meaningful movies.
11. Viridun, C., et al. (2017). Dying in the hospital setting: A meta-synthesis identifying the elements of end-of-life care that patients and their families describe as being important.
12. Pronk, R., Willems, D.L. & van de Vathorst, S. (2021). Feeling seen, being heard: Perspectives of patients suffering from mental illness on the possibility of physician-assisted death in the Netherlands.
13. Jackson, B.L. (2017). Bereavement in the pediatric emergency department: Caring for those who care for others.
14. Harrawood, L. K., White, L. J., & Benschhoff, J. J. (2008). Death anxiety in a national sample of United States funeral directors and its relationship with death exposure, age, and sex.
15. Lifshin, U., et al. (2018). Mortality salience, religiosity, and indefinite life extension: Evidence of a reciprocal relationship between afterlife beliefs and support for forestalling death.

Please see the course schedule on the last page of the syllabus for the additional reading deadlines/schedule.

IMPORTANT: Additional readings should be read before their respective lectures!

COURSE EVALUATION *You are expected to complete...*

3 End-of-Unit Exams (scheduled on dates indicated in syllabus) — **60% of final grade (20% each)**

See section on *'Examinations'* for additional details and requirements on exams.

3 Thought Papers (1 page each, 1 submitted per unit) — **40% of final grade (13.33...% each)**

See section on *'Thought Papers'* for additional details and requirements.

3 End-of-Unit Exams (60%) + 3 Thought Papers (40%) = Final Grade

+ up to 3 bonus points for participating in HSP research (optional; see section on *'Extra Credit'*)

EXAMINATIONS

There are **3 equally-weighted, non-cumulative exams** in this course, each worth **20% of your final grade**. Each exam corresponds to one course unit and will test only material from that unit. See the course schedule at the end of this syllabus for the dates of Exams 1 and 2, both of which will be held during scheduled class time. Exam 3 will be scheduled by the university (it is up to you to ensure that you are available during this period; final exam dates are announced mid-term). Each exam will consist of a series of multiple choice and/or written questions (short answer; point form responses are acceptable) that must be completed in the allotted time. These questions will be based on both assigned readings (including textbook chapters and additional articles) and lecture material from the respective unit. The purpose of the lecture and video files is to explain and expand upon the textbook and additional readings. Although there will be overlap between the lectures and readings, there will also be material that will be covered in lectures that is not specifically discussed in readings. Furthermore, there may be some material from assigned readings that will not be explicitly discussed in lecture. ***More details on exam content will be provided online.***

ON EXAM DAY: Please bring **your own** HB pencil and an eraser to each exam to allow for electronic scoring of the multiple-choice questions (scantron sheets will be used). All exams are closed-book and notes may not be referred to. **All exams will be closely supervised and monitored for cheating.** Invigilators may ask students to move or alter students' seating arrangements with no explanation provided. If you arrive more than 30 minutes late to an exam, you may be refused admittance to the exam and therefore be assigned a grade of "0" on the exam. **Students who arrive to an exam after a classmate has completed the exam and left the exam room will not be permitted to write the exam.** This applies to all examinations, including midterm exams. Given restrictions on room capacity, **you are STRICTLY PROHIBITED from writing an exam in a section of the course in which you are not enrolled (if applicable).**

MISSING AN EXAM: Examinations will be given on published dates only. Exceptions will be made in cases of medical or health-related issues, certain conflicting responsibilities, and other emergency situations. For policies regarding in-term academic concessions, including a list of eligible circumstances, please refer to the relevant UBC calendar entry: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,329,0,0>.

Note that for health-related issues, no medical documentation is required for the first occurrence; however, if you experience ongoing health challenges during the term, you should seek support from your Academic Advising Office. **If you are unable to write an exam due to unforeseen events (illness or otherwise), you must contact me before the exam or within 24 hours following the exam. If you do not contact me within 24 hours of the exam you will be assigned a grade of "0" on the exam.** Accommodations will also be made for religious obligations that conflict with an exam and for athletes with sporting events that are scheduled during an exam.

