

---

## Term Information

Effective Term Spring 2023

## General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area English  
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org English - D0537  
College/Academic Group Arts and Sciences  
Level/Career Undergraduate  
Course Number/Catalog 3362  
Course Title Death and Literature  
Transcript Abbreviation Death&Literature  
Course Description In this course students will read widely about death and dying, topics of great interest to poets, playwrights, novelists, and filmmakers from the dawn of writing to the present, connecting these topics to the concerns of philosophers, theologians, sociologists, and physicians, and to the physical, psychological, social, and cultural phenomena of the one absolute universal human experience: death.  
Semester Credit Hours/Units Fixed: 3

## Offering Information

Length Of Course 14 Week, 12 Week, 8 Week, 7 Week, 6 Week, 4 Week  
Flexibly Scheduled Course Never  
Does any section of this course have a distance education component? No  
Grading Basis Letter Grade  
Repeatable No  
Course Components Lecture  
Grade Roster Component Lecture  
Credit Available by Exam No  
Admission Condition Course No  
Off Campus Never  
Campus of Offering Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark, Wooster

## Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites Prerequisite: Completion of GE Foundation Writing and Information Literacy course  
Exclusions  
Electronically Enforced Yes

## Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings

## Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code 23.0101  
Subsidy Level Baccalaureate Course  
Intended Rank Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior

## Requirement/Elective Designation

Health and Well-being

## Course Details

### **Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes**

- Students engage with the topics of death and dying as essential aspects of human life, gaining insights into myriad perspectives toward death in their own culture or in comparison with other cultures at different times and across the world.

### **Content Topic List**

- Funeral rites and burial customs
  - Mortal remains
  - Ghosts, spirits, revenants
  - Dying
  - Grief, mourning, consolation
- No

### **Sought Concurrence**

## Attachments

- GE Death and Literature.docx: Proposal and Syllabus  
*(Syllabus. Owner: Lowry, Debra Susan)*
- GE Submission Form, Death and Literature, English 3362.pdf: GE Submission Form  
*(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Lowry, Debra Susan)*
- English 3362 Death Syllabus.docx: Revised Syllabus  
*(Syllabus. Owner: Hewitt, Elizabeth A)*
- health-well-beingForm.pdf: Revised GE Submission Form  
*(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Hewitt, Elizabeth A)*

## Comments

- Please see Panel feedback email sent 05/04/21. *(by Hilty, Michael on 05/13/2021 09:19 AM)*
- The decision has been taken that no 3000-level new GE courses in English will be electives for the major at this time. I have removed the request for elective status. Thanks. *(by Lowry, Debra Susan on 03/19/2021 02:02 PM)*
- Since this course will be an elective in the major, please upload updated curriculum map for the major. *(I checked off ATI as well.) (by Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal on 03/16/2021 05:18 PM)*

**COURSE REQUEST**  
3362 - Status: PENDING

Last Updated: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette  
Chantal  
09/06/2022

**Workflow Information**

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Lowry, Debra Susan	03/16/2021 03:08 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Winstead, Karen Anne	03/16/2021 03:14 PM	Unit Approval
Revision Requested	Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal	03/16/2021 05:19 PM	College Approval
Submitted	Lowry, Debra Susan	03/19/2021 02:03 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Lowry, Debra Susan	03/19/2021 02:03 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal	04/06/2021 09:20 PM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Hilty, Michael	05/13/2021 09:19 AM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Hewitt, Elizabeth A	06/12/2022 07:01 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Hewitt, Elizabeth A	06/12/2022 07:01 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal	09/06/2022 12:25 PM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Cody, Emily Kathryn Jenkins, Mary Ellen Bigler Hanlin, Deborah Kay Hilty, Michael Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal Steele, Rachel Lea	09/06/2022 12:25 PM	ASCCAO Approval

