

## Course Syllabus

*(subject to change)*

HS 4710B: Palliative and End of Life Care  
School of Health Studies, Faculty of Health Sciences  
Winter | 2022

### Instructor Information

Prof. Katie Shillington | [kshilli4@uwo.ca](mailto:kshilli4@uwo.ca)  
Weekly Virtual Office Hours: By Appointment

### Positionality

*I acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. With this, I respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. I acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples (e.g., First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) endure in Canada, and I accept responsibility to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through my teaching, research, and community service.*

### Teaching Assistant Information

Leila Amirfakhrian | [lamirfak@uwo.ca](mailto:lamirfak@uwo.ca)  
**Weekly Virtual Office Hours:** Wednesdays from 12:30-1:30pm  
**Join Zoom Meeting:** <https://westernuniversity.zoom.us/j/92862217902>  
**Passcode:** 583230

### Course Information

This course will explore, from an inter-disciplinary perspective, critical issues related to death, dying, palliative, and end-of-life care relevant to health professionals working in a variety of settings. Topics include an introduction to death and dying in Canadian society, socio-cultural influences on our understanding of death, theories used to guide practice, an understanding of the dying person's experience, principles of palliative care, ethical and legal issues, and health system initiatives and challenges.

**Lecture Day:** Thursday  
**Lecture Time:** 4:30-6:30PM  
**Lecture Location:** AHB Rm 1B08

**Tutorial Day:** Wednesday  
**Tutorial Time:** 9:30-10:30AM  
**Tutorial Location:** AHB Rm 1B06

*Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.*

## Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

This course offers an introduction to death, dying, palliative, and end-of-life care in the Canadian context. This course will examine factors that influence individuals' end of life experiences from a wide variety of perspectives. By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Delineate and differentiate between death literacy and education, and where each fit in the healthcare context
- Appreciate death practices and rituals among various cultures
- Explain current best practices, as well as the individual and systemic challenges of palliative care within the health system
- Offer future directions to improve the end-of-life experiences of individuals across the age spectrum
- Have a better understanding of the dying person's experience, as well as the experiences of those around them

## Classroom Expectations

Contemporary academic traditions are built upon the power of a select groups of people, namely privileged white folks, typically men. However, that is changing as we move towards classroom content and approaches that acknowledge the importance of inclusivity and equity. I have worked hard to ensure the course content reflects the knowledge created by authors working from diverse social locations. However, I acknowledge that it is possible that there may be both overt and covert biases in the material due to the lens with which it was written. Please contact me or submit anonymous feedback (linked below) if you have any suggestions to improve the quality of the course materials.

Furthermore, I would like to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives, and experiences, and honours your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.). My goal is to have meaningful conversations and interactions and create opportunities for intellectual and personal enrichment. I disavow racism, xenophobia, homophobia, sexism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, classism, ableism, and hate speech or actions that attempt to silence, threaten, and degrade others. To help accomplish these classroom goals, I invite you to partner with me in the following ways:

- At the beginning of each class, I kindly ask that you create a name tag that includes your preferred name and set of pronouns
- If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to talk to me
- I am still in the process of learning about anti-racism, decolonization, and diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it (again, anonymous feedback is always an option).

Link to submit anonymous feedback: [https://uwo.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_cy0E1c4VwXGL5zM](https://uwo.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cy0E1c4VwXGL5zM)

## Course Materials

Students will be assigned several readings throughout the duration of the course. These readings correspond to the lecture topics and will be identified in the course syllabus. Additional readings may be

posted on the course website at any time. Students are responsible for the content of all required readings.

**Required Text:** Kortés-Miller, K. (2018). Talking about death won't kill you: The essential guide to end-of-life conversations. ECW Press.

**Purchase the book through Amazon:** <https://www.amazon.ca/Talking-About-Death-Wont-Life/dp/1770414061>

**Purchase the book through Chapters:** <https://www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/talking-about-death-wont-kill/9781770414068-item.html>

## Student Evaluation

Weighting	Grade Component	Evaluator	Due Date
10%	Tutorials	TA	<i>If online: Submitted by Friday at 4:00pm EST each week</i>
5%	Presentation Abstract	Instructor	February 4 <sup>th</sup> by 4:00pm EST
20%	Critical Reflection	Instructor	February 18 <sup>th</sup> by 4:00pm EST
30%	Presentation	Instructor	March 9 <sup>th</sup> , 16 <sup>th</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup> , or 30 <sup>th</sup> <i>Submitted the day before assigned presentation date by 4:00pm EST</i>
35%	Final Exam	Instructor	TBA

### 1. Tutorials

**In the event that tutorials are in-person:** As a component of this course, you are required to attend tutorial once a week. Attendance will be taken at each tutorial. Participation in tutorials will account for 10% of your tutorial grade. There are 10 tutorials, you are required to participate in 9 to receive full marks. Participation in tutorials may involve sharing your thoughts/opinions during small group discussions, sharing your thoughts/opinions during large group discussions with the entire class, and/or sharing your thoughts/opinions directly with your TA during tutorial.

