PT5/725 SACRED DYING: PASTORAL CARE, END OF LIFE, AND THE 21ST CENTURY
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PURPOSE
This course offers an overview of spiritual needs that surround the changing physical, medical, ethical, and psychological landscape of death and dying. Designed for clergy, laity, and multi-disciplinary professionals, the course will address related and complex issues affecting spiritual dynamics of end of life in the 21st century.

COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES
• Describe key components of the Sacred Dying philosophy
• Identify the spiritual dynamics of dying and death within the broader landscape of end of life care.
• Articulate the spiritual needs of dying persons and those who care for them.
• Evaluate the current aspects of the Canadian Medical Assistance in Dying law as it affects pastoral care.
• Create hands-on models/rituals to minister to the sick and dying.
• Grapple with one's own personal and spiritual experiences and emotions related to dying and death.

FORMAT AND CONTENT
This is a one-week intensive course worth 1.5 credit hours. Work in the course consists of classes including readings done ahead and during the course, lectures, discussions, one research-based paper, and a personal journal.

Identification of the levels at which the course can be taken: Audit, Certificate, Basic (Diploma, MA, MDiv) or Advanced (ThM).
TEXTS

Required Reading:

Required texts are:


4. Selected articles and reports (*posted on Moodle*).

These books can be purchased through Amazon or any other vendor or bookstore. The remaining selected articles and reports can be downloaded through the provided links here and on Moodle.

Please read prior to the first class:


3. Hospice/Palliative care basic info

Recommended Reading:

These books and articles are recommended but not required. They will not be on reserve in the library.


**COURSE POLICIES**

1. **Attendance** For an intensive course, VST requires 100% attendance.

2. **Reading and assignments** Students are expected to read all required assignments before class and to complete all assignments as outlined in the syllabus within the specified dates of the course and term.

3. **Academic honesty** Students are expected to adhere to VST’s requirements for academic honesty as published in the Student Handbook.

4. **Inclusive language** In speaking and writing, inclusive language is expected when making reference to humans and a variety of metaphors are anticipated when making reference to God.

5. **Assignment and Course Evaluation**
   - Course evaluations at VST combine a letter grade system (A+ to B-; course failure is “Not Approved”) including narrative comments based on the competencies of the course. No number grades or weights of assignments are calculated, nor are final grades given numerical equivalents.
   - Individual assignments within a course are given narrative evaluations, that is, APP (Approved) or INC (Incomplete) with narrative comments, based on the competencies and expectations set for that assignment. One re-write is allowed on any assignment that is INC. The re-written assignment is due two weeks after the work is returned. The final evaluation for an assignment can be APP or NAPP after a re-write.
   - For a passing grade in the course, all assignments must be completed in order for students to demonstrate that they have successfully met the competence objectives.

6. **Late assignments**
   Submission of assignments on time is a part of academic, professional and pastoral competence and a part of every course at VST. All assignments in courses are due on the dates specified in the syllabus. Failure to submit an assignment on time will be noted in the narrative evaluation of an assignment. Repeated failure to submit assignments on time may affect the final grade for the course.
7. **Limitation on use of social media**
   Ordinarily, the use of electronic devices in the contexts of classrooms or meetings will be to support the learning, formation, or agenda at hand.

8. **VST** is committed to creating safe space and an inclusive learning environment. If you have a diagnosed or suspected learning disability, chronic condition, mental health concern, or physical requirement which you anticipate may impact your participation in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs with the instructor and the Dean within the first week of classes.

**Confidentiality:**
The importance of confidentiality and anonymity both inside and outside the classroom cannot be overemphasized. Because of the nature of the conversations and the experiences in which students will be participating, it is extremely important that everyone attending this class make special efforts to respect this required expectation.

**ASSIGNMENTS and EXPECTATIONS**
1. Please do all the readings and come prepared to discuss them in class.
2. A personal journal is required for all students taking the course for credit, and recommended for those auditing the course. The journal is to be turned in at the end of the week. It can be typed or handwritten in a diary.
3. Students who take this course for credit towards a degree are required to write a research-focused paper with a case study. It will be due by end of term. Topic and methodology must first be approved by me, via a short 1 to 2 paragraph proposal and consultation. Detailed instructions, guidelines, grading criteria, and expectations will be provided.
CALENDAR

Day One: Monday July 10\textsuperscript{th} – Today's medical landscape for those at end of life

Topic: Prolonged dying, hospice/palliative care, how people are dying in the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century

Assigned Readings for discussion:

1. ‘Letting Go’ in the \textit{New Yorker}, by Atul Gawande
   \url{http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/08/02/letting-go-2}

2. Hospice/Palliative care information
   \url{http://www.virtualhospice.ca/en_US/Main+Site+Navigation/Home/Topics/Topics/What+Is+Palliative+Care_/What+Is+Palliative+Care_.aspx}

Assigned Homework:

Begin writing in your journal. Read Tuesday’s assigned readings.