## **Rationale for new GE course: 3XXX Death**

The death rate for humans remains steady at 100%. Whoever we are, wherever we live, whatever we do for a living or recreation, whomever we love, whatever challenges we face in our lives in terms of hardship, loss, illness, injury, we all die. We always have, and it seems highly likely we always will. Yet despite death's universal inevitability, it is something twenty-first century Americans generally try to avoid. We don't think about it, we don't talk about it, we don't plan for it, and we certainly don't want to see it. As Atul Gawande pointed out in 2014, a century ago that vast majority of people died at home. Today, the vast majority die in hospital or hospice, safely sequestered away from the rest of us who prefer not to be reminded of our end, and certainly prefer not to deal with the messy, smelly, and often ugly bodies of the dying and the dead. Yet no subject has been more richly and diversely explored by creative writers than death. Gilgamesh struggled through the crisis of his friend Enkidu's death in the poem written four thousand years ago, four hundred years ago Shakespeare's Hamlet soliloquized about mortality and the "undiscovered country" beyond death, and Abraham Lincoln mourns his dead young son in the 2017 Book Prize Winning novel *Lincoln in the Bardo*. Literature provides an exceptional means of exploring the experiences of the dying, the grieving of survivors, the many conceptions of the afterlife and how these shape our attitudes to death, and the nature of our existence as humans. Where does our identity lie? Are we are bodies? our minds? our souls? What exactly is "death" and when or how does it happen? How do we know someone is dead? If they are dead, are they still someone? What do we, or should we, do with dead bodies and why? Do the dead cease to be part of our lives as individuals, families, and societies, or do these relationships somehow continue, perhaps in different ways? Why are we so obsessed with immortals and revenants of one kind or another? Many of these questions cannot be addressed except vicariously, since despite "near death" experiences, no one seems convincingly to come back from what lies beyond death to tell us about it. Moreover, even though all of us die, none of us actually experiences our own death.

Though including a course on Death in the Health and Wellness Theme may seem counterintuitive, it is exactly the right place for it, as the growing fields of end of life issues and medical ethics, thanatology, hospice and spiritual care suggest. It might be argued that our mental and physical health depends upon an acceptance of death—our own and others—as an inevitable part of life. The sample syllabus includes literature in a range of genres, by authors from different historical periods and global cultures, exploring various aspects of death and dying from multiple perspectives. Alongside these works students will also read a selection of articles and chapters on relevant topics by experts in medicine, the funeral business, philosophy, sociology, psychology, and anthropology. The goal is to get students thinking and discussing critical questions concerning death and dying, as well as to read and appreciate some powerful poems, plays, novels, and films, and finally to consider the unique contribution these artistic media offer to our understanding of the critical questions.

Faculty who are interested in teaching this course include Professors Hannibal Hamlin, Karen Winstead, Zoe Brigley Thompson (Poetry), James Phelan (Former Director, Project Narrative), David Adams (Lima Campus), Kathy Fagan Grandinetti (Creative Writing), Jared Gardiner (Film and Pop Culture), Norman Jones (Dean and Director, Mansfield Campus), Sara Crosby (Marion Campus), Molly Farrell, Kate Denton (Lecturer, Marion Campus). The course is easily

adaptable to any area within English, on any campus; the number of other works of literature and film that might be included is vast, and there are other focused topics that might be included as well, such as suicide and euthanasia, death and mourning among humans and animals, death and gender, and so forth. A pilot version of the course was taught in Spring 2022 as English 3361, Narrative and Medicine: Death.

**English 3361**  
**Death**  
**Spring 2022: TR 2:20PM - 3:40PM**  
**Denney 238**

**Professor: Hannibal Hamlin**  
**E-mail: hamlin.22@osu.edu**  
**Office: Denney 501**  
**Office hours: tba (or by appointment)**

