

Soc. 150 ❖ SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF DEATH AND DYING ❖ Spring 2015
Tues. and Thurs. - 6:00 – 7:45 p.m. ❖ Stevenson 150

❖ WENDY MARTYNA, Ph.D. ❖ Continuing Lecturer in Sociology

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. and by appointment

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❖ Teaching Assistants: Laura Harrison and Nadia Roche

Laura Harrison: lharris@ucsc.edu

Section Times: Mondays, 11:00 a.m. – 12:10 p.m., College 8, Room 250

Mondays, 12:30 – 1:40 p.m., College 8, Room 250

Office Hours: To be arranged

Nadia Roche: nroche@ucsc.edu

Section Times: Wednesdays, 2:00 – 3:10 p.m., Oakes 102

Wednesdays, 3:30 – 4:40 p.m., Oakes 102

Office Hours: To be arranged

This course explores a range of contemporary, historical, cross-cultural, and interdisciplinary perspectives on the social psychology of death and dying. We will probe the many ways in which our attitudes toward death and dying influence our experiences of life and living, focusing throughout the quarter on the relationship between the individual and the social context.

The main text, *Death, Society and Human Experience*, was written by one of the founders of the modern field of thanatology, Robert Kastenbaum, and its broad coverage illustrates a guiding assumption of this course: death and dying are inextricably connected with life and living. Among the areas covered in this engaging and comprehensive text: how we think about death, how cultures organize themselves in relation to death and dying, the dying process, hospice and palliative care, end-of-life issues and decisions; euthanasia, assisted death, and the right to die; death in the world of childhood; bereavement, grief and mourning; the funeral process; suicide; violent death; beliefs about the afterlife; caregiving and death education; making sense of it all; notions of “a good life” and “a good death.” Three additional texts encourage you to reflect on a few of these themes in greater depth: Rafael Campo’s *The Desire to Heal: A Doctor’s Education in Empathy, Identity, and Poetry*, Audre Lorde’s *The Cancer Journals*, and Pauline Boss’ *Ambiguous Loss: Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief*. Three books written with children or young adults in mind are used in this course to illuminate the theoretical perspectives provided by

other course materials, offering stories that bring the theories alive and allowing you to apply social psychological perspectives to lived experience.

COURSE READINGS

These four books are at **The Literary Guillotine** (located one block over from Pacific Ave., between Cedar and Center – 204 Locust St., 831-457-1195). Many used copies are available, and this independent bookstore (one of the only remaining ones in Santa Cruz County) has a year-round buy-back policy. These books are also on 2-hour reserve at McHenry Library.

- Robert Kastenbaum
Death, Society and Human Experience (11th Ed.). Pearson, 2012.
- Rafael Campo. *The Desire to Heal: A Doctor's Education in Empathy, Identity, and Poetry*. W.W. Norton, 1997.
- Audre Lorde. *The Cancer Journals*. Aunt Lute Books, 1980/1997.
- Pauline Boss. *Ambiguous Loss: Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief*. Harvard University Press, 1999.

These three books are available at **Bookshop Santa Cruz** (located downtown, at 1520 Pacific Ave., 831-423-0900). They are on a table at the back of the store.

- Natalie Babbitt. *Tuck Everlasting*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975.
- Jacqueline Woodson. *Locomotion*. Puffin/Penguin, 2003.
- Susan Patron. *The Higher Power of Lucky*. Simon & Schuster, 2006.

Note that additional brief readings and resources (some required, some recommended) will be placed on eCommons from time to time; you will be notified in class when additions have been posted.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Coming to class is a crucial part of your work in this course (someone else's notes cannot adequately substitute for being present for lecture, videos, in-class discussion, speakers). In other words, do not miss class unless you are ill or due to an emergency. Coming prepared is also important: since lectures complement and supplement, rather than reiterate, the required reading, it is important that you complete each day's assigned readings before class (however, it is important to be in class in any case; come unprepared if you must, then catch up as soon as you can). Class participation is encouraged; your thoughtful and informed comments, questions, and contributions are welcome.

There is no eating allowed in the classroom (even before class: pre-class food consumption can leave odors that have a way of overstaying their welcome). If you do bring in drinks, guard them well, for spills in this room with its slanted floor are particularly unwelcome.

Those using laptop computers must sit in the last row (against the back wall) or in the side aisle where chairs are placed, so that screens don't distract other students. You are expected to use the laptop only to take notes.

Use of phones in class for any purpose is not allowed; if you must take an emergency call, please step outside. Keep all electronic devices on silent mode (or off) during class. Use of phones not only distracts you from class but also interferes with the attention of those seated nearby.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments are due at the start of class; thus, there is nothing to be gained by skipping class to finish working on a paper, hoping to get it finished by the end of class. Late papers are accepted with reduced credit given. If you find yourself in that unsatisfying situation of not having completed your work, come to class and finish the paper later.

Discussion Papers - Due four times during the quarter (dates are on the schedule). A handout will be distributed which describes these in detail.

Essays - Two short essays (approximately 3 pages each) are assigned; topics and instructions will be distributed well in advance of due dates.

Midterm and Final Exam - The Midterm and Final exam will consist of true/false and multiple choice questions. You will receive a study guide in advance, and may prepare one page of notes (double-sided) to consult during each exam. While you are welcome to study together, your notes must be prepared individually. These are closed-book exams, designed to assess your understanding of course readings and lectures. The Final exam is not cumulative.

