



# El Camino College

## COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD - Official

### I. GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

**Subject and Number:** Sociology 115  
**Descriptive Title:** Sociology of Death and Dying

**Course Disciplines:** Sociology

**Division:** Behavioral and Social Sciences

**Catalog Description:** This course is a sociological approach to investigating death, dying, and bereavement processes in contemporary society. Students will compare the concept of death historically, socially, psychologically, and cross-culturally. Current legal, medical, and ethical issues related to death and dying, hospice, palliative care, end-of-life issues, violent deaths, and mass killings are also discussed.

**Conditions of Enrollment: Recommended Preparation**

Sociology 101  
AND  
Eligibility for English 1A

**Course Length:**  Full Term  Other (Specify number of weeks):  
**Hours Lecture:** 3.00 hours per week  TBA  
**Hours Laboratory:** 0 hours per week  TBA  
**Course Units:** 3.00

**Grading Method:** Letter  
**Credit Status:** Associate Degree Credit

**Transfer CSU:**  Effective Date: 12/19/2016  
**Transfer UC:**  No

**General Education:**

**El Camino College:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CSU GE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**IGETC:** \_\_\_\_\_

### II. OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

**A. COURSE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES** (The course student learning outcomes are listed below, along with a representative assessment method for

**each. Student learning outcomes are not subject to review, revision or approval by the College Curriculum Committee)**

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of theoretical perspectives and apply sociological perspectives such as functionalism, conflict theory, and interactionism to issues regarding death, dying, and bereavement.
2. Students will define and demonstrate an understanding of sociological concepts, such as socializaion, cultural norms, social institutions, deviance. globalization, and the sociological imagination to death, dying, and bereavement processes.

The above SLOs were the most recent available SLOs at the time of course review. For the most current SLO statements, visit the El Camino College SLO webpage at <http://www.elcamino.edu/academics/slo/>.

**B. Course Student Learning Objectives (The major learning objective for students enrolled in this course are listed below, along with a representative assessment method for each)**

1. Compare the concept of death historically, socially, and cross-culturally.  
Reading reports
2. Assess the impact of changing demographics on death and dying.  
Quizzes
3. Identify key legal, medical, and ethical issues related to death and dying.  
Quizzes
4. Identify and discuss social factors relating to changing patterns of mortality.  
Term or other papers
5. Analyze and compare the functions of death and bereavement rituals in America and cross-culturally.  
Written homework
6. Recognize current social attitudes toward death.  
Term or other papers
7. Discuss personal beliefs, values, and attitudes toward death, dying, and bereavement.  
Class Performance
8. Provide an overview of the stages of dying and grief processes.  
Essay exams
9. Articulate the relationship between social institutions and death, dying, and bereavement processes.  
Class Performance
10. Recognize the role of individuals, groups, and communities in dealing with death and grieving.  
Written homework
11. Assess the role of death throughout the life-course perspective.  
Quizzes
12. Evaluate current legal, medical, and ethical issues related to death and dying.  
Quizzes

13. Examine health care issues regarding hospice, palliative care, transplants, insurance, and caregiving.

Reading reports

14. Reflect on current social movement trends regarding dying with dignity, rights, and euthanasia.

Class Performance

15. Discuss theoretical and empirical approaches to death, dying, and bereavement.

Class Performance

16. Evaluate risk factors, theoretical explanations, and current social attitudes toward suicide.

Reading reports

17. Recognize how violent deaths, mass killings, and suicide bombers impact socio-cultural understandings of death, dying and bereavement.

Reading reports

**III. OUTLINE OF SUBJECT MATTER (Topics are detailed enough to enable a qualified instructor to determine the major areas that should be covered as well as ensure consistency from instructor to instructor and semester to semester.)**

Lecture or Lab	Approximate Hours	Topic Number	Major Topic
Lecture	3	I	Introduction to the Study of Death and Dying A. Definition of Death and Dying
Lecture	5	II	How Americans Experience Death A. Changes in Death Rates B. Gender and Class Differences in Death Rates C. Life Expectancy Changes D. Changes in Location and Types of Deaths E. Social Factors Associated with these Changes
Lecture	4	III	Changing Attitudes about Death and Dying A. How Americans Feel About Death and the Dead B. Comparisons with Attitudes of Other Societies C. Historical Developments in American Society Regarding Death and Dying D. Portrayal of Death and Dying in News and Entertainment Media E. Impact of Technology and Industrialization on Death and Dying
Lecture	5	IV	The Social Institutions Surrounding Death and Dying A. Funeral Practices: Past and Present B. Role of Medical Institutions C. Role of Religious Institutions D. Emerging Institutions (e.g. Hospice)
Lecture	3	V	Theoretical Perspectives on Death and Dying A. Different Theoretical Approaches B. Religious Belief Systems and Death
Lecture	4	VI	Diversity of Death and Dying Rituals in American Society A. The Experiences of Rituals of Selected Cultural Groups in American Society B. Impact of Gender, Social Class and Ethnicity
Lecture	7	VII	Coping with Death A. How Individuals Deal with Dying