NOTE: If you are experiencing ANY cold, flu, or COVID-19 symptoms on exam day, or if you have tested positive for COVID-19 or been asked to quarantine, PLEASE DO NOT ATTEND THE EXAM.

CONCESSIONS: Depending on the specific circumstances (as determined on a case-by-case basis), students may be offered one of the following accommodations for in-term concessions: (1) a make-up exam scheduled at a later time, or (2) re-weighting of missed marks to other exams and/or course assignments.

MAKE-UP EXAMS: In most cases, if you are unable to write an exam on the scheduled date, you will be expected to complete a make-up exam (in-person or online) **within the shortest time possible at the convenience of the TA. Depending on the TA's availability, you may be offered only one alternative time to write the exam.** The content and/or format of the make-up exam may differ from the original version. Once scheduled, make-up exams should be treated as originally scheduled exams and the same policies regarding exam concessions (as outlined above) must be followed. **In instances in which you are unable to accommodate the TA's schedule, or in cases where a make-up exam is also missed, you may be asked to contact your Academic Advising Office to mediate the situation.** In certain circumstances, including periods in which too many requests have been received, other arrangements may be made.

EXAM GRADES: Exam grades will be posted on the course website as soon as they are available. Please allow 2 weeks for grades to be posted. You may review your completed exams with your TA(s) at either scheduled review sessions or by appointment (to be announced). If you wish to have an exam re-graded, you should email me detailing why you think that your exam was unjustly graded within 2 weeks of the grades being posted and **only after** first reviewing the exam with your TA. Re-grades will not be considered after the 2-week mark, although you are welcome to review your midterm exams at any point during the term. Final examinations are typically reviewed directly with me at a scheduled review session or by appointment after the term is complete. Note that due to minor errors that may occur in grading and/or scoring, exam grades may be adjusted after their original posting. In such corrections, your exam grade may either increase or decrease in order to ensure that it reflects an accurate assessment of the material.

THOUGHT PAPERS

You are required to submit 3 'thought papers' over the course of the term (1 thought paper must be submitted for each unit of the course). **Thought papers are not meant to be summaries of course material. Rather, they are intended to give you the opportunity to develop and express your own thoughts about a particular question posed in lecture.**

Throughout our lecture discussions, we will take time to reflect on a number of critical thinking questions. Some of these questions will be eligible for thought paper topics, as will be clearly indicated on the slides (with the orange icon shown to the right). In each of the 3 units of the course (see course schedule), you may choose any **one** of these questions to write about in a one-page thought paper. (This means that you must write one full page of content!) Thought papers should not be summaries or reiterations of course content or class discussion, but should instead include new thoughts or insights following your own reflection and contemplation on the matter.



Although thought papers should be academic in tone, they may include personal or anecdotal references where appropriate and within reason. Alternatively, you may also support your thoughts or insights by referencing other sources. The goal is to express your critical thinking and reasoning skills on paper. Additional direction will be provided before your first thought paper is due. A sample thought paper will also be provided in Canvas, **though it should not be used as a strict template or 'gold standard.'**

THOUGHT PAPER REQUIREMENTS: Thought papers must be typed, double-spaced (with 1-inch margins), in 12-point Times New Roman or similar font, and one full page in length (any additional pages of written content will be ignored). First-person perspective should be used only when referring to personal experiences, and direct quoting should be avoided in papers of this length unless absolutely necessary (i.e., when paraphrasing would change the meaning of the original statement). Thought papers should adhere to basic **APA formatting** guidelines as outlined in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th Edition (APA, 2019), with the exception of an Abstract.

The UBC Library has information on APA citations here: <https://guides.library.ubc.ca/apacitationstyle>, or this link may help: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html. In the event that you refer to another source in a thought paper, you should then attach a standard APA page of references. Given the length of the assignment, you should not include more than 3 references per paper. **You must include the relevant question as stated in lecture at the top of your thought paper along with your name and student ID number. Please keep it as simple as possible; do NOT use more space than you need to or include extra spacing!** This is an example of how the top of each thought paper should appear:

1

Question: What are the potential practical limitations of the Kubler-Ross stage model of dying?