Discussion Section Requirement - Weekly discussion sections are required, and allow a valuable opportunity for you to reflect upon course material in a small setting. Ten percent of your grade will reflect your completion of the section requirement, which will include your attendance as well as attentiveness in section. These are not drop-in sections, but consistent groups that meet once a week. If you miss a section, you may not attend a different section that week to make up for the absence. Be sure to contact your TA regarding any emergencies that cause you to miss a section, as well as to make up what you missed.

Section enrollment was conducted online; if you must switch sections before they begin, follow instructions on your portal, and notify your TA of the change. Do not enroll in a section which has 30 students already, even if the system allows you to do so; you will be dropped, as 30 is the cap for section size. Sections will begin during the third week, beginning April 13, and continue through the last week of class. No changes are allowed without permission after sections begin.

Section Replacement paper: If you are not able to be in a section, you may fulfill the requirement by writing a 7-page Section Replacement paper, due at the end of the quarter, which describes the alternative way in which you have met the educational goal of the weekly discussion sections: to regularly discuss course material with other people, outside of a large class setting. You might choose to speak each week to the same person (e.g., a parent, roommate, friend) or to different people each week. Your paper should thoughtfully reflect on what you learned from that regular weekly discussion outside of class. Those taking this option will be given detailed instructions for completion of this paper. Section replacement people must enroll in TBA section online.

Grading - These percentage weights will be used to calculate your final grade --
Four Discussion Papers: 20%; Two Essays: 20%; Midterm: 25%; Final Exam: 25%;
Discussion Section Requirement: 10% (this requirement is met either through attendance at weekly section or completion of Section Replacement Paper).

DRC ACCOMMODATION (Information from the Disability Resource Center)

If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please get an Accommodation Authorization from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) and submit it to instructor in person *within the first two weeks of the quarter*. If you need a DRC note taker, let me know as soon as possible so I can help with arrangements. Contact DRC at 459-2089 (voice), 459-4806 (TTY), or <http://drc.ucsc.edu> for more information on the requirements and/or process.

PLAGIARISM and ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

All students are responsible for maintaining accepted standards of academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty are contrary to the ideals and purposes of a university, and carry serious consequences (among the possibilities: receiving a lower grade, failing a class, being placed on suspension or expelled). Please make sure you have read the full text of UCSC's policy on academic dishonesty – it is available online at www.ucsc.edu/academics/academic_integrity. You should also consult UCSC Library guides on Citing Sources and Plagiarism:

- <http://library.ucsc.edu/help/howto/citations-and-style-guides>
NetTrail: <http://nettrail.ucsc.edu/> (Section 6, Info Ethics)

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Plan your reading schedule well, so that you have enough time to complete each day's readings before class, as lectures will assume you have done the reading assigned for that day. *Text* refers to Robert J. Kastenbaum's *Death, Society and Human Experience* (11th ed.). Supplemental brief

readings and resources to be posted on eCommons do not appear on this list, but will be announced in class.

Tues. Mar. 31 Introduction to the course

Thurs. April 2 *Text:* Preface, Ch. 1 - As We Think About Death

Tues. April 7 *Text:* Ch. 2 – What Is Death?

Thurs. April 9 *Text:* Ch. 3 – The Death System

Tuck Everlasting, Natalie Babbitt

Tues. April 14 *Text:* Ch. 4 – Dying

The Desire to Heal, Rafael Campo (pp. 13-156)

- Discussion Paper #1 due

Thurs. April 16 *The Desire to Heal*, Rafael Campo (pp. 157-270)

Tues. April 21 *Text:* Ch. 5 - Hospice and Palliative Care

- Essay #1 due

Thurs. April 23 *The Cancer Journals*, Audre Lorde

- Distribute Study Guide for Midterm

Tues. April 28 *Text:* Ch. 6 – End of Life Issues and Decisions

- Discussion Paper #2 due

Thurs. April 30 *Text:* Ch. 9 – Euthanasia, Assisted Death, Abortion and the Right to Die

Tues. May 5 • Midterm Exam

Thurs. May 7 *Text:* Ch. 10 – Death in the World of Childhood

Tues. May 12 *Text:* Ch. 11 – Bereavement, Grief and Mourning

Locomotion, Jacqueline Woodson

• Discussion Paper #3 due

Thurs. May 14 *Ambiguous Loss*, Pauline Boss

Tues. May 19 *Text:* Ch. 12 - The Funeral Process

The Higher Power of Lucky, Susan Patron

• Essay #2 due

Thurs. May 21 *Text:* Ch. 7 – Suicide

Tues. May 26 *Text:* Ch. 8 – Violent Death

• Discussion Paper #4 due

• Distribute Study Guide for Final Exam

Thurs. May 28 *Text:* Ch. 13 – Do We Survive Death?

Tues. June 2 *Text:* Ch. 14 – How Can We Help? Caregiving and Death Education

Thurs. June 4 *Text:* Ch. 15 – Good Life, Good Death? Trying to Make Sense of It All

Finals Week

Monday, June 8 • Section Replacement Paper due (for those not in discussion sections)
(Turn these in at my office, College Eight, 216, by 3 p.m.)

Wed., June 10

• Final Exam: 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

(Since the Final is not cumulative, and is the same length as the Midterm, it is unlikely that you will need the full three hours)

*When it's over, I want to say: all my life
I was a bride married to amazement.
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.*

*When it's over, I don't want to wonder
if I have made of my life something particular, and real.
I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened,
or full of argument.*

I don't want to end up simply having visited this world.

Mary Oliver

Always the beautiful answer who asks a more beautiful question....

E.E. Cummings