

# PSYC 4020.001: Psychology of Death and Dying

## Spring 2026

**Course Instructor:** Dr. NaYeon Yang (she/her)

**Email:** [NaYeon.Yang@unt.edu](mailto:NaYeon.Yang@unt.edu)

**Office:** Terrill Hall 383

**Student Hours:** By appointment

**Class Meets:** Tues & Thurs: 2:00 PM – 3:20 PM

**Location:** Matthews Hall 311

**Course Dates:** 1/12/2026 – 4/30/2026

### Course Prerequisites:

- Junior or above
- C or better in PSYC 1630 and one of the following: PSYC 2580, PSYC 3100, or PSYC 3620.

### Course Communication

- The TAs are **primarily responsible for grading and should be the first point of contact for grading, attendance (e.g., excused absences), and syllabus-related questions.**
- Emails **MUST** follow the instructions on **page 6**. Emails that do not follow instructions will **NOT** be answered.
- We accept email communication **ONLY**. Do **NOT** use the CANVAS messaging system to communicate with us.
- Assignment-related questions and other course-related concerns should be directed to the instructor.

### Teaching Team

**Graduate TA:** Cachet Lue (she/her/hers)

**Email:** [CachetLue@my.unt.edu](mailto:CachetLue@my.unt.edu)

**Zoom Office:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8744829224>

**Student Hours:** Thursdays 3 PM – 4 PM

**Graduate TA:** Jacqueline Sifuentes (she/her/ella)

**Email:** [JacquelineSifuentes@my.unt.edu](mailto:JacquelineSifuentes@my.unt.edu)

**Zoom Office:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84451081123>

**Student Hours:** Wednesdays 11AM – 12 PM

*“Death and life are interdependent:  
Though the physicality of death destroys us,  
the idea of death saves us.”  
– Irvin D. Yalom*

### Course Overview

Welcome to Psychology of Death and Dying! This course provides a comprehensive psychological introduction to death, dying, and bereavement. We examine how people think and feel about death, how individuals navigate death, dying, and bereavement, and how these experiences are shaped by social, cultural, and institutional contexts. Topics include death attitudes and death anxiety; psychological experiences of dying and coping; coping with loss and bereavement; cultural approaches to death; hospice and palliative care; end-of-life decision-making and its ethical/legal debates (including aided death); and the meaning of death in life. The course also considers emerging issues such as the future of grief and the use of AI in grief support. The primary goal of the course is to familiarize students with major theories, research findings, and contemporary issues related to death, dying, and bereavement. Equally important, the course further seeks to encourage critical thinking, self-reflection, and thoughtful dialogue, enabling students to engage with death-related topics in informed, compassionate, and psychologically grounded ways.

## Learning Objectives

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- Define and differentiate key concepts related to death, dying, and bereavement.
- Analyze societal patterns of death using demographic, historical, and social data.
- Evaluate major theories of coping with dying and grief across individual and cultural contexts.
- Understand cultural approaches to death, dying, and bereavement.
- Assess the role of institutions (e.g., medicine, law, religion, media) in shaping end-of-life experiences.
- Apply developmental perspectives to death and bereavement across the lifespan.
- Examine ethical and legal debates regarding suicide, assisted dying, and end-of-life decision-making.
- Demonstrate death literacy through theory-driven, evidence-based analysis of real-world cases.

## Required Resources

1. **Textbook:** Corr, C. A., Corr, D., & Doka, K. (2025). *Death & Dying, Life & Living* (9<sup>th</sup> ed). Cengage Learning.
2. **iClicker + A charged laptop, tablet, pad, or phone**
  - Please attend class with a fully charged laptop, tablet, or phone to use iClicker or other polling tools during class. You will use your device to participate in interactive exercises, complete in-class activities, and submit responses via Canvas.
  - iClicker is a free app for UNT students that can be accessed via mobile devices and laptops (To create an account, please access: [https://lms.unt.edu/supported\\_tech/iclicker.html](https://lms.unt.edu/supported_tech/iclicker.html)).
  - Laptop checkouts are available at UNT libraries (<https://library.unt.edu/services/laptop-checkout/>).

## How to Succeed in this Course

This is a 4000-level course, and thus, **this course requires a significant time (and emotional) commitment** from you. Because PSYC 4020 is a three-credit class, you should expect to spend, on average, 6 to 9 hours each week on coursework outside of class. If your schedule does not allow you to put in the necessary time to master the course material, you should consider dropping the course and re-registering for it when it is offered in a different format. Although attendance is not required, by enrolling in this course **you are expected to attend class**.

