

Death Panels: Exploring Dying and Death Through Comics

(KNOW 26230/36230)

Spring 2023

Institute on the Formation of Knowledge
University of Chicago

Course Directors:

- MK Czerwiec, RN, MA
 - comicnurse@mac.com
 - Office hours by appointment
- Brian Callender, MD
 - bcallend@medicine.bsd.uchicago.edu
 - Office hours by appointment

Course Description:

What can comics contribute to the discourse on dying and death? What insights can comics provide into the experience of dying, death, caregiving, grieving, and memorialization? Can comics help us better understand our own wishes about the end of life? *Death Panels: Exploring Dying and Death Through Comics* is an interactive course designed to introduce students to the field of graphic medicine and explore how comics can be used as a mode of scholarly investigation into issues related to dying, death, and the end of life. Through didactics, discussion, and interactive activities, this course provides students with a unique interdisciplinary and creative opportunity to explore dying and death.

This course will balance readings and discussion with creative drawing and comics-making assignments. This work is intended to provoke personal inquiry, self-reflection, and understanding about a range of topics relating to the end of life. Topics covered will include examining defining death, exploring how we die, euthanasia, rituals around dying and death, and grieving. The readings will primarily be drawn from a wide variety of graphic memoirs and comics, but will be supplemented with materials from a variety of multimedia sources including biomedical literature, philosophy, cinema, podcasts, and the visual arts.

Taught by a nurse-cartoonist and a physician, both of whom are active in the graphic medicine community and scholars of the health humanities, the course will primarily be taught from a biomedical and health humanities perspective.

No prior knowledge or experience of graphic novels, comics, drawing, medicine, or death required.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, we intend for students to:

- Develop an awareness of and appreciation for one's values and attitudes about the end of life
- Appreciate the unique properties of comics to convey difficult and complex subject matter
- Understand how the medium of comics can uniquely explore and express end-of-life experiences, including caregiving, grief, and memorialization
- Engage with drawing and the creation of comics as a self-reflective exercise

Meeting times:

- Tuesdays and Thursdays
- 3:30 - 4:50 pm

Location:

- Institute on the Formation of Knowledge
 - 5737 S University Ave
 - Classroom 104

Course Materials:

Primary Resources

The readings will be drawn from a variety of sources and will include complete texts, excerpts, scholarly articles, web-content, and supplemental readings. We will

occasionally include other media (videos, podcasts) to supplement the readings. Many of the readings will be available electronically, though some full-length graphic novels will be required and need to be purchased.

- Course texts:
 - Some texts will be available electronically through the University's library
 - Those texts that are not available electronically will be placed on reserve at the library for time-limited use
 - Please be respectful of classmates who also wish to use materials placed on reserve and adhere to time-limits
 - Those texts that are not available electronically can also be purchased
- Readings:
 - Most readings will be available electronically via Canvas or through hyperlinks
- Scholarly articles:
 - Scholarly articles will be drawn from the health humanities and comic studies to provide a fuller understanding of some of the works and to aid in discussion
- Multimedia Sources:
 - Some course materials will be videos with links embedded within the syllabus
- Supplemental readings:
 - Supplemental readings will be provided to augment the primary readings with background, contextual, or in-depth information or examples
 - These are not required readings, but are available based on your interest in a particular topic.

Additional Resources

- The [Graphic Medicine](#) website is a great resource for news, reviews, multimedia, and general information about graphic medicine
- Additional graphic medicine works available in the library can be found [here](#)
- On making comics
 - On [how to get started making comics](#)
 - Coover, JP. [Maker Comics: Make A Comic](#). First Second, 2019.
 - Brunetti, Ivan. [Cartooning: Philosophy and Practice](#). Yale University Press, 2011.
 - Available electronically through the library [here](#)
 - Nick Sousanis' website: [Spin Weave and Cut – Homepage of Nick Sousanis](#)
- On comics as a visual language

- Neil Cohn's website: [Visual Language Lab • The website of Neil Cohn](#)
- On different ways to tell a story
 - Madden, M. [99 Ways to Tell a Story: Exercises in Style](#). Chamberlain Bros., 2005.

Assignments:

- Sketchbook Assignments:
 - Students will do weekly drawing assignments based on the topics and content explored each week.
 - The drawings will be based on weekly prompts.
 - These assignments are intended to improve the students' understanding of:
 - Comics as a medium for self-reflection, expression, and knowledge formation.
 - The technical and conceptual aspects of comics when put into practice.
 - These can be done in mediums of the students choosing in a sketchbook (loosely defined as a collection of paper)
- Final Assignment:
 - For your final project in this class, we would like you to create an 8-10 page original short-form comic that reflects on some aspect of the course that had particular resonance for you. It could be an expansion of one of the homework assignments or entirely original. In choosing a topic for your final project, reflect on the many themes we will have covered in this course: defining death, the "good death," the medicalization of death, medical ethics and decision making at end of life, palliative care and hospice, advance directives, being with the dying, caring for caregivers, rituals of mourning, disposition of human remains, death humor, obituary and memorialization.
 - We want you to choose a topic of particular interest to you and use the medium of comics to explore that topic
 - This assignment will consist of two components:
 - A comic
 - This final 8-10 page comic should draw upon the themes and/or concepts addressed throughout the course and incorporate the following:
 - Be creative with your use of the medium of comics and the format you choose

- The comic can be longer than 10 pages if more than 10 pages are needed
- Personal Reflection/Analysis
 - 500-600 word analysis of how creating the comic and your use of the medium of comics contributed to personal understanding about the topic(s) addressed in the comic
- Final assignments should be approximately 8-10 pages.
 - Though creative works can be longer than 10 pages.
- **Due Dates:**
 - For graduating 4th years, final project is due May 24, 2023 at 5pm.
 - For all others, final project is due May 26, 2023 at 5pm.

Optional Experiences and Opportunities

- Ethics Case Conference
 - What:
 - Weekly discussions about ethical issues, often related to end-of-life challenges
 - When:
 - Wednesdays, 3:00-5:00pm
 - Where:
 - H103, located near the Goldblatt Lobby of the Goldblatt Pavilion, 860 E. 59th Street
 - H103 is located behind the security desk
 - [Campus Map with Medical Center](#)
 - Goldblatt Pavilion is located in sector 5B
 - How:
 - Class will be notified of cases that are relevant to material covered in the course.
 - If you are interested, please email bcallend@bsd.uchicago.edu to notify him of your interest in attending.
- Palliative Care Case Conference
 - What:
 - Case review and discussion with the palliative care team of the medical center.
 - When:
 - Wednesdays, 9:00-10:00am
 - Where:
 - Room W719
 - [Campus Map with Medical Center](#)
 - Goldblatt Pavilion is located in sector 5B

- At the security desk, take a right down the long hallway to Elevator 2,3 and take that to the 7th floor. Then make a right off the elevator through the double doors that have a “W700” sign next to them
 - Follow the hallway past cubicles and just past the kitchenette is the
 - How:
 - If you are interested, please email bcallend@bsd.uchicago.edu to notify him of your interest in attending.
 - *** To attend this conference you will need to be HIPAA trained since discussions involve patient information ***
 - You can complete HIPAA training through Canvas [here](#)
 - Enroll in the Privacy and Security Training, complete the modules, and take the quiz
 - Your CNET ID/login is required
- Autopsy Viewing:
 - What:
 - Viewing of an autopsy at the medical center
 - When:
 - Varies (autopsies occur randomly)
 - Where:
 - The pathology morgue
 - Basement of Comer Children’s Hospital
 - [Campus Map with Medical Center](#)
 - Comer Children’s Hospital is located in sector 4A
 - How:
 - When an autopsy is to be performed, Dr. Callender will be notified and communicate this opportunity to those who are interested.
 - Ability to participate will depend on student availability
- Field Museum Exhibit - [Death: Life's Greatest Mystery](#)

Grading:

Grading will broadly be based on attendance, participation throughout the course, and completion of assignments. The breakdown is as follows:

- Attendance: 20%
- Participation: 30%
- Assignments: 50%
 - On-going assignments: 20%
 - Final: 30%

Attendance Policy:

- Since this is a seminar course with an emphasis on discussion and experiential learning, attendance at each class is mandatory.
- Students may miss only two sessions and still be eligible for full credit for the course.
- Students who know that they will miss a class should email the instructor in advance.

