

# HUMN 3031 DEATH AND CULTURE

**Credit Points** 10

**Legacy Code** 100996

**Coordinator** Di Dickenson ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Di Dickenson/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Di%20Dickenson/))

**Description** This unit is a critical introduction to the social practices surrounding death in modernity. Although primarily addressing social arrangements in the West, the unit examines the bio-politics of death in a wider cultural framework, with attention to geographies of power and economic influence. The unit traces the historical development of concepts of the individual; the impact on Western ideas around death of genocide and modern warfare; and assesses contemporary ethical, social and medical controversies (like euthanasia and the trade in body parts). The unit attempts to demonstrate the relationship of death to: social institutions; ideas of community and the construction of self in modernity.

**School** Humanities & Comm Arts

**Student Contribution Band** HECS Band 4 10cp

Check your HECS Band contribution amount via the Fees ([https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current\\_students/fees/](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/fees/)) page.

**Level** Undergraduate Level 3 subject

**Equivalent Subjects** LGYC 1307 - Death and Culture LGYA 0949 - Death and Culture

**Restrictions** Successful completion of 60 credit points of study in currently enrolled program.

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this subject, students should be able to:

1. Critically evaluate the function of social debate around issues of vital social importance.
2. Identify key issues about contemporary experiences of death and dying in a range of learning resources.
3. Demonstrate their understanding of the historical origins of present day beliefs and practices around death and dying
4. Apply theoretical knowledge to real-world situations and give a scholarly context to personal experience.

## Subject Content

Content may vary between semesters of offering dependant on the teaching staff expertise and interests.

1. The history of death: 1800-1945
2. Grief, mourning and social ritual
3. Death in High Modernity
4. Mass death and the century of genocide
5. The economics of death: killing for science and profit
6. Death and the media
7. Death, trauma and the unmaking of community
8. Euthanasia
9. Legal Execution
10. Commodifying the corpse: the trade in body parts etc.
11. Deathwork
12. Virtual death
13. Virtual mourning

## Assessment

The following table summarises the standard assessment tasks for this subject. Please note this is a guide only. Assessment tasks are regularly updated, where there is a difference your Learning Guide takes precedence.

Item	Length	Percent	Threshold	Individual/ Group Task
Portfolio of Responses to Topic Questions	6 x 300 words (1,800 words approximately in total)	50	N	Individual
Concept Quiz (Online)	25 minutes (500 words approximately)	15	N	Individual
Scenario Analysis task	1,500 words approximately	35	N	Individual

Prescribed Texts

- Kellehear, Allan. A Social History of Dying. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Death and Culture Subject Reader

Teaching Periods