

**Care and the Good Life: Exploring Care, End-of-Life and Death**  
Sarah Lawrence College, Spring 2025

**\*\*\*Please note that class will meet outside as much as is possible, once it gets warmer out, weather permitting. Please come prepared for a variety of weather conditions- sun, wind, cold, etc. \*\*\***

**Instructor:** Maggie Ornstein-Sloan, PhD, MPH

**Day:** Thursday, 1:30-4pm

**Room:** Sheffield 22

**Course #:** PSYC 3029 R

**Course level:** Open



Photo Credit: Yes Magazine

### **Course Description**

What does it mean to live a flourishing life? This is one of the most fundamental questions of human existence and this course explores this question through an engagement with the universal human experiences of caregiving and dying. Together, we will dig deep into the centrality of caregiving to the human experience and identify and explore normative claims around care, aging and disability, and death. Specifically, we will explore issues of death denial, dependence and interdependence as we think together about the role of care in our lives across the lifespan, but especially leading up to the final stages of life.

In dominant U.S. culture, notions of individualism prevail and caregiving is often conceptualized as a burden. But, who has decided that the care of other humans is a burden or that an unburdened life is one most worth living? Who is to say that we'd prefer or be better off to be 'unburdened' from significant relationships in our lives? Collectively, we will consider more life-affirming, meaningful and pluralistic ideas about care and consider who is most served by current mainstream normative claims. Finally, we will look at the ways these ideas are being resisted. Guest speakers will help us explore how individuals have engaged with questions about how one lives life well by discussing how they have replied to these questions with their lives for meaningful engagement.

Readings in this interdisciplinary course will include Lyn Lofland, Viktor Frankl, Carol Gilligan, Martha Nussbaum, and *The Sage Handbook of Death and Dying* to focus on various cultural approaches, such as the Native American, Hindu, Muslim, Japanese, Taoist, and Jewish ways of death.

## **Course Principles**

This course is being offered in partnership with the Life Worth Living (LWL) Network, which is based at Yale University and involves several other universities from around the world. In keeping with the principles of the LWL program, as we work our way through the variety of life philosophies covered in the course the teaching and discussions will be grounded in four key principles:

- 1. Pursuit of Existential Meaning**
- 2. Commitment to Truth-Seeking Pluralism**
- 3. First-Person Engagement**
- 4. Participation in a Life-Giving Learning Community**

The class seeks to create a genuine learning community in that participants will be invited to draw on their personal history and daily lives. Thus, we will learn to examine not only texts and ideas, but our very selves.

## **Course objectives**

With active engagement and upon completion of this course, students will:

- Have an interdisciplinary understanding of family caregiving and end-of-life care
- Appreciate the influence of family caregiving on everyday life
- Become familiar with various cultural approaches to death
- Understand and be able to apply an Ethic of Care to a variety of caregiving and end-of-life situations
- Be more comfortable engaging in conversations and articulating their vision of a good life in relation to caregiving, end-of-life and death

## **Course Questions**

As a survey course, you will be exposed to a variety of texts with differing viewpoints that probe existential questions. You will be encouraged and expected to reflect on your own value system, role in society, and what you find meaningful. It is expected, and indeed desired, that many questions will emerge over the course of the semester. We will focus on the following questions:

- What does it mean to live a flourishing life?
- What is the role of caregiving and receiving in leading a good life?
- Why do we (as a society) conceptualize care as a burden?
- What constitutes a “good death”? And, should we strive for one?
- How do different cultures create meaning in the face of death?
- What should we hope for in terms of the future of care provision and dying-- more technological progress (i.e. caregiving robots), increased support of caregivers, etc.?
- Does the exploration of death help us live a more meaningful life?

## **Approach**

This course is structured around inquiry and growth rather than mastery or perfection. This means that if you make a decent effort to read and understand the texts, make notes about areas of confusion, attend class regularly, and participate in various ways you will do well. This course also requires highly personal reflection that is much more important than any grade you will receive. The final grade you are assigned should in no way be considered indicative of the value or meaningfulness of your work. Nonetheless, the basis of your evaluation and grade will be how well

you *interact meaningfully* with and are enriched by the various course readings, discussions, films, guest speakers and each other.

### **Ground Rules**

In order to maintain a positive and productive learning environment please note that **this is a tech-free course**. Longhand notes lead to higher rates of knowledge retention and a deeper understanding of the material (Mueller and Oppenheimer, 2014)<sup>1</sup>. The use of cell phones or devices in class is not permitted, unless specific activities require them, as it disrupts our ability to be present to one another and to the course material. Exceptions will be granted in the case where a student has obtained reasonable accommodations from the Office of Access and Disability Services. Otherwise, if you are involved in a situation where you must be available for a call during class time (i.e-the impending death of a loved one), please let me know before class and make sure the ringer is off.

Treat each other with respect. If personal information is shared in class or your learning group – it should stay in the group. Respect each other’s privacy and participate in creating a safer space for our learning community.