### **Objectives:**

In recent decades there has been increasing interest in what has been called the “Medical Humanities,” focusing on what can be learned about various essential aspects of human life by bring together the expertise of scientists and medical practitioners with scholars of literature, history, philosophy and other Humanities disciplines. One area of particular interest for this interdisciplinary study is the end of life: death, dying, and the many physical, psychological, social, and cultural phenomena connected to them. This course approaches these topics from the literary perspective, addressing one of the topics of greatest interest to poets, playwrights, novelists, and filmmakers from the dawn of writing to the present: death. Death is the one absolute universal human experience. Since humans first came into existence, coming down from the trees or evolving from earlier primates, the human death rate has remained steady at 100%. Sooner or later, one way or another, we all die. How we have come to terms with this fact (or not) has varied considerably, from time to time, and culture to culture. We have developed different funeral and mourning rites as well as different ways of disposing of dead bodies. We have different beliefs about what happens, if anything, to us after death. Some believe in eternal life, whether in heaven, hell, nirvana, sheol, gehenna, tartarus, the Elysian fields, or the bardo. Some believe we can return from the dead, as ghosts or spirits, or that we can thwart death as vampires, zombies, or through scientific means as cyborgs or genetically altered eternal. Literature has always provided a fertile ground for cultivating such beliefs. Literature has also explored the undeniable realities surrounding death, including pain and suffering, grief and consolation, struggles with disease, accidents, and aging. In this course, we will read widely in literature about death and dying, addressing literary issues as well as, wherever possible, connecting these to the concerns of philosophers, theologians, sociologists, physicians, and also using insights from these fields to inform our literary studies.

Theme: Health and Wellbeing		
Goals	Expected Learning Outcomes	Related Course Content
<b>GOAL: Students will explore and analyze health and wellbeing through attention to at least two dimensions of wellbeing. (Ex: physical, mental, emotional, career, environmental, spiritual, intellectual, creative, and financial.</b>	<b>Successful students are able to...</b> <b>1.1</b> Explore and analyze health and wellbeing from theoretical, socio-economic, scientific, historical, technological, policy, and/or personal perspectives.	<b>In this course, students will</b> Study poetry, prose fiction, drama and film that considers issues related to death and dying from a variety of historical, cultural, philosophical, medical, and ethical perspectives
	<b>1.2</b> Identify, reflect on, or apply strategies for promoting health and well-being.	Explore and reflect on how literature and other arts represent valuable vicarious experiences of dying, death, and what comes next, experiences we cannot have ourselves, at least before the fact, but that help come to terms with our inevitable end so that we can better cope with loss and live healthier, happier lives.

**Specific Course Goals:** Successful students will:

- Engage in an advanced, in-depth scholarly exploration of the ways in which literary texts in multiple genres and from a variety of historical and cultural perspectives represent dying, death, and the afterlife through character, theme, and figurative language
- Appreciate how literature provides a means of thinking through issues of death and dying by the imaginative representation of experiences unavailable to us in our lives and inaccessible in the lives of others.
- Engage in critical and logical thinking to connect literary texts to debates about definitions of life and death, individual identity and membership in family and society, the treatment of the dead both ritually and practically, coping with grief and loss, and the extent to which our attitudes toward death and treatment of the dead define us as human beings and enable us to live healthy and meaningful lives.
- Consider how diverse representations of death, dying, and the afterlife in different cultures and historical periods challenge us to recognize and evaluate our own beliefs and practices.
- Describe and reflect on the transferable critical thinking skills that come from experience and analyzing literature through the lenses of philosophical, medical, psychological, sociological, and even theological debates. This will enable students to demonstrate a developing sense of themselves as living beings who must die, as somebodies who will

become some bodies, using the experience of literature and film, and the experiences represented in these works, to develop their own understanding of and attitude toward death, in order to better cope with the deaths of those dear to them, to make sound decisions about their own end of life, and by coming to terms with death to live a better life.

### **Texts:**

Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman* (Norton)  
Jim Crace, *Being Dead* (Picador)  
René Depestre, *Hadriana In All My Dreams* (Akashic Books)  
John Donne, *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* (Vintage)  
Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, *The Gates Ajar* (Penguin)  
George Saunders, *Lincoln in the Bardo* (Random House)

All other materials will be made available on Carmen.

### **Method of Presentation:**

As far as possible, given the size of the class, the course will be a seminar discussion. Obviously, this will depend on your participation. I will revert to lecture mode when absolutely necessary.

### **Course requirements:**

Participation in class discussion and activities	15%
Reading Quizzes	20%
Essays	40%
Final Exam	25%

Two short essays (4-5 pages) will be due at different points in the term. Students are free to develop their own topic, provided you consult with me in advance, but I will offer a number of suggested topics. In each case, you will be asked to explore one of a range of topics or issues with reference to one or two of the literary works we have read in class (the number will depend on the length of the works and the nature of the topic). You might discuss whether death is primarily individual or social, for instance, comparing *Death and the King's Horseman* with the poems of Dickinson. Or ask why ritual is so important in our coping with death, examining *Hadriana In All My Dreams* and Donne's *Devotions*. Another topic might ask you to describe and explain our tendency to use metaphors and euphemisms when talking about death and dying. No secondary research is required, though you can pursue it if you wish. For most topics, you will find that one or other of the secondary readings on the syllabus will be useful.

### Grade Conversion Scale

A	95-100	C+	70-74
A-	90-94	C	65-69
B+	85-89	C-	60-64

B	80-84	D+	55-59
B-	75-79	D	50-54

Attendance is essential to your participation grade. If you miss more than two classes without a clear and acceptable excuse, your course grade will suffer. Since the midterm and final are based largely on what we discuss in class, absenteeism will jeopardize those grades as well. However, while your absence can lead to a failing grade, your presence is not enough to get you the participation mark. You need not be an extrovert, but keep up with the reading, and come prepared to ask and respond to questions.

The exam will cover the entire course and consist of short identifications, several brief analyses of short passages, and a comparative essay.

Late work without an acceptable excuse will be penalized at the rate of one letter grade (i.e., B+ to B) per day.

## **PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own. It includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with university rules, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

**It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.**

## **DISABILITY SERVICES**

**The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307; [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu); 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue.**



## MENTAL HEALTH

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting [ccs.osu.edu](http://ccs.osu.edu) or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

## SCHEDULE

[Asterisks indicate days with reading quizzes. These will consist of five brief questions you should be able to answer if you have read carefully and completely.]

### Week 1

- Tues., Jan. 11      **Introduction**  
PowerPoint Lecture: *Gravestones, Monuments and Memorials*
- Thurs., Jan. 13      Nigel Barley, *Grave Matters: A Lively History of Death around the World*  
Introduction and Chapter 1, "The Universality of Death"  
Atul Gawande, *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End*  
Introduction and Chapter 1, "The Independent Self."

## FUNERAL RITES AND BURIAL CUSTOMS

### Week 2

- \*Tues., Jan. 18      Thomas Lynch, *The Undertaking: Life Studies from the Dismal Trade*,  
Preface, "The Undertaking," "Jessica, the Hound, and the Casket  
Trade"  
Gary Laderman, *Rest in Peace: A Cultural History of Death and the  
Funeral Home in Twentieth-Century America*, Chapter 5, "Final  
Frontiers: Into the Twentieth-First Century"
- Thurs., Jan. 20      Obituaries, Epitaphs, Last Words:  
Select published obituaries  
"Epitaphs, Requiems, and Last Words," from *The Oxford Book of Death*,  
ed. D.J. Enright

### Week 3

- \*Tues., Jan. 25      Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975)  
[This masterwork by a Nobel Prize winning Nigerian writer adapts a real historical episode, when a British colonial government official intervenes in a traditional ritual requiring the highest officer of the king to follow his lord into death to prepare a place for him with his ancestors. What the Yoruba people see as a ritual with cosmic consequences, essential for the continued fertility of the land and those living on it, the British see as a primitive act of enforced suicide. The results of the conflict—taking place ironically during WWII—are tragic and catastrophic, though the reasons for it are complex, due to the selfishness of the horseman as well as the cultural blindness of the official. The play challenges traditional Anglo-American attitudes to death and suicide, the individual and society, and to the relationship between the dead and the living.]  
Adélékè Adéèkò, "Death and the King's Horseman," *African Literature and Its Times*, 77-85

Thurs., Jan. 27      Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman* (cont.)

