



# SOC 386 – DEATH AND DYING SUMMER 2025

Class time: 1.00-4.00  
Location: Library Classroom  
Name of Faculty: Professor Mari Plikuhn  
Contact details: plikuhn@evansville.edu

Office hours: By appointment in the Visiting Faculty Office

## Course Description

### **SOCIOLOGY 386: Death and Dying (3)**

This course explores thanatology- the study of death- using a sociological lens. We will examine how American society shapes attitudes and behaviours toward dying, death, and bereavement. Topics of study include: cultural traditions, rituals, practices, and attitudes toward death, self-awareness and value identification concerning death and dying, grief and bereavement, the impact of death and dying across the life span, and end-of-life planning.

## Credit Hour Policy Statement

This course meets the federal requirements of 15 in-class hours plus an expected 30 hours of out-of-class work per credit hour. You are expected to attend each scheduled course period for the entire assigned time; class begins on time and I do not let class out early. However, the time you spend in class is only a portion on your expected time commitment. For every hour you spend in class, it is expected that you will spend two hours outside of class in preparing for or critically examining the course material and content. This includes: readings, working on assignments, and preparing for quizzes and exams. This expectation of time is the standard for all 3-credit courses at the University of Evansville (Harlaxton College). Please consider this time commitment when budgeting your time across the semester.

## General Education Objective

This course does not meet University of Evansville General Education requirements.

## Learning Objectives and Goals

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- 1) describe how society shapes attitudes and behaviours toward dying and death;
- 2) define thanatology and explain how sociologists study death; and
- 3) articulate a broader perspective on death, dying, grief, and bereavement across the life course.

## Further Information about the Course

Class Discussion: Sociology is a discipline covering many interesting topics that can often lead to lively discussion. You do not always have to agree, but please remember to be courteous and respectful of other students and other ideas and opinions. Disrespect will not be tolerated; those unable to remain respectful will be asked to leave the discussion and will be considered absent for that class period.

Electronic Devices: Please make sure to turn off and leave in your bag all cell phones, smart phones, Bluetooth, and all other electronic or noise-making devices before entering class. They are disruptive to your fellow classmates. If your cell phone rings during class, you will be counted absent during that class period and will not receive attendance credit. Also, please refrain from bringing tablets or laptops to class.



# SOC 386 – DEATH AND DYING SUMMER 2025

## Schedule of topics

Class	Chapter Assignment	Due
W 11 Jun	Welcome to SOC 386! Thanatology and Why We Study Death What Is Death?	
Th 12 Jun	The Death System	
Sa 14 Jun	<b>Experiential Learning in London:</b> British Museum, Highgate Cemetery, Jack the Ripper Walking Tour	
M 16 Jun	The Funeral Process (+Movie Night: <i>The Undertaking</i> 7.00pm)	<b>Reflections on Death &amp; Dying</b>
Tu 17 Jun	<b>Experiential Learning in Nottingham:</b> Lymn Funeral Home	
W 18 Jun	Hospice and Palliative Care	<b>Documentary Paper 1</b>
Th 19 Jun	NO CLASS ( <i>AM day</i> )	
M 23 Jun	<b>TEST 1</b> End-of-Life Issues & Decisions (+Movie Night: <i>Facing Death</i> 7.00pm)	
Tu 24 Jun	NO CLASS ( <i>AM day</i> )	
W 25 Jun	Suicide, Terrorism, Genocide, Disaster	<b>Documentary Papers 2</b>
Th 26 Jun	<b>Experiential Learning:</b> Leeds: Leeds City Museum & Royal Armouries	
M 30 Jun	Euthanasia, Assisted Death, Abortion, Right to Die	
Tu 1 Jul	<b>Experiential Learning in London:</b> London: Crossbones Cemetery, Westminster Abbey	<b>Obituary</b>
W 2 Jul	Bereavement, Grief, & Mourning	
Th 3 Jul	NO CLASS ( <i>AM day</i> )	<b>Experiential Learning Paper</b>
M 7 Jul	<b>TEST 2</b>	<b>Dying &amp; Death Arrangements</b>

\*Field trips may change depending on availability



# SOC 386 – DEATH AND DYING SUMMER 2025

## Teaching Methods

Key Text: No text required

Other Class Materials:

Handouts where applicable

Course management website through the University of Evansville (Harlaxton College)- Blackboard  
Documentaries (provided by instructor)

Teaching Methods:

Extensive, detailed, interactive lectures; frequent, engaged discussion; experiential field trips

## Detailed Information on and Schedule of Assignments and Examinations

**Projects:**

There are three projects for the course, covering different aspects of death and dying: Reflections on Death and Dying, Obituary, and Dying and Death Arrangements. A detailed handout with format and content guidelines for each project will be given in the first week of class. Each project is worth 70 points and will be due at the start of class on the due date. Due dates are listed in the course outline. These papers are worth 210 points total.

**Documentary Papers:**

There are 2 documentary videos that we will watch outside of class that add to the material covered in class. For each documentary, you will be given a prompt that guides your reflection and thoughts on what you watched. These documentary papers must be no fewer than 750 words, typed, and double-spaced. Each paper is worth 40 points and is due by the start of class. All due dates are listed in the course outline. These papers are worth 80 points total.

**Experiential Learning Paper:**

In this course, we will take several field trips: into London, Eyam, and Nottingham. You will complete a paper reflecting on the experience of these experiential trips and what you learned. A detailed handout with paper format and content guidelines will be given before the first experiential learning trip to guide your reflections. This paper is worth 110 points and will be due at the start of class on the due date.