This course emphasizes **active and experiential learning**. As a result, class time will focus on clarifying complex concepts, engaging in discussion and reflective activities, and applying course material through examples, videos, demonstrations, and occasional guest lectures, rather than primarily listening to lectures on the readings. **You are expected to complete all readings prior to each class** so that you can fully engage in in-class learning. In addition, you are expected to complete all assigned readings, whether or not they are discussed in class, as well as all material covered in class. You are a vital part of this learning community, and your contributions are an essential part of the knowledge we create together in our classroom.

I recognize that illness, loss, or other personal hardships may arise during the semester. When this happens, please reach out to the teaching team so we can support you. In cases requiring formal accommodations or excused absences, documentation through the Dean of Students may be required.

If you find that you are at risk of failing the course, withdrawing may be an option to consider. University deadlines apply for dropping a course with or without a “W” on the transcript. Students are encouraged to review these deadlines carefully and consult with academic advising when making decisions about course enrollment.

Please note that an Incomplete (“I”) grade is available only to students who are passing the course and who experience a documented, extenuating circumstance beyond their control late in the semester. Students seeking an Incomplete must follow procedures established by the Registrar and the Dean of Students.

## Sensitive Content Statement: Emotional Impact of Course Content

As you might have guessed, this class engages deeply with topics of death, dying, and bereavement. These subjects can be **emotionally challenging**, particularly for students who have experienced recent loss, are living with serious illness, have been impacted by the death or suicide of someone close to them, or are currently navigating significant personal distress. **If any of these situations apply to you, I encourage you to reflect carefully on whether this is the right time for you to take this course, and to seek support from counseling or mental health services if needed.** While sharing personal experiences relevant to course topics is welcome and respected in our classroom, it is important to note that **this course is educational in nature and is not intended to be therapy or a substitute for therapy. If engaging with these topics feels overwhelming at this time, you may wish to consider taking this class when you feel more prepared** (see p. 8 of our textbook for further details). Choosing to do so is a valid and self-respecting decision, especially when grief or distress feels raw and close. There is no shame in prioritizing your well-being and recognizing your own limits. This note is not meant to discourage enrollment, but rather to support thoughtful, informed, and compassionate decision-making.

## Learning Activities & Assessments

Your grade will be based on the following assessments:

Learning Assessments	Point Calculation
Participation and Engagement (PnE) (e.g., in-class activities, reflective assignments)	150 pts (10 x 15 points each)
Pop Quizzes	50 pts (5 x 10 points each)
Exam #1	100 pts
Exam #2	100 pts
Exam #3	100 pts
Final Group Project	100 pts
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>600 pts</b>

- 1. Participation and Engagement:** This category reflects your level of participation in this course. Active participation contributes to your own learning as well as the learning of others and helps make the class more engaging and meaningful. Throughout the semester, in-class activities and reflective assignments will be assigned at various points and are expected to be completed either during class or by specified deadlines. Details will be provided in class. Some activities will involve discussion with classmates. Students are encouraged to participate actively in small-group and whole-class discussions. Activities may be completed individually or collaboratively, depending on the assignment. Late or retroactive completion of this assignment is **not permitted**.
- 2. Pop Quizzes:** This category reflects your level of preparedness, specifically your completion of assigned readings prior to class. As stated in the syllabus, students are expected to complete all assigned readings before each class meeting. Throughout the semester, a total of five pop quizzes will be administered at the beginning of class to assess reading completion. Late or retroactive completion of pop quizzes is **not permitted**.
- 3. Exams:** There will be **three** required exams. Exams will be released on Canvas and will be timed. They will include multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, and/or short essays based on the assigned readings and course material covered in class. Exams are **take-home, open-book, and open-notes**;

however, they are **NOT** open-Internet. The use of generative AI or any sources beyond the course readings, notes, and your own knowledge is **NOT** permitted. Exams **must be completed individually**, without discussion with others.

- **Missed Exams** – If a student misses an exam due to reasonable circumstances (e.g., an excused absence) and informs the teaching team **in advance**, an alternative exam will be provided. The alternative exam will include short-answer questions and short essays only and must be completed within one week of the original exam date. A 10% deduction from the total possible score will be applied for each 24-hour period that the exam is submitted late from the agreed-upon date. Failure to notify the teaching team in advance of a missed exam will result in a score of zero.
- **Academic Integrity** – Any violation of these policies will be considered academic dishonesty and will be handled in accordance with the Professional Conduct Policy described below.