Come prepared for class and open to learning, most importantly, this means completing the required reading for each class session.

DISCLAIMER- Due to the nature of the content of this course, we will cover topics related to death, aging, disability, suicide, race, gender, and injustice, I advise you to be responsible for and to consider your own well-being in regard to these materials. Some of us may be upset by various topics, the readings, and the discussions we will have in class. Please be open to the possibility that discussing difficult topics will lead to personal and collective growth. It is my goal to conduct the class in a manner which will construct a “container” safe enough to openly explore the material and gain practice in discussing difficult topics that we might otherwise try to avoid. You can read about the potential negative impacts of trigger warnings [here](https://www.psychologicalscience.org/news/releases/trigger-warnings-fail-to-help.html) to consider why I do not use them\*.  
<https://www.psychologicalscience.org/news/releases/trigger-warnings-fail-to-help.html>

### **Course Requirements**

**\*\*The syllabus is a working document and is subject to change as the semester progresses\*\***

### **Reading & Participation**

Classes will be student-centered and open seminar style based on group exercises and discussion. We will take a collaborative inquiry-based approach to the exploration of course topics. Therefore, it is essential that you bring the readings to each class having *read them closely, reflected on them and having made notes in the margins* that will enable you to quickly find sections you have questions or comments about. Active engagement in the discussions and careful, respectful listening to your classmates' contributions is expected. If you have a tendency to be shy and/or under-participate in class discussions please let me know during our first conference. My role as the instructor is to facilitate

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<sup>1</sup> Mueller, P. & Oppenheimer, D. (2014). The Pen is Mightier Than the Keyboard. *Psychological Science*; 25 (6): 1159-1168.

your discussion of the ideas and issues raised in the readings and assignments, and to help you think about and interpret them.

### **Attendance**

The success of this course depends on your class participation. This includes being prepared for class (including bringing all assigned readings and reading notes to class), attending class, and meaningfully contributing to class discussions. Because attendance is of utmost importance in this discussion-based course, **you may receive a lowered grade if you miss more than two classes, or one conference meeting** or if you are consistently late to either class or conference. Unexcused absences, as well as frequent lateness, will be noted in your course evaluation. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain missed class notes, assignments, and updates, in order to be prepared for the next class session. If an emergency requires your absence, please notify me via e-mail as soon as you know you will miss class or conference. I will do my best to provide you with a make-up conference meeting if you notify me in advance, although I cannot guarantee my availability for last minute changes or if you miss a session with no prior notice.

### **All that said... communicate with me!**

I take seriously the fact that we continue to feel the impacts of the pandemic and have been living through one of the most difficult moments of our lives and that in addition, we all have external family and work-related obligations. I cannot stress this enough: if you are forthcoming in your communications about any issues that prevent you from attending or participating in class or meeting the timeline for course assignments, I will do my best to help you succeed. I cannot do this, however, unless you communicate with me. It is much more difficult to solve problems that arise from late work and missed classes after the fact. Communicate in advance, whenever possible. We are in this together and it's safe to say I will need your patience and understanding as well, during the semester. A trauma-informed approach will be employed, with consideration of our individual and collective well-being a priority.

NB: When emailing, please include the course name along with a brief description in the subject line. I make every effort to respond within 24 hours during weekdays. Please include "Urgent" in the subject line if the issue is truly time sensitive.

### **Class Structure**

In keeping with the open seminar style of the class, all class meetings will depend on the active participation of each student. I will participate as a member of the group as we engage in the work and co-creation of knowledge and understanding of the course materials. With the exception of the first few weeks of class, students will present on a news article of their choice. Expectations for the presentation of *death in the news* will be discussed further in class, and posted on MySLC.

### **The Good Life (and Death) in the News**

Once during the semester, students will be responsible for identifying a news article related to the course content and initiating the class discussion for that session. Detailed information will be provided in class.

### **Group Work**

Each week, you will engage with your peers through in-class (and perhaps out of class) group work. In these groups you will discuss readings, methods and in-class films, and get to know one another. It is my hope that these groups will become a safer space where you will feel free to discuss and

explore issues that you may initially be struggling with or uncomfortable sharing with the entire class. That said, it should also be a space that is open to a wide variety of perspectives, all of which should be welcomed, listened to and respected. Confidentiality is expected.

### **Reading Responses/Discussion Board Posts**

You will be expected to keep a written record of the central ideas contained in the assigned readings. These will serve as your discussion board posts and will help you organize your thoughts prior to class discussions, and serve as a reference for you to return to during the semester and in your future studies.