**Examinations:**

There are two exams given in this course, each of which is worth 125 points. The dates of each exam are provided on the course outline. These exams are worth 250 points total. Late exams will be given without penalty ONLY IF prior arrangements have been made

with the instructor or in the event of a documented emergency. If prior arrangements are not made, a make-up test will be given. If you miss a test, you will lose 10 points from the test score per day (including the day of the test) that the test is not taken. For example, if you take the test after our class time on the day of the test, you will lose 10 points; the day after the scheduled exam day, you will lose 20 points, etc. If the missed test is not taken before the next test, the missed test will automatically receive a grade of zero.

Students with tests receiving a score less than 70% (84 out of 120) will meet with me during office hours or by appointment to discuss ways of improving future test scores.



# SOC 386 – DEATH AND DYING SUMMER 2025

## Assessment and Grading Criteria

Projects – 3 x 70 points each	210 points
Documentary Papers – 2 x 40 points each	80 points
Experiential Paper – 110 points	110 points
Exams – 2 x 125 points each	250 points
Total Possible Points	650 points

	A	=	650 - 582		
B+	=	581 - 569	B	=	568 - 517
C+	=	516 - 504	C	=	503 - 452
D+	=	451 - 439	D	=	438 - 387
	F	=	386 or less		

## Attendance Policy

Harlaxton College operates a mandatory attendance policy that is binding on all faculty and students.

Because of the amount of material covered, it is in your best interest to attend all classes. Much of the material covered in class is not found in the text but will be on the test. Attendance will daily record your presence. Because this is a condensed 5-week semester, only **1** absence will be permitted before the penalty of one full letter grade (e.g., A to B) *per absence* begins. Additional unexcused absences will attract a grade penalty *per absence*. *Please note:* travel or unexpected delays returning from travel are **not** excused absences.

Tardiness is unprofessional and disruptive to your fellow classmates. If you are more than 5 minutes late for class, you will be considered absent. Leaving class early is equally disruptive, please avoid it.

## Extra Credit, Incompletes, Drop/Add, and Withdrawal Policies

There will be **no** opportunities for extra credit, regardless of your current grade. Please study accordingly to achieve the grade you desire. Incompletes will not be given except under extraordinary circumstances.

There is normally about a 10-day period at the beginning of semester what a student may drop and class and/or add a class. The deadline date is published in the Semester Guidance handbook. Drop/Add forms are available from the library and completed forms should be returned to the same place. Faculty signatures are required for all classes being added.

Students may withdraw from a class, with the exception of British Studies, for a longer period of time. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of the final date to withdraw from the course and still receive a "W" on the transcript. Again the deadline date is published in the Semester Guidance handbook. Forms are available from the College Secretary, to whom completed forms should be returned. Forms must be signed by the faculty member of the class being withdrawn from and the Principal.

**All students must register for, and be continuously enrolled in, 12 credit hours of study to be eligible to study at Harlaxton and remain in the United Kingdom.**



# SOC 386 – DEATH AND DYING SUMMER 2025

## Disability Policy

It is the policy of the University of Evansville (Harlaxton College) to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. University of Evansville students should contact the Office of Counselling and Health Education to seek help with this. Students from Partner Universities/Colleges should contact their own relevant student support office. For assistance whilst at Harlaxton students should contact the College Secretary whose office is located adjacent to the Principal's office.

Written notification to faculty from the College Secretary is required for academic accommodations to be implemented.

## Honour Code

Academic dishonesty of any sort will not be tolerated. This includes: working together on reflection papers, projects, movie Q&A papers, or exams; copying another's work on exams or papers; having another student/person take your exam, write your papers/projects/responses; submitting your work that previously has been submitted for another course; plagiarism (please see the handout on our course Blackboard site "Avoiding Plagiarism" for a more detailed description of defining and avoiding plagiarism); and all other forms of cheating. If you are unsure, ask me first. Per our Academic Policies and Procedures: "Ignorance is not accepted as a valid excuse for a violation of the Academic Honor Code."

Artificial intelligence (AI) language models, such as ChatGPT, and online assignment help tools, such as Chegg®, are examples of online learning support platforms; they **cannot** be used for course assignments.

The following actions are prohibited in this course:

- Submitting all or any part of an assignment statement to any online learning support platform;
- Incorporating any part of an AI generated response in an assignment;
- Using AI to brainstorm, formulate arguments, or template ideas for assignments;
- Using AI to summarize or contextualize source materials;
- Submitting your own work for this class to an online learning support platform for iteration or improvement.

As a condition of taking this course, all papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity and AI content review to Turnitin.com. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database. Any student caught violating the Academic Honor Code in any way will be given a zero on that assignment, reflection, or exam and their actions will be reported to their Advisor(s) and the Dean of Students. If this violation is the first offense reported to the Dean of Students, you may be allowed to informally resolve the incident. If it is the second Honor Code violation reported to the Dean (from any class), your actions will result in a hearing before the Honor Council and may include greater penalties. If it is the third Honor Code violation, you will be expelled from the University. Please be aware: there are several resources on campus for help on assignments, papers, and studying for exams, including coming to office hours and talking to me! Do not fail an assignment or class because you did not utilize these resources. As in all University of Evansville courses, we will abide by, and commit to, the Academic Honor Code.

**I understand that any work which I submit for course credit will imply that I have adhered to this Academic Honor Code: "I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid nor will I tolerate an environment which condones the use of unauthorized aid."**

*For more detailed information, please see the University of Evansville Academic Honour Code at: <https://www.evansville.edu/offices/deanstudents/downloads/honorcode.pdf>*