

AMBERTON UNIVERSITY
e-COURSE SYLLABUS

PSY5735.E1 Perspectives of Death and Dying
Fall 2026

PROFESSOR INFORMATION:

Professor: Dr. Rose Johnson.
Amberton Extension: 972-279-6511 ext. 205
Amberton Email: **RJohnson@amberton.edu**

COURSE INFORMATION:

PSY5735.E1 Perspectives of Death and Dying
Level: Graduate
Beginning Date of Session: Saturday, September 12, 2026
Ending Date of Session: Thursday, November 19, 2026

Student access available to the Student Portal: Saturday, September 12, 2026

Students enrolled in distance learning courses are not assessed any additional fees for security or identity verification.

PREREQUISITES:

None

TEXTBOOK(S) AND REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Title: Understanding Dying, Death, and Bereavement
Author: Michael R. Leming, George E. Dickinson
Publisher: Cengage
Year Published: 2021
Edition: 9th
ISBN: 10: 9780357703595 or 13: 9780357045084
Price: Available at <http://amberton.ecampus.com>

Students should verify enrollment in course before purchasing textbooks. Textbook information and ordering options are available through the Amberton Virtual Bookstore. Since no books are sold on campus, students should plan accordingly and purchase their books in advance of the first day of class, allowing time for shipping.

APA REQUIREMENT:

APA (American Psychological Association) style is most commonly used to cite sources within the social sciences. This resource, revised according to the 7th edition, offers examples for the general format of APA research papers, in-text citations, endnotes/footnotes, and the reference page. For more information, please consult the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, (7th ed.). All coursework at Amberton University will comply with the standards contained in the APA Publication Manual.

COURSE COMPETENCIES:

This course explores the multifaceted concepts of death and dying across cultures through various lenses, including sociological, psychological, cultural, and philosophical perspectives. Students will examine historical attitudes toward death, the rituals surrounding dying, and the significance of grief and mourning in different cultures. The course will also address contemporary issues such as end-of-life care, ethical dilemmas, and the impact of technology on the dying process. Through discussions, readings, and assignments, students will develop a deeper understanding of how personal, societal, and cultural beliefs shape our perceptions of death and our responses to loss. Another goal of the course is to cultivate empathy and critical thinking skills while encouraging students to confront and articulate their perspectives on mortality.

CAVEAT: No graduate credit will be awarded if PSY3735 has been successfully completed.

UPON COMPLETION OF THE COURSE, THE STUDENT WILL BE COMPETENT IN:

1. Describing the presence of and practices related to death and dying across cultures, with particular emphasis upon the United States.
2. Identifying stereotypical relationships established between aging and dying.
3. Describing the multidimensional nature of death anxiety.
4. Examining links between death anxiety and psychosocial adjustment, i.e., coping strategies, pathology, and/or stress reactions.
5. Analyzing the societal attitudes toward controversial issues, such as euthanasia, selling of organs, and organ donation list.
6. Exploring the responses of family, co-workers, and friends to a dying person.
7. Analyzing the psychological and philosophical foundations for dying found in the predominant literature and media of the day.
8. Examining the interrelationship between the process of living and dying.
9. Analyzing public policies and practices related to issues of dying.
10. Identifying and understanding death certificates and the importance of other documents that require completion at death or early in life (e.g., living will, will, life insurance, funeral, etc.) in order to avoid undesirable outcomes personally and on the family.
11. Comparing and contrasting healthy and unhealthy grieving.
12. Conducting a cross-cultural comparison of institutionalized practices for dealing with death and dying.
13. Focusing on issues of dying and grieving specific to cases of suicide.
14. Analyzing the factors that contribute to higher suicide rates in certain populations and focusing on solutions for lowering these rates.
15. Examining the relationship among selected demographics such as age, gender, religious preference, educational level and one's expressed death anxiety.
16. Identifying resources for use by professionals and the public who are addressing issues of death and dying.
17. Exploring areas of thanatology study that require further research and increasing awareness of how many thanatology courses medical professionals are exposed to in their studies.
18. Identifying the different cultural and religious perspectives on the meaning of death.
19. Defining and examining near-death experiences.
20. Defining and explaining what people consider a "good death."
21. Utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) to efficiently locate and evaluate professional resources published in the last five years ensuring access to current research, best practices, and innovative approaches in the field of the perspective of death and dying.

ACQUIRED SKILLS

1. Critical Thinking
2. Empathy
3. Analysis and Decision-Making

COURSE POLICIES:

1. All assignments are due at the scheduled time CST.
2. An assignment submitted after the due date will receive a penalty of 25% for each day or partial day that it is late. Work submitted 2 (two) or more days after the due date will **NOT** be accepted. There are no options for extra credit or make-up work. Please plan according and reach out in advance if you anticipate any challenges meeting a deadline.
3. Assignments must be submitted through the Moodle Course Management System and must be submitted in Word format. Do NOT submit files in PDF format.

STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES:

This syllabus contains information, policies, and procedures for a specific course. By enrolling, the student agrees to read, understand, and abide by the policies, rules, regulations, and ethical standards of Amberton University as contained in the current university catalog and schedule of classes.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Regular and punctual class attendance and engagement is expected at Amberton University. In case of an absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact the professor as soon as possible. If a student intends on withdrawing from a course, it is the student's responsibility to follow the university's policy on formally withdrawing from a course. **Ceasing to attend classes does not constitute an official withdrawal.**

Attendance in a lecture course is defined as punctual arrival to, and engagement in, a full lecture session. A Student in a lecture course missing more than 20% (two class periods for weekday classes or one class period for Saturday classes) of the class meetings may be assigned a grade of an "F" or withdrawn at the discretion of Amberton University.

Attendance in a distance learning course is defined as active participation in the weekly online class sessions. "Active participation" can be defined as: submitting an academic assignment, taking an exam, engaging in an interactive tutorial, participating in an online discussion forum (or chat session), or initiating (or responding to) a communication with a faculty member about an academic assignment or the subject matter of the course. A student not meeting these requirements may be assigned a grade of an "F" or withdrawn at the discretion of Amberton University.

PLAGIARISM POLICY:

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as though it were your own. If you use another person's words, ideas, or information; or if you use material from an outside source – whether a book, magazine, newspaper, business publication, broadcast, speech, or electronic media – you must acknowledge that source. Plagiarism is a violation of the University's code of student ethical conduct and is one that is taken seriously. Amberton University operates on an honor system; therefore, honesty and integrity are essential characteristics of all who are associated with the institution. All Amberton students are expected to abide by the honor system and maintain academic integrity in all their work. Amberton University and its instructors monitor student work for plagiarism and reserve the right to submit such work to technology-based plagiarism detection services and applications at any time.

Self-plagiarism means reusing work that you have already published or submitted for a class. It can involve:

- Resubmitting an entire paper
- Copying or paraphrasing passages from your previous work

Self-plagiarism misleads your readers by presenting previous work as completely new and original. Students may not submit the same paper in substance in two or more classes without prior written permission of the instructors involved.

Amberton University students who use Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated content must adhere to the following policies:

Originality: Students must avoid presenting AI generated content as their own original work. It is essential to acknowledge the involvement of AI in the content creation process in order to maintain academic and ethical standards.

Paraphrasing: When using AI generated content, students must rephrase and/or modify the generated text. Paraphrased AI generated content should also be properly cited.

Acknowledgement: When using AI generated content in any assignment, proper credit must be given to the AI system that generated the content. <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

Students agree that by taking this course, all required assignments may be subject to submission for a textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism and self-plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in future papers. Use of Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com website.

Turnitin is a writing improvement and plagiarism prevention tool which uses special algorithms, to compare text-based student submissions to the Turnitin database and other online sources. Turnitin produces a detailed **similarity report** that can be customized and viewed by instructors and students.

Turnitin “Draft Coach” is a Google based add-on to Turnitin which supports students in developing high-quality academic writing; and serves as an integrity coach. Draft Coach helps address errors and improve the quality of student’s writing by highlighting grammar mistakes, identifying incorrectly cited sources, and scanning for similarity across several databases. By providing formative feedback on how to address citation issues, incorrect grammar, and matches with the Turnitin database, Draft Coach provides explanations to help students become more confident writers, capable of producing higher quality work both in academics and in the workplace.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR:

This course explores the multifaceted concepts of death and dying across cultures through various lenses, including sociological, psychological, cultural, and philosophical perspectives. Students will examine historical attitudes toward death, the rituals surrounding dying, and the significance of grief and mourning in different cultures. The course will also address contemporary issues such as end-of-life care, ethical dilemmas, and the impact of technology on the dying process. Through discussions, readings, and assignments, students will develop a deeper understanding of how personal, societal, and cultural beliefs shape our perceptions of death and our responses to loss. Another goal of the course is to cultivate empathy and critical thinking skills while encouraging students to confront and articulate their own perspectives on mortality.