Classroom Etiquette

- The in-class time will be focused on discussion, sharing, and creating.
- Respect for your classmates and their opinions and privacy is expected to maintain a forum for open, contentious and collegial discussion and debate.

Zoom Etiquette (when applicable)

- For the synchronous components via Zoom, we expect that students will have their video ON (unless pre-arranged with the instructors)
- Chat function will be used to augment and moderate discussion.
 - Private chat has been disabled.

Personal Health and Well-Being

Since this class will explore topics of a sensitive nature through the readings, discussion, and self-reflective exercises, if at any point you feel uncomfortable and/or that your health and well-being are threatened, you should immediately communicate this to the course instructors, who will maintain confidentiality and seek appropriate assistance and resources.

COVID-19 Precautions

Students are to follow COVID-19 precautions, including masking, as outlined in the University's policies and protocols found on the [Go Forward website](#).

Office Hours:

Office hours can be made by email to the instructor(s).

General Course Plan

- **Week 1: Introduction to Graphic Medicine, Comics, and Death Studies**
 - Class 1 (March 21) Introduction of Graphic Medicine

- Class 2 (March 23) Introduction to Dying and Death
- **Week 2: Defining Death**
 - Class 3 (March 28) *Ars Moriendi* and “The Good Death”
 - Visit to Special Collections
 - Class 4 (March 30) Defining Death
- **Week 3: Medicalizing Death**
 - Class 5 (April 4) The Medicalization of Death
 - Class 6 (April 6) Medical Ethics and the End of Life
- **Week 4: Palliative Care and Hospice**
 - Class 7 (April 11) Palliative Care and Hospice
 - Class 8 (April 13) Death Over Dinner
- **Week 5: Planning for the End of Life**
 - Class 9: (April 18) Advance Directives
 - Class 10 (April 20) Bearing Witness: Being with the Dying
- **Week 6: From Dying to Death**
 - Class 11 (April 25) Caring for Caregivers
 - Class 12 (April 27) Rituals of Mourning
- **Week 7: Rituals**
 - Class 13 (May 2) American Afterlives
 - Class 14 (May 4) The Body After Death
- **Week 8: For the Living**
 - Class 15 (May 9): Death and Humor
 - Class 16 (May 11): Obituary and Memorialization
- **Week 9: Sharing**
 - Class 17 (May 16) Class Wrap-Up
 - Class 18 (May 18) Final Project Sharing
- **Week 10: Pulling it all together**
 - Class 19 (May 23)

Course Outline

(Subject to Change)

Week 1: Introduction to Graphic Medicine, Comics, and Death Studies

Class 1 (March 21): Introduction to Graphic Medicine and Death Studies

- Topics:

- Personal introductions
- Student introductions
 - Create your avatar/self-portrait
- Introduction to the course
- Why take a course on dying and death?
- Readings:
 - Zellers, C. [Let's talk about death!](#) POMEmag. February 21, 2020

Class 2 (March 23): Graphic Medicine, Dying, and Death

- Topics:
 - Introduction to graphic medicine
 - What?
 - Why?
 - How?
 - What graphic medicine has to offer:
 - Graphic Pathographies
 - Patient Education
 - Materials
 - Activities/Exercises
 - Professional development/training
 - Students beliefs and attitudes about death
 - Personal experiences with dying and death
 - Personal
 - Abstract
 - Historical context of dying and death
 - “Death Mentalities”
 - How we die and what we die from
- Readings:
 - Czerwicz, MK et al. “Welcome to the Graphic Medicine Manifesto.” *Graphic Medicine Manifesto*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015.
 - Available electronically through the library [here](#)
 - Jacobsen, MH. ["Spectacular Death" - Proposing a New Fifth Phase to Philippe Aries's Admirable History of Death](#). Humanities 5(2); 2016.
 - Academy of Ideas. [Ernest Becker and the Fear of Death](#). (video)

- Warner, A. [Who wants to live forever?](#). The Nib. October 22, 2018.
 - Supplemental Materials:
 - Sallnow, L et al. [Report of the Lancet commission on the Value of Death: bringing death back into life](#). The Lancet 2022; 399: 837-884.
 - Lectures/Presentations:
 - MK's Introduction to Graphic Medicine is available [here](#) and is also uploaded to Canvas as a PDF
 - Brian's Brief History of Death Mentalities is uploaded to Canvas as a PDF
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Week 2: Defining Death

