



Perspectives on Death

ENG 102:
Academic Writing
Ipek University
Spring 2015

Room 607

D1 Section:
M 16:10-18:00
W 9:10-10:00

D2 Section:
M 11:20-13:10
W 10:10-11:00

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Office Hours: W 13:00-17:00
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to develop students' academic reading, writing and speaking skills with a specific emphasis on writing. The texts chosen for this course are predominantly academic reflecting a variety of disciplines in the Social Sciences. The course also aims to develop students' abilities to write a research paper through conducting independent research, synthesizing and evaluating information, and constructing original and substantial arguments for their research projects.

Course Title: Perspectives on Death

*Tell me, what is it you plan to do
With your one wild and precious life?*
- Mary Oliver

All of us will die one day. But what does dying mean? And how do our cultures and communities prepare us for this final human experience? In this course, we will thoughtfully explore the diverse ways in which people around the world experience and respond to the experience of death, dying, and grief. While all human societies have their own death systems and practices, our beliefs about mortality and how to approach it are very diverse—including what it means to have a “good death,” the proper ways to mourn, and the role of the dead in the lives of the survivors. Throughout this course, we will explore the topic of death as experienced in different cultures around the world and through the lenses of culture, gender, history, globalization, migration, ethics, and the environment. By the end of the course, students will have a better understanding of death in regards to their cultural heritage and the heritage of others, contemporary issues of death and dying, and their own personal worldview. Ultimately, through seeking a meaningful understanding of death, we also seek a more meaningful understanding of how to best live “our one wild and precious life.”

Required Texts

Class sessions will involve close readings of scholarly and literary texts, discussions, peer workshops, and both critical and creative writing. Readings will include academic articles and book excerpts drawn from the fields of anthropology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, journalism, and literature. Selected films will also be viewed during the course.

Readings may be downloaded from our Blackboard Course website: www.ipek.blackboard.com. You are responsible for printing the articles and bringing a hardcopy to class for discussion.

Open Course Library. In addition to the required readings, I've added supplemental non-required articles to the Open Course Library on Blackboard, which you are welcome to browse and encouraged to contribute to.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

In addition to assigned readings, coursework will consist of reading, writing, speaking, and other tasks:

Deathography	15%
Research Project Proposal (5%) Annotated Bibliography (10%) Final Draft (20%) Poster Presentation (15%)	50%
Peer-Led Discussion	10%
Participation Course Blog	10%
Blackboard Forum Reading Responses	10%
Final Portfolio	5%

COURSEWORK

You will read a variety of texts during the semester, and will be required to write a process-based essay and a process-based research paper that will include the following sequenced stages:

- Brainstorming
- Outlining
- Drafting
- Peer Review
- Revision
- Reflection
- Final Portfolio

Some of these stages you will do alone and some you will do in class. For both essays, you will receive peer feedback on Draft 1 and my feedback and a provisional grade on Draft 2. (The grade on your final draft, presented in your Final Portfolio, will replace this provisional grade). Detailed prompts will be given for each stage. Explanation of both the task format and task criteria will also be provided.

Deathography. You will be asked to write an academic essay that considers your own life experiences of death and relate them to your current attitudes and beliefs today. Your final draft will be around 1000-1500 words.

Research Project. You will also write a research paper that states and defends an argument of your choice in regards to our course topic. The Research Paper will be written over the following stages:

- **Research Proposal.** The research proposal will be an initial step to your research paper. It will include your research questions and preliminary thesis statement of your research paper. You have to choose your own topic within the content of the course. In the process of reading, you will narrow this topic down to a stage where you can write an argument-led paper of about 2000-3000 words.
- **Annotated Bibliography.** You will compile a bibliography of sources for your Research Paper with a brief summary of each article.
- **Final Draft.** You will have the chance to workshop two drafts of your Research Paper and receive instructor feedback on one draft. Your final version of the research paper will be an argument-led paper of about 2000-3000 words.
- **Poster Presentation.** Instead of a final exam, you will be asked to present and defend your research project as a poster during our Death Forum, which will be open to the university community.