**In the event that tutorials are online:** You will be required to participate in the tutorial activity posted each week. These activities can range from participating in a VoiceThread discussion, creating an infographic, posting on the discussion board, etc. Participation in tutorial activities will account for 10% of your tutorial grade. There will be 10 tutorial activities posted and you will be required to participate in 9 to receive full marks. These will be graded for completion (i.e., you will get 100% if you complete the tutorial activity). Online tutorial activities will close by Friday at 4:00pm EST each week.

### 2. Critical Reflection on a Book Chapter

Dying and death are a crucial component of life and living. Through Dr. Kortés-Miller's book I invite you to reflect on end-of-life; what it means in general, and what it means to you. Upon completion of the book, you will write a critical reflection worth 20%. You will reflect on your initial view of death and dying prior to starting the course, how that view changed (or stayed the same), as well as your current positionality on the topic. In doing this, you will select a chapter in the book that spoke to you. You will

position that chapter in relation to current literature, while also providing a critical reflection on the chapter topic. The paper should be 2000-2500 words, double-spaced, following APA formatting. Please submit your papers via the 'Assignments' tab on OWL.

### 3. Presentation Abstract & Presentation

At the beginning of the semester, you will be put into groups of ~5. You will work together with your group to critically examine the influence that culture has on our understanding of death, death practices, and end-of-life rituals. Each group will select a culture (with the instructor's approval) and will describe the palliative, end-of-life, and death practices/rituals of that culture through an evidence-based presentation. Each group will present on a different topic. That is, topics will be on a first-come first-serve basis.

Approximately one month before the presentations start, each group will be asked to submit a presentation abstract via the 'Assignments' tab on OWL. The abstract is worth 5% and should include a brief background on the topic, the purpose of the presentation, high-level discussion points, and a conclusion. The abstract should be no more than 250 words, double spaced, using APA formatting. Late submissions will be deducted 10% per day.

Prior to the presentations, each group will be asked to select one relevant journal article. Groups will be asked to submit their articles via 'Assignments', one week before their scheduled presentation date (please see submission schedule below).

Group	Journal Article Submission Date
1-3	March 3 <sup>rd</sup>
4-6	March 10 <sup>th</sup>
7-9	March 17 <sup>th</sup>
10-12	March 24 <sup>th</sup>

The presentation is worth 30% and should be 20-30 minutes in length – a strict time limit will be enforced. The rubric will be posted on the course site. You are expected to submit your presentation via the 'Assignments' tab the day before your assigned presentation date (please see submission schedule below). Late submissions will be deducted 10% per day.

Group	Presentation Submission Date
1-3	March 9 <sup>th</sup>
4-6	March 16 <sup>th</sup>
7-9	March 23 <sup>rd</sup>
10-12	March 30 <sup>th</sup>

### 4. Final Exam

The final exam may include long/short answer questions, multiple choice, and/or some true/false. The final exam, worth 35%, will be scheduled by the Registrar's Office and will cover content from Weeks 1-13 (i.e., the exam is cumulative). The exam will include material from the assigned book and other required readings, as well as any material covered in the lectures and tutorials (e.g., lecture notes, podcasts, films/videos, guest presentations, etc.).

Please note computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

**Lecture and Reading Schedule** (*subject to change*)

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Jan 12</b> <i>Tutorial</i>	<b>No Tutorial</b>	Introduction (Book)
	<b>Jan 13</b> <i>Class</i>	<b>Introduction to Course &amp; Introduction to Palliative Care in Canada</b>	Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association. (2013). A Model to Guide Hospice Palliative Care: Based on National Principles and Norms of Practice.  Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. (2021). Ontario Provincial Framework for Palliative Care.
<b>2</b>	<b>Jan 19</b> <i>Tutorial</i>	<b>Tutorial 1</b>	Chapters 1 & 2
	<b>Jan 20</b> <i>Class</i>	<b>Developing Death Literacy</b>	Noonan, K., Horsfall, D., Leonard, R., & Rosenberg, J. (2016). Developing death literacy. <i>Progress in Palliative Care</i> , 24(1), 31-35.  Durant, K. L. (2018). How grief camp reinforces the need for death education in elementary schools. <i>Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education/Revue canadienne des jeunes chercheuses et chercheurs en éducation</i> , 9(2).
<b>3</b>	<b>Jan 26</b> <i>Tutorial</i>	<b>Tutorial 2</b>	Chapters 3 & 4
	<b>Jan 27</b> <i>Class</i>	<b>The Ripple Effect of Death</b>	