John Smith 12341234

Although Kubler-Ross' proposed stages of dying dramatically changed our understanding of typical responses to impending death, there are some practical limitations. In a clinical setting, one concern revolves

WRITING SUPPORT: A seminar on academic writing will be held during class time early in the term (see course schedule). UBC students may obtain further assistance with their writing through the UBC Centre for Writing and Scholarly Communication (<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/improve-your-writing>). The UBC Library (<http://www.library.ubc.ca>) also provides online information to assist students in research and writing.

THOUGHT PAPER SUBMISSION: Thought papers must be submitted for each unit no later than 11:59 PM on the deadlines indicated (see the course schedule at the end of this syllabus). **Electronic copies must be uploaded through Canvas (see Assignments) in PDF file format.** Only ONE thought paper can be submitted per unit. If you do not submit a thought paper by the unit's deadline, you will receive a grade of '0' for that unit. In cases of medical emergencies and other circumstances, concessions may be offered (see UBC's policy on in-term concessions), but you must contact me within 24 hours of the deadline. If your concession is approved, a late submission may be accepted or your grade redistributed.

THOUGHT PAPER GRADING: Thought papers will be graded primarily on critical thinking and insightfulness, originality of thought, and organization and clarity. Grammar, spelling, and overall style and structure of each exercise should be at high enough levels so as to not interfere with the communication of your ideas or clarity of your thoughts. Each thought paper will be assigned a point grade out of 100 to reflect a percentage score. This grade is intended to be a holistic representation of your performance on the assignment. (A grading rubric will be provided online and used for the grading of all thought papers.) Grades and feedback will be posted in Canvas. Please allow 2 weeks for grades to be posted following the submission deadline. Thought papers will account for 40% of your final grade in the course (i.e., 13.33... % each).

EXTRA CREDIT (HSP)

You can gain research experience by serving as a participant in one of the many different psychological studies that are being conducted by the department. For each hour of experimental participation you can earn one credit towards your final grade, **up to a maximum of 3 extra credits in this course**. You can sign up for studies by visiting <https://ubc-psych.sona-systems.com/>. If you prefer, you can earn these same extra credits by completing a library-writing project, in which you read and summarize a peer-reviewed research article. You can find out more about how you can earn extra credits at <https://psych.ubc.ca/hsp>. There you will find a detailed guide about how to participate in the HSP, how-to videos, and a list of frequently asked questions. **You should register in the HSP system AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

DEPARTMENTAL POLICY ON GRADE DISTRIBUTION

In order to reduce grade inflation and maintain equity across multiple course sections, all psychology classes are required to comply with departmental norms regarding grade distributions. The average grade in 200-level psychology classes will be 72 for an exceptionally strong class, 70 for an average class, and 68 for a weak class, with a standard deviation of 14. Scaling may be used in order to comply with these norms; grades may be scaled up or down as necessary by an instructor or the department. **Grades are not official until they appear on a student's academic record.** You will receive both a percent and a letter grade for this course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, CHEATING, & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

The academic community is one that is founded on the exchange of ideas, information, and intellectual discourse. This requires that all individuals act with honesty and integrity at all times. **As you are now a part of the academic community, you are expected to act honestly and ethically in all of your academic activities (just like the rest of us).** Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct are very serious concerns of the University, and the Department of Psychology has taken steps to alleviate them, including the use of software and online platforms (such as TurnItIn) to detect cheating and plagiarism. In cases of suspected academic misconduct, the parties involved will be pursued to the fullest extent dictated by the guidelines of the University. Strong evidence of cheating or plagiarism may result in a zero credit for the work in question. According to the University Act (section 61), the President of UBC has the right to impose harsher penalties including (but not limited to) a failing grade for the course, suspension from the University, cancellation of scholarships, or a notation added to a student's transcript. If you have any questions as to whether or not what you are doing is a case of academic misconduct, please consult UBC's policies on [Academic Honesty and Standards](#) as well as [Academic Misconduct](#) here: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver> (click on Campus-Wide Policies and Regulations). *What does academic integrity look like in this course? Here are some tips:*

Do your own work! All graded work in this course is to be original work done independently by you! It is unacceptable to: buy/sell/share exam questions or answers on any platform; misrepresent your identity; use someone else to complete an assignment or exam; help someone else cheat; complete someone else's work; and plagiarize or present someone else's written work as your own. **If plagiarism is suspected on a written assignment, we will submit the written work (anonymously) to Turnitin.com to scan for similar content.**

Avoid unintentional plagiarism. The ideas of others should always be acknowledged! Visit this guide to preventing plagiarism in your writing: <http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides/avoiding-plagiarism/>

DO NOT share course materials. All course materials, including PowerPoint files, lecture recordings (where applicable), exam questions, and discussions are the **copyrighted intellectual property of David King**. It is unacceptable to share any of these materials outside of this course (e.g., CourseHero).

ATTENDANCE & MISSING CLASS

Although attendance is not recorded, **you are responsible for all material covered during class**. Should you miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to find a classmate who is willing to share their notes with you (and you may want to establish this early on in order to better prepare). If your absence is legitimate, then I will be happy to answer questions about the missed material once you have consulted with a fellow student. However, I will not be able to go through missed lecture content in detail (as if presenting missed lectures again), and will only be able to answer a *reasonable* number of questions about missed content. As recordings of lectures will not be made available, **it is expected that you treat this course as a normal, in-person, course.**

PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CLASS if you are sick (with a cold, the flu, or COVID-19), have COVID-19 symptoms, have recently tested positive for COVID-19, or are required to quarantine.

CLASS ETIQUETTE

In consideration of your fellow students, **PLEASE TURN YOUR PHONE OFF DURING CLASS** and **keep noise to a minimum!** The use of laptops in class is an effective means to take notes and record comments related to course content. However, some students use laptops in class to surf the internet, engage in e-mail correspondence, and/or work on material associated with other courses. These activities can be very distracting to those who sit in adjacent seats and can interfere with their efforts to focus on course content. For this reason, all students who intend to use laptops in class for activities unrelated to the course are asked to sit in rows at the rear of the classroom. Please also make an effort to type quietly, as background sounds can be very distracting to others. If you arrive at class late or need to leave early, do so with minimal disruption. **OPEN AND CLOSE DOORS QUIETLY** and **DO NOT ALLOW DESKTOPS TO SLAM DOWN LOUDLY (if applicable)!**

COVID Safety: Although non-medical masks are not required, masks may be worn during class meetings for your own protection as well as the safety of others. Please use your own discretion and consider others!

RESPECT & DECENCY

I will only ever tolerate an inclusive, respectful, and safe learning environment (which includes all online discussions and interactions). **The opinions and perspectives of all individuals are valued and respected, no matter their age, sex, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, or gender identity.** To this end, and in support of UBC's Positive Space campaign, I further aim to foster a learning atmosphere that is receptive to and welcoming of LGBTQ+ people and issues (see <http://positivespace.ubc.ca>). All individuals in the classroom should feel safe to express their thoughts and opinions without judgment, ridicule, or discrimination. As such, thoughts and opinions should only ever be shared in a **respectful** and **polite** manner. **Yes, intellectual discourse and debate CAN happen politely and respectfully!** In regards to more sensitive issues, it is advisable that you "think before you speak." If a statement or behaviour might offend someone or make an individual feel alienated or threatened, it should be reworded or not shared at all. Educated and respectful opinions, on the other hand, are always welcome. Students should familiarize themselves with UBC's policy on maintaining a Respectful Environment on campus and in the classroom: <http://www.hr.ubc.ca/respectful-environment>



STILL UNSURE OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE RESPECTFUL? Here are some basic tips on how to communicate respectfully: https://www.wikihow.com/Be-Respectful#Communicating_Respectfully_sub. **And remember, treat your Instructor and TA(s) with the same respect! That includes being patient for e-mail replies.**

SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access, including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious and cultural observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available here: <https://senate.ubc.ca/policiesresources-support-student-success>. Further details follow...

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Centre for Accessibility (<http://students.ubc.ca/about/access>). Please let me know in advance, preferably within the first 2 weeks of class, if you require any accommodation on these grounds.

ACADEMIC CONCESSION

During your time in this course, if you encounter medical, emotional, or personal problems that affect your attendance or performance, please notify me. You may be able to obtain academic concession from the Dean of your Faculty. For further information on academic concession, please consult Policies and Regulations in the UBC Calendar (<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm>).

LEARNING RESOURCES

Learning Commons (<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca>) is an online resource designed to provide UBC students with learning and study support. It is an interactive website that provides access to information on exam preparation, tutoring, on-campus learning workshops, study groups, and technical tools. The University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) also has a number of useful learning resources available for students online. They can be found at: <http://www.unbc.ca/lsc/index.html>.

HEALTH & WELLNESS RESOURCES

This is a psychology course and we will necessarily be discussing a number of factors in psychological health and well-being, including specific psychological disorders. This may lead you to reflect on your own mental health and in some cases, even have concerns about your own well-being. This is somewhat normal (and also happens to students in medical school), and you should not panic! Although self-reflection will be encouraged, it is recommended that you avoid being too self-analytical and/or self-diagnosing.

Should you find yourself in need of additional support during the term, there are a number of resources available to you. **Student health services** can be found here: <https://students.ubc.ca/health/student-health-service>; and **counselling services** can be found here: <https://students.ubc.ca/health/counselling-services>. **The Wellness Centre at UBC** also allows you to connect with other UBC students on matters of mental health and wellness: students.ubc.ca/health/wellness-centre.

If you find yourself in distress or are worried about someone in distress who may hurt themselves, you should call 1-800-SUICIDE 24 hours a day to connect to a BC crisis line, without a wait.

Additional information on health and wellness resources can be found on the main page of the course website.

PSYC-208 (003). PSYCH OF DYING. Schedule of Course Lectures, Readings, & Exams

	<u>Start Date:</u>	<u>Module / Lecture # and Topics:</u>	<u>Readings:*</u>
UNIT 1	UNIT 1 → Psychological, Social, & Existential Factors in Death & Dying		
	Sept. 8	1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF DEATH & DYING <i>Syllabus Review; Introduction to Death & Dying; Stats and Facts</i>	Ch.2
	Sept. 13	2. THE AWARENESS & FEAR OF DEATH <i>The Concept of Death; Development of Death Awareness; Death Anxiety & TMT</i>	Ch.5 / A.1
	Sept. 20	3. FROM DEATH DENIAL TO DEATH ACCEPTANCE <i>Stages of Dying; Psychology of a Dying Person; Finding Meaning; NDEs; Suicidal Ideation</i>	A.2,3
	Sept. 27	<i>In-Class Seminar on Academic Writing – in preparation for your first thought paper assignment</i>	
	Sept. 29	4. BEREAVEMENT & THE GRIEVING PROCESS <i>The Perspective of the Survivor; Stages of Grief; Psychosocial Factors in Grief</i>	Ch.6 / A.4,5
	Oct. 9	Unit 1 Thought Paper Due – to be uploaded to Canvas by 11:59 PM!	
	Oct. 11	UNIT 1 EXAM – to be held during regular class time.	
	UNIT 2	UNIT 2 → The Social & Cultural Contexts of Death & Dying	
Oct. 13		5. THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF DEATH & DYING <i>Social Institutions; Legalities & Formalities; The Funeral Industry; Mass Media</i>	Ch.3 / A.6
Oct. 18		6. CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON DYING, DEATH, & GRIEF <i>Beliefs about Life After Death; Cultural & Religious Factors; Historical Trauma & Grief</i>	Ch.1,4 / A.7
Oct. 27		7. SOCIOCULTURAL ISSUES IN DEATH & LOSS <i>Death & Grief in Western Society; Disenfranchisement; Shame & Stigma</i>	Ch.4 / A.8,9
Nov. 3		8. DEATH IN POPULAR CULTURE <i>Psychology of Halloween; Our Immortality Stories; Death in TV, Film, & Advertising</i>	A.10
Nov. 8–10		<i>No classes this week FOR THIS CLASS. / Official midterm break runs from Nov. 9 to Nov. 11.</i>	
Nov. 13		Unit 2 Thought Paper Due – to be uploaded to Canvas by 11:59 PM!	
Nov. 15		UNIT 2 EXAM – to be held during regular class time.	
UNIT 3	UNIT 3 → End-of-Life Care, Death Work, & The Future of Death & Dying		
	Nov. 17	9. CARING FOR THE DYING <i>The Health Care Context; Factors in End-of-Life Care; Deathbed Phenomena</i>	Ch.5 / A.11
	Nov. 22	10. A CLOSER LOOK AT MEDICALLY ASSISTED DYING <i>Euthanasia & Assisted Suicide; Medically Assisted Dying in Canada; The Right to Die</i>	A.12
	Nov. 29	11. THE IMPACT OF END-OF-LIFE CARE & DEATH WORK <i>Working with Death; Health Care Workers, First Responders, & Death Care Workers</i>	Ch.7 / A.13,14
	Dec. 6	12. THE FUTURE OF DEATH & DYING <i>The Implications of Life Extension; Final Thoughts & Course Wrap-Up</i>	A.15
	Dec. 11	Unit 3 Thought Paper Due – to be uploaded to Canvas by 11:59 PM!	
	Dec. 11–22	UNIT 3 EXAM – to be scheduled by the university. (Keep your schedule open!)	