**4. Final Group Project:** For the final group project, students will work in groups of 4–5 to create accessible, evidence-based materials designed to help others better understand death, dying, or bereavement. This project asks you to translate psychological research and course concepts into information that is accurate, compassionate, and meaningful for a general audience. A 10% deduction from the total possible score will be applied for each 24-hour period the project is submitted late. A student may receive a score of zero if their average peer evaluation score indicates a lack of meaningful contribution to the group project.

- Many of the topics explored in this course are often avoided, misunderstood, or emotionally difficult to talk about. Through this project, you will work collaboratively to make these topics more approachable while practicing critical thinking, synthesis of research, and clear communication. The goal is not only to demonstrate your understanding of course material, but also to thoughtfully consider how psychological knowledge can be shared in ways that genuinely help others.
- This project is also about collaboration. For some of you, this may be an early experience working closely with a group, while for others it may be one of your final group projects as students. Please approach this experience with care—for the topic, for the work, and for one another. Be kind, contribute thoughtfully, and support your group members and one another throughout the process. Although the topic is serious and emotionally heavy, creating something meaningful together can also be an engaging and rewarding experience.

Groups may choose to create one of the following formats (but are not limited to these; please consult with me if you would like to propose an alternative option):

- An infographic; a psychoeducational pamphlet or brochure; a resource guide for the public
- A short educational video
- A podcast outline or episode plan
- A social media-based education campaign (e.g., a series of posts or storyboards)
- A structured discussion or paper on a controversial issue regarding death, dying, or bereavement

Projects should be grounded in psychological theory and supported by peer-reviewed research. Groups are expected to engage with relevant course material and scholarly sources to ensure accuracy and depth.

Example topics include (but are not limited to):

- How to support a grieving friend
- What hospice actually is—and why many people misunderstand or resist it
- How media portrayals shape fear and avoidance of death
- Talking to children about death: Common adult mistakes
- How families experience anticipatory grief during terminal illness
- Digital grief and bereavement in the age of social media and AI

**Note:** Additional guidelines, expectations, and grading criteria will be provided later in the semester.

**5. Extra credit:** Throughout the semester, opportunities to earn extra credit will be offered. These opportunities may include attending an outside event relevant to the course and submitting a brief reflection, participating in SONA research, identifying relevant videos or materials that connect to course content, or completing a short group-based flash talk toward the end of the semester. Extra credit opportunities may add up to approximately five percentage points (30 pts) to the final course grade.

## Evaluation of Learning

Your learning of course material and achievement of course objectives will be assessed through your performance on the assignments and assessments listed above. Evaluation is based on demonstrated mastery of course content. Final grades are calculated based on total points earned out of 600 possible points. Because opportunities for extra credit are provided, final grades are **NOT** rounded. Letter grades are assigned according to the grading rubric below.

Grade	Points	Percentages
A	540–600	90% – 100%
B	480–539	80% – 89%
C	420–479	70% – 79%
D	360–419	60% – 69%
F	< 360	< 60%

## Your Responsibilities

This course requires substantial time and effort, both in and out of the classroom. You should expect to spend an average of six to nine hours per week on preparation and coursework outside of class. During class sessions, you are expected to actively participate in discussions, group work, and other activities. Please note that I will not discuss all topics of importance that I deem sufficiently covered in the text. It is your responsibility to complete the assigned readings before class and to bring questions about concepts that are unclear.

You are expected to take responsibility for your own learning. Your responsibilities include (but are not limited to) the following:

- 1) Reviewing and adhering to all course policies in this syllabus
- 2) Attending class and completing assigned readings before each session
- 3) Actively participating in class discussions and activities
- 4) Obtaining notes and announcements from a classmate if you are absent
- 5) Submitting all assignments on time
- 6) Taking exams on the scheduled dates
- 7) Asking questions about material or assignments when they are unclear (to peers, the TAs, or me)

## My Responsibilities

As your instructor, I will support your learning by:

- 1) Communicating clear expectations
- 2) Maintaining a respectful and inclusive classroom environment
- 3) Designing the course to help you achieve learning objectives
- 4) Staying current with the course material
- 5) Providing timely and constructive feedback
- 6) Evaluating student work fairly
- 7) Responding to questions to the best of my ability, and acknowledging when I do not have an answer

## Student Hours (a.k.a. Office Hours)

We, the teaching team, are happy to help you succeed in this course. You are encouraged to attend student hours (office hours) or schedule an appointment, either in person or virtually. Some members of the teaching team hold fixed weekly student hours, while others are available by appointment. Appointments are intended for students who are unable to attend regular student hours. When requesting an appointment, please share your weekly availability so that we can find a mutually convenient time.