## BODIES

### Week 4

- Tues., Feb. 1      Jeffrey P. Bishop, "When is somebody just some body? Ethics as first philosophy and the brain death debate," *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics* 40.5 (2019): 419-36  
Richard Selzer, "Brain Death: A Hesitation," *The Exact Location of the Soul* (New York: Picador USA, 2001), 110-20.  
Mary Roach, *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers*, Chapter 3, "Life After Death: On Human Decay and What Can Be Done About It"

- \*Thurs., Feb. 3      Raymond Carver, "So Much Water, So Close to Home" (1981)  
[Carver's story is about three men on a fishing trip who find the naked body of a young woman floating in the lake soon after they arrive. Deciding not to abandon the fishing they had looked forward to, they decide to tie the body up to the shore, go on with their vacation, and report their find only after they are finished. The greatest emotional intensity builds as one of the men tries to explain their decision to his wife, who is increasingly appalled, identifying with the young woman. The story confronts us with the question of whether we are or are not our bodies, whether special attention is due to bodies even after death, as well as with how these questions might be differently answered by men and women.]  
Eric T. Olson, "The Person and the Corpse," in Ben Bradley et al, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Death*

### Week 5

- \*Tues., Feb. 8      Jim Crace, *Being Dead* (1999)  
[2001 novel in which, apart from various other plot points, a married couple of natural scientists are murdered and their bodies not found for many days. Particularly remarkable

is the detailed, dispassionate description of what happens to the bodies as they settle, decay, are inhabited and consumed by various creatures, and become part of the environment in which they lie, and which was the lifelong subject of the couple's research. A challenging representation of the body after death, questioning our combined reverence for and revulsion at the dead body, perhaps asking whether the continued "life" of the body and its components, reprocessed back into the ecosystem, might be considered a kind of afterlife.]

Thurs., Feb. 10      Crace, *Being Dead* (cont.)

## GHOSTS, SPIRITS, REVENANTS

### Week 6

Tues., Feb. 15      **ESSAY #1 DUE**

Alejandro Amenábar, *The Others* (2001)

[2001 film set on the island of Jersey in the aftermath of WWI, a mother struggling to raise her two children while her husband still hasn't returned, the children suffering from extreme photosensitivity. A group of servants comes to help out, but it increasingly seems the house is haunted by "others." As it turns out in this brilliantly written film, those haunting the house are actually its new, living, tenants, while the mother, children, and servants are in fact the ghosts, the mother having killed her children and herself on learning of her husband's death. The servants are spirits of those who worked in the house still earlier and died of cholera. The premise is that death doesn't necessarily come with understanding, the ghosts neither realizing they are dead, nor having any sense of the consequences of their deaths. Mother and children come to terms with their state as well as the way in which they died and the trauma that led to it.]

John Martin Fischer and Benjamin Mitchell-Yellin, "Immortality and Boredom," *The Journal of Ethics* 18.4 (2014): 353-72

\*Thurs., Feb. 17      René Depestre, *Hadriana In All My Dreams* (1988)

[The major novel of one of the great Haitian poets and political activists, who lived in exile in Cuba and France. The narrator tells of a traumatic event in his youth in Jacmel, when a highly anticipated marriage between the beautiful daughter of a leading French plantation family and the son of a prominent black family is prevented by the sudden death of the bride at the altar. In this fantastic-realist narrative, Hadriana is turned into a zombie, the community descends into a frenzied carnival of love and death, and the long decline of the city and the nation begins. From a much later perspective, the narrator reflects on desire and death, the culture of zombies (whether spiritual or criminal-chemical), and the politics of the colonial Caribbean, which might itself be a factor in the zombie legend. Depestre presents an array of explanations of voodoo and zombies, including the material and the political, but these seem inadequate in the face of the narrative's exploration of love, sex, and death, the intimacy of lovers, and the spiritual health or sickness of the community.]

**Week 7**

Tues., Feb. 22 Depestre, *Hadriana* (cont.)

