



## COURSE OUTLINE

FUN 306  
Course Number

INTRO. TO FUNERAL SERVICE  
Course Title

3  
Credits

3/0  
Hours: lecture/laboratory/other (specify)

### Catalog description:

An introduction to Funeral Service encompasses the study of the history of funeral service as well as sociological factors that influence contemporary practices. Funeral customs of ancient civilizations, the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Early American and American Colonial periods are emphasized. The evolution of funeral merchandise and transportation is studied as it relates to specific historical periods. A study of ethics that includes models for decision-making, as well as the development of associations and education within funeral service is also addressed.

Prerequisites: Students must be enrolled in the Funeral Service Program

Corequisites: None

### Required texts/other materials:

Texts:  
TITLE: SOCIOLOGY FOR FUNERAL SERVICE  
PUBLISHER: PROFESSIONAL TRAINING SCHOOLS INC.  
EDITION: 2002 OR LATEST

TITLE: PSYCHO.SOCIAL ASPECTS OF DEATH & DYING  
AUTHOR: CANINE  
PUBLISHER: APPLETON & LANGE  
EDITION: 1996

Last revised: August 2007

Course coordinator: Robert C. Smith, III, tel. 570-3472; email: [smithr@mccc.edu](mailto:smithr@mccc.edu)

### Information resources:

TEXT: HISTORY OF AMERICAN FUNERAL DIRECTING  
PUBLISHER: BULFIN/NFDA  
EDITION: LATEST

### Other learning resources:

MCCC library website for database of holdings:

[http://www.mccc.edu/student\\_library.shtml](http://www.mccc.edu/student_library.shtml)

There are numerous MCCC library holdings for Funeral Service.

The call designations are:

RA622	Funeral Service science and practice
HD9999	Funeral Service business and profession
GT3202	Funeral customs, sociology, and history

Director of Funeral Service has copies of Funeral Service magazines and articles for student use in his office collection.

**Course goals:**

***The student will be able to:***

- recognize the historical roots of some contemporary funeral service practices
- understand how funeral service merchandise and transportation have evolved
- understand the historical development of the contemporary funeral home
- apply ethical decision-making models to case scenarios
- create a “code of ethics” for those entering the funeral service profession
- understand the development of funeral service education
- identify professional organizations in funeral service and related professions and the importance of intra and interprofessional relationships
- understand the relationship between sociology and the study of funeral service
- understand how cultural requirements and cultural diversity influences the relationship between the funeral director and the family being served
- identify family governance systems and structure and how they are affected when a member dies

**Course-specific General Education goals and objectives.** The students will demonstrate competency in critical and quantitative thinking and problem solving by working in groups on case studies, as well as participating in classroom discussion. They will learn to appreciate the human response to death as it relates to the family unit and community at large. Throughout the course they will research and study the historical milestones in funeral service practice and evaluate their relationship to current funeral trends. The students will apply concepts researched and discussed through real-world application exercises. Ethical responsibilities of the newly licensed professional will be determined and culminate in the code of ethics that they create.

**General Education Core Competencies.** The students will demonstrate competency in written and oral communication in English by presenting a research paper to the class on a specific funeral service organization. Students will work in groups on case studies that will challenge their critical thinking, problem-solving, and ethical decision-making skills. Information and computer literacy will be demonstrated in the research paper that they prepare and present to their classmates. Group work will demonstrate the student’s ability to collaborate and cooperate with their classmates. Collaboration and cooperation are key elements to the student’s success based on participation in group work and classroom discussion. Students are responsible for recognizing cultural issues as they relate to funeral customs and traditions.

## **Units of study in detail.**

### **Week 1** Introduction Terminology

Preparation: Psychosocial: Chapter 14

Objectives: Having done the assigned readings, attended the lecture, and participated in class discussion, the student will be able to:

1. understand the relationship between sociology and the study of funeral service
2. identify common beliefs in American Society
3. discuss the psychosocial functions of funerals

### **Week 2** American *National* Character

Preparation: Sociology: Chapters 9, & 10

Objectives: Having done the assigned readings, attended the lecture, and participated in class discussion, the student will be able to:

1. discuss the basis for the American funeral
2. identify factors that create different types of American funerals
3. understand the importance of sociology and culture in funeral service