Day Two: Tuesday July 11\textsuperscript{th} – Spiritual needs of the dying

Topic: Academic studies identifying spiritual and religious needs of the dying. Overview of assessment tools and how they were developed.

Assigned Readings for Discussion:

1. Chapters in \textit{A Time for Listening and Caring} by Christina M. Puchalski
   Chapters 1, 2, 4, & 7.

2. “Religiousness and Spiritual Support Among Advanced Cancer Patients and Associations With End-of-Life Treatment Preferences and Quality of Life”
   Tracy A. Balboni, Lauren C. Vanderwerer, Susan D. Block, M. Elizabeth
   \url{https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2515558/pdf/nihms58578.pdf}


   (\textit{nb:} I will post the link on Moodle or send you a PDF of the article.)
Assigned Homework:

Write in your journal. Read Wednesday's assigned readings. Work on your proposal (1-2 paragraphs) describing the topic for your paper.

*Day Three: Wednesday July 12th – MAiD: Medical Aid in Dying*

Topic: Legal documents and Church responses to MAiD

Assigned Readings:

1. The Anglican Church’s Report

2. The United Church of Canada

3. The Roman Catholic Church

4. The Government Document

Assigned Homework:

Write in Journal. Read Thursday's readings. Turn in proposals for your paper.

*Day Four: Thursday July 13th – Pastoral Care Models*

Topic: Landscape of pastoral care to the dying, Chaplaincy training and experiences, pastoral care in faith communities, seminary training.
Assigned Readings for Discussion:

1. Pastoral Care In the larger Churches
   See attached PDF in Moodle.

2. Pastoral Care to the dying taught in Seminaries
   http://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2522&context=etd

3. Chaplaincy training

Assigned Homework:

Write in Journal. Read Friday's readings.

I will meet with academic credit students immediately after class to discuss the proposals. We will have a group discussion as well as individual consultations. Please schedule to be present from 12:15 noon until 1:15 pm.

Day Five: Friday July 14th – Growing Trends in End of Life Care


Assigned Readings for Discussion:

Death Doulas:

Home Funerals:
http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/02/05/inside-a-home-funeral.html
http://www.cindea.ca/home-funerals.html

Alternative Death Care:
http://www.subudhealth.org/documents/BeyondTheMedicalModel.pdf
Vigiling/No One Dies Alone:
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeanne-dennis/vigil-volunteers_b_1624678.html

Natural Death Centre

Assigned Homework:
Work on your research paper.

End of Term – 31 August 31st
END OF TERM: Last Day for submission of all written work.

Expectations, Assignments and Evaluative Criteria
1. Class participation: Students are expected to participate in class discussions, and do adequate preparation of in-class discussion exercises. Evaluative criteria: comments and questions show adequate preparation, an understanding of the assigned readings and exercises, and a readiness to apply readings to interpretive questions and insights.
2. Research-based paper: this paper will help students gain specific skills and learn critical study methods. Evaluative criteria: concise and clear writing, and completeness and accuracy in carrying out tasks assigned.
3. Journal as described below in more detail. Due as specified in calendar. Evaluative criteria: completeness, depth of reflection and insight, ability to explore complexity in interpretation. (Further instructions for the journal given on a separate page.)
4. Audit students are required to do all the reading and participate in the class discussions and exercises. Journals are recommended but not required.
5. Certificate students are required to do all the reading, participate in the class discussions and exercises, and do the journal, handing in the sections of the journal as listed in the calendar.
Selected Bibliography

Caregiving


Spirituality/Religion


General Death & Dying


Williams-Murphy, Monica, MD. *It's OK to Die*. MKN, LLC. 2011.

**Medical System and End of Life**


**Hospice / Palliative Care**


**Having “The Conversation”**


**Grief and Bereavement**