Class 3 (March 28): Ars Moriendi and "The Good Death"

****** LOCATION CHANGE****** This class will be held in the **SPECIAL COLLECTIONS RESEARCH CENTER** in **Regenstein Library** between the main entrance and the entrance to the Mansueto Library

- Topics:
 - Introduction to historical comics focused on death and dying
 - *Ars Moriendi* and *The Dance of Death*
 - The concept of "The Good Death"
- Readings:
 - Holbein, Hans. [The Dance of Death](#)
 - Skim
 - Thornton, K and CB Phillips. [Performing the good death: the medieval Ars Moriendi and contemporary doctors](#). Medical Humanities 2009; 35: 94-97.
 - Kastenbaum, R. (2000) "Deathbed Scenes" in *The Psychology of Death 3rd edition* (chapter 7). Springer.
 - Available [online](#) through the University Library System
 - Harris, E. [Everything Dies: Death through History](#). The Nib. November 26, 2018.
- Supplemental Materials:
 - [The Good Death](#)

- Steinhauser, KE et al. [Factors considered important at the end of life by patients, family, physicians, and other care providers](#). JAMA 2000; 284(19): 2476-2482.
 - Leget, C. [Retrieving the ars moriendi tradition](#). Med Health Care and Philosophy 2007; 10: 313-319.
 - Zaman, M et al. [What would it take to die well? A systematic review of systematic reviews on the conditions for a good death](#). The Lancet Health Longevity 2021; 2(9): e593-e600.
 - Illich, I. (1976). "Death against death" in Medical Nemesis (chapter 5). Random House.
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Class 4 (March 30): Defining Death

- Topics:
 - What is death?
 - What does it mean to die?
 - Biomedical definitions of death
 - What are the implications of various definitions of death?
- Readings:
 - Aviv, R. [What does it mean to die?](#). The New Yorker. February 5, 2018.
 - Truog, R. [Defining Death - Making Sense of the Case of Jahi McMath](#). JAMA 2018; 319(18): 1859-1860.
 - [What is the line between life and death?](#) Here's my answer - Peter Singer, 10/22/23 **LATE ADD**
 - Veatch, RM and LF Ross. (2016). "Crafting a New Definition-of-Death Law" in *Defining Death: The Case for Choice* (chapter 7).
 - Available [online](#) through the University Library System
- Supplemental Materials:
 - Ross, LF. [Respecting choice in definitions of death](#). Hastings Center Report 2018; 48(6): S53-S55.
 - Veatch, RM. [Controversies in defining death: a case for choice](#). Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics 2019; 40: 381-401.
 - Veatch, RM. [The evolution of death and dying controversies](#). The Hastings Report 2009; 39(3): 16-19.
- Supplemental Events

- Bioethics debate: Are in utero termination and postnatal palliative care morally equivalent
 - March 30th, 2023, 12:00-1:00 pm
 - In-person (room P-117 in medical center) or remote (see below website for Zoom link)
 - [Dr. Bill Meadow Memorial Bioethics Debate](#)
- “A defense of physician facilitated death” lecture by Mark Sheldon
 - March 30th, 2023, 12:00-12:45pm
 - Montgomery Lecture Series, Northwestern Center for Bioethics and Medical Humanities
 - Remote option
 - Information and registration for zoom link available [here](#)

Week 3: Medicalizing Death

Class 5 (April 4): The Medicalization of Death

- Topics:
 - How medicine has impacted the process of dying and death
 - What are the implications of a medicalized death?
 - Readings:
 - Moss, M. (2017) Last Things: a graphic memoir of loss and love. Conari Press.
 - Available [online](#) through the University Library System
 - Supplemental Materials:
 - Hall, LK. (2019). “Medicalized Death and the Current of Centralized Care” in *The Medicalization of Birth and Death* (chapter 2). Johns Hopkins University Press.
 - Available [online](#) through the University Library System
 - Kaufman, SR. (2006). “Death and Hospital Culture” in *And a Time to Die: How Americans Hospitals Shape the End of Life* (chapter 1). University of Chicago Press.
 - McCue, JD. [The naturalness of dying](#). JAMA 1995; 273(13): 1039-1043.
 - [Dying in your Mother's Arms](#) (video) New York Times, Beder, John, August 2020
- LATE ADDITION

