

Common Course Outline
PSYC/SOCL 226
Perspectives on Death and Dying
3 Credits

Community College of Baltimore County

Description

PSYC/SOCL 226 – Perspectives on Death and Dying is a multidisciplinary, evidence-based exploration of behaviors, attitudes, emotions, and beliefs related to death, dying, and bereavement. In order to better understand ourselves and others, this course examines the cultural context of death, personal meaning of death at different stages in the life cycle, and the effect of death upon surviving family members and society. This course covers historical, psychological, sociological, cultural, physiological, religious, spiritual, ethical, and legal viewpoints along with exploration of personal reactions to death, dying and bereavement.

3 Credits

Prerequisites: PSYC 101 or SOCL 101

Overall Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. define the fundamental concepts associated with each of the course's major topics;
 2. analyze and compare different perspectives (historical, psychological, sociological, cultural, physiological, religious, spiritual, ethical, legal) of death, dying, and bereavement;
 3. examine how individual, societal, and cultural differences contribute to the understanding of, preparation for, and coping with death and dying;
 4. examine death and the process of dying as natural components of the lifespan, and evaluate how an awareness of mortality contributes to the construction of meaning in one's life;
 5. explain how the experience of death, dying and bereavement is different and/or similar at different stages in the life cycle;
 6. evaluate theoretical, scientific, and practical knowledge relevant to issues pertaining to death, dying, grief, and bereavement, and integrate that knowledge in such a way that facilitates personal growth and development;
 7. examine information on death, dying, and bereavement through the exploration of film, television, radio, print, and/or internet resources;
 8. communicate clearly in written, visual, oral, and/or signed format a description, analysis, and evaluation of issues related to death, dying, and bereavement;
 9. describe the relevance of global diversity as it applies to death, dying, and bereavement;
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10. reflect on one's own cognitive, affective, and behavioral reaction to death, dying, and bereavement.

Major Topics

- I. Definitions of death, dying, and bereavement
- II. Multidisciplinary perspectives of death and dying
- III. Death anxiety
- IV. Stages and models of death and dying and the grieving process
- V. Death, dying, and bereavement across the life span
- VI. Coping mechanisms relating to grief work
- VII. The funeral process
- VIII. Legal and ethical issues related to death and dying
- IX. Traumatic loss
- X. Hospice and palliative care
- XI. End of life issues and decisions
- XII. Near-death experiences
- XIII. The afterlife

Course Requirements

Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member but will include the following:

Grading/exams

- A minimum of two formal examinations
- A minimum of four graded participation activities (e.g., online discussions, in-class group activities, etc.)
- A minimum of two reflective written assignments and/or oral presentations
- A minimum of one research assignment (at least 4 pages in length, to include original research and analysis)

Written Assignments: Students are required to use appropriate academic resources.

Other Course Information

This course is a program elective in the Psychology and Sociology areas of concentration and may also be taken by students in other programs or majors.