You can think of posts as an annotated bibliography for the course. Please refer to the Purdue University on-line Writing Lab for an overview of how to write an annotated bibliography. This will also be useful for your conference work:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/common\\_writing\\_assignments/annotated\\_bibliographies/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/annotated_bibliographies/index.html)

Use this as a reference, but you are free to experiment with the format. Your goal should be to write ~ half a page per week (~200-300 words). Please write a brief response synthesizing the entire week's readings, with focused comments on the readings which were most interesting, troubling, thought provoking or confusing for you. Please don't be concerned with having the 'right' answer, but with considering, exploring and discussing the ideas presented. Include comments on your thoughts, feelings and reactions to the readings and make connections to previous readings, as well as material you have engaged with in other courses, where appropriate. Please don't avoid articles or concepts that were difficult for you, but use them as an opportunity to deepen your understanding by engaging with them. **Include at least two questions with each post to be used as a basis for class discussions.** Remember that the only bad questions are the ones you don't ask!

Posts should be published on the discussion board on MySLC by **8pm Tuesday evenings**. Consistently late posts will have a negative impact and will be noted in your evaluation. *You are able to miss two posts, with no impact on your grade.* If you do all of them, the extra work will be noted in your evaluation. Please note that if you tend to be quiet in class, reading other students' posts will help boost your participation grade and will be noted in your evaluation.

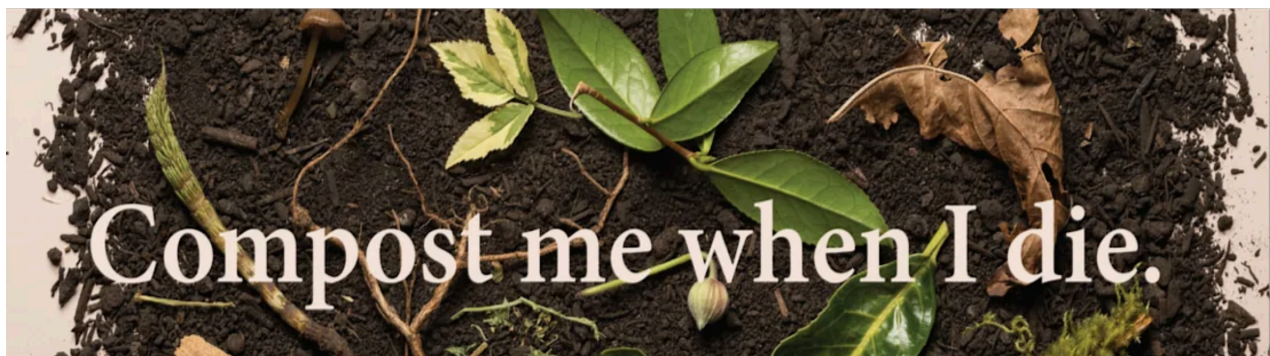


Photo credit- Recompose: <https://recompose.life/>

**Assignments:** Detailed instructions for each will be posted on MySLC

Attendance/Participation (15%)

Weekly Reading Response/Discussion Board Posts (15%)

The Good Life (and Death) in the News- Discussion Leadership (10%)

Care & Loss Autobiography (10%)

Eulogy/Obituary (10%)

Conference Project (40%): Conference projects will be a ~15-page research paper, which includes an interview with someone you know about aging/ death.

### **Conference Projects**

I conceptualize conference as a 1-credit process and 1-credit product. For example, if you complete an excellent final paper, but weren't engaged in a research process *throughout the semester*, this is not a successful conference experience. Work on conference projects will proceed steadily throughout the semester. We will discuss project approaches, challenges, and milestones in individual meetings as well as with the entire class at various points during the semester. These semester-long projects are flexible and based on student interest.

The following deadlines are a guide for demonstrating progress and will remain unless an alternate schedule is worked out with me in advance:

**February:** Topic Selection: 1-2 paragraph proposal

**March** (before spring break): Annotated bibliography (~10 peer-reviewed scholarly articles or books/chapters)

**April:** Outline / partial draft (one is required, both are recommended)

**April 24, 2025:** Final draft/in-class presentation (please note early due date)

### **Guidelines for written assignments**

- Unless otherwise specified, all written assignments should be in a 12-point font, double-spaced, and with 1-inch margins.
- APA (American Psychological Association)-style references are required. See the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) (available in the 'Works Cited and Citations' guide on the library website) and/or the Purdue Online Writing Lab for APA-style guidelines:
  - <http://sarahlawrence.libguides.com/AcademicIntegrity/Citations>
  - <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- Files should be named using the following template: Last name.Assignment.date. For example: Ornstein.Syllabus.1.25.25.doc
- Files should be word files saved with a .doc or .docx extension. **Please do not submit through Google Docs or Pages, these formats will not be accepted.**
- If you are not able to complete a writing assignment by the day it is due, email me to obtain an extension *before* the day it is due and *as early as possible*.

