

LS/SP505 Anglican Formation Retreat: Funerals and End-of-Life Ministry

Instructor Melissa M. Skelton

Email melissamskelton@gmail.com

Spring Term Friday, March 17 (6:00 to 9:00 PM) and Saturday, March 18 (9:00 to 5:00 PM) 2023
All sessions of the class are in-person.

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

Participants will examine their experience and beliefs regarding death, since, as clergy, or chaplains, they will often be dealing with people whose understanding and experience of death may be very different from their own. They will be challenged to reflect on and express what they believe about the dying process, about death, about understandings of life after death, and about human being's relationship with God and others within the experience of death. They will explore ways of understanding, caring for, and supporting people in the face of loss to give meaningful expression to that loss in the form of the funeral liturgy.

COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, participants will be able

1. To articulate their own personal history and attitudes regarding death and express the impact that these experiences and attitudes have in their dealings with people suffering loss and grief.
2. To describe the issues that people face at time of death.
3. To identify the basic aspects of grief and offer helpful ways of being of service to the dying and to their families both during the dying process and after the death of family members.
4. To plan and conduct a funeral and any other supportive liturgical rites either in the church or in another setting that demonstrate a sensitivity to the insights of the Anglican tradition, to the needs of the family of the person who has died, and to the parish or other community affected by the death.

PREREQUISITES

This course is **restricted** to Anglican M.Div. students and students in the DADS program for diaconal postulants, unless by special permission of the instructor.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Atwell, Robert. *Peace At the Last: Leading Funerals Well*. Canterbury Press, 2014.

The Book of Alternative Services (Anglican Church of Canada) – reference in particular the various versions of funeral liturgies and the instructional material relating to them (BAS pp. 567—569), and also the forms for Ministry to the Sick and Ministry at the Time of Death (BAS p. 551ff.) *The Book of Common Prayer* (Anglican Church of Canada) (BCP pp. 576 – 610)

RECOMMENDED READING

Becker, Ernest. *The Denial of Death*. Free Press, 1997.

Boulter, Rob with Kenneth Koehler. *Preparing an Episcopal Funeral*. Morehouse, 2013.

Buckman, Robert. *I Don't Know What to Say: How to Help and Support Someone Who is Dying*. Key Porter Books, 1988.

Callanan, Maggie and Patricia Kelly. *Final Gifts: Understanding the Special Awareness Needs and Communications of the Dying*. Bantam, 2012.

Hoffacker, Charles. *A Matter of Life and Death: Preaching at Funerals*. Cowley Publications, 2002.

James, John W. and Russell Friedman. *The Grief Recovery Handbook; A Program for Moving Beyond Death, Divorce, and Other Devastating Losses*. William Morrow, 2009.

Kuhl, David. *What Dying People Want: Practical Wisdom for the End of Life*. Harper Collins, 2003.

Long, Thomas. *Accompany Them with Singing: The Christian Funeral*. John Knox Press, 2013.

Long, Thomas and Thomas Lynch. *The Good Funeral: Death, Grief, and the Community of Care*. John Knox Press, 2013.

McCarthy, Flor. *Funeral Liturgies*. Dominican Publications, 1987.

Meeks, Blair Gilmer. *Standing in the Circle of Grief: Prayers and Liturgies for Death and Dying*. Abingdon Press, 2002.

Schmemmann, Alexander. *The Liturgy of Death*. St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2017.

David Sparks. *A Good Ending: A Compassionate Guide to Funerals, Pastoral Care, and Life Celebrations*. The United Church of Canada, 2014.

Rodney Smith. *Lessons from the Dying*. Wisdom Publications, 2015.

Verhey, Allen. *The Christian Art of Dying: Learning from Jesus*. Eerdmans, 2011.

COURSE POLICIES

100% in-person attendance for all the sessions of the course and appropriate participation in class discussion. Personal interaction and a sense of how the material applies in real contexts is an important aspect of formation. Students will need to be aware that VST Readiness for Ministry criteria are in effect.

ASSIGNMENTS

In preparation for the retreat, students are expected to read the assigned text and other relevant reading. They are to complete all assignments within the specified dates of the course and term.

Based on their participation in the retreat, and assigned reading, they will be required to submit

- A 1500-word paper (Word format, using *The Chicago Manual of Style*).

The paper should reflect what was learned in the course and significantly reference the required text(s). Subject of the paper will be given previous to or during the course. The paper is due via email to the Instructor by April 15, 2023. If the paper does not reflect substantial understanding and appreciation of the subject matter, a re-write will be required.

- A funeral order of service that the student would like to be used for themselves, including readings, music, prayers, participants, etc.

Submission of assignments on time is a part of academic, professional, and pastoral competence and a part of every course at VST.