Peer-Led Discussion. In small groups, you will research and lead the class in discussing an assigned article. You will be responsible for preparing your own discussion questions and reading materials.

Reading Responses. Each week, you will post a critical response to an assigned reading on our course Blackboard Forum (due at 8am on the day the reading is scheduled for discussion) at www.ipek.blackboard.com. From time to time, I expect you to respond to the posts of your peers.

Blackboard Forum: These are short, creative writing prompts to be posted on Blackboard. I hope you have fun with these.

Participation. Throughout the course, you will be expected to contribute to the classroom discourse community by engaging with your peers in respectful but intellectually lively dialogue, listening attentively, encouraging others, and investing sincere effort and good will. As a discourse community member, your thoughtful, constructive feedback on your peers' work develops your communication and critical thinking skills and offers valuable insight. Your peers will also share feedback on the quality and dynamics of your own contributions to Peer Workshops and group discussions.

Course Blog. As a class, we will maintain a course blog that all students can contribute to. Everyone will be expected to post entries and comment on the entries of others. This blog will function as a sort of collective journal to creatively explore the subject of death through writing, poems, discussions, news articles, films, books—basically anything that offers thought-provoking ideas about death or dying, or any reflections in your daily life on the subject.

Final Portfolio. Your final portfolio will present your task outcomes and showcase your best work in the course, accompanied by self-reflections on your process and learning. The self-reflections will also evaluate your own contributions and performance in the course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Reading and Writing Task Objectives

- To improve ability to assess and respond to a text
- To improve written communication skills
- To improve observation and reflection skills
- To improve clarity, coherence, and depth in student writing
- To explore ideas in preparation of discussions or assignments
- To encourage student dialogue beyond the classroom

Speaking Task Objectives

- To improve critical thinking skills, use of audio-visual aids
- To improve discussion leading skills
- To improve text analysis and summarizing skills
- To improve reading comprehension skills
- To improve research skills
- To encourage team-work
- To practise turn-taking skills
- To practise synthesizing info for the intended purpose

Engagement Task Objectives:

- To encourage horizontal, collaborative, and independent learning
- To improve listening and communication skills
- To improve quality of contribution in focused discussions of texts / ideas / arguments
- To cultivate maturity, intercultural competence, and professionalism

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Written Work. All written work must be typed. Please use Times New Roman or Calibri font, size 12, double spacing, and format your essay as per MLA/APA style guidelines. If there are any concerns that the work submitted is not your own, you will be asked to discuss/rewrite your assignment in the presence of the instructor.

Except in very exceptional cases, emailed work will NOT be accepted. Please turn in hardcopies of your assignments.

Deadlines. You are expected to meet deadlines and turn in work on time. In the case of failure to turn in a project/activity or any other task assigned on time, 5% will be deducted on a daily basis.

Assignments more than 2 days late will not be accepted and will automatically receive a zero.

Peer-Led Discussions and Peer Workshops have fixed dates and cannot be rescheduled or made up in the event of absence. If you do not attend your discussion/workshop on the assigned date, you will receive a zero.

Tutorials. The main aim of the AE program tutorials is to encourage the students to become autonomous learners by being a part of an academic environment where they can defend their arguments, ask for support and clarification, and explore the points they need to work on with the help of their instructors. Twice during the semester you will meet with me for individual or group consultations. In addition to these scheduled meetings, you may receive tutorials whenever you feel a need; however, you should contact me in advance to make an appointment. Office hours may be used for tutorials to discuss the course, your academic progress, or for getting extra help.

Attendance Policy. Students are required to attend a minimum of 70% of total course hours.

Attendance is counted from the first class. Students who exceed the attendance limit by missing 14 or more hours will automatically receive an 'F' grade for the course. You are expected to track your own absences; however, if you are unsure of your absences, you may request an attendance report from the instructor. You are also responsible for any homework, instructions, or assignments you missed.