### **Resources**

The following college resources are available to help students thrive in their coursework as well as navigate the campus. **Students must take the initiative to access these resources as needed:**

\*[Access and Disability Services](#): the Director of Access and Disability Services works individually with students with disabilities to assure that they have equal access to the full range of opportunities at the college

[DEI@SLC](#): the college offers a number of programs and resources pertaining to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging

[Dean of Studies Office](#): helps students and dons navigate academic policies; serves as a resource referral for students

[Health and Wellness Center](#): provides compassionate, confidential care for students' medical and psychological health concerns

[Learning Commons](#): offers academic coaching for time management, organization, note-taking and effective reading; individualized writing support; peer tutoring in math, science, and several languages; and workshop series on a variety of academic support topics

[The Library's Research Assistance and Tools](#): students can meet with a research librarian and access wonderful research resources through this site

### **\*Reasonable Accommodations**

Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability is encouraged to contact the Office of Access and Disability Services (ADS) to request reasonable accommodations. Email Kara Barrows, Assistant Dean of Access and Disability Services at [disabilityservices@sarahlawrence.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@sarahlawrence.edu) to begin the process or call 914-395-2235. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 all students with or without disabilities, are entitled to equal access to the programs and activities of Sarah Lawrence College.



Photo credit: Maggie Ornstein

**Course Materials**

The following books are required for this course. If you don't want to purchase them, both are available on reserve in the library.

Frankl, V.E. (2006). *Man's Search for Meaning*. Beacon Press.

Lofland, L.H. (2019). *The Craft of Dying: The Modern Face of Death*. [40<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition]. The MIT Press.

Readings are listed in the order in which they should be read and will be made available electronically in the 'Reserves and Handouts' area of MySLC or via web links.

**Working Schedule:**

All readings and assignments are due on the dates listed. Supplemental readings are not required.

**\*\*Subject to change as fits the workings of this class\*\***

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics and *Notes</b>	<b>Readings and Activities</b>	<b>Assignment due dates and notes</b>
<b>Wk 1</b> Th 1/23/25	<b>Course Introduction</b>	Introduction to the course and each other, syllabus review and course requirements  Course Ethos of Care document  Croasmun, M. What's Worth Wanting? <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aw2IIQRrXg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aw2IIQRrXg</a>	
	Supplemental	David Foster Wallace, "This is Water," (23 min listen) or read- <a href="https://fs.blog/david-foster-wallace-this-is-water/">https://fs.blog/david-foster-wallace-this-is-water/</a>	
<b>Wk 2</b> Th 1/30/25	No conferences this week	Frankl- Man's Search for Meaning, pp. ix-93 – (Forward, Preface, part I)	<b>Database assignment due Tuesday, 2/04</b>
	Supplemental		
<b>Wk 3</b> Th 2/06/25 <b>(A week)</b>	<b>In-class session with research librarian-</b> meet in lower-level library classroom	Frankl- Man's Search for Meaning, pp. 97-165- (part II, Afterword)  Alua Arthur (death doula)- Why thinking about death helps you live a better life (18 min) <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/alua_arthur_why_thinking_about_death_helps_you_live_a_better_life">https://www.ted.com/talks/alua_arthur_why_thinking_about_death_helps_you_live_a_better_life</a>	<b>A-week-conferences begin</b>
	Supplemental	Roberts & Applebaum - The benefits of concurrent engagement in meaning-centered psychotherapy and meaning-centered	

		<p>psychotherapy for cancer caregivers: A case study.</p> <p>McAndrew, et al- Existential distress in family caregivers: scoping review of meaning-making interventions.</p>	
<p><b>Wk 4</b></p> <p>Th 2/13/25 <b>(B Week)</b></p>	<p><b>Care &amp; The Good Life: An ethic of care</b></p> <p>Normative Claims: Individualism &amp; Moral Development</p>	<p><b>In the news discussions to begin-</b></p> <p>Strauss- A philosophy of care: Through caregiving, we can encounter big questions, and big answers</p> <p>What is the Good Life and How to Attain it <a href="https://positivepsychology.com/good-life/">https://positivepsychology.com/good-life/</a></p>	<p><b>B Week</b></p> <p><b>Conference Project Topics Due in February</b></p>
	Supplemental	<p>Stohr-Aristotelian Friendship and Ignatian Companionship</p> <p>Vanderweele- On the promotion of human flourishing</p> <p>Tronto-Moral Boundaries, Chapter 4: Care</p>	
<p><b>Wk 5</b></p> <p>Th 2/20/25 <b>(A week)</b></p>	<p><b>Caregiving</b></p> <p>Normative claim: Caregiver Burden</p>	<p><b>In the news-</b></p> <p>Mack-The Elephant in the Room</p> <p>Applebaum- There is Nothing Informal about Caregiving</p> <p>Applebaum- Chapter 9-Finding Meaning in Caregiving</p> <p>Advance Directives: Making Your Wishes Known and Honored: <a href="https://ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/advancedirectives.pdf">https://ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/advancedirectives.pdf</a></p>	<p><b>A Week</b></p> <p><b>Care &amp; Loss Autobiography Due</b></p>
	Supplemental	<p>Caregiving in the US- Executive summary</p> <p>Levine- “Family-Caregiving” in Bioethics</p> <p>Ornstein, et al-A National Profile of End-of-Life Caregiving in the US <a href="http://theconversationproject.org/">http://theconversationproject.org/</a></p>	
<p><b>Wk 6</b></p> <p>Th 2/27/25 <b>(B Week)</b></p>	<p><b>Death &amp; Dying in America- Do we Deny Death?</b></p>	<p><b>In the news-</b></p> <p>Lofland, L.H. (2019). <i>The Craft of Dying: The Modern Face of Death</i>. [40<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition]. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.</p>	<p><b>B Week</b></p>