			<p>Keeley, M. P., Generous, M. A., &amp; Baldwin, P. K. (2014). Exploring children/adolescents' final conversations with dying family members. <i>Journal of Family Communication, 14</i>(3), 208-229.</p> <p>The Waiting Room Revolution. (2021). S1: Episode 6: Anticipate Ripple Effects.</p>
4	Feb 2 <i>Tutorial</i>	Tutorial 3	Chapters 5 & 6
	Feb 3 <i>Class</i>	The Role of Healthcare Professionals in the Dying Person's Experience	<p>Wolf, A., Garlid, C. F., &amp; Hyrkas, K. (2018). Physicians' perceptions of hope and how hope informs interactions with patients: A qualitative, exploratory study. <i>American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine</i>®, 35(7), 993-999.</p> <p>Conway, M. F., Pantaleao, A., &amp; Popp, J. M. (2017). Parents' experience of hope when their child has cancer: Perceived meaning and the influence of health care professionals. <i>Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing, 34</i>(6), 427-434.</p>
5	Feb 9 <i>Tutorial</i>	Tutorial 4	Chapters 7 & 8
	Feb 10 <i>Class</i>	Death in a Digital World	Stevenson, N. (2021). Nadia Chaudhri, beloved Montreal neuroscientist with fans worldwide, has died.
6	Feb 16 <i>Tutorial</i>	Tutorial 5	Chapters 9 & 10
	Feb 17 <i>Class</i>	Medical Assistance in Dying	

			<p>Bruce, A., &amp; Beuthin, R. (2020). Medically assisted dying in Canada: “Beautiful death” is transforming nurses’ experiences of suffering. <i>Canadian Journal of Nursing Research, 52</i>(4), 268-277.</p> <p>Cottrell, L., &amp; Duggleby, W. (2016). The “good death”: an integrative literature review. <i>Palliative &amp; Supportive Care, 14</i>(6), 686-712.</p>
7	Feb 21-25 No Tutorial or Class	Reading Week	None
8	Mar 2 Tutorial	Tutorial 6	<p>Arya, A., Buchman, S., Gagnon, B., &amp; Downar, J. (2020). Pandemic palliative care: Beyond ventilators and saving lives. <i>Canadian Medical Association Journal, 192</i>(15), E400-E404.</p> <p>Abel, J., Kellehear, A., Millington Sanders, C., Taubert, M., &amp; Kingston, H. (2020). Advance care planning re-imagined: A needed shift for COVID times and beyond. <i>Palliative Care and Social Practice, 14</i>.</p>
	Mar 3 Class	Palliative Care During COVID-19	
9	Mar 9 Tutorial	Tutorial 7	TBD
	Mar 10 Class	Presentations Groups 1-3	
10	Mar 16 Tutorial	Tutorial 8	TBD
	Mar 17 Class	Presentations Groups 4-6	
	Mar 23	Tutorial 9	

<b>11</b>	<i>Tutorial</i>		TBD
	<b>Mar 24</b> <i>Class</i>	<b>Presentations</b> <i>Groups 7-9</i>	
<b>12</b>	<b>Mar 30</b> <i>Tutorial</i>	<b>Tutorial 10</b>	TBD
	<b>Mar 31</b> <i>Class</i>	<b>Presentations</b> <i>Groups 10-12</i>	
<b>13</b>	<b>April 6</b> <i>No Tutorial</i>	<b>No Tutorial</b>	None
	<b>April 7</b> <i>Class</i>	<b>Course Wrap-Up</b>	

## University and Course Policies

### 1. Course Delivery with Respect to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Although the intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, the changing COVID-19 landscape may necessitate some or all of the course to be delivered online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

**When deemed necessary**, tests and examinations in this course will be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide personal information (including some biometric data) and the session will be recorded. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote Proctoring website at: <https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

### 2. Intellectual Property

The educational materials developed for this course, including, but not limited to, lecture notes and slides, handout materials, examinations and assignments, and any materials posted to OWL, are the intellectual property of the course instructor. These materials have been developed for student use only and they are not intended for wider dissemination and/or communication outside of a given course. Posting or providing unauthorized audio, video, or textual material of course content to third-party websites violates instructors' intellectual property rights, and the Canadian Copyright Act. Recording lectures in any way is prohibited in this course unless specific permission has been granted by the instructor.

