



Thanatology 4331G (570)
Winter 2026

Social and Political Discourse in Thanatology

Course Information:

Calendar Description: Students will have an opportunity to become familiar with critical theory concepts as they relate to Thanatology. Students will examine the underpinnings of critical theory, and explore topics such as class structure, social and political institutions and social policy relevant to Thanatology.

Prerequisite(s): Thanatology 3322G or written permission from the Thanatology Coordinator.

Anti-requisite(s):

Extra Information: 3 lecture hours.

Course Weight: 0.50 **Breadth:** Category A

Subject Code: THANT

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or 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 pre-requisites.



Thanatology 4331G/570
Social and Political Discourse in Thanatology
Winter 2026

Instructor: Dr. Lisa McLean (she/her)

Email: lmclea43@uwo.ca

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:30-2:30 in my office (details in OWL).

Course Overview

The exploration of Thanatology from a critical perspective is a relatively recent area of study, yet one that is highly important for students to understand the deeper issues involved in topics that are related to death, dying, and bereavement. Students will examine the underpinnings of critical theory, and explore topics such as social class structure, social and political institutions, structural violence, necropolitics, and social policy relevant to Thanatology. Through this course, students will consider the importance of a critical death studies education and what the future of the field may hold.

Upon completion of the course, students will:

- Examine topics related to death, dying, grief, and loss using critical theories and social justice lenses.
- Engage in critical discourse regarding social and political issues that are relevant to Thanatology.
- Be able to articulate the importance of a critical lens in Thanatology.

This course is designed as a seminar to promote engaged critical thinking. As a result, the responsibility of learning is shared between students and faculty, meaning that students are expected to be active participants in discussions about the readings. The class will be organized to include brief lectures, class discussions about the readings, student presentations, and assignment workshops where you work individually and collectively on your final project. Consequently, it is vital to the success of this course that the assigned reading(s) are completed and mulled over according to the reading schedule.

Required Textbook

Borgstrom, E., & Visser, R. (2025). *Critical approaches to death, dying, and bereavement*. Routledge.

- \$75.45CAD from the [Western Bookstore](#)
- OR for free as an ebook through the library system. Available through Course Readings.

All additional readings will be available through the Course Readings tab in OWL.

EVALUATION

1. Attendance	10%
2. Participation	20%
3. Essay 1: What is Critical Theory?	20%
4. Final Project	40%
a. Topic & Format Outline	5%
b. Final Project Draft Theoretical Context	10%
c. Final Project: Poster/Creative Intervention	25%
5. Closing Reflection: Why Critical Death Studies?	10%

Attendance (10%)

As a seminar, it is expected that students will be active participants in the learning process. As such, attendance in class will earn only part of your full participation grade. In this course, attending class will earn you 10% of your overall grade. An attendance sheet will be circulated during class, and it is the student's responsibility to ensure that they sign the sheet. The remainder of your participation mark will be earned through active participation in class (see below).

Each week, you should be prepared to discuss the authors' main points and provide a critical perspective on the materials and their relation to other theories of grief, loss, and bereavement as well as to broader issues in the field of thanatology. As this course emphasizes active student participation, students are expected to demonstrate their engagement with the course materials and with one another, while bringing a respectful and collegial attitude to discussions.

If you are ill or otherwise are unable to attend class, you may post a response to the professor's prompt in the OWL Forum board **2 times** in lieu of class attendance. Additional absences will receive a '0' grade for the day unless you have an approved academic consideration from the Academic Dean's Office. Please contact your professor if you have approved accommodations or an academic consideration request from the ADO that may impact your participation.

Participation (20%)

Your participation grade will be based on the completion of the following:

1) Reading discussion 10%: In the first week of the semester, each student will choose 1 reading that they will prepare a brief (approximately 10 minutes) commentary on to be presented in class. Your commentary should not aim to teach the *whole* reading (many of our readings are very complex), but you may elect to provide an overview of key concepts highlighted in the reading or a brief discussion of an example or argument that stood out to you. Your verbal commentary (pre-recorded is fine) will be accompanied by slides or handouts. If you create handouts, you can provide study notes, concept definitions, or highlight important quotes or entries from the text. This brief presentation should be accompanied by 2 discussion questions about the reading. Your discussion questions might: i) seek to clarify content in the readings; ii) highlight a controversial or key argument presented

in the text; or iii) connect the text to real issues in the world. You will help facilitate the class discussion (all together, small groups, or pairs).

Requirement summary: 1) 10-minute verbal commentary on a reading (pre-recorded is fine), 2) slides or handouts, 3) 2 discussion questions and discussion facilitation.