	Normative claim: Death denial		
	Supplemental	<p>The Order of the Good Death: <a href="https://www.orderofthegooddeath.com/">https://www.orderofthegooddeath.com/</a></p> <p>The Routledge Companion to Death and Dying- Ch 38-The Death Awareness Movement</p> <p>Tradii &amp; Robert- Do we deny death? II: Critiques of the death-denial thesis</p> <p>Robert &amp; Tradii- Do we deny death? I: A genealogy of death-denial</p>	
<p><b>Wk 7</b></p> <p>Th 3/06/25 <b>(A week)</b></p>	<p><b>Collaborative learning workshop</b></p> <p><b>Guest Speaker:</b> Dan Doniger- home hospice nurse</p>	<p><b>In the news-</b></p> <p>McKnight-John Deere and the Bereavement Counselor</p> <p>Lynch- Individualism and Capitalism: From Personalized Salvation to Human Capitals (pp. 115-133) from Care &amp; Capitalism</p> <p>Koksvik- Neoliberalism, individual responsabilization and the death positivity movement</p> <p>Conference workshop session - Elevator pitch</p>	<p><b>A Week</b></p> <p><b>Annotated Bibliography for Conference Projects Due</b></p> <p>- Come prepared to share your work</p>
	Supplemental	<p>Endgame: How the Visionary Hospice Movement became a For-Profit Hustle- <a href="https://www.propublica.org/article/hospice-healthcare-aseracare-medicare">https://www.propublica.org/article/hospice-healthcare-aseracare-medicare</a></p>	
<p><b>Wk 8</b></p> <p>Th 3/13/25</p>	SPRING BREAK	<p>No class- enjoy a restful and productive week!</p> <p><b>Film:</b> Being Mortal <a href="https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/being-mortal/">https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/being-mortal/</a> (please watch prior to class on 3/20)</p>	<p><b>Independent work on Conference Projects Continues</b></p>
<p><b>Wk 9</b></p> <p>Th 3/20/25 <b>(B Week)</b></p>	<p><b>Institutions</b></p> <p><b>Field Trip:</b> Ken Hamilton Caregiver Center</p>	<p>Kaufman-And a Time to Die: How Hospitals Shape the End of Life - Chapter 4-Moving Things Along</p> <p>Wachterman, et al. (2022). Where Americans Die-Is There Really “No Place Like Home”?</p>	<p><b>B Week</b></p>
	Supplemental	The Last Dance- Chapter 5- Health Care: Patients, Staff, and Institutions	

		<p>Applebaum, A.J., (2022). I was never “just” a visitor. Hastings Bioethics Forum, March 9, 2022. <a href="https://www.thehastingscenter.org/i-was-never-just-a-visitor/">https://www.thehastingscenter.org/i-was-never-just-a-visitor/</a></p> <p><b>Film:</b> A Family Undertaking: Home Funerals in America</p>	
<p><b>Wk 10</b> Th 3/27/25 <b>(A week)</b></p>	<p><b>A Good Death</b></p> <p><b>Guest Speaker:</b> Dr. Robin Plumer, Compassionate Endings NJ</p>	<p><b>In the news-</b> Cottrell &amp; Duggleby- The “good death”: An integrative literature review (pp: 686-8 &amp; 707-11)</p> <p>Coward &amp; Causton- A “Good Death” in Hospice and Palliative Care (Routledge Companion to Death &amp; Dying)</p> <p><a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/medical-aid-dying-new-jersey-maid/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/medical-aid-dying-new-jersey-maid/</a></p> <p>Lawry- Rethinking Medical Aid in Dying: What Does it Mean to ‘Do No Harm?’</p>	<p><b>A Week</b></p>
	<p>Supplemental</p>	<p>Badham- Assisted Dying (Ch 42-Routledge Companion to Death &amp; Dying)</p> <p>Fersko-Weiss-Caring for the Dying: The Doula approach to a Meaningful Death</p> <p>Not Dead Yet: <a href="https://notdeadyet.org/">https://notdeadyet.org/</a></p> <p>Compassion &amp; Choices: <a href="https://compassionandchoices.org/">https://compassionandchoices.org/</a></p> <p>Academy of Aid-in-Dying: <a href="https://www.aadm.org/">https://www.aadm.org/</a></p> <p>Doughty-From Here to Eternity: Traveling the World to Find the Good Death</p>	
<p><b>Wk 11</b> Th 4/03/25 <b>(B Week)</b></p>	<p>In-class presentation of eulogies</p> <p><b>Film:</b> Alternate Endings: Six New Ways to Die in America (Available in Kanopy)- please watch prior to class</p>	<p><b>In the news-</b> The Last Dance- Chapter 8-Last Rites: Funerals and Body Disposition</p>	<p><b>B Week</b></p> <p><b>Eulogy Due</b></p>
	<p>Supplemental</p>	<p>The Hart Island Project <a href="https://www.hartisland.net/">https://www.hartisland.net/</a></p> <p>To be a field of Poppies-The Elegant Science of Turning Cadavers into Compost:</p>	

		<a href="https://harpers.org/archive/2021/10/to-be-a-field-of-poppies-natural-organic-reduction-composting-corpse/">https://harpers.org/archive/2021/10/to-be-a-field-of-poppies-natural-organic-reduction-composting-corpse/</a>	
<b>Wk 12</b> Th 4/10/25 <b>(A week)</b>	<b>Class is cancelled- I will be attending a conference</b>	Kübler-Ross- <i>Death: The Final Stage of Growth</i> - Foreward, Preface, introduction & Chapter 6: Death: The Final Stage of Growth	<b>A Week</b> <b>Outline/ Rough Draft of Conference Project Due</b>
	Supplemental	<b>Film:</b> The Farewell (available on Hulu & other streaming services)	
<b>Wk 13</b> Th 4/17/25 <b>(B week)</b>	<b>Film:</b> A Family Undertaking - please watch prior to class & include in your discussion board post	<b>In the news-</b>  <b>Cultural response to death presentation-</b>  The Last Dance- Chapter 9: Survivors: Understanding the Experience of Loss	<b>B Week</b>
	Supplemental	Rothaupt & Becker- A Literature Review of Western Bereavement Theory: From Decathecting to Continuing Bonds	
<b>Wk 14</b> Th 4/24/25 <b>(A week)</b>	<b>Conference presentations</b>	<b>Conference Work Presentations</b>	<b>A Week</b> <b>Final Conference Projects Due Today</b>
<b>Wk 15</b> Th 5/01/25 <b>(B Week)</b>	<b>Last Class: Course wrap up</b>	TBD	<b>B Week</b>



Photo credit: Maggie Ornstein- Greensprings Natural Cemetery Preserve

**Required Readings (Subject to change): Listed in the order they will be read**

Frankl, V.E. (2006). *Man's Search for Meaning*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Strauss, E. (2023). A philosophy of care: Through caregiving, we can encounter big questions, and big answers. (pp 191-222). In *When you care: the unexpected magic of caring for others*.

Mack, S. (2007). The Elephant in the Room. In *An Uncertain Inheritance: Writers on Caring for Family*. Nell Casey, ed.

Applebaum, A.J. (2024). Stand By Me: A Guide to Navigating Modern, Meaningful Caregiving. New York, NY: Simon Element. (Chapter 9-finding Meaning in Caregiving)

Applebaum, A.J. (2022). There is Nothing Informal about Caregiving. *Palliative and Supportive Care*, 20, 621-622.

Advance Directives: Making Your Wishes Known and Honored

<https://ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/advancedirectives.pdf>

Lofland, L.H. (2019). *The Craft of Dying: The Modern Face of Death*. [40<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition]. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Lynch, K. (2021). Ch 6: Individualism and Capitalism: From Personalized Salvation to Human Capitals (pp. 115-133). In *Care and Capitalism*.

McKnight, J. (1996). John Deere and the Bereavement Counselor. In *The Careless Society*. BasicBooks.

Koksvik, G.H. (2020). Neoliberalism, individual responsabilization and the death positivity movement. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 951-967.

**Film:** Being Mortal

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/being-mortal/>

Wachterman, et al. (2022). Where Americans Die-Is There Really “No Place Like Home”? *New England Journal of Medicine*, 386(11), 1008-1010.

Kaufman, S. (2006). From *And a Time to Die: How Hospitals Shape the End of Life*. University of Chicago Press. [Chapter 4-Moving Things Along].

Cottrell, L. & Duggleby, W. (2016). The “good death”: An integrative literature review. *Palliative and Supportive Care*, 14, 686-712.

Coward & Causton (2018). A “Good Death” in Hospice and Palliative Care. In Moreman, C.M. (Ed.) *The Routledge Companion to Death and Dying*. Routledge.

Lawry, D.R. (2023). Rethinking Medical Aid in Dying: What Does it Mean to ‘Do No Harm?’. *J Adv Pract Oncol.*, 14(4), 307-316. doi: 10.6004/jadpro.2023.14.4.5.

Kübler-Ross, E. *Death: The Final Stage of Growth*- chapter TBD

DeSpelder, L. A., & Strickland, A. L. (2009). *The last dance: encountering death and dying* (8th ed). McGraw Hill Higher Education. [**Chapter 8-Last Rites: Funerals and Body Disposition**]

**Film:** Alternate Endings: Six New Ways to Die in America (Available on Kanopy)

Bryant, C.D. (Ed.) (2003). *Handbook of Death and Dying*. SAGE Publications, Inc. (SELECTED CHAPTERS)

### **Selected Supplemental Readings**

Cottrell, L. & Duggleby, W. (2016). The “good death”: An integrative literature review. *Palliative and Supportive Care*, 14, 686-712.

