Syllabus for SOC 4332 Death & Dying (Fall 2018)

Dr. Shirley Simpson  
Office: Academic Building, A 104A  
Phone: (325) 486-6727  
Fax: (325) 942-2236  
Email: shirley.simpson@angelo.edu  
(Use “SOC Death” in subject line)

Campus Office Hours:  
M 1-3pm  
W 1-5pm  
& By Appointment if necessary

Virtual Contact hours:  
BB Forum/Connect or Email: TR 9-11am

COURSE DESCRIPTION
A course on the sociological aspects of death and dying, examining such topics as the social and personal meaning of death and dying, grief and bereavement, and the interrelationships between the dying person and family, friends, and professionals.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS
The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying, 10th Edition, by DeSpelder & Strickland  

OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS
- Computer with MAC or Windows Operating System  
- High Speed Internet Access  
- Ethernet adapter cable highly recommended (wireless connections can drop during exams)  
- Webcam (esp. for exams)

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Assignment(s) or activity(ies) best validating outcome achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Gaining factual knowledge | 1 & 2  
2. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories | Text, Videos, Articles |
| 3. Learning to apply course material | 3 & 5  
4. Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing | Homework, Exams |
| 5. Learning how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems | 4 & 6  
6. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view | Learning Modules |
TEACHING STRATEGIES

• Students are encouraged to stay current on the readings and turn assignments in on time. This will benefit them and others as they seek to participate meaningfully in the course.
• Students are expected to be “active learners.” It is a basic assumption of the instructor that students will be involved (beyond the materials and lectures presented in the course) discovering, processing, and applying the course information using peer-review journal articles, researching additional information and examples on the Internet, and discussing course material and experiences with their peers.
• Students are asked to seek help early if they have problems, questions, or concerns during the semester. Every student has something unique to offer to the discourse. If students don’t come to class or refuse to engage others while in class, that decreases the diversity of the dialog for everyone.

GRADING SYSTEM
Course grades will be dependent upon completing course requirements and meeting the student learning outcomes. The following grading scale is in use for this course:

- A = 500-450 points
- B = 400-449 points
- C = 350-399 points
- D = 300-349 points
- F = 0-299 points (Grades are not rounded up)

EVALUATION AND GRADES
Graded assignments, activities and percent of the overall course grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
<th>% OF GRADE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tests</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL COURSE GRADE</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ASSIGNMENT/ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS

• **Learning Modules/Textbook** are designed to give you an opportunity to learn, engage, clarify, and grapple with the basic concepts & principles of sociology.
• **Videos/Articles/PPTs** are presented to help clarify and enrich your understanding of sociology and supplement.
• **Homework** is designed to make you think critically about how course concepts relate to one another and to you.
• **Exams** are designed to test your competence in the essential concepts & principles of sociology AND your ability to apply those concepts & principles to real world situations. These are open-book.
• **Forums** are designed to allow you to discuss concepts with other students in the course.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE PROFESSOR

In most cases, Dr. Simpson will respond to your email and/or telephone messages within 24 hours during working hours Monday through Friday. Weekend messages may not be returned until Monday.
Written communication via Blackboard: There is a discussion on the forum to ask questions.

Written communication via email: All private communication will be done exclusively through your ASU email address. Check frequently for announcements and policy changes. Please start your subject line with “SOC Death” so your message does not get buried. I can search by that term instead of sifting through 300-400 emails.

Virtual communication: If we really need to “meet” we can use Blackboard’s Connect! feature.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY & ATTENDANCE
Students are expected to engage in course activities and submit work by due dates and times. The hope is that students will make substantive contributions which reflect integration of assigned materials as well as any outside readings as appropriate. Scholarly contribution is an expectation. For planning purposes, this class will probably require a minimum of 6-9 study hours per week on average.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION
In this class, you must complete all of your work online through forum entries, Turnitin assignment submissions, or Blackboard exams. It is your responsibility to use a reliable computer (especially for quizzes) with a reliable connection and give yourself plenty of time to avail yourself of the attempts offered. Since you have 2 attempts for tests and plenty of time to make forum entries, issues with technology should not affect your progress in this course. If a technology issue does occur that affects your progress, and you did not wait until the last minute to start a test or assignment, email the professor at shirley.simpson@angelo.edu explaining the issue. Attach a copy of the forum message you are trying to submit and/or a screen capture of any quiz-related error messages received if you have one. The professor is not under any obligation to reset quizzes.

Testing via Respondus™ Monitor
Access to quizzes and exams will be through Respondus™ Lockdown Browser and will be video recorded via Respondus™ Monitor. Use of another electronic device is prohibited.

There are two practice quizzes: a) one is a Webcam test and b) a short 10 question practice quiz over ASU trivia that is not graded. These tools will be available to the student to assure accessibility. Students are highly encouraged to go through these practice quizzes in advance of taking a graded quiz. This process will allow you to become familiar with the technology associated with testing and improve the testing environment. These quizzes, instructional videos, and more information regarding Respondus Monitor can be found under the Respondus Monitor Help tab in your Blackboard course.

As you may know, Respondus Monitor is a companion tool to Respondus LockDown Browser. Monitor is a tool to proctor the online exam. Here is some more information regarding Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor:


LATE WORK OR MISSED ASSIGNMENTS POLICY
Late work will not be accepted. Missing homework or exams grades will convert to a zero after the deadline. Do not wait until the last minute to upload assignments or take exams. If something goes wrong, I can’t help you.

