

The University of Western Ontario
School of Health Studies
Health Sciences: Palliative & End of Life Care
HS 4710B
January - April 2023

Instructor: Dr. Afshin Vafaei

Email: avafaei2@uwo.ca

Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:00 am to 12:30 PM or by appointment

Location: Health Sciences Building – Room 215

TA: Leila Amirfakhrian - lamirfak@uwo.ca

Lecture Times: Thursdays 4:30-6:30

Location: University Community Centre (UCC) – Room 67

Tutorials: Wednesdays 9:30-10:30

Location: Art and Humanities Building (AHB)-1B08

Course Website: <https://owl.uwo.ca/>

Prerequisite Checking

Health Sciences 2711A/B or the former Health Sciences 3711A/B

Course Description

This course will explore, from an inter-disciplinary perspective, critical issues related to death, dying, palliative and end of life care relevant to health professionals working in a variety of settings. Topics include an introduction to death and dying in Canadian society, socio-cultural influences on our understanding of death, theories used to guide practice, an understanding of the dying person's experience, principles of palliative care, ethical and legal issues, and health system initiatives and challenges.

Learning Objectives

This course offers an introduction to death, dying, palliative, and end-of-life care with a focus on the Canadian context. This course will examine factors that influence individuals' end of life experiences from a wide variety of perspectives. By the end of this course students will be able to:

- explain current best palliative care practices, as well as the individual and systemic challenges of palliative care within the health system
- offer future directions to improve the end-of-life experiences of individuals across the age spectrum
- have a better understanding of the dying person's experience, as well as the experiences of those around them
- recognize the special palliative care needs of various groups

Textbook & Reading List

Most reading are selected chapters of these two textbooks that are available in electronic format through [Western Libraries](#). You do not need to purchase a copy.

- Bruera et al (2021). Textbook of Palliative Medicine and Supportive Care.

Western Library link: https://ocul-uwo.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_UWO/1hdoga6/alma991045469819105163

- Blank et al (2007). Choices in Palliative Care. Issues in Health Care Delivery.

Western Library link: <https://books.scholarsportal.info/en/read?id=/ebooks/ebooks2/springer/2011-04-28/5/9780387708751>

Additional readings will be posted in OWL. A main requirement is arrangement for a strong internet connection for accessing online materials.

Statement on contingency plan for in-person class pivoting to online learning:

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, tests and examinations in this course will be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide personal information (including some biometric data) and the session will be recorded. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western's Remote Proctoring website at: <https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

Statement on Multiple Choice Exams:

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.

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices:

During Exams: Unless you have medical accommodations that require you to do so, or explicit permission from the instructor of the course, you may not use any electronic devices during ANY tests, quizzes, midterms, examinations, or other in-class evaluations.

During Lectures and Tutorials: Although you are welcome to use a computer during lecture and tutorial periods, you are expected to use the computer for scholastic purposes only, and refrain from engaging in any activities that may distract other students from learning. From time to time, your professor may ask the class to turn off all computers, to facilitate learning or discussion of the material presented in a particular class.

Unless explicitly noted otherwise, you may not make audio or video recordings of lectures – nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.

Class Schedule (subject to change)

Week/Date	Topic/Focus	Readings
Section 1: Defining Palliative Care		
Week 1: Jan. 11, 12; 2023	Approach to palliative care as public health and primary care issues	Chapters 1, 2 & 3 of Bruera (2021)
Week 2: Jan. 18, 19; 2023	Medical Needs	Chapters 10 & 20 of Bruera (2021)
Week 3: Jan. 25, 26; 2023	Psycho-social Needs	Chapter 77 of Bruera (2021) Rego & Nunes (2016). The interface between psychology and spirituality in palliative care. <i>J. Health Psychol</i> ; 24 (3): 279-289 doi: 10.1177/1359105316664138 Balboni & Peteet (2017). "Religion and Spirituality in Palliative Medicine" Chapter 10 of <i>Spirituality and Religion Within the Culture of Medicine: From Evidence to Practice</i> , Oxford University Press. pp. 147-164 https://ocul-uwyo.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01OCUL_UWO/r0c2m8/alma991044851548905163
Section 2: The Act of Palliative Care		
Week 4: Feb. 1, 2; 2023	Palliative Care in Hospitals	Chapter 1 of Blank
Week 5: Feb. 8, 9; 2023	Palliative Care in Long-term Care	Chapter 2 of Blank
Week 6: Feb. 15, 16, 2023	Midterm	
Fall Reading Week: February 21 -25		
Week 7: March 1, 2; 2023	Palliative Care in Home Hospice Care	Chapters 3 & 4 of Blank Chapter 18 of Bruera (2021)
Week 8: March 8, 9; 2023	Palliative Care During COVID-19	Arya et al. (2020). Pandemic palliative care: Beyond ventilators and saving lives. <i>Canadian Medical Association Journal</i> , 192(15), E400-E404. https://www.cmaj.ca/content/192/15/E400 Abel et al. (2020). Advance care planning re-imagined: A needed shift for COVID times and beyond. <i>Palliative Care and Social Practice</i> , 14. doi: 10.1177/2632352420934491
Week 9: March 15, 2023	Families and Friends of a Dying Person Time for group work on presentations	Chapters 78, 79 & 80 of Bruera (2021)
Section 3: Special Populations and Palliative Care		
Week 10: March 22, 23; 2023	Older Adults Presentations 1-3	Chapter 11 of Blank
Week 11: March 29, 30; 2023	Individuals with Intellectual Disability Presentations 4-6	TBD Guest lecturer: Dr. Rachel Forrester-Jones
Week 12: April 5,6; 2023	Children and Youth Presentations 7-9	Chapter 10 of Blank

Evaluation and assignments

By **March 2nd**, 2023, students will know 15% of their final grade.