**DYING**

Thurs., Feb. 24 PowerPoint Lecture: *Ars Moriendi* or Dying Well from the Black Death in Europe to twenty-first century America

**Week 8**

\*Tues., Mar. 1 John Donne, *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions, and Several Steps in My Sickness* (1623)

[Donne's response to his serious, nearly fatal illness, reflecting on the body, mind, and soul, early modern medicine, human interrelations, mortality and decay, God and humanity. An original and somewhat scandalous contribution to the medieval *ars moriendi*, the tradition of "dying well" that developed after the Black Death. Donne is reluctant to die under any circumstance and doesn't hesitate to challenge his God with questions like, why me? why now? why so much pain? Source of the famous passage, "No man is an island," including the injunction, "Ask not for whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee."]

Thurs., Mar. 3 Donne, *Devotions* (cont.)

**DEATH AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR****Week 9**

\*Tues., Mar. 8 Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (sels)

[Faust argues that the Civil War, in which more people died than in all the other wars in American history combined, dramatically changed the whole country's relationship to death. Ideas about how to "die well" were disrupted by so many soldiers dying horribly on distant battlefields, their bodies sometimes even unrecoverable. The business of simply managing and properly disposing of the dead, numbering perhaps as many as 750,000, was an enormous challenge and changed both funeral and burial practices.]

Thurs., Mar. 10 Photographs by Mathew Brady, William Mumler, and others  
[One reason for the impact of the Civil War dead was the development of photography, which recorded countless images of soldiers on both sides, both living (as keepsakes for loved ones) and, horribly, dead. Photography has long been thought to have peculiar powers to capture the soul and reach into the spirit world, as manifested in images claiming to show spirits, like the famous photo of Mary Todd Lincoln with the ghost of her husband standing over her.]

**Week 10**

Wed., Mar. 16 **SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES**

Fri., Mar. 18 **SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES**

## Week 11

\*Tues., Mar. 22

Walt Whitman, "When Lilacs Last In Dooryard Bloomed";  
"Out of the Cradle, Endlessly Rocking"; "The Wound Dresser";  
"Vigil Strange I Kept at the Field that Night"

Thurs., Mar. 24

Emily Dickinson, "Because I Could Not Stop For Death"; "I Heard a Fly  
Buzz When I Died"; "After Great Pain, a Formal Feeling Comes";  
"I Felt a Funeral, in My Brain"; "It Was Not Death, for I Stood  
Up"; "There's a Certain Slant of Light"; "I Never Hear That One Is  
Dead"; "Do People Moulder Equally?"; "Bring Me the Sunset in a  
Cup"; "Twas just this time last year I died"; "The grave my little  
cottage is"; "I am alive—I guess"

[Two of the founding poets of the American literary tradition, starkly different as they are in many other respects, were both preoccupied with death, perhaps because they both lived through the Civil War. Whitman, who served a nurse, wrote elegies for Lincoln and other poems about death in which he sees it "lovely and soothing," a beautiful part of the life cycle. In one poem he tells the reader that if she wants to find him, look under her feet. Dickinson wrote dozens of compact lyrics about death and dying, reflecting a more skeptical, even anxious attitude, as when Death carries her off in "Because I could not stop for death," or her fixation on a fly in "I heard a fly buzz—when I died," two of the many poems in which Dickinson imagines herself dead.]

## Week 12

\*Tues., Mar. 29

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, *The Gates Ajar* (1868)

[The only nineteenth-century novel more popular was *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. *Gates Ajar* sold hundreds of thousands of copies, and Phelps became a celebrity. The novel clearly satisfied a widespread need for consolation in the face of the horrendous losses of the Civil War. Young Mary grieves for her fallen brother, feeling almost unable to sustain her faith in God's justice, but her Aunt Winifred restores her to life and happiness by preaching a view of heaven in which loved ones are restored to each, dreams and aspirations are fulfilled, all wants and handicaps vanish, and life continues virtually identically—except better—to the one we know on earth. Wildly unorthodox, Phelps's vision of the afterlife challenges traditional Protestant Christian beliefs and raises questions about the dependence of our attitude to death on what we believe lies beyond it.]