## Email Policy

- Email is the **primary method** of communication. We do **NOT** use the Canvas messaging system.
- All emails **MUST** follow the instructions below.
- Emails that do not follow these instructions will **NOT** receive a response.
- **TAs** are the first point of contact for:
  - Grading questions
  - Attendance (e.g., excused absences)
    - Note.
  - Syllabus-related questions
  - And other cases if/when announced by the instructor
- When emailing the TAs, you **must email both TAs** (e.g., include both email addresses and use “reply all”). Here are the TAs’ email addresses: [CachetLue@my.unt.edu](mailto:CachetLue@my.unt.edu); [JacquelineSifuentes@my.unt.edu](mailto:JacquelineSifuentes@my.unt.edu)
- Assignment-related questions and other course-related concerns should be directed to the instructor.

**Please review the Dos and Don'ts below before emailing the teaching team.**

### DOs

- Always email **both TAs** when contacting them.
- Use your **UNT email address**.
- Include “**PSYC 4020**” in the subject line and use a clear, specific subject line.
- Include your **first and last name** in the email.
- Greet the recipient **properly** (e.g., *Hi Dr. Yang, Professor Yang, or Hi Cachet and Jacqueline*).
- Use a **professional format and professional language** (read [this article](#) for your reference).
- Allow adequate time for a response before following up. Please allow 24–48 hours for a response during business hours (Monday–Friday, 9 AM–5PM).
- Proofread your email for clarity, grammar, and tone before sending.
- Keep the email **short and concise**.
- Be **kind and respectful**.
- End your email **politely** (e.g., Thank you or Best regards).

### DON'Ts

- Never start an email without addressing the recipient. Jumping directly into your question or problem is considered rude.
- Do not email us if the answer can be found in the course syllabus.
- Do not email assignments.
- Do not message us through CANVAS.
- Do not expect an immediate response. It is *your responsibility* to reach out in advance with questions about assignments, course materials, and/or other related matters.
- Do not expect responses during evenings or weekends.
- Do not write casually, sarcastically, or rudely. Please maintain a professional and respectful tone in all email communications.
- Do not request accommodations or considerations beyond what is outlined in the syllabus. Requests that go beyond these policies will not be considered.
- Do not engage in email wars.

## Course-Specific Policies

### Course Climate and Etiquette

You will be invited to share your thoughts in class and a diversity of opinions is welcome. Respectful communication is expected, even when expressing differing perspectives. Supporting one's statements with research findings is encouraged. In accordance with free speech statutes and university policies, speech that contains threats of violence or constitutes discriminatory harassment, which incites harm, violence, or substantially disrupts the educational environment, is prohibited.

Because this is a large class, I ask for your help in maintaining a respectful and focused learning environment. Please follow these guidelines:

- **Do not use your phone** unless it is related to a class activity.
- Do not talk or whisper during lectures or when others are speaking.
- **Avoid side conversations and distractions** during lecture.
- Silence all cell phones and other distracting electronic devices.
- Arrive to class on time and wait until the end of the class to leave.
- **Recording of lectures is prohibited.** All course materials are the instructor's intellectual property, and class discussions may include sensitive content. Students are expected to respect the privacy and confidentiality of their peers.
- Treat the teaching team, guest lecturers, and your fellow students with respect and courtesy.

*Note.* Repeated disruptions may result in a warning, and continued disruptive behavior may lead to being asked to leave the classroom.

### Sensitive Topics and Privacy

This course addresses personal and sensitive topics, and you will have opportunities to share your own insights and experiences if you wish. Please share only to the extent you feel comfortable and respect your classmates' privacy by not discussing their personal disclosures outside of class.

All members of the teaching team (i.e., me and the TAs) are mandated reporters. If you disclose (orally or in writing, including assignments) sexual abuse, child or elder abuse, or intent to commit suicide or homicide, we are required to report this information to the appropriate campus authorities.

### Attendance

- **Attendance is not required**; however, regular attendance is strongly encouraged.
- Activities through "Participation and Engagement" and pop quizzes are administered during class and cannot be completed retroactively if missed, unless in cases of excused absences.
- Classes will not be recorded or shared virtually in order to protect student privacy.
- In accordance with university policy, you may request an excused absence. All excused absences (including religious absences) should be requested via email **in advance**. Retroactive requests will not be accommodated unless there are documented extenuating circumstances. Further requirements for excused absences are described [here](#).
- Please do NOT attend class if you are sick, especially if you have a cold, flu, COVID-19, or other illness that could be easily passed on to others.