Assessment	Weight of Final Mark	Due Date
Midterm	20%	Feb. 16, 2022
Tutorial activities	20%	Jan. 17 until the last week
Group Assignment		April 8, 2023
Presentation	10%	
Written paper	20%	
Final exam	30%	During the exam period (April 13-28)

Tutorial Activities: 20% of the overall grade

Starting in the second week, every Wednesday from 9:30 to 10:30 students are expected to attend and **actively** participate in tutorial sessions. Concepts learned in the week before will be discussed and expanded upon during tutorials. For full marks, **active** participation in 8 tutorials is required (2.5 each, *8=20).

Group Assignment: 30% of the overall grade (Presentation 10%; Paper 20%)

The goal of this assignment is a deep evaluation of palliative care approach for a specific population and their specific care needs. Students will apply what they learned in sections 1 and 2 in their analysis. This assignment, to be completed in groups of 5-6 students, includes two components: a short (7-8 minutes) in-class presentation in weeks 10 to 12 and a written paper to be submitted two weeks after the presentation day. As a group or individually students select a particular population in need of palliative care and send it to the instructor before Jan 28, 2023 for approval. Examples of **specific** populations: individuals with HIV, older adults with dementia, youth with end stage leukemia.

The presentation provides an opportunity for feedback from the instructor and fellow classmates. **Please check your timing during a practice run.** It is expected that the written paper considers all valid feedback and be a reliable scientific work. Details about the logistics and content of the assignment will be discussed throughout the semester.

Midterm (20%) and Final (30%) Exams:

Two exams will evaluate students' deep understanding of course materials. The midterm exam will take place at the regular meeting time (4:30-6:30 PM) on February 16, 2023 while the final exam will be scheduled by the *Exam Central* during the formal exam period (April 13 to April 28; 2023). Both exams will be in multiple choice, fill in blanks, short answer format. The final exam is cumulative.

Missed Work:

This is a discussion-based course and attendance in all lectures and tutorials is essential for learning. It is not possible to provide equal opportunity to make-up for the missed classes. **All materials** covered in **all classes** are **testable**.

Missed Exams:

If you are too ill to write a quiz or exam or there are other 'extenuating circumstances beyond your control' you **must** document this either with a medical certificate (if available) or by notifying the instructor in writing (with your signature). If you are ill for an extended period of time, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor immediately on your return to campus.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

Statement on Academic Offences:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)

Statement on use of electronic devices:

During Exams: Unless you have medical accommodations that require you to do so, or explicit permission from the instructor of the course, you may not use any electronic devices during ANY tests, quizzes, midterms, examinations, or other in-class evaluations.

During Lectures and Tutorials: Although you are welcome to use a computer during lecture and tutorial periods, you are expected to use the computer for scholastic purposes only, and refrain from engaging in any activities that may distract other students from learning. From time to time, your professor may ask the class to turn off all computers, to facilitate learning or discussion of the material presented in a particular class.

Unless explicitly noted otherwise, you may not make audio or video recordings of lectures – nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.

Accommodation for illness:

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by extenuating circumstances, including short-term illness or injury. Reasonable academic consideration is a cooperative process between the University, the student, and academic staff. All participants in the process must act in good faith, and fulfil their respective obligations, if it is to succeed.

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstance) sufficiently significant as to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements, may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:

- (i) For medical absences, submitting a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner, in order to be eligible for Academic Consideration; or*
- (ii) For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to academic advising office in their Faculty of registration, in order to be eligible for academic consideration.*

Students seeking academic consideration:

- Are advised to consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying handing in work;*
- Are encouraged to make appropriate decisions, based on their specific circumstances, recognizing that minor ailments (e.g., upset stomach) or upsets (e.g., argument with a friend) are not normally an appropriate basis for a self-reported absence;*

- *Must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by either the self-reported absence or SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence;*
- *Are advised that all necessary documentation, forms, etc. are to be submitted to academic advising office within two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities*

Support Services:

There are various support services around campus and these include, but are not limited to:

1. Student Development Centre -- <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>
2. Student Health -- <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>
3. Registrar's Office -- <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>
4. Ombudsperson Office -- <http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/>

Health and Wellness:

The undergraduate experience is rewarding and challenging socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Finding ways to balance scholarly life with our personal lives can be tough, but it's important to learn how to manage stress. Western provides several health and wellness-related services to students, which may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>. You can also check out the Campus Recreation Centre or the McIntosh Gallery (<http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>), for alternative spaces to reconnect with your bodies and restore your spirit. You may also want to access local resources that are closer to where you are living during the school year. Recalibrating ourselves emotionally begins with slowing down, reminding ourselves that we are ok, and taking a few deep, slow breaths. This remarkably effective strategy brings the body from stress mode into a more relaxed state.

If you are in emotional or mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western [Mental Health Support - Health & Wellness - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help or Thames Valley Family Services (<https://www.family servicethamesvalley.com/>), a trusted provider within the community. To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: [Health & Wellness - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#). It's also advisable to have a wellness safety plan if you don't want to reach out to formal services. Having the numbers of a few trusted individuals is another strategy.

Grade Policy:

The university-wide descriptor of the meaning of letter grades, as approved by Senate:

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

It is expected that the grades for this course will fall **between 74-80**. In the event that the course average falls outside this range, a constant may be added (or subtracted) from each student's grade, by the instructor, to bring the class average in line with school policy.