2) *Cue cards 10%:* We're going analog! Each week of class will start with personal writing on cue cards. On the week's card, you will write a short entry responding to one of the following prompts: i) define/explain a key concept discussed in the readings this week; ii) write about what you found interesting, a favourite quote, or what you had trouble understanding; iii) reflect on the professor's prompt provided at the beginning of class; iv) skip: life happens. You get 3 skips in the semester. Use them wisely!

These cards will lay the groundwork for our initial check-in discussion.

Grading will be on a scale of 0 – 2.

- 0 points: applied above and beyond your 3 skips. Missed classes will count toward your 3 skips (ie. you can make up attendance grades online, but not participation).
- 1 point: opinion, no/little engagement with the readings.
- 2 points: engagement with the readings.

Essay 1: *What is critical theory?* (20%), due Tuesday, February 3, 11:59pm

For this assignment, you will write a short essay reflecting on the readings covered to date to answer the question of what is critical theory and how does it relate to the study of death, dying, grief and loss. You will focus on 2 key areas of critical theory explored in the readings. Your paper will be 4-5 pages. Additional guidelines are available in OWL.

Final Project (40%), various deadlines

For your final project, you will be creating a visual that will be presented publicly during Research Week in the SLC. Your visual will take the form of either a traditional 'research'-style poster or a visual creative intervention of your choosing (zine, book, painting etc... your choice). This is a scaffolded assignment, meaning that there are due dates throughout the semester that will build toward your final product.

1) Topic & Format Outline. 5% due Tuesday, February 10, 11:59pm. For this assignment, you will submit a 0.5-1 page outline that will describe the topic that you will examine in your final project and the format of your visual (research-style poster or creative intervention). Your outline will also include a timeline outlining your plan to complete the project prior to the final deadline. Additional details are available in OWL.

2) Draft Theoretical Context. 10% due Tuesday, March 3, 11:59pm. This written assignment will outline the theory you are using to inform your final project. This information will be integrated later into your final project, along with your edits in response to your professor's feedback.

3) *Posters/Creative Intervention*. 25% **due Monday, March 16, 11:59pm**. All written material to accompany your final project including printouts (for posters or other visuals), as well as your presentation notes are due the Monday prior to the presentation during Research Week. Additional details available in OWL.

During class on March 17, we will hold workshops where students can put together their posters, put final touches on their visual, and practice their presentations with classmates. For this reason, **the 3-day flexibility policy does not apply** to the final poster/creative intervention. Any **late submissions must be accompanied by documented academic consideration** or a 2% per day late penalty will apply (no exceptions).

The final product presented during ResearchWeek (**March 24**) will be worth 10% of this mark (ie. written material is worth 15%, the final product is worth 10%).

Concluding Reflection Paper (10%), due Tuesday, March 31, 11:59pm

We will conclude the course with a brief 3-page paper where you will reflect on your own academic journey in thanatology, and your thoughts on the importance of critical theory and perspectives in death studies.

Bonus Marks (2%)

All students who book and attend an appointment with The Write Place for feedback on a written assignment will receive a 2% bonus mark, which will be applied to your overall grade in the course. **You are responsible** for emailing me a confirmation of your appointment to receive bonus marks. All requests for bonus marks must be submitted to the instructor by the last day of class. For more information on The Write Place and for making an appointment, please visit: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/the-write-place/appointments-and-drop-ins/>.

Grade Descriptors

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level.
A	80-89	Superior work which 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.

Important Information

A Note on Workload

Students should expect to spend approximately **10 hours** each week completing the readings, attending class, and completing graded and ungraded assignments. **You are expected to have completed all course readings before class so you can actively participate in the discussion.**

Office Hours and Contacting the Instructor

I have set office hours each week for drop in and will be available for meetings by appointment to discuss your progress, assignments, and any questions you may have. The weekly drop-in office hours will be available on a first come, first serve basis and I will only speak with one student at a time (meaning you may need to wait until it is your turn or make an appointment).

To contact me, email lmclea43@uwo.ca and include the course name and number in the subject line. I will try to respond within 48 hours, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Boundaries & Confidentiality

While the course may contribute to the student's personal growth, grades will be assigned on the basis of academic achievement and mastery over the material covered. All participants are expected to complete the course requirements to a high standard in order to receive credit. While there may be opportunities to present personal experiences and feelings to the class, appropriate limits to self-disclosure or to the time allotted to individuals will be upheld when personal narratives are shared. All participants must agree to treat one another with *respect* and hold each other's contributions as *strictly confidential*.

Intellectual Property Statement

Recording of lectures or tutorials without the explicit consent of the Professor is grounds for academic discipline. Course content created by a faculty member is considered the faculty member's intellectual property; distribution of this material outside of the course (shared online or in any public domain, sold by a student or other third party without prior written consent of the faculty member) is explicitly forbidden and is grounds for academic discipline.