Students involved in university organized activities, such as sport or cultural activities, during lesson time, may have their attendance credited for the missed lessons, provided they bring a letter of notification from their department. Students may submit a written petition for their absence, clearly stating which assignment/exam they are requesting to make-up. The petition should be addressed to the Academic English Program. If students have a medical certificate they should attach it to their petition. Make-up exams will be arranged for those students whose petitions are approved by the university. Other reasons for absence will be considered and responded to on an individual basis.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity. Plagiarism can be defined as: "The use of somebody else's ideas, viewpoints, findings or works in a paper, project, report, or any similar document which is presented as part of a course requirement, without proper acknowledgment of the source." For many students, avoiding plagiarism is a difficult skill to learn. For this reason, I will explain how to avoid plagiarism by quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing and citing properly. However, **you are responsible for not plagiarizing and will be held accountable if you do.** Should the final draft of your assignment still have serious problems with plagiarism, or if it is copied from another student or written by or with someone else, you will receive a failing grade. Disciplinary action may also be taken.

Preparation and Engagement. For every class period, you are expected to bring ALL necessary materials (reading texts/worksheets etc.) and to prepare the required assignments **ON TIME**. Since the course relies heavily on discussion, active participation is essential for the success of the entire class. Students are expected to speak in English in class.

Academic Courtesy and Professionalism. Our classroom requires mutual respect from every member so that all may learn and explore ideas in a safe environment of intellectual inquiry; therefore, the rights of others to express their views must be respected. I expect every member to show courtesy and tolerance, to honor confidentiality, and to never share outside of this class any personal information or writing from your colleagues without their permission. Anyone who fails to honor the professional, respectful behavior expected in this classroom may be asked to leave or face other disciplinary action. In addition, please show courtesy by avoiding the following:

- ▶ **Tardiness.** Arriving late or leaving early disrupts the class, derails conversations, and generally interrupts our work. Please arrange to come to class on time. Chronic tardiness will harm your participation grade.
- ▶ **Inattention.** Similarly, whispering to a friend or playing with your phone while another person in class is speaking (including the instructor) not only shows lack of respect for the other person, it affects the class atmosphere. Please be attentive.

Safe Space Policy. I have **zero tolerance** for racist, sexist, ableist, transphobic, homophobic, or any other intentionally negative or disparaging behavior towards anyone in this class. This does not mean we can't: disagree, make mistakes, blurt out something accidentally rude or offensive, ask silly or uncomfortable questions, expose our ignorance, or get cranky at each other. (We are, after all, here to learn and grow, and this can be a challenging process.) This *does* mean that we will strive for respect, patience, empathy, sincerity, and a willingness to give each other the benefit of the doubt and listen to each other's perspectives. Anyone who fails to honor the professional, respectful, and courteous behavior expected in this classroom will be asked to leave. Period.

Emails. Please note that you are expected to check your Ipek University email daily for information or news about the course.

Blackboard. You are expected to read announcements, post on the Discussion Forum, download and print course materials, and respond to emails sent via Blackboard. Toward this, enrollment in the Blackboard Course is mandatory and you are responsible for ensuring you are properly registered for this course.

Final Exam/Make-Up Exam. There will be no final exam or make-up exam for ENG 102. Instead, you will deliver a poster presentation of your research project. This poster presentation CANNOT be rescheduled or made up if missed.

Extra Credit. No extra credit assignments will be given during or after the course. You are responsible for completing the work I assign you on time. If you are concerned about your grades in this course—or having difficulty with the assignments—please come see me as early as possible. I am happy to provide tutorials and/or discuss study methods and strategies to support your learning goals. However, the later you ask for my help, the less help I can offer you.

Open Door Policy. I encourage you to contact me (aewatts@ipek.edu.tr) or visit my office (104) if you have any questions or concerns about your work in this course, about academic life, or other

issues. I have reserved the hours of 13:00-17:00 on Wednesdays specifically for this class; this is the best time to meet with me as I will be most available. However, appointments may also be arranged by request outside of these hours. I am always happy to meet with you for consultations or suggest referrals if your needs fall outside my professional scope.