### Excused Absence

Per [06.039 Student Attendance and Authorized Absences](#), the UNT recognizes that student success is promoted by regular attendance and participation in class.

An absence may be excused for the following reasons:

1. religious holy day, including travel for that purpose;
2. active military service, including travel for that purpose;
3. participation in an official university function (including athletic team members);
4. illness or other extenuating circumstances;

5. pregnancy and parenting under Title IX; and
6. when the University is officially closed.

Students are responsible for **submitting written requests for excused absences in advance, providing satisfactory documentation**, and delivering the request to the faculty member or teaching team assigned to the course, as specified in the syllabus.

When an absence is excused, the faculty member will provide a reasonable time after the absence for the student to complete a missed assignment or examination.

### Late Assignments Policy

- **Participation and Engagement and Pop Quizzes:** Any assignments in these categories will **NOT** be available for late or retroactive completion unless the absence is officially excused.
  - Some assignments in the “Participation and Engagement” category will have deadlines outside of class time; announcements will be made in class. In those cases, these assignments will be due by 11:59 PM on the stated due date. Submissions received at 12:00 AM or later will be considered late, and a 10% deduction from the total possible score will be applied for each 24-hour period past the deadline.
- **Exam:** A 10% deduction from the total possible score will be applied for each 24-hour period the exam is submitted late from the agreed-upon date. Failure to notify the teaching team in advance of a missed exam will result in a score of zero.
- **Final Group Project:** A 10% deduction from the total possible score will be applied for each 24-hour period the project is submitted late.
- When submitting homework assignments electronically, make sure you upload the correct file and confirm that it opens properly. Submitting a corrupt, blank, or unreadable file will count as a **non-submission**. This policy is **non-negotiable**, and it is **your responsibility** to check your file on Canvas.

### Grade Dispute Policy

- All assignments and exams may be disputed **within 7 days** of the date the grade is posted in Canvas or the work/exam is returned. **After 7 days, no grade changes or reviews will be considered.**
- **Formal Appeal Process:** If you believe you should have received credit for a question or portion of an assignment or exam that was marked incorrect, you may submit an appeal under the following conditions:
  1. Appeals must be submitted in writing **via email only**.
  2. Your email **must** follow the email instructions outlined in the syllabus and include a clear, well-supported rationale; emails that do not meet these requirements **will not receive a response**.
    - a. **Appeals for assignments** must include (1) the submitted assignment, (2) clear identification or highlights of the specific portions being disputed, (3) an explanation of why points should be awarded, and (4) references to the grading rubric.
    - b. **Appeals for exams** must include (1) a screenshot of the relevant exam question(s) and (2) a clear rationale supported by references to specific textbook page numbers or lecture dates.
  3. All appeals must be submitted **within 7 days** of the date the work, assignment, or exam is returned, regardless of whether you were present that day.
- **Note:** While every effort is made to ensure accurate grading, errors can occur. If you believe a mistake has been made, you are always welcome to ask.
- **Note 2:** Please do NOT email the teaching team regarding grade disputes unless your request meets the criteria outlined above. Requests for additional points based on opinion, effort, personal circumstances, or grade rounding **are not valid appeals and are unfair to other students; therefore, such requests will not be considered.** Submitting such requests indicates that the syllabus has not been carefully reviewed and may be taken into account when grading.

## Reading Assignments

Required readings will be posted on Canvas (excluding the textbook). You are expected to review each reading and prepare thoughts and reactions prior to class.

## Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In this class, the use of AI-generated content (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini) is **strictly prohibited** for all class assignments. You are **strongly encouraged** to use your own critical thinking skills in all course activities. If this policy is violated, it will be considered a violation of the UNT Academic Integrity Policy and will be reported accordingly.

## Student Evaluations

I will conduct a mid-semester evaluation to assess your overall experience in this course and identify ways to improve the course. Your input is valuable and will contribute to a better learning experience for your peers and future students. The Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT; <https://vpaa.unt.edu/news/spot-survey>) is a requirement for classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, which will provide you a chance to comment on the class.