Class 6 (April 6): Medical Ethics and the End-of-Life

- Topics:
 - The limits of medicine and futile interventions
 - Physician/medical aid in dying
 - Quality of life versus quantity of life
- Readings:
 - Gawande, A. [Letting Go: What should medicine do when it can't save your life?](#) The New Yorker. July 26, 2010.
 - Shim, JK, AJ Russ, and SR Kaufman. [Late-life cardiac interventions and the treatment imperative](#). PLoS Medicine 2008; 5(3): e7.
 - Dugdale, LS, BH Lerner, and D Callahan. [Pros and Cons of Physician Aid in Dying](#). Tale Journal of Biology and Medicine 2019; 92(4): 747-750.
 - Gray, N. [What Doctors Know About CPR](#). *Rites of Passage* 2018; Issue 18.
 - Gray, N. [I'd want a natural death](#). Annals of Internal Medicine. August 2, 2016.
 - LaLanda, M. [A Living Death](#)
 - Natter, M. [Code Blue](#). Annals of Internal Medicine. April 4, 2017.
 - Green, MJ and R Rieck. [Betty P](#). Annals of Internal Medicine. April 7, 2015.
 - Arnow, P. [Posey's Plan: a memoir of my neighbor's timely death](#)
- Supplemental Materials:
 - Bao, G. [Caring for dying patients: visual narratives from the intensive care unit](#). Annals of Internal Medicine. January 1, 2019.
 - Shim, JK, AJ Russ, and SR Kaufman. [Risk, life extension and the pursuit of medical possibility](#). Sociology of Health and Illness 2006; 28(4): 479-502.
 - Hetzler, PT and LS Dugdale. [How do medicalization and rescue fantasy prevent health dying?](#) AMS Journal of Ethics 2018; 20(8): E766-773.
 - Fontalis, A, E Prousalis, and K Kulkarni. [Euthanasia and assisted dying: what is the current position and what are the key arguments informing the debate?](#) Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine 2018; 111(11): 407-413.
 - Back, AL and RM Arnold. [Dealing with Conflict in Caring for the Seriously Ill](#). JAMA 2005; 293(11): 1374-1381.
 - Illich, I. Medical Nemesis. *Lancet* 1974; 303: 918-921.
 - Available [online](#) through the University Library System
- Weekend Assignment: Drawing in the Gutter
 - Due April 11th
 - The assignment for this weekend is about Drawing in the Gutter. When we discussed comics layout, we noted that the empty space between two panels is

called the gutter, and it implies time. Often things happen in the gutter that we don't see, but understand and interpret must have happened. Sometimes there are interesting things to explore in those gutters.

- Your homework assignment due Tuesday 4/11 is to explore a gutter in any of the comics we read for week 3 and draw, in the style of the comic's artist as best you can imagine and replicate, a "gutter panel." Pick a pair of sequential images that is particularly interesting to you and visually interpret (in the cartoonist's style) what you think happens between the panels.
- Essentially, you are taking a two-panel sequence and making it a three-panel sequence.

Week 4: Palliative Care and Hospice

Class 7 (April 11): Palliative Care and Hospice

- Topics:
 - What is palliative care and hospice?
- Guest:
 - Nathan Gray, MD
 - [The Ink Vessel](#)
 - Nitkin, K. [Drawing Conclusions: A palliative care doctor finds rich rewards at the intersection of medicine and cartooning](#). Johns Hopkins Medicine. 2023
- Readings:
 - Gray, N. [Dying words aren't what I imagined](#). Medium. 2019
 - Gray, N. [Cicely Saunders: the woman who changed how we die](#). Annals of Internal Medicine. November 19, 2019.
 - Gray, N. [My patients wrestle with end-of-life care, even if there's a living will](#). Los Angeles Times. April 25, 2022.
 - Gray, N. [The Weight of Caring at Home](#). Originally published in the Los Angeles Times, February 2020.
- Supplemental Materials:
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Class 8 (April 13): Death Over Dinner