			B. Role of Family and Friends in Supporting the Individual C. Issues for the Community
Lecture	7	VIII	Bereavement: Coping with Loss and Grief A. How Individuals Deal with these Issues B. Role of the Community in Supporting the Individual
Lecture	4	IX	Legal and Moral Issues A. Legal Issues before Death B. Legal Issues at Death C. Legal Issues after Death D. Euthanasia: Physical Assisted Death
Lecture	7	X	The Impact of Age on the Death and Dying Experience A. Children and Death B. Adolescence and Death C. Adults and Death D. Elderly and Death
Lecture	5	XI	The Impact of the Type of Death A. Suicide B. Violent and/or Sudden Death C. Lingered Illness D. Alzheimer's and Dementia Related Issues E. HIV/AIDS F. Socially Sanctioned Death, including Capital Punishment and War
<b>Total Lecture Hours</b>		54	
<b>Total Laboratory Hours</b>		0	
<b>Total Hours</b>		54	

#### IV. PRIMARY METHOD OF EVALUATION AND SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

##### A. PRIMARY METHOD OF EVALUATION:

Substantial writing assignments

##### B. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENT USING PRIMARY METHOD OF EVALUATION:

Watch a television show, news show, or read a current newspaper, journal, or Internet article that relates to death and dying in American society. In a two- to three-page paper, briefly summarize the show/article and write an essay on how death and dying are portrayed in the media. What does this portrayal reveal about beliefs, values, and norms surrounding death and dying in American society?

##### C. COLLEGE-LEVEL CRITICAL THINKING ASSIGNMENTS:

1. The lectures and readings point to specific rituals regarding an end-of-life commemoration. Sometimes, this is a funeral. At other times, it may be a party or some sort of celebration. Write a four- to five-page essay describing the commemoration (funeral, etc.) rituals in a specific ethnic or religious group, a

society of your choosing. In the essay, make sure to analyze how the various rituals help individuals and groups express their loss, deal with their grief, commemorate the deceased, and adapt to new identities and roles resulting from death.

2. The lectures and readings point to particular end-of-life preparations, such as arranging for disposal of the deceased, decisions that need to be made regarding property/money, and what type of ceremonial commemoration to hold for the person who has died. Write a four- to five-page essay discussing your own end-of-life preparations. What do you want to happen to your body? What type of ceremony (if any) do you want to have? What do you want done with your property, and what other particulars do you want others to know for your death? Discuss and assess why these particular arrangements are important to you, and incorporate at least two concepts from lecture in your essay.

#### **D. OTHER TYPICAL ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION METHODS:**

Essay exams

Quizzes

Reading reports

Written homework

Class Performance

Term or other papers

#### **V. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS**

Discussion

Group Activities

Lecture

Multimedia presentations

**Note: In compliance with Board Policies 1600 and 3410, Title 5 California Code of Regulations, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Sections 504 and 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act, instruction delivery shall provide access, full inclusion, and effective communication for students with disabilities.**

#### **VI. WORK OUTSIDE OF CLASS**

Study

Answer questions

Required reading

Written work

**Estimated Independent Study Hours per Week: 6**

**VII. TEXTS AND MATERIALS**

**A. UP-TO-DATE REPRESENTATIVE TEXTBOOKS**

Glennys Howard. Death and Dying: A Sociological Introduction. Polity, 2007.  
 Judith Stillion, Thomas Attig. Death, Dying, and Bereavement: Contemporary Perspectives, Institutions, and Practices. Springer Publishing Company, 2014.

**B. ALTERNATIVE TEXTBOOKS**

**C. REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS**

**D. OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS**

**VIII. CONDITIONS OF ENROLLMENT**

**A. Requisites (Course and Non-Course Prerequisites and Corequisites)**

Requisites	Category and Justification
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**B. Requisite Skills**

Requisite Skills
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**C. Recommended Preparations (Course and Non-Course)**

Recommended Preparation	Category and Justification
Course Recommended Preparation AND Sociology-101	
Non-Course Recommended Preparation  Eligibility for English 1A	It is advised that students are able to read and effectively analyze college level texts, and have the ability to write a paper that persuasively proves an original thesis. If students are eligible for English 1A they are more likely to be successful in this course.

**D. Recommended Skills**

Recommended Skills
Students who have taken Sociology 101 will be better prepared for this course. Terminology and concepts taught in Sociology 101 better prepare students for Sociology of Death and Dying. SOCI 101 - Define and describe sociology as a field of study and distinguish it from other disciplines in the social sciences. SOCI 101 - Explain and apply the sociological imagination as defined by C. Wright Mills. SOCI 101 - Identify agents of socialization and describe the process of socialization throughout the life course. Explain the “nature vs. nurture” debate and assess socialization theories of human development.
Ability to read and effectively analyze college level texts, as well as be able to write a paper that persuasively proves an original thesis. ENGL A - Read and apply critical thinking skills to college-level expository prose for the purposes of writing and discussion. ENGL 84 - Select and employ reading strategies to interpret the content of a college-level textbook, with special focus on constructing a thesis statement and providing valid support. ENGL 84 -

Identify an implied main idea (thesis), and support with major and minor details, from a longer text or novel.

ENGL A -

Apply appropriate strategies in the writing process including prewriting, composing, revising, and editing techniques.

### **E. Enrollment Limitations**

<b>Enrollment Limitations and Category</b>	<b>Enrollment Limitations Impact</b>
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**Course created by Abe Levine on 11/10/1981.**

**BOARD APPROVAL DATE:**

**LAST BOARD APPROVAL DATE: 12/19/2016**

**Last Reviewed and/or Revised by Kassia Wosick on 09/14/2016**

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