## Student Concerns about the Course and Performance

If you have a concern/complaint about the course or need support with understanding class materials, I encourage you to connect with me and/or the TAs for support either after class or stop by my student hours. Additional student hours, in person and virtually, will be offered as the semester concludes, as your success is our goal. The link listed below outlines UNT's procedure for resolving complaints against UNT faculty, staff, and the university. <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-016>

## Course Communication and Messaging Forums Policy

You are encouraged to form friendships and study groups, but please be aware that unofficial messaging forums (e.g., GroupMe, Discord, WhatsApp) may lead to confusion or incorrect information about course content. Please note that, in order to comply with FERPA and university security policies, I cannot participate in or take responsibility for communication outside official university platforms.

**All course materials and requirements are my intellectual property and will only be distributed through UNT Canvas, UNT Outlook, UNT Zoom, and/or the classroom.** Communication with me or the course TAs must take place through these official channels. You are responsible for knowing course requirements as outlined in the syllabus. If you believe there is an error in the syllabus, course requirements, or content, please contact me or the TAs directly so we can address it.

## Technology Policy

Except for learning and in-class activities that require device use, students are expected to refrain from using cellphones or laptops for non-class-related matters during class. If you have critical communication to attend to, please excuse yourself and return when you are ready. For more information about the science behind the policy watch: [youtu.be/WwPaw3Fx5Hk](https://youtu.be/WwPaw3Fx5Hk). You may use laptops and tablets to take notes; however, it is expected that you will not use these devices for other tasks during class.

## Changes to the Course

In the unlikely event that I need to change the course schedule, cancel a class, or modify a course policy or assignment, I will announce the change on the course website. In addition, the syllabus is a "living document," meaning that I may alter aspects of it, such as its content or assignments, at my discretion. If any changes occur, I will make announcements in class and/or through Canvas.

## ODA Accommodations

For students with ODA accommodations, time extensions (e.g., for exams) will be applied as appropriate. No additional request is required. If you notice that an extension has not been applied before an exam, please email the instructor.

Some ODA accommodations may involve the use of optional agreements or forms, depending on the nature of the approved accommodation. **In such cases, students may be asked to complete the relevant forms to facilitate the implementation of the accommodation and ensure appropriate support in the course.** Detailed information will be provided during the first class meeting and/or via Canvas announcements. Please contact the teaching team with any questions.

The forms are listed below:

- Audio Recording Agreement
- Lecture Slides and Materials Agreement
- Modification of Course Attendance Policy Agreement
- Occasional Extension of Due Dates Agreement
- Link Here: <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access/faculty/faculty-guide/forms.html>

## Campus Policies

### Incomplete Grades

“I” is a non-punitive grade given only during the last one-fourth of a term/semester and only if a form signed by the instructor, student, and department chair and must be entered on the grade roster by the instructor. See also “Removal of I” policy in the Academics section of undergraduate catalog. (The UNT Catalog generally allows up to 1 year to remove an “I” grade.). Grades of “I” assigned to an undergraduate course at the end of the Fall 2007 semester and later, will default to “F” unless the instructor has designated a different automatic grade.

### Academic Integrity Policies

If you are in doubt regarding the requirements, please consult with the websites below and me before you complete any requirements of the course:

- Integrity: <https://facultysuccess.unt.edu/academic-integrity>
- Code of Student Conduct: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>

### Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

According to the UNT Student Academic Integrity Policy (UNT Policy 6.003), the unauthorized use of any person or technology to complete an assignment, project, or paper is considered cheating. Unless explicitly authorized by the instructor, the use of AI tools is prohibited and may result in a violation of academic integrity (see UNT policy [here](#)).

### ADA Policy

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours (student hours) or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours (student hours) to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

## **Title 9 Policy**

Please be aware that UNT policy (See <http://policy.unt.edu/policy/12-005>) based on Title 9 of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. § 1681(a); See <https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/title-ix-and-sexual-assault>) entails a duty for institutional employees to report to the university any knowledge regarding recent events of sexual misconduct involving students or employees. Additionally, if you report any information indicating that you have been a victim of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking being a student or employee at UNT, I am required to report this information to concerned authorities as mandated by Texas State Law.

## **Professional Conduct Policy**

- Students are reminded that academic misconduct will not be tolerated. For example: (a) copying another student's work, in part or whole; (b) unauthorized communication to obtain information about a test(s); (c) using unauthorized material during a test; (d) handing in any work product that is not your own; (e) failing to give credit to the intellectual property of another in any written work (including, but not limited to, plagiarizing).
- For a more extensive list of behaviors that are considered "cheating" or "plagiarism," please refer to the official statement of UNT regarding these matters, which may be assessed as part of the Student Handbook at the following website: <http://www.unt.edu/csrr>. Please note that specific penalties, including assigning a failing grade in the course, may be assigned by the course instructor. For further information on academic misconduct, penalties, and appeal procedures, please view the "Code of Student Conduct and Discipline" at [http://www.unt.edu/csrr/student\\_conduct/index.html](http://www.unt.edu/csrr/student_conduct/index.html).