*READINGS: “Ch.” refers to a chapter from the book. “A.” refers to an additional reading/article (see p. 3).

Appendix

NOTICE ABOUT REQUESTS FOR LETTERS OF REFERENCE

During your academic career, you may wish to request a letter of reference or recommendation (for admission into a graduate or diploma program, to apply for a research job, etc.). Unfortunately, due to the volume of requests I receive, I will not be able to accommodate all students. I will only be able to *consider* such a request under the following conditions:

(1) You have had significant interaction with me such that I have gotten to know you as an individual. I am not able to provide a reference based solely on you taking this course, and this does make the possibility less likely in a distance-education course (though not impossible). I will *not* provide a reference simply stating the grade that you receive in this course. (Your transcript will do that.) If I cannot confidently speak to your other qualities or traits, I cannot write a letter of reference for you. I will make *no exceptions* to this rule.

(2) You have received a final grade in this course of at least 80%. This means that I cannot consider such requests before the term has ended and grades are finalized. Please do not ask before that time.

(3) Your GPA should also be at a level that reflects a high academic performance overall. Note that my academic reputation would be compromised if I were to refer students who do not have the necessary qualifications for a program of study. Please be mindful of this.

(4) You make the request at least one month before the letter(s) must be submitted. Ideally, such a request should be made even earlier.

(5) In your correspondence, you clearly state the schools/programs you are applying to and the deadline(s) for submission of said letter(s) of support, and also attach your C.V., an unofficial copy or screenshot of your transcript, and a brief explanation of your interest in the desired program(s) and why a letter of reference from me specifically would be relevant.

Note that even if these above conditions are met, it is still very possible that I will not be able to provide you with a letter of reference due to the sheer volume of requests I receive. Writing such letters is a very time consuming process, and as such, it is necessary for me to set a limit on how many I can write per academic term/year. Please also note that I may not be able to get back to you in a timely manner if any of the above conditions are not satisfied.

Please also note that in recent years, I have started to receive follow-up requests from students immediately after I inform them that I am unable to provide them with a letter of support. In these follow-up requests, students ask me a second time if I can help, often pleading and begging me to accommodate their request. Please note that I do not have unlimited amounts of time (or energy), and as such, it should not be presumed that I could just “make it work” if I wanted to. In the end, I would appreciate not receiving such follow-up requests. (And keep in mind that they come across as highly unprofessional, and as such, do not make me more inclined to provide the support requested.) I consider every request seriously, and if I can make it work (and the above requirements are satisfied), I will. If I cannot, I’m sorry, but this is sometimes how these things go...