*** LOCATION CHANGE - This session will be held in H300 in the Goldblatt Pavilion ***

- [Campus Map with Medical Center](#)
 - Goldblatt Pavilion is located in sector 5B
 - At the security desk, take a right down the long hallway to Elevator 2,3 and take that to the 3rd floor. Then make a right off the elevator through the double doors and follow it around to the conference room.
 - Topics:
 - Death Over Dinner experience
 - Guest:
 - [Teresa van Oort](#)
 - Readings:
 - [End-of-Life Care: Helping patients make the hard decisions](#). Cleveland Clinic Consult QD. June 9, 2017.
 - Halifax, J. [Compassion and the true meaning of empathy](#). TED Talk.
 - [Dr. Atul Gawande: Make end of life more humane](#). Fresh Air. July 29, 2010.
 - Supplemental Materials
 - [Death Over Dinner website](#)
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Week 5: Planning for the End of Life

Class 9 (April 18): Advance Directives

- Topics:
 - What are advance directives?
- Readings:
 - Chast, R. (2014). *Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?* Bloomsbury.
 - Multiple copies available on reserve at Regenstein Library
 - [Illinois POLST Form](#). 2022
 - [Advance Care Planning: Making Choices for Your Health Care](#). University of Chicago Medical Center.
 - "Who's your person?" video

- [Advance Care Planning Guide: Making Choices for Your Health Care](#)
 - [What to know about healthcare power of attorney](#)
 - [Illinois Power of Attorney for Health Care](#)
- [“Speaking for the Dying: Lessons from ICU Observation”](#) Susan P. Shapiro on Chicago Tonight
- Supplemental Materials:
 - [The Ventilator: Life, Death and the Choices We Make at the End](#). Hidden Brain Podcast. November 19, 2019.
 - Bernacki, RE and SD Block. [Communication about serious illness care goals: a review and synthesis of best practices](#). JAMA Internal Medicine 2014; 174(12): 1994-2003.

Class 10 (April 20): Bearing Witness - Being with the Dying

- Topics:
 - Role of the dying
 - What does it mean to bear witness to dying?
- Readings:
 - Mannix, K. (2018). “French Resistance” in With the End in Mind: Dying, Death, and Wisdom in an Age of Denial. Little Brown Spark.
 - Mannix, K. [What happens as we die?](#). TEDx Newcastle. (video) and “[Dying for Beginners](#)” (video, **late add**)
 - Emanuel, L, K Bennett, and VE Richardson. [The dying role](#). Journal of Palliative Medicine 2007; 10(1): 159-168.
 - Dieter, K. [We are the medicine](#). TEDx NeoMed. (video)
 - Puri, Sunita [As A Doctor, I Know Being Ready to Die is an Illusion](#), March 23, 2023
 - Arnow, P. [A death in Chicago, 1972: Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and my family](#). Intima
 - [Alua Arthur, Going with Grace](#) doula training
 - [Death Doula](#) on TikTok

- Supplemental Materials:
 - Block, SD. [Psychological considerations, growth, and transcendence at the end of life](#). JAMA 2001; 285(22): 2898-2905.

Weekend Assignment - Advance Care Planning Conversation

- Due Tuesday April 25th

The homework for this weekend is in two steps.

1. Have a conversation (via whatever method is most available to you - in-person, phone, Zoom) with someone important in your life. The person you choose could be a parent or any other significant person in your life who is older than you. Ask them one of the first six questions on the first page Illinois Statutory Short Form Power of Attorney for Health Care form that you got in class last Thursday. Listen to their answer and follow with the question, “why?” (or another situationally-appropriate follow-up question to draw out more of their values with regard to advance care planning.) If you did not get the form, the questions are [here](#). Also consider using the UCMC [Advance Care Planning Guide](#) to facilitate the conversation. You can continue the conversation or that can be enough to move to step 2.
2. From that conversation, make a comic (of at least eight panels, but can be longer) about your conversation and experience and relate it to advance care planning. Remember to consider utilizing some of the unique conventions of the comics medium, such as thought bubbles, ability to defy scale and dimension, manipulation of time and space, action implied in the gutter, etc.

Please note: we would like to share and discuss these comics in class on Tuesday. Rules as described apply - you don’t always have to show your work, but we’d like you to at least discuss the process.