Thurs., Mar. 31

Phelps, *The Gates Ajar* (cont.)

## GRIEF, MOURNING, CONSOLATION

## Week 13

\*Tues., Apr. 5

Elegy: Gilgamesh's lament for Enkidu (*Gilgamesh*)

David's laments for Saul, Jonathan, and Absalom (2 Samuel)

Bion of Smyrna's lament for Adonis

Thurs., Apr. 7 Raymond Carver, "A Small Good Thing" (1983)  
[Carter's story tells of an escalating conflict between a woman and a baker, because she fails to pick up and pay for a special birthday cake she ordered. The baker doesn't realize that the boy the cake was for has been struck by a car and killed. A showdown turns into a reconciliation and reaffirmation of life as everyone reveals their stories, and the baker sits the couple down and offers them freshly baked bread.]

Françoise Dastur, "Mourning as the Origin of Humanity," *Mosaic* 48.3  
(2015): 1-13

#### Week 14

Tues., Apr. 12 **ESSAY #2 DUE**

Anthony Minghella, *Truly, Madly, Deeply* (1990)  
[1990 film about a woman, Nina, grieving for her dead lover. The lover, a cellist, returns to their apartment to keep her from despair, and he (and a group of other ghosts from past eras) watch old movies on TV, play music, and ultimately help her move on to another relationship, partly by irritating her into a more realistic memory of her first one. Other characters allow the exploration of loneliness and love, immigration, language (Nina is an interpreter), and special education, all of which are interwoven together. Do the dead continue in any sense with the living? Is death something like immigration, requiring an effort at translation? Is love what life is really all about?]

\*Thurs., Apr. 14 George Saunders, *Lincoln in the Bardo* (2017)  
[2017 Man Booker Prize-winning novel set in a fantastical space in between life and death, modeled on the Tibetan belief in the "bardo," between death and reincarnation, though Saunders adapts the bardo in Christian directions, suggesting a version of heaven and hell rather than rebirth. The central story is Abraham Lincoln's grief over the death of his son Willie, and Willie's coming to terms with his own death. A host of other characters includes spirits of the dead also interred in Oak Hill Cemetery in Georgetown, and the narrative is interspersed with actual voices from the Civil War era, in diaries, letters, and newspapers. Both living and dead must learn to move on, either in the world or into what lies beyond.]

#### Week 15

Tues., Apr. 19 *Lincoln in the Bardo* (cont.)  
From *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, trans. Edward Conze, in *The Book of Heaven: An Anthology of Writings from Ancient to Modern Times*, ed. Carol Zaleski and Philip Zaleski

Thurs., Apr. 21 Conclusions

**Final Exam:** Wed., April 27 2:00 pm – 3:45 pm

**Further Reading:**

The bibliography on death, dying, and related topics is massive, but here are some useful places to start.