Late Submissions/Extensions

Students must endeavor to submit assignments by the due date listed in the Syllabus and OWL. All assignments, unless otherwise noted, will be subject to a **3-day flexibility period**. Students may submit assignments up to 3 days after the listed due date without penalty. **Assignments submitted after the grace period will be penalized at a rate of 2% per day** unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.

NOTE: the 3-day flexibility period DOES NOT apply to the Final Poster/Creative Intervention due March 17. Late submissions must be accompanied by a *documented academic consideration (designated assignment)* or will be subject to a 2%/day late penalty (no exceptions).

If you cannot submit an assignment within the 3-day grace period, you must submit medical or other supporting documentation to the ADO to receive academic consideration (see: the King's Policy Section). Absences from the **final exam** will follow the policy described in Appendix A.

Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, & AI Policy

King's is committed to fostering a culture of professionalism, honesty, and academic integrity, and all members of our community—faculty, staff, and students—have a role to play in promoting an ethical learning environment. Furthermore, through the work they

submit for academic evaluation, students develop important habits of critical thinking, independent inquiry, and creativity. Thus, it is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor.

Within this course, use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as Chat GPT) is not permitted to generate ideas or written content (not including spelling/grammar check) for work submitted for evaluation. Unauthorized use of AI will be subject to academic discipline. If you are unsure of the policy surrounding AI use in this class, please consult with your instructor.

Reasons for this policy include*:

- This course is intended to provide an overview of Thanatological theory and concepts as well as opportunities to integrate these ideas and practice scholarly writing. If you are not engaging with the class, including the assignments, you are not learning.
- AI raises a number of questions regarding academic integrity, ethics, and plagiarism. These questions include whether work submitted using AI can be considered ‘your’ own work, and AI firms’ use of [uncredited and uncompensated materials](#) from writers, journalists, and artists.
- Work produced with AI often contains errors and fabrications, while also reproducing and reinforcing negative stereotypes and bias.
- There have been serious questions raised about the [environmental impacts](#) of AI databases and [labour exploitation](#) on the part of their parent companies among a plethora of other ethical concerns.

These issues represent just some of ethical dilemmas that have been posed by the introduction of AI in academic spaces as well as the business practices of AI companies. For these reasons, the use of AI, including ChatGPT and similar generative AI tools, is **not permitted** in this course.

*Adapted with permission from [Olivia Stowell](#), @oliviastowell on X, June 16, 2024.

Plagiarism involves the unacknowledged use of others’ words and ideas. Whenever you use another person’s ideas or words, you must cite your source according to APA guidelines (**APA Manual, 7th Edition**). Plagiarism is a major offense and is taken seriously by the instructor and the College. All papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) under license to the University. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offense range from refusal of a passing grade on the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the university to expulsion from the university. **Plagiarism is a major academic offence.** Please refer to Western’s scholastic discipline policy, which can be found [here](#).

Assignment Style Guide

All graded assignments should be written using APA 7th Edition. Students should make use of these guidelines provided by King's University College with regards to style: [APA 7th Ed. Quick Guide](#).

Drop Date

The final date to drop a half course without academic penalty is **March 30, 2026**.

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf.

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

Please note that Friday Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent.

For further information, please see:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

GBSV Support:

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the

purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

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.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.

Course Schedule

January 6 Week 1: Thanatology: Past and Present

- Balk, D. (2021). An abbreviated history of the field of thanatology. In H.L. Servaty-Seib & H. Stanton Chapple (Eds.), *Handbook of Thanatology* (3rd ed.). (pp. 520-547). Association for Death Education and Counseling.

January 13 Week 2: Death Education: Present and Future?

- Kortés-Miller, K. (2014). A matter of life and death: Situating death in education. *Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education* 5(2), 39-48.
- Francis, A., Fletcher, K., & Maxwell, P. (2025). Critical approaches to death studies: A conversation. *Mortality* 30(2), 569-584. DOI: 10.1080/13576275.2025.2465302

January 20 Week 3: What is Critical Theory?

- Borgstrom & Visser (textbook): Chapter 1: Introduction (pp. 1-7)
- Thompson, N., & Owen, E. (2017). Michel Foucault. In N. Thompson & G. Cox (Eds.), *Handbook of the sociology of death, grief, and bereavement: A guide to theory and practice* (pp. 103-115). Routledge.
- Hill Collins, P. (2019). *Intersectionality as critical social theory*. Duke University Press.
 - Chapter 1: Intersectionality as Critical Inquiry (pp. 21-53).

Recommended: Patterson, E., Becker, A., & Baluran, D.A. (2022). Gendered racism on the body: An intersectional approach to maternal mortality in the United States. *Population Research and Policy Review* 41, 1261-1294.