## **Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)**

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

## **Campus Closures and Schedule Changes**

In the event that university operations are disrupted due to an emergency or hazardous conditions threatening the safety, health, or welfare of the campus community, UNT may be required to cancel classes, suspend operations, or close the campus entirely. If a campus closure occurs, you will be notified through Eagle Alert, and I will post an announcement via Canvas. In such circumstances, the course schedule is subject to change in accordance with the Campus Closures Policy (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006>).

## **Retention of Student Records**

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

## Additional Information

- UNT schedule to register and withdraw/drop a course: <https://registrar.unt.edu/registration/fall-academic-calendar.html>
- Information on student policies and resources: <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/>
- Learning Center: <https://learningcenter.unt.edu/>
- Undergraduate Research Fellowship: <https://honors.unt.edu/research/unt-undergraduate-researchfellowship>
- **The Learning Center**
  - How to access resources
    - Sage 170 (Main Office) / Sage 130 (Math Lab)
    - [learningcenter@unt.edu](mailto:learningcenter@unt.edu) / 940-369-7006
  - Provides the following resources
    - Supplemental Instruction / Math Lab
    - One-on-one tutoring / Academic Coaching
    - Learning 101 Series (Academic workshops on varying topics)
    - Graduate Student Resources
- **Mental Health:** UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:
  - Student Health and Wellness Center (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center>)
  - Counseling and Testing Services (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
  - UNT Care Team (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>)
  - UNT Psychiatric Services (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry>)

## Appendix A. Regarding Requests for Letters of Recommendation

Students may wish to request letters of recommendation for applications to graduate programs, internship/research positions, scholarships, or related opportunities. While I am committed to supporting students in their academic and professional development whenever possible, I am unable to write letters of recommendation for all students due to the sheer volume of requests received each semester.

To ensure that any letter I provide is both meaningful and professionally responsible, requests will be **considered only if** all of the following conditions are met. A request may be considered if:

### 1. You Have Completed Two Courses Taught by Me

You have successfully completed **at least two courses** under my instruction, earning **a final grade of A** in both courses. This minimum requirement allows me to assess consistency in your academic performance. Preference will be given to students who demonstrate outstanding engagement, such as active participation, strong academic work, and clear commitment to the courses. Requests will **not** be considered before the semester has concluded and final grades have been officially released.

### 2. You Have Had Significant Interaction with Me

It is extremely important for me to know who you are as a person beyond your academic performance. I must be able to comment meaningfully on your character, work habits, and individual strengths. Therefore, I can only write letters of recommendation for individuals who have had significant interaction with me, to the extent that I can provide a genuine and informed recommendation. If you feel that I do not know you well enough, it is likely that I may not be able to write a strong letter of recommendation, and in such cases, I may choose to decline the request.

### 3. You Have Demonstrated Strong Overall Academic Performance

Your cumulative GPA reflects strong academic achievement. GPA is considered an indicator of sustained effort, perseverance, and readiness for future academic or professional opportunities. As reference letters represent professional judgment, I can only support students who are well qualified for the programs or positions to which they are applying.

### 4. You Have Provided At least One Month's Advance Notice

I only consider requests that are submitted **at least one month** prior to the earliest deadline. Requests that do not meet this timeline will **not** be considered. Students are strongly encouraged to submit requests well in advance.

### 5. You Have Shared the Following Materials with Me via Email

Your first request email **must** include all of the following:

- A current CV or résumé
- An unofficial transcript
- An essay or statement of purpose (if it is one of the required application materials)
- A list of programs, schools, positions, and/or scholarships you are applying to, along with the links and deadlines
- A brief statement explaining your interest in these opportunities (e.g., why you are applying to graduate school) and why a letter from me would be relevant (e.g., what makes you think that my words or recommendation would persuade reviewers that you are a competitive candidate).
- A brag sheet summarizing your strengths, achievements, and relevant experiences.