Week	Topic	Assignment	Competencies Covered	Due Date
1	Thanatology	Reading: Ch. 1 & 2 Assignment: Student Introduction	1,2,5,10,12,13	9/19/2026
2	Experiencing Death in Life	Reading: Ch 3 & 6 Assignment: Cemetery Research	2,3,5,6	9/28/2026
3	The Mechanics of Death	Reading: Ch 5 & 7 Assignment: Cemetery Assignment Due	2,3,5,6	10/4/2026
4	Choices	Reading: Ch 8 Assignment: Discussion 1	3,4,7,11,15,16	10/11/2026
5	Mid-term Exam	Mid-term Exam: Ch 1-3, 5-8	1-7,11,13,15-18	10/18/2026
6	Traumatic Death and Rituals	Reading: Ch 9 & 10	8,9,11,12,13,15,16	10/25/2026

		Assignment: Discussion 2		
7	Getting Ones Affairs in Order	Reading: Ch 11 & 12 Assignment: Discussion 3	1/7/11/12/13/15/16/17	11/1/2026
8	After Death	Reading: Ch 4 Assignment: Discussion 4	1,4,7,11-17	11/8/2026
9	Grief	Reading: Ch 13 & 14 Assignment: Final Project Due	4,8	11/15/2026
10	Final Exam	Final Exam: Ch 4, 9-14	1,4,7-9,11-17	11/19/2026

GRADING CRITERIA:

Exams (mid-term and final): 30%

Final Project: 25%

Discussions: 25%

Cemetery Assignment: 20%

Graduate

92 – 100 A

82 – 91 B

72 – 81 C

62 – 71 D

Below 62 F

GRADE NOTIFICATION AND INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK:

Students should review instructor feedback provided through Moodle or Amberton CampusWeb Portal. Final grades are processed approximately one week after the session and may be viewed through the student portal. Grades will not be released by phone or through unsecured channels. University instructors will not leave a message with comments or grades in any type of media that is not secure.

For questions regarding grades after the semester has ended, students should use their university email account and contact the instructor at the faculty email address as provided above in Professor Information area.

INCOMPLETE GRADES:

An "I" (Incomplete) grade is granted only at the professor's discretion for emergencies or illness.

Students have 30 days from the end of the session to complete the course requirements. If the conditions are not met within this 30-day window, the "I" automatically converts to an "F".

HOW TO WITHDRAW FROM A COURSE:

To be official, the class withdrawal must be in writing and signed by the student requesting the withdrawal; no withdrawal is accepted verbally. Please review the "Schedule of Classes" (online or in-print) for procedures for class changes or withdrawals and the refund policy and schedule.

COURSE DELIVERY METHODOLOGY:

This course is delivered through Moodle. Students are expected to have reliable internet access, basic computer skills, the ability to upload/download files, use Amberton email, and submit assignments in the required format. Students needing assistance should use the Amberton SSO support/ticket process.

HOW TO ACCESS YOUR COURSE:**SINGLE SIGN-ON (SSO) INSTRUCTIONS FOR AMBERTON UNIVERSITY:**

Students should access Amberton systems through the Single Sign-On portal at <https://sso.amberton.edu>. After logging in, students can access Moodle, Amberton email, CampusWeb, and other assigned applications. Students who need help accessing SSO should submit a support request through the SSO support option or contact support@amberton.edu.

MOODLE TUTORIAL:

Upon successful log in and access to the Moodle learning platform, there is a Student Moodle Tutorial course available, to learn about the basics of Moodle. Simply click on the link for the Student Moodle Tutorial and read through the various learning topics: Navigating; Communicating; Assignments & Exams; Grades; and Student Resources.

COURSE COMMUNICATIONS:

Students will communicate with faculty through the Moodle Learning Platform or the Amberton University email system.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION:

Students are expected to use their Amberton email account and Moodle for course communications. Students must use their official university email account for all university related communication and should check their Amberton emails regularly for course and university notices.

Upon completion of a session, all communication and course specific information is removed from the Moodle system. If a student needs to maintain a record of communications or assignments, the student is strongly encouraged to print out or download these items to a disk for their own records.

FORMAT AND SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments must be submitted through the appropriate Moodle assignment link unless otherwise directed by the instructor. Students are responsible for submitting files in the format required by the instructor.

INSTRUCTOR/COURSE EVALUATION:

Students will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous course and instructor evaluation near the end of the session. Instructions and dates will be provided through Moodle and/or Amberton email.

RESEARCH RESOURCES:

The Amberton Library provides access to full-text articles, peer-reviewed databases, and research tools, with options like Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and TexShare for items outside its collection. For research assistance, students can connect with library staff during operating hours via email (library@amberton.edu), phone (972-279-6511 ext. 185), "How-to" videos, live online chat, or in person at the Garland campus. The online library is available through Single Sign On (SSO).

MICROSOFT OFFICE 365 EDUCATION:

Amberton University students may access Microsoft 365 Education resources as provided by the university.

GOOGLE WORKSPACE FOR EDUCATION:

Amberton students are assigned a Google Workspace for Education account, including Amberton Gmail, Google Drive, Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides. Students should use their Amberton Google account for course-related work when required.