PROBLEM WITH A BLACKBOARD GRADE?
Check your grades regularly. If you do not have a score within a week of submission, receive a zero on an assignment you completed, or get a score you think is in error, please do NOT wait until the end of the semester to point it out. Send an email to me so I can check it for you. Note: Since most of your assignments in this course will be digitally submitted, it is highly unlikely you will find errors on graded homework or quizzes.
GENERAL POLICIES RELATED TO THIS COURSE

All students are required to follow the policies and procedures presented in the following documents:

- Angelo State University Student Handbook located on the ASU website: http://www.angelo.edu/student-handbook/
- ASU Undergraduate Catalog located on the ASU website: https://www.angelo.edu/content/files/16795-201213-undergraduate-catalog

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic honesty is expected on all work. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their online experiences. Any student found guilty of any form of dishonesty in academic work is subject of disciplinary action and possible expulsion from ASU.

The Psychology & Sociology Department adheres to the academic honesty statement as set forth in the Angelo State University Student Handbook (2011-2012) http://www.angelo.edu/student-handbook/code-of-student-conduct/misconduct.php. The University “faculty expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experience both in and out of the classroom setting and may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials.”

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism at ASU is a serious topic. The Angelo State University’s Honor Code gives specific details on plagiarism and what it encompasses. Plagiarism is the action or practice of taking someone else’s work, idea, etc., and passing it off as one's own. Plagiarism is literary theft.

In your discussions and/or your papers, it is unacceptable to copy word for word without quotation marks and the source of the quotation. We use the APA Style Manual of the American Psychological Association as a guide for all writing assignments. Quotes should be used sparingly. It is expected that you will summarize or paraphrase ideas giving appropriate credit to the source both in the body of your paper and the reference list. Papers are subject to be evaluated for originality via Bb Safe Assignment or Turnitin. Resources to help you understand this policy better are available at the ASU Writing Center http://www.angelo.edu/dept/writing_center/academic_honesty.php.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

1. “Angelo State University is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation.”

2. The Office of Student Affairs is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability, and it is the student’s responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting the Office of Student Affairs, University Center, Room 112 at (325) 942-2047 or (325) 942-2211(TDD/FAX) or by e-mail at studentservices@angelo.edu to begin the process. The Office of Student Affairs will establish the particular documentation requirements necessary for the various types of disabilities.

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students determined to be disabled or who have documented disabilities.

INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY (OP 10.11 Grading Procedures)

It is policy that incomplete grades be reserved for student illness or personal misfortune. Please contact
faculty if you have serious illness or a personal misfortune that would keep you from completing course work. Documentation may be required.

**STUDENT ABSENCE FOR OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS**
“A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence.” Please see ASU Operating Policy 10.19.

**COPYRIGHT POLICY**
Students officially enrolled in this course should make only one printed copy of the given articles and/or chapters. You are expressly prohibited from distributing or reproducing any portion of course readings in printed or electronic form without written permission from the copyright holders or publishers.

**SYLLABUS CHANGES**
The faculty member reserves the option to make changes as necessary to this syllabus and the course content. If changes become necessary during this course, the faculty will notify students of such changes by email, course announcements and/or via a discussion board announcement. It is the student’s responsibility to look for such communications about the course daily.

---

**Course Schedule with due dates**

**Welcome (Aug 27-Sept 2): Self-Intro**
- Read Syllabus/Get Last Dance Textbook/(Review Sociology-as needed)
- Graded Discussion 1: Self Intro [Due by 11:59PM, Sept. 2]

**Part 1 (Sept 3-Sept 9): Intro**
- Read/Study *Last Dance* (Chp 1-2) + Module Material
- HW1: Good-Bye Letter Due Sept 9 by 11:59PM (BB, Turnitin)

**Part 2 (Sept 10-23): Dying**
- Read/Study *Last Dance* (Chp 3-4) + Module Material
- Graded Discussion 2: Case Studies [Due by 11:59PM, Sept. 23]
- HW2: Bucket List Due Sept 23 by 11:59PM (BB, Turnitin)

**Part 3a (Sept 24-Oct 21): Death**
- Read/Study *Last Dance* (Chp 10-11) + Module Material
- Graded Discussion 3: Death Rites [Due by 11:59PM, Oct 21]
- HW3: How We Die (Vital Stats) Assignment Due Oct 21 by 11:59PM (BB, Turnitin)

**Part 3b (Oct 22-31): Halloween**
- Read/Study *Last Dance* (Chp 8) + Module Material
- HW4: Cemetery Due Oct 31 by 11:59PM (BB, Turnitin)

**Midterm (Nov 1-4): 100 points**
- Covers key concepts presented to date. [Format: 50% Multiple Choice; 50% Essay/Short Answer]
Part 4 (Nov 5-18): Intro

- Read/Study Last Dance (Chp 12, 7, 9) + Module Material
- Graded Discussion 4: Crisis, Hotlines & Social Media
- HW5: Manner of Death & Grief  Due Nov 18 by 11:59PM (BB, Turnitin)

Part 5 (Nov 19-Dec 2): Dying

- Read/Study Last Dance (Chp 6, 13, 14) + Module Material
- Graded Discussion 5: Topic TBA  [Due by 11:59PM, Dec 2]

Part 6 (Dec 2-9): Catch up

- Read/Study Last Dance + Module Material

Final (Dec 10-13): 100 points

- Covers key concepts presented since the midterm  [Format: 50% Multiple Choice; 50% Essay/Short Answer]