Week 6: From Dying to Death

Class 11 (April 25): Advance Care Planning (cont’d) and Caring for Caregivers

- Topics:
 - Continued discussion about Advance Care Planning

- Role of family and professional caregivers and support available (or lack thereof)
 - Discussion of final project
 - Readings:
 - Gray, N. [You think you want to die at home?](#) Los Angeles Times. February 16, 2020.
 - Kious, B. [Burdening others](#). Hastings Center Report 2022; 52(5): 15-23.
 - Supplemental Materials:
 - [What Are Palliative Care and Hospice Care?](#)
 - [Biden Signs Executive Order to Improve Child & Elder Care](#)
 - [Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers](#)
 - [National Alliance for Caregiving](#)
-

Class 12 (April 27): Grief & Rituals of Mourning

- Topics:
 - What annual events, activities, and traditions remind you of your mortality?
 - What can grief look like?
 - What is the connection between death rituals and grieving?
- Readings:
 - [It's Our Funeral](#) – comic by Whit Taylor
 - [After You Die](#) - Ramin Nazer
 - [Drawing Grief](#) - Yao Xiao
 - [Grieving Through Drawing](#) - Sharon Rozenzweig
 - [Cry Heart, But Never Break](#)
 - [Excerpt from Billy, Me, & You](#) - Nicola Streeten
 - ["After"](#) - excerpt from *Tangles* by Sarah Leavitt
- Supplemental Materials:
 - [Why mourning is essential to well-being, with Jonathan Lear](#). Big Brains Podcast. Episode 108.

Weekend Assignment

“You are dust and unto dust you shall return” (Genesis 3:19) This biblical phrase is repeated by a Catholic priest as he dips his thumb in the ashes of the previous year’s Easter week palms and makes a cross on the forehead of those who line up to receive this annual ritual.

[Alan De Botton](#), a contemporary British philosopher, writes in his book *Religion for Atheists* that religions around the world use repetition and the setting of calendars to remind us of important truths. One of the truths that many calendars, both religious and secular, find as an annual focus is the fact that we are mortal.

Think of an example of a calendar you follow, formally or informally, that reminds you every year that you are mortal. It could be an annual cultural event (think [Dia Day los Muertos](#)) or an annual family (chosen, adopted, or genetic) event (visiting a grave or another tradition on the anniversary of an important person's death) or even a pop culture observance (the Oscar ceremony includes an [In Memoriam](#) segment, the *New York Times* features [The Lives They Lived](#) each new year season).

Draw a single-panel scene from that annual reminder of our mortality for your homework this weekend. You can write a few words on or to accompany the drawing if you'd like.

Week 7: Rituals

Class 13 (May 2): American Afterlives

- Topic:
 - Contemporary funerary and disposition of human remains
- Guest:
 - [Shannon Lee Dawdy, PhD](#)
 - Author of *American Afterlives: Reinventing Death in the Twenty-First Century*
 - Co-director, co-producer, and writer of the film [I Like Dirt](#)
- Readings:
 - Dawdy, SL. (2021). *Dirt*. Chapter 4 in *American Afterlives: Reinventing Death in the Twenty-First Century*. Princeton University Press.
 - Available [online](#) through the University Library System
 - PDF available in Canvas folder
 - [Big Brains podcast](#) with Dr. Dawdy
 - Dawdy, SL. (2021). Epilogue. In *American Afterlives: Reinventing Death in the Twenty-First Century*. Princeton University Press.
 - Available [online](#) through the University Library System
 - PDF available in Canvas folder

- Supplemental Materials:
 - [Death is Not the End: Fascinating Funeral Traditions from Around the Globe](#), Kate Torgovnick May
 - [Human Composting story](#) on CBS This Morning **LATE ADDITION**
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Class 14 (May 4): The Body After Death