Roberts, K.E. & Applebaum, A.J. (Oct. 2022). [The benefits of concurrent engagement in meaning-centered psychotherapy and meaning-centered psychotherapy for cancer caregivers: A case study.](#) *Palliat Support Care*, 20(5):754-756. doi: 10.1017/S1478951522001109.

McAndrew NS, Gray TF, Wallace L, Calkins K, Guttormson J, Harding ES, Applebaum AJ. [Existential distress in family caregivers: scoping review of meaning-making interventions](#). *BMJ Support Palliat Care*. 2024 Jan 8;13(e3):e676-e685. doi: 10.1136/spcare-2023-004448.

Stohr, K. (2019). Aristotelian Friendship and Ignatian Companionship. In D. McPherson (Ed.) *Spirituality and the Good Life: Philosophical Approaches*. (pp. 155-176). Cambridge University Press.

The Routledge Companion to Death and Dying- Ch 38-The Death Awareness Movement

Tradii & Robert- Do we deny death? II: Critiques of the death-denial thesis

Robert & Tradii- Do we deny death? I: A genealogy of death-denial

Endgame: How the Visionary Hospice Movement became a For-Profit Hustle-  
<https://www.propublica.org/article/hospice-healthcare-aseracare-medicare>

DeSpelder, L. A., & Strickland, A. L. (2009). *The last dance: encountering death and dying* (8th ed). McGraw Hill Higher Education. [Chapter 5- Health Care: Patients, Staff, and Institutions]

Applebaum, A.J., (2022). I was never “just” a visitor. *Hastings Bioethics Forum*, March 9, 2022.  
<https://www.thehastingscenter.org/i-was-never-just-a-visitor/>

Badham- Ch 42-Assisted Dying. In Moreman, C.M. (Ed.) (2018). *The Routledge Companion to Death and Dying*. Routledge.

Vanderweele, T. J. (2017). On the promotion of human flourishing. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 114(31), 8148–8156.  
<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1702996114>

Rothaupt, J. W. & Becker, K. (2007). A Literature Review of Western Bereavement Theory: From Decathecting to Continuing Bonds. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 15(1), 6-15.

### **Academic Journals to Consult**

Death and Dying

Death Studies

Journal of Loss & Trauma

Journal of Personal and Interpersonal Loss

Mortality

Omega: Journal of Death & Dying

Journal of Aid-in-Dying

### ***Special Issues***

Death Studies: Life’s End: Ethnographic Perspectives (2018)

Death Studies: Death in a Broader Perspective: Historical, Anthropological, and Sociological Contributions (2017)

Death Studies: Loss & Grief in the Social World (2014)

Death Studies: Meaning and Spirituality in Grief (2014)

Death Studies: Death Acceptance (2011)

## **Organizations & Projects of Interest**

National Alliance for Caregiving: <https://www.caregiving.org/>

The Conversation Project: <https://theconversationproject.org/>

Compassion & Choices: <https://compassionandchoices.org/>

Order of the Good Death: <https://www.orderofthegooddeath.com/>

The Green Burial Council: <https://www.greenburialcouncil.org/research.html>

American Psychological Association (APA)

- Division 32: Society for Humanistic Psychology: <https://www.apadivisions.org/division-32>
- Division 36: Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality: <https://www.apadivisions.org/division-36>

The Art of Dying Well (podcast): <https://www.artofdyingwell.org/podcasts/>

The Conversation Project-25 podcasts about end-of-life care:

<https://theconversationproject.org/tcp-blog/16-podcasts-about-end-of-life-care/>

Advance Directives- MOLST, DNR, Living Wills, NYS Health Care Proxy

<https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/1430.pdf>

Disposition of Remains:

[https://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/funeral\\_director/disposition\\_of\\_remains.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/professionals/funeral_director/disposition_of_remains.htm)

## **Recommended Supplemental Reading**

Feel free to ask to explore my bookshelves, which contain many of these books, among others.

### ***Books***

Abel, E. K. (2013). *The inevitable hour: A history of caring for dying patients in America*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Bryant, C.D. (Ed.) (2003). *Handbook of Death and Dying*. Sage Publications. [available in the library]

Casey, N. (2014). *An uncertain inheritance: Writers on caring for ill family members*. HarperCollins. [caregiving narratives]

Doughty, C. (2017). *From Here to Eternity: Traveling the World to Find the Good Death*. Recorded Books.

Doughty, C. (2015). *Smoke Gets in your Eyes & Other Lessons from the Crematory*. Norton & Company.

Dugdale, L.S. (2021). *The Lost Art of Dying: Reviving Forgotten Wisdom*. Harper Collins.