### 3. Academic Consideration

You must have a valid medical or compassionate reason for missing a scheduled examination, and documentation for your absence must be filed with the main office of the School of Health Studies (please see "Additional Statements" section below for information pertaining to academic consideration for medical illness or non-medical absences). Following receipt of approved accommodation from the

counselling office, a makeup examination will be scheduled. Please note that makeup examinations will differ from the originally scheduled examinations.

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by extenuating circumstances, including short-term illness or injury. Reasonable academic consideration is a cooperative process between the University, the student, and academic staff. All participants in the process must act in good faith, and fulfil their respective obligations, if it is to succeed.

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstance) sufficiently significant as to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements, may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:

- (i) Submitting a Self-Reported Absence form, provided that the conditions for submission are met;
- (ii) For medical absences, submitting a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner, in order to be eligible for Academic Consideration; or
- (iii) For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration, in order to be eligible for academic consideration.

Students seeking academic consideration:

- Are advised to consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying handing in work;
- Are encouraged to make appropriate decisions, based on their specific circumstances, recognizing that minor ailments (e.g., upset stomach) or upsets (e.g., argument with a friend) are not normally an appropriate basis for a self-reported absence;
- **Must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by either the self-reported absence or SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence;
- **Are advised that all necessary documentation, forms, etc. are to be submitted to academic counselling within two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities**

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe as to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities within 48 hours or less. The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances:

- a. Students will be allowed a maximum of two self-reported absences between September and April, and one self-reported absence between May and August;
- b. The duration of the excused absence will be for a maximum of 48 hours from the time the Self-Reported Absence form is completed through the online portal, or from 8:30am the following morning if the form is submitted after 4:30pm;

- c. The duration of the excused absence will terminate prior to the end of the 48 hour period, should the student undertake significant academic responsibilities (e.g., write a test, submit a paper) during that time;
- d. The duration of an excused absence will terminate at 8:30am on the day following the last day of classes each semester, regardless of how many days of absence have elapsed;
- e. Self-reported absences will not be allowed for scheduled final examinations; for midterm examinations scheduled during the December examination period; or for final lab examinations (i.e., “bellringers”);
- f. Self-reporting may not be used for assessments (e.g., midterm exams, tests, reports, presentations, or essays) worth more than 30% of any given course;

Students must be in touch with their instructors no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by the Self-Reported Absence form, to clarify how they will be expected to fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed.

#### **4. Student Code of Conduct**

The purpose of the Code of Student Conduct is to define the general standard of conduct expected of students registered at The University of Western Ontario, provide examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this standard of conduct, provide examples of sanctions that may be imposed, and set out the disciplinary procedures that the University will follow. For more information, visit <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>.

#### **5. Academic Offenses**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [Academic Calendar](#) - Western University.

#### **6. Support Services**

There are various support services around campus, and these include, but are not limited to:

1. Student Development Centre -- <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>
2. Student Health -- <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>
3. Registrar’s Office -- <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>
4. Ombudsperson Office -- <http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/>

#### **7. Health and Wellness**

The undergraduate experience is rewarding and challenging socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Finding ways to balance scholarly life with our personal lives can be tough, but it’s important to learn how to manage stress. Western provides several health and wellness-related services to students, which may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>. You can also check out the Campus Recreation Centre or the McIntosh Gallery ( <http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>), for alternative spaces to reconnect with your bodies and restore your spirit. You may also want to access local resources that are closer to where you are living during the school year. Recalibrating ourselves emotionally begins with slowing down,

reminding ourselves that we are ok, and taking a few deep, slow breaths. This remarkably effective strategy brings the body from stress mode into a more relaxed state.

If you are in emotional or mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western [Mental Health Support - Health & Wellness - Western University](#) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or Thames Valley Family Services (<https://www.familyservicethamesvalley.com/>), a trusted provider within the community. To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: [Health & Wellness - Western University](#). It's also advisable to have a wellness safety plan if you don't want to reach out to formal services. Having the numbers of a few trusted individuals is another strategy.

## 8. University and School of Health Studies Grading Information

The university-wide descriptor of the meaning of letter grades, as approved by Senate:

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work that is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable.
F	below 50	Fail

It is expected that the grades for this course will fall between 74-80%. In the event that the course average falls outside this range, a constant may be added (or subtracted) from each student's grade, by the instructor, to bring the class average in line with school policy.

## 9. Classroom Use of Electronic Devices

**During Exams:** Unless you have medical accommodations that require you to do so, or explicit permission from the instructor of the course, you may not use any electronic devices during ANY tests, quizzes, midterms, examinations, or other evaluations.

**During Lectures:** Using any electronic device to take pictures of the instructor or lecture material is **strictly prohibited** in this course. When engaged in online lectures/discussions, please ensure that all cellphones or other communication devices are turned off or have their ringers silenced.