January 27 Week 4: Necropolitics

- Mbembe, A. (2019). *Necropolitics*. Duke University Press.
 - Chapter 3: Necropolitics (pp. 66-92).
- Lee, C. (2020). The necropolitics of COVID-19. *Africa is a Country*. <https://africasacountry.com/2020/04/the-necropolitics-of-covid-19>
- Radomska, M., Mehrabi, T., & Lykke, N. (2020). Queer Death Studies: Death, dying and mourning from a queerfeminist perspective. *Australian Feminist Studies* 35(104), 81-100. DOI: 10.1080/08164649.2020.1811952

February 3 Week 5: Public Policy & Death

Essay 1 due: Tuesday, February 3, 11:59pm

- Borgstrom & Visser (textbook). Chapter 2: Thinking with and beyond mortality statistics (pp. 11-25).
- Borgstrom & Visser (textbook). Chapter 3: Policy and death (pp. 26-33).
- Borgstrom & Visser (textbook). Chapter 9: Disenfranchised dying (pp. 92-102)

February 10 Week 6: The Medicalization of Death and Dilemmas of a ‘Good Death’
Final Project Topic & Format Outline due: Tuesday, February 10, 11:59pm

- Borgstrom & Visser (textbook): Chapter 6: Medicalisation of dying (pp. 57-66)
- Borgstrom & Visser (textbook): Chapter 8: Assisted Dying (pp. 78-91)
- Corpora, M. (2022). The privilege of a good death: An intersectional perspective on dying a good death in America. *The Gerontologist* 62(5), 773-779.

Recommended:

- Hart, B., Sainsbury, P., & Short, S. (1998). Whose dying? A sociological critique of the ‘good death.’ *Mortality* 3(1), 65-77. DOI: 10.1080/713685884
- Borgstrom & Visser (textbook): Chapter 7: Palliative care and the modern hospice movement (pp. 67-77)

February 14 – February 22 READING WEEK

February 24 Week 7: Body Disposal & Memorialization

Guest Speaker

- Borgstrom & Visser (textbook): Chapter 10: The dead body and disposal practices (pp. 105-114).
- Elicona, C. (2020, November 20). Whose green burial is it anyway? *The Collective for Radical Death Studies Blog*.
<https://www.radicaldeathstudies.com/blog/2020/11/20/whose-green-burial-is-it-anyway>
- Stock, P.V., & Dennis, M.K. (2021). Up in smoke or down with worms? Older environmentalist’s discourse on disposal, dispersal, and (green) burial. *Mortality* 28(1): 73-89.

March 3 Week 8: Mass Death & Collective Loss

Draft Theoretical Context due: Tuesday, March 10, 11:59pm

- Borgstrom & Visser (textbook): Chapter 4: Mass death events and shifting death practices (pp. 34-43)
- Borgstrom & Visser (textbook): Chapter 5: Social movements and death (pp. 44-53).
- Varutti, M. (2024). Claiming ecological grief: Why are we not mourning (more and more publicly) for ecological destruction? *Perspective* 53: 552-564.

March 10 Week 9: Dimensions of Political Grief, Grievance, and Loss

- Thompson, N., Corless, I., Cox, G., Gallagher, D., Harris, D., Ho, A.H.Y., Monahan, J., Price, D., Sofka, C., & van Wielink, J. (2025). The significance of political grief: An examination through major global events. *OMEGA – Journal of Death and Dying*, 1-20.
- Hooker, J. (2023). *Black grief/white grievance: The politics of loss*. Princeton University Press.
 - Chapter 1: White grievance and anticipatory loss (pp. 31-80).
- Waraschinski, T. (2019, September 5). Cultural death illiteracy as applied Terror Management Theory. *Collective for Radical Death Studies Blog*.
<https://www.radicaldeathstudies.com/blog/2019/09/05/cultural-death-illiteracy-as-applied-terror-management-theory>

March 17 Week 10: Futures of Critical Death Studies

Final Project due: Monday, March 16, 11:59pm. Submit all printouts and presentation notes. 3-day flexibility policy **not applicable**; documented academic consideration required.

In class project construction and workshopping. We will create our posters, run through our presentation notes in class in preparation for next week.

- Bertoldo, J.C. (2025). Reconsidering death education in/for the Anthropocene from a posthumanist approach. *Death Studies*, 1-16. DOI: 10.1080/07481187.2025.2510476
- Lerum, K.A. (2023). Teaching death ritual during states of emergency: Centering death positivity, anti-racism, grief & ritual. *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy* 20(1), 40-62. DOI: 10.1080/15505170.2021.1964114

March 24 Week 11: Poster Presentations

We will present our posters in the SLC from 3-5:30pm

March 31 Week 12: Debrief & Discussion: What is the future of Thanatology?

Closing Reflection due: Tuesday, March 31, 11:59pm

- No assigned readings.
- Come to class today to share what you learned, what questions you still hold, and celebrate the successes of the semester!