

## Death and Dying in the United Kingdom

HC497 (3SH)

London, Edinburgh, Inverness, Belfast

### Instructor

Dr. Raymond Green

Cell Phone #: 903-366-9438

Office Hours: Being that Europe is our classroom, we won't be using traditional office hours.

However, I hope to be with you and available to discuss the content of this class, or just your European experience, more often than not. You can also email question to me

([raymond.green@tamuc.edu](mailto:raymond.green@tamuc.edu)).

### Course Description

This course is designed to allow students to explore their understanding of death and dying. Additionally, this course hopes to highlight the subtle ways that understandings of death and dying are different in Western Europe and in the United States. How does culture and history affect understandings of death? Is death viewed differently in a culture that has existed for more than a millennium? How do Europeans think about abortion, assisted suicide, and euthanasia? How do differences in laws influence homicide rates?

### Readings

We will not use a traditional textbook for this class. Rather, the United Kingdom will be our textbook.

### Class participation

In a typical syllabus there might be discussion of what percentage of your grade class participation comprised. But here, the import is greater. This. Is. Your. Life. Experience it, drink in every second. You are visiting some of the most famous locations in the history of the civilized world. We will barely skim the surface of what these places offer during our time in Europe. Take care of yourself, but also, push yourself. Explore, try new foods/drinks/experiences, overcome your fears, and question what you know. If you don't do that, you will have failed yourself, regardless of what grade you earn in the course.

Papers and Homeworks: Your grade will largely be determined by the quality of your written assignment. Papers should be in the 4-infinity page range. These papers should be academic in nature and should thus include credible research sources. Papers should be emailed to Dr. Green ([raymond.green@tamuc.edu](mailto:raymond.green@tamuc.edu)) no later than July 28<sup>th</sup>. Please choose your paper from one of the following topics.

- Discuss the complex (and some may say tortured) legal status of physician assisted suicide in the United Kingdom. Physician assisted suicide is currently legal in a handful of states in the U.S. How would you compare and contrast our countries thoughts on the issue? Place

yourself in the shoes of both a terminally ill individual and in the shoes of a significant other who will be the survivor. Should physician assisted suicide be legal in the United States?

- The 'death penalty' is currently still legal and used in many states in the US. However, it is not legal in England (nor any other G7 country, in fact). If you look at statistics about the death penalty you will see our country listed with the following countries in the Top 10: China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, North Korea, Vietnam, Libya. These are generally not countries that we aspire to hang out with. What historical and sociological influences may have shaped our views to differ so greatly from those of Western Europe? (Hopefully it is obvious that you also need to consider the history and culture of Western Europe to answer this question).
- High level terrorist incidents have happened in the U.S. and England over the last few years. Discuss the political and sociological responses to these events in each country. Are the responses different? If so, how and why? What is unique about our cultures that lead us to respond differently (if you think we do!)? Would you hesitate to travel to NYC due to threats of terrorism? Did you hesitate to go on this trip due to concerns about terrorism? If your answers differ to these two questions, why? How might it tie back to your earlier responses?
- Cremation rates vary in England and the United States (where state to state variability is quite large). What may be the cause(s) of these differences? Dying in the United States is expensive and some talk about the commodification of death. Is this concern as prevalent in Western Europe?

Additional component of your grade include:

- Designing your memorial service (Completed before trip)

<b>COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES</b>
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Other important information

**(1) COVID-19 Information**

Students should not attend class when ill or after exposure to anyone with a communicable illness. Communicate such instances directly with your instructor. Faculty will work to support the student getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.

**(2) ADA Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a

learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email:

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

**(3) Statement on Nondiscrimination:**

A&M-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

**(4) “All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.” (See Student’s Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct).**

Further, students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

**(5) The Counseling Center** at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center’s crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit [www.tamuc.edu/counsel](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel)

**(6) D2L Information:**

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

<https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser-support.htm>

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

**(7) Attendance:**

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

### (8) Itinerary

Day	Weekday	Activity	Description
5-Jun	Mon	Depart Dallas to LHR	
6-Jun	Tues	Arrive at 11am, check into Alexander Fleming House, tour of Highgate Cemetery	
7-Jun	Wed	Museum of London Docklands Tour, Jack the Ripper Tour	
8-Jun	Thurs	Tower of London tour	
9-Jun	Fri	Free Day	
10-Jun	Sat	Depart London to Inverness, check into Inverness Youth Hostel	
11-Jun	Sun	Culloden Battlefield	
12-Jun	Mon	Urquhart Castle, Loch Ness	
13-Jun	Tues	ScotRail Train Inverness to Edinburgh, check into Castle Rock Hostel	
14-Jun	Wed	Edinburgh Underground tour	
15-Jun	Thurs	Free Day	
16-Jun	Fri	Edinburgh Castle tour	
17-Jun	Sat	Edinburgh Walking Tour	
18-Jun	Sun	Flight Edinburgh to Belfast, check into Belfast International Hostel	
19-Jun	Mon	Titanic Museum in Belfast	
20-Jun	Tues	The Troubles Walking Tour	
21-Jun	Wed	Free Day	
22-Jun	Thurs	Depart Belfast to DFW	

### Questions

I have provided you with the following questions that I'd like you to consider before, during, and after your visits to the sites above.

Battle of Culloden – What was the average life expectancy in Scotland in 1750? Does a shorter life expectancy make it easier to go off to die in war? What did people believe happened to them after death at this time? If you didn't die in battle, where did you tend to die?

Edinburgh – it's a lovely place, isn't it. Do some research on how it used to be less than lovely and a breeding ground for the bubonic plague.

Highgate Cemetery – Why do we care where famous people are buried? What unique memorials did you find? What themes in memorialisation did you see over time? What did people leave behind at these sites? Why?

Jack the Ripper Tour – why are we generally fascinated with serial murderers? When does fascination turn to fear? In a strange twist of irony, the murders of Jack the Ripper helped the people of the East End – how?

Titanic – Why (even before the movie) is the Titanic so famous? Is it the number of deaths? Is it the hubris associated with believing the ship was unsinkable? What role did social class play in the incident? Would you go on the new Titanic II – a cruise ship that should launch this decade?

The Troubles –Were you familiar with The Troubles before you signed up for this class? Can you think of similar disputes across the globe in the previous century? How does a culture move on from decades of violence associated with religion/ethnicity/identity?