- Ariès, Philippe, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Oxford UP, 1991)
- Becker, Ernest, *The Denial of Death* (New York: The Free Press, 1973)
- Bishop, Jeffrey P., *The Anticipatory Corpse: Medicine, Power, and the Care of Dying* (Notre Dame, IN: U Notre Dame Press, 2011)
- Blanco, Maria-Jose, and Ricarda Vical, eds., *The Power of Death: Contemporary Reflections on Death in Western Society* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014)
- Bradbury, Mary, *Representations of Death: A Social Psychological Perspective* (London: Routledge, 1999)
- Davies, Douglas J., and Chang-Won Park, eds., *Emotion, Identity, and Death: Mortality Across Disciplines* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2012)
- DeMello, Margo, *Mourning Animals: Rituals and Practices Surrounding Animal Death* (East Lansing: Michigan State UP, 2016)
- Ebenstein, Joanna, and Will Self, *Death: A Graveside Companion* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2017)
- Elias, Norbert, *The Loneliness of Dying* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2001)
- Enright, D.J., *The Oxford Book of Death* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983)
- Farrell, James J., *Inventing the American Way of Death, 1830-1920* (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1980)
- Gawande, Atul, *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End* (New York: Picador, 2014)
- Gilbert, Sandra M., *Death's Door: Modern Dying and the Way We Grieve* (New York: Norton, 2006)
- Harrison, Robert Pogue, *The Dominion of the Dead* (Chicago and London: U Chicago P, 2003)
- Huntington, Richard, and Peter Metcalf, *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979)
- Jupp, Peter C., and Glennys Howarth, eds., *The Changing Face of Death: Historical Accounts of Death and Disposal* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997)
- Kammen, Michael, *Digging Up the Dead: A History of Notable American Reburials* (Chicago: U Chicago Press, 2010)
- Kellehear, Allan, *A Social History of Dying* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007)
- Khapaeva, Dina, *The Celebration of Death in Contemporary Culture* (Ann Arbor: U Michigan P, 2017)
- Kübler-Ross, Elisabeth, M.D., *On Death and Dying* (New York: Macmillan, 1969)
- Rosenow, Michael K., *Death and Dying in the Working Class, 1865-1920* (Urbana: U Illinois Press, 2015)
- Sloan, David Charles, *Is the Cemetery Dead?* (Chicago: U Chicago Press, 2018)
- Van Brussel, Leen, and Nico Carpentier, eds., *The Social Construction of Death: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (London: Palgrave, 2014)
- Verdery, Katherine, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia UP, 1999)

## **Selected Resources:**

*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York, 2009).

This defines the standard format for essays in literary criticism, including some comments on style as well as more extensive material on layout, notes, and bibliography. You can also find MLA info at the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_style\\_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_style_introduction.html).

*The Oxford English Dictionary*

The one absolutely essential reference work for the study of English literature, especially Pre-1900. The OED is available online, with various search functions, through the OSU Libraries website. <http://dictionary.oed.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/entrance.dtl>

(There are other online dictionaries, largely inadequate.)



# GE THEME COURSES

## Overview

Courses that are accepted into the General Education (GE) Themes must meet two sets of Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs): those common for all GE Themes and one set specific to the content of the Theme. This form begins with the criteria common to all themes and has expandable sections relating to each specific theme.

A course may be accepted into more than one Theme if the ELOs for each theme are met. Courses seeing approval for multiple Themes will complete a submission document for each theme. Courses seeking approval as a 4-credit, Integrative Practices course need to complete a similar submission form for the chosen practice. It may be helpful to consult your Director of Undergraduate Studies or appropriate support staff person as you develop and submit your course.

Please enter text in the boxes to describe how your class will meet the ELOs of the Theme to which it applies. Please use language that is clear and concise and that colleagues outside of your discipline will be able to follow. You are encouraged to refer specifically to the syllabus submitted for the course, since the reviewers will also have that document. Because this document will be used in the course review and approval process, you should be *as specific as possible*, listing concrete activities, specific theories, names of scholars, titles of textbooks etc.

## Accessibility

If you have a disability and have trouble accessing this document or need to receive it in another format, please reach out to Meg Daly at [daly.66@osu.edu](mailto:daly.66@osu.edu) or call 614-247-8412.

Course subject & number

## General Expectations of All Themes

**GOAL 1: Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations.**

**Please briefly identify the ways in which this course represents an advanced study of the focal theme.** In this context, “advanced” refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities. (50-500 words)

Course subject & number

**ELO 1.1 Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.** Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

**ELO 1.2 Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.** Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

Course subject & number

**GOAL 2: Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.**

**ELO 2.1 Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.**

Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

**ELO 2.2 Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.** Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met.

(50-700 words)

Course subject & number

Specific Expectations of Courses in Health & Wellbeing

**GOAL Students will explore and analyze health and wellbeing through attention to at least two dimensions of wellbeing. (Ex: physical, mental, emotional, career, environmental, spiritual, intellectual, creative, financial, etc.).**

**ELO 1.1 Explore and analyze health and wellbeing from theoretical, socio-economic, scientific, historical, cultural, technological, policy, and/or personal perspectives.** Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

**ELO 1.2 Identify, reflect on, or apply strategies for promoting health and well-being.** Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)