### Additional Notes

- All requests and correspondence must be professional, respectful, and clearly written.
- I reserve the right to decline any request at my discretion.
- I will only **consider** requests that meet the above criteria and for which I believe I can write a strong letter of recommendation.
- Meeting the above criteria does **not** guarantee that a letter will be written, as the number of letters I can provide each semester is limited.
- In most cases, I will only write letters that are submitted through official institutional or program portals and for which the student has waived their right of access.
- I do not share, preview, or discuss the contents of letters of recommendation with students.
- Follow-up requests after being informed that I am unable to write a letter are not appropriate or professional. Please do not submit additional requests.

## Course Schedule

**Note.** All chapter readings are expected to be completed *prior* to class and are intended as *preparation* for class (except Chapter 1).

Wk	Date	Topics & Readings Due	Assignments (DUE)
<b>Part 1. Learning about Death, Dying and Bereavement</b>			
1	Tues, 1/13	Course Introduction & Review Syllabus Ch 1. Education about Death, Dying, and Bereavement	
	Thurs, 1/15	<b><i>Documentary: Being Mortal</i></b>	
<b>Part 2. Death</b>			
2	Tues, 1/20	Ch 2. Changing Encounters with Death	Reflection: Last Lecture <b>Due 1/20 Tues 2:00 PM</b>
	Thurs, 1/22	Ch 3. Changing Attitudes toward Death	
3	Tues, 1/27	Ch 4. Death-related Practices and the American Death System	
	Thurs, 1/29	Ch 5. Cultural Patterns and Death	
4	Tues, 2/3	<b>Exam 1</b> Take-Home, Open-Book	
	Thurs, 2/5	<b>Final Group Project: Introduction &amp; Find Group Members</b>	
<b>Part 3. Dying</b>			
5	Tues, 2/10	Ch 6. Coping with Dying	
	Thurs, 2/12	Ch 7. Coping with Dying: How Individuals Can Help	
6	Tues, 2/17	Ch 8. Coping with Dying: How Communities Can Help	
	<b>Part 4. Bereavement</b>		
	Thurs, 2/19	Ch 9. Coping with Loss and Grief	
7	Tues, 2/24	Ch 10. Coping with Loss and Grief: How Individuals Can Help	
	Thurs, 2/26	Ch 11. Coping with Loss and Grief: Funeral Practices and Other Ways Communities Can Help	
8	3/3–3/5	<b>Exam 2</b> Take-Home, Open-Book <b>Mid-semester Evaluation</b>	

9	3/7–3/15	<b>Spring Break</b>  No class this week. Enjoy Your Break!	
10	Tues, 3/17	<b>Guest: TBD</b>	
	Thurs, 3/19	<b>Final Group Project: In-Class Work Session and Q&amp;A</b>	<b>Extra Credit Flash Talk Proposals</b> <b><u>3/22 Due SUN 11:59 PM</u></b>
3/21: Last Day to Drop a Class Section Without a W			
<b>Part 5. Developmental Perspectives</b>			
11	Tues, 3/24	Ch 12. Children	
	Thurs, 3/26	Ch 14. Young and Middle-Aged Adults Ch 15. Older Adults	
12	Tues, 3/31	Ch 13. Adolescents	
	<b>Part 6. Legal, Conceptual, and Moral Issues</b>		
	Thurs, 4/2	Ch 17. Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior	
13	Tues, 4/7	Ch 16. Legal Issues	
	Thurs, 4/9	Ch 18. Aided Death: Assisted Suicide, Euthanasia, and Aid in Dying Ch 19. The Meaning and Place of Death in Life	
14	Tues, 4/14	The Future of Grief: AI and Grief Support <i>(No readings; just come to class ready to talk about AI and grief)</i>	
	Thurs, 4/16	<b>Exam 3</b> Take-Home, Open-Book	
15	Tues, 4/21	<b>Final Group Project: In-Class Work Session and Q&amp;A</b> <b>(Final Wrap Up)</b>	
	Thurs, 4/23	<b>Final Group Project: Extra Credit Flash Talk #1</b>	<b>Final Project</b> <b><u>DUE 4/26 SUN 11:59 PM</u></b>
16	Tues, 4/28	<b>Final Group Project: Extra Credit Flash Talk #2</b>	SPOT Evaluation
	Thurs, 4/30	<b>Last Day of Classes</b> Extra Credit Assignment	

**NOTE:** This syllabus is not a binding document. I reserve the right to modify the syllabus as needed to meet the learning needs of the class. Any changes will be communicated to the class in advance, both in class and on Canvas. It is your responsibility to keep up with course announcements and updates. If you have any questions or concerns about the syllabus, you are responsible for asking either me or the TAs for clarification.