- ***** Location Change***** Class will be starting in the Biological Sciences Learning Center (BSLC) Room 416
- ***** Bring your sketchbook and sketching materials *****
- Topics:
 - Pronouncing the dead
 - Anatomy lab visit
- Readings:
 - [The body after death](#) in George's Anatomy. Lien Foundation. 2017
 - Willberg, Kriota, [Cadaver Diaries](#) (zine)
 - [Chapter 3: Life After Death: On Human Decay and What Can Be Done About It](#). excerpt from *Stiff: The Curious Life of Human Cadavers*, Mary Roach
- Supplemental Materials:
 - Montoya, R. [What is death, exactly?](#) Scientific American. October 18, 2019
 - Jones, M. [The Movement to Bring Death Closer](#). New York Times Magazine. December 19, 2019
 - [The Red Earth](#) **LATE ADDITION**
 - [Interview with Mary Roach about writing *Stiff*](#) (you can listen to the whole thing, but pick up around 21:00 or so about bodies donated to science)
 - [Morbid Anatomy](#)
 - [The Order of the Good Death](#)
 - [End of Life University](#)

Weekend Assignment

- Create a 4-6 panel comic that explores the topic "After I die, I want my body to be ...".
 - The main narrative should be grounded in reality, but...
 - ... 1 of the panels can be more fantastical/imaginative
 - Consider what you want done to your body, who may take possession of it, what ceremonies may occur, and where you want the remains to end up
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Week 8: For the Living

Class 15 (May 9): Death and Humor

- Topics:
 - Humor in Dying and Death
- Readings:
 - Louis, R and L Antal. (2022). *Ronan and the Endless Sea of Stars*.
 - Available on reserve at the Regenstein Library.
 - [Medical Ethics & The Dark Side of Humor](#), Katie Watson
 - Perelson-Gross, L. [Never the right time](#). 2018
 - [The Grim Reaper](#)
 - South, AL, J Elton, and AM Lietzenmayer. [Communicating death with humor: humor types and functions in death over dinner](#). Death Studies 2020; 46(4).
- Supplemental Materials:
 - Graphic Medicine Podcast [interview with creators of Ronan and the Endless Sea of Stars](#)
 - [The Funeral of Chuckles the Clown](#) (video)
 - [Kramer wants to die with dignity](#) (video)

Class 16 (May 11): Obituary and Memorialization

- Topics:
 - The purpose and meaning of memorializing life
 - The ways in which we remember lost lives
- Guest:
 - [Jill Greenbaum](#), visual facilitator
 - Works with [VEOLI](#) (Visualizing End of Life Issues)
- Preparation:
 - [Creating a Visual Obituary Prep](#)
 - Also in the Canvas file folder
 - [Our class padlet](#)
- Supplemental Materials:
 - [In Loving Memory. D.W. Briggs](#)
 - “Obit: Life on a Deadline” (movie)
 - [Trailer here](#).
 - [Film viewing options here](#).

Week 9: Sharing

Class 17 (May 16): How Has Death Changed? Contemporary Aspects of Dying and Death

- Topics:
 - Class wrap-up
- Readings:
 - Miller, BJ. [What is death? How the pandemic is changing our understanding of mortality](#). The New York Times. December 18, 2020
 - Yong, E. [How did this many deaths become normal?](#) The Atlantic. March 8, 2022.
 - Yong, E. [America was in an early-death crisis long before COVID](#). The Atlantic. July 21, 2022.
 - Doughty, K. [We might not ever know the true toll of COVID-19](#). The Nib. September 21, 2020.
 - [And This is How I Leave You](#), Sean Seamus McWhinny
 - Kellman, R and K Radtke. [On dying alone: Behind every COVID-19 case, there is a story](#). NPR. June 6, 2020.
- Supplemental Materials:
 - <https://www.graphicmedicine.org/covid-19-comics/>
 - Lewis, T. [The U.S. just lost 26 years' worth of progress on life expectancy](#). Scientific American. October 17, 2022.
 - Schreiber, M. [What one million COVID dead mean for the U.S.'s future](#). Scientific American. March 29, 2022.
 - [America's decline in life expectancy speaks volumes about our problems](#), Michael Hiltzik, 4/5/23
 - [Me and the Universe](#) (on perspective) Anders Nilsen
 - [The Frontline Comics Project](#)

Class 18 (May 18): Drawing to a Close

- Topics:
 - Review of what we've covered this term
 - [Summary of Death Panels topics and exercises](#)
 - Please bring to class a list of your top 3-5 (or more!) takeaways from this course.
 - [Thank you.](#)
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Week 10: Final Projects Due

For graduating 4th years, final project is due May 24, 2023 at 5pm.

For all others, final project is due May 26, 2023 at 5pm.