

Due: Write-up of first two interviews (10 points): Thursday, April 23rd.

Final copy of essay (30 points): Thursday, April 30th.

The assignment

1. **Interview at least 3 people** about their perceptions of death and dying.
2. **Write a 2-3 page essay** analyzing cultural beliefs about death and dying based on those interviews .
 - a. Your essay should **include a summary** of the interviews you conducted.
 - i. **Who did you interview?** Age, gender, ethnicity, religious affiliation are all useful descriptors. Do not name the person or identify their relationship to you.
 - ii. After you have done the interview, tell a story about how the ideas expressed in the interviews. **Choose 3-4 of the questions** upon which to focus your essay. Use answers that you can **compare and contrast** that seem particularly relevant. How are their answers similar? How are they different? What might account for this?
 - iii. **You may include 1-2 quotes from each interview** as necessary in your essay to illustrate a point, but do not use a transcript of the interviews as your essay.

The rules

Be sensitive to the potentially challenging nature of this topic. As is our commitment in class with each other, you should also maintain **compassion** for the people you are interviewing. Death and dying are uncomfortable to speak about for most people.

Introductory statement

You are encouraged to use the statement below, or develop one similar in beginning your interview:

My goal in doing this project is to have a better understanding about how people in my community think and deal with death and dying. I know that death and dying are uncomfortable topics and ones that are not often talked about openly. If any of the questions I ask seem too personal, or difficult for any reason, please feel free to pass on answering them. Please also know that you will not be personally identified in the essay I write as a result of this interview.

Possible Questions

1. What does our culture teach us about death and dying? How does it do that?
2. Why don't we as a culture talk about death more openly?
3. What are appropriate ways to teach young people about death? How do you do that?
4. What are common methods for dealing/coping with death?
5. How should we treat others when they are grieving? What is the best way to support them?
6. What do you think happens when we die? Where do we "go"?
 - a. What informs your idea about this? Why do you think that?
7. What are ways that we can "prepare" for death while we are still alive?
8. How do you feel about your own death?
9. How does your inevitable death affect the way that you live?
10. Would you like to revisit any of the questions I have asked before we conclude? Is there anything you would like to add?

Closing

Be sure to **sincerely thank** the person for taking the time to speak with you.

He/she/they has a right to see the essay you are going to write based, in part, on things you learned from him/her/them. **Ask if he/she/they would like to see a draft of the essay.** If so, you can send him/her/them a copy. Be sure to **get an email address** or other means of sending the draft.

Perceptions of Passing Assignment (40 Points)

Comment Abbreviations – Exceeds (*E*), Sufficient (*S*), Needs improvement (*NI*), Not Covered (*NC*), Unclear (*UC*).

Purpose: To create a 2-3 page essay analyzing cultural beliefs about death and dying based on at least 2 interviews.

_____ Essay is on topic and is 2-3 pages in length.

_____ Information from at least three interviews is apparent in essay.

_____ Essay includes a summary of the conducted interviews.

_____ Essay includes a description of the interviewee with regard to age, gender, ethnicity, and religious affiliation.

_____ Essay compares and contrasts 3-4 relevant questions and answers.

_____ Essay is well organized and follows a logical order.

_____ First draft was submitted on or before Tuesday, December 3rd.

Comments: