Issues at the End of Life

HUMS 9421

Course Director: Annette Greer, PhD, MSN
Location: Online
Duration: 2 weeks

Course Goal(s)
To enhance the ability of medical students/future physicians to appropriately address ethical issues arising within patient care of those experiencing end-of-life interventions.

Educational Objectives
Upon completion of this course learners will be able to:

1. Explore the meaning of death and dying, both personally and professionally, for self and others.
2. Describe the variability of the meaning of death and dying relative to the medical professional role and that of others.
3. Evaluate relevant policies and legal statutes pertaining to end-of-life interventions across the life span.
4. Appraise ethical issues arising in contemporary end-of-life medical interventions including autonomy and competing or complimentary values.
5. Demonstrate the ability to assess those experiencing end-of-life and to formulate culturally competent interventions which address ethical issues that arise.

Course Readings
1. Final Exam: A Surgeon’s Reflections on Mortality by Joyce Chen
   Paperback: 267 pages
   Publisher: Vintage; Reprint edition (January 8, 2008)
   Language: English
   ISBN-10: 030727537X
2. Other readings available on Blackboard: Course Documents.

Course Requirements
1. The course is graded on a pass-fail basis. All requirements must be met in order to pass the course. The course is based on 20 hours of contact time/effort by students.
2. The Chen book Chapter 1 of Final Exam: A Surgeon’s Reflections on Mortality is a required reading. Optional book selection and systematic review is also available.
3. Additional course readings will be located in the course documents folder. Within the course documents folder, the readings will be located in each of the content modules associated with the outlined content areas.
   a. Cultural Mean of Death (Self and Other)
   b. Professional Role in the Dying Process
   c. Policies and Legal Issues in the Dying Process & Death
   d. Contemporary Ethical Issues at End of Life
   e. Formulating Ethical and Legal Medical Interventions at End of Life
### Student Performance & Assessment

Assignments are as follows:

1. The first assignment will be to write a 500-word description of their most significant experience with death of another, either personal or in medical training. The Instructions for the Death and Dying narrative will be located in Blackboard.

2. For each content area the student will complete a “Voice-thread” (audio/video) commentary following a process rubric based on Chen and other assigned readings. The student will review two other student commentaries and post a response on Voice-thread for each content area. Optional: Students may elect to complete an electronic journal in Blackboard.
   - a. Cultural Mean of Death (Self and Other)
   - b. Professional Role in the Dying Process
   - d. Contemporary Ethical Issues at End of Life
   - e. Formulating Ethical and Legal Medical Interventions at End of Life

3. For each content area listed the student will complete an essential case study that corresponds to an ethical or legal dilemma in the clinical care of a patient at the end of life and will formulate an evidence-based response supported by a literature review (2 sources). This assignment will be completed in discussion board and will require the student to post substantive forums, as well as read and respond to at least one other original post from a peer.

4. Students will post a creative expression of death and dying: This can be the posting of a sculpture, a painting, a song, a poem, a specific reading or a film about dying or death, in discussion board along with your interpretation of its meaning of death and dying from a cultural standpoint. This should be something that personally touched you and helped you give meaning to your understanding of death and dying. This will be posted in a Blog area of Blackboard.

5. In addition to the one-page papers listed above, each student will write a 2-4 page (single spaced) final paper that addresses the following: “Based on what you have learned in your previous medical school experiences, and from the assignments in this elective course, discuss how you plan to address patients’ end-of-life needs in your eventual independent practice of medicine.”

You should cite at least three scholarly references in this paper selected from readings assigned or from those researched.

6. OPTIONAL: Students may elect to complete a systematic literature review using a matrix provided by the instructor. A minimum of 15 articles on the topic must be annotated and a manuscript produced of publishable quality.

### Other Info

The course is based on 20 hours of contact time/effort by students.