Fersko-Weiss, H. (2020). *Finding Peace at the End of Life : A death doula's guide for families and caregivers*. Red Wheel.

Gawande, A. (2014). *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End*. Metropolitan Books.

Gilligan, C. (1993). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Harvard University Press.

- Kastenbaum, R. & Moreman, C.M. (Eds.) (2024). *Death, Society, and Human Experience*. Routledge.
- Kübler-Ross, E. (1975). *Death: The Final Stage of Growth*. Simon & Schuster.
- Levine, C., & United Hospital Fund of New York. (Eds.) (2004). *Always on call: When illness turns families into caregivers*. Vanderbilt University Press. [caregiving narratives]
- Maddrell, A. & Sidaway, J.D. (Eds.) (2010). *Deathscapes: Spaces for Death, Dying, Mourning and Remembrance*. Taylor & Francis.
- McKnight, J. (1995). *The careless society: Community and its counterfeits*. BasicBooks.
- Moreman, C.M. (2020). *The Routledge Companion to Death and Dying*. Taylor & Francis.
- Noddings, N. (2013). *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (Second edition, updated). University of California Press
- Piemonte, N. & Abreu, S. (2021). *Death and Dying*. The MIT Press.
- Volf, M., Croasmun, M. & McAnnally-Linz, R. (2023). *Life Worth Living: A Guide to What Matters Most*. The Open Field/Penguin Life.

The following is a **general** assessment guide for participation:

A: **Outstanding participation.** The student is actively engaged in every facet of the class. He/she comes to every class session ready to engage in informed discussion based on a thorough and critical reading of the assigned material. The student is always prepared for class having his/her textbook and other necessary materials (such as handouts, notebook with assignments and class work, etc.). The student makes extraordinary contributions to the class through consistently thoughtful, well-focused, and original comments and questions and shares additional materials that are relevant to and synthesize the course topics. The student works collaboratively with his/her classmates and instructor, and the student seeks assistance should he/she need it.

B: **Good participation.** The student is actively engaged in most facets of the class. He/she comes to every class session ready to engage in informed discussion based on a careful reading of the assigned material. The student is almost always prepared for class having his/her textbook and other necessary materials (such as handouts, notebook with assignments and class work, etc.). The student makes a solid contribution to the class through regular relevant and thoughtful comments and questions. The student works collaboratively with his/her classmates and instructor, and the student is likely to seek assistance should he/she need it.

C: **Average participation.** The student is actively engaged in some facets of the class. He/she comes to many class sessions ready to engage in informed discussion based on a general reading of the assigned material. The student is usually prepared for class having his/her textbook and other necessary materials (such as handouts, notebook with assignments and classwork, etc.). The student makes a contribution to the class through general, incomplete, and/or tangential comments. The student, for the most part, works collaboratively with his/her classmates and instructor, and the student is not likely to seek assistance on his/her own.

D: **Poor participation.** The student rarely demonstrates an active engagement in the class. He/she comes to many class sessions unprepared for informed discussion. The student sometimes brings his/her textbook and other necessary materials (such as handouts, notebook with assignments and class work, etc.). The student does not contribute to the class in any significant way. The student does not collaborate with his/her classmates and instructor, and the student is not likely to seek assistance on his/her own or even with direction.

F: **Unacceptable participation.** The student is not an active member of the class.

The following is a **general** assessment guide for *formal* papers:

A:     **Outstanding written work.** This work demonstrates comprehensive and solid understanding of course material, and presents thoughtful interpretations, well-focused and original insights, and well-reasoned commentary, synthesis and analysis. This work includes skillful use of source materials, illuminating examples and illustrations, a high level of clarity, and it is on-time and complete. Written work is free of editing errors. This work is not, in part or wholly, plagiarized.

B:     **Good written work.** This work demonstrates a complete and accurate understanding of course materials, and it presents a reasonable degree of insight and broad levels of analysis. This work includes an engaged use of source material, an adequate ability to apply concepts and to provide examples, a solid level of clarity, and it is for the most part on-time and complete. Written work has a limited amount of editing errors. This work is not, in part or wholly, plagiarized.

C:     **Average written work.** This work demonstrates a basic understanding of course materials and it presents a general level of analysis. This work might include a limited use of source material, inconsistent ability to apply concepts and to provide examples, an adequate level of clarity, and it might demonstrate a pattern of being late and/or incomplete. Written work has some editing errors. This work is not, in part or wholly, plagiarized.

D:     **Poor written work.** This work demonstrates a limited understanding of course materials, and it presents little or no level of analysis. This work might include inadequate or inconsistent use of source material, a lack of ability to apply concepts and to provide examples, an insufficient level of clarity, and it is for the most part late and/or incomplete. Written work has many editing errors. This work is not, in part or wholly, plagiarized.

F:     **Unacceptable written work.** This work demonstrates a serious lack of understanding of course materials and an inability to apply concepts, generate analysis, or to provide suitable examples. It has a pattern of lateness and/or for being incomplete. This work is in part or wholly plagiarized.