### **Week 3** Sociology of Funeral Service

Preparation: Psychosocial: pages 192-194  
Sociology: Chapters 3, 4 and 5

Objectives: Having done the assigned readings, attended the lecture, and participated in class discussion, the student will be able to:

1. integrate the cultural requirements and diversities each family brings that is served
2. recognize family governance systems and their effect on the family's response to a loss
3. compare various family structures and their relationship to familial grief response
4. describe the social benefits and positive functions of funerals
5. analyze changing social factors which affect funeral rites and the families that are served

### **Week 4** Ancient Roman and Early Hebrew Funeral Customs

Preparation: attend class

Objectives: Having attended the lecture and participated in class discussions, the student will be able to:

1. interpret the funeral customs and death beliefs of the Ancient Egyptians, Ancient Romans and the Ancient Greeks
2. discuss the relationship between the Libitinarius and the modern funeral director
3. connect the impact of Constantine the Great with Roman burial practices
4. interpret the funeral customs and death beliefs of the Early Hebrew culture

## **Week 5** Early Christian and Ancient Scandinavian Funeral Customs

Preparation: attend class

Objectives: Having attended the lecture and participated in class discussions, the student will be able to:

1. distinguish the death beliefs and funeral customs of the Early Christians
2. discuss the role of the family in Early Christian funerals
3. examine the development of Early Christian cemeteries
4. discuss the role of Early Christian funeral functionaries
5. interpret the death beliefs and customs of the Ancient Scandinavians

## **Week 6** Middle Ages and Renaissance Funeral Customs

Preparation: attend class

Objectives: Having attended the lecture and participated in class discussions, the student will be able to:

1. integrate the Christian influence on funeral behavior during the Early Middle Ages
2. assess the relationship between funeral practices and social developments at the end of the Middle Ages
3. analyze the influence of the Medieval preoccupation with the physical side of death
4. discuss the influence of the Reformation on Christian funeral beliefs and practices

## **Week 7** Early American Indians and American Colonial Funeral Customs

Preparation: Psychosocial: page 23

Objectives: Having attended the lecture and participated in class discussions, the student will be able to:

1. interpret the death beliefs and burial customs of the Dakota, Santee Sioux, and Lakota tribes
2. integrate the influence of geographic location on American Colonial funeral practices
3. describe New England burial practices of the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century
4. evaluate the influence of social change in the 18<sup>th</sup> century on American Colonial funeral traditions

## **Week 8** Early American Funeral Undertaking

Preparation: attend class

Objectives: Having attended the lecture and participated in class discussion, the student will be able to:

1. integrate the influence of 19<sup>th</sup> century America on funeral directing as a profession
2. describe the duties of "layers out of the dead"
3. assess the role of religious functionaries on 19<sup>th</sup> century funeral rituals
4. integrate the advent of municipal concern regarding burial of the dead with special occupations
5. analyze the development of coffined burial in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century
6. describe the evolution of coffin and casket makers and their impact on funeral products
7. define stone and metal coffins, metallic burial cases, metallic burial caskets, cloth burial cases, burial vaults, and outside boxes
8. interpret the development of "life signals"

## **Week 9** Funeral Transportation

Preparation: attend class

Objectives: Having attended the lecture and participated in class discussion, the student will be able to:

1. connect the origin of the word hearse with its French and Latin roots
2. describe the early methods of transportation of the deceased
3. explain the contributions of James Cunningham, Hudson Samson, Fred Hulberg, and Crane & Breed
4. analyze the influence of gas and electric vehicles

5. describe the role of the ambulance, undertaker's buggy, and limousine

### **Week 10** Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Funerals and Funeral Service Associations

Preparation: attend class

Objectives: Having attended the lecture and participated in class discussion, the student will be able to:

1. illustrate the influence of life in late 19<sup>th</sup> century America on funeral thoughts and customs
2. examine the traditions for a death that occurred in the home
3. discuss the role of the undertaker when death occurred including embalming, funeral arrangements, and casket selection
4. describe the traditions for city funerals and rural funerals
5. list the coaches and carriages in appropriate order for the funeral cortege
6. describe graveside procedures
7. integrate the advent of late 19<sup>th</sup> century mourning symbols
8. analyze the role of economic revolution on the development of funeral service associations

### **Week 11-12** Ethics in Funeral Service

Preparation: attend class

Objectives: Having attended the lecture and participated in class discussion, the student will be able to:

1. assess the importance of studying ethics
2. identify the Funeral Ethics Organization and its influence on funeral service
3. integrate models for ethical decision-making as demonstrated by Lawrence Kohlberg, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, Robert Ninker, and Rotary International

### **Week 13** Changes Which Have Affected Funeral Service

Preparation: Psychosocial: Chapter 1  
Sociology: Chapter 6

Objectives: Having done the assigned readings, attended the lecture and participated in class discussion, the student will be able to:

1. integrate the impact of industrialization and urbanization on funeral service
2. analyze the effect that bureaucratization has on funeral service practices
3. synthesize the concept of longevity with contemporary trends regarding childhood and infant deaths
4. evaluate the impact of "cure-oriented" medicine in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century
5. describe the effect of medical technology and institutions on current death experiences

### **Week 14** Contemporary Social Factors and Funeral Rites

Preparation: Psychosocial: pages 118-120  
Sociology: Chapters 7, 8 and 9

Objectives: Having done the assigned readings, attended the lecture and participated in class discussion, the student will be able to:

1. describe and explain the effect of sociological factors and social support systems on the bereaved
2. identify the three areas of socioeconomics that may influence a family's choice of funeral rites
3. define "neolocalism" and explain its impact on American funeral rites
4. assess "religion" as a social factor
5. analyze the influence of the government as a social factor
6. describe how a person's educational level and ethnicity may impact their choice of funeral rite

### **Week 15** Changes in American Funeral Rites

Preparation: Psychosocial: Chapter 17  
Sociology: Chapters 11 and 12

Objectives: Having done the assigned readings, attended the lecture and participated in class discussion, the student will be able to:

1. describe how the historical role of the undertaker has evolved into today's funeral service practitioner
2. analyze how contemporary educational requirements reflect the changes in funeral service
3. connect the evolution of embalming with today's contemporary funeral rites
4. assess the impact of contemporary society's mobility on current funeral rites
5. interpret the influence of modern methods of disposition on the role of the funeral director
6. integrate immigration with contemporary rites of passage in American society
7. describe the influence of the electronic age on modern rites of passage

**Assessment of student learning:**

Student learning will be assessed using examinations, tests, quizzes, research papers, class presentations, and case studies. The final examination will be inclusive. Quizzes will cover material from the most recent class meetings, and tests will span several units of work. Case studies will be completed in groups. Each student will prepare a research paper and present the information to the class using a variety of visual aids.

Mastery of the material in this course will be evidenced through matching, multiple choice, fill in the blank, and/or short essay questions with at least a 75% accuracy level required.

NOTE: Minimum "C" grade in Funeral Service Courses is **75**.

100 – 94	A
93-90	A-
89-87	B+
86-83	B
82-80	B-
79-78	C+
77-75	C
74-60	D
<60	F

Grades for this course will be computed based on the following:

Quizzes/Tests:	50%
FS Org. & Ethics Projects:	25%
Final Exam:	<u>25%</u>
	100%

**RE: ALL Funeral Service Courses (FUN) must be completed with a grade of "C" or better**

Students should strive for maximum success in all coursework.

A GPA of 2.0 is necessary for graduation.

Students must sit for the National Board Exam in order to graduate. Students must be graduates and pass the NBE to be eligible for state licensure.

### **Academic Integrity Statement:**

It is the student's responsibility to attend all of their classes. If they miss a class meeting for any reason, students are responsible for all content that is covered, for announcements made in their absence, and for acquiring any materials that may have been distributed in class. It is expected that students be on time for all their classes. If students walk into a class after it has begun, it is expected that they choose a seat close to where they entered the room so that they do not disrupt the class meeting.

Students are expected to follow ordinary rules of courtesy during class sessions. Engaging in private, side conversations during class time is distracting to other students and to the instructor. Leaving class early without having informed the instructor prior to class is not appropriate. Unless there is an emergency, leaving class and returning while the class is in session is not acceptable behavior. Disruptive behavior of any type while someone is speaking is not appropriate.

The college welcomes all students into an environment that creates a sense of community pride and respect; we are all here to work cooperatively and to learn together.

### **Special Needs:**

**Any student in this class who has special needs because of a disability is entitled to receive accommodations. Eligible students at Mercer County Community College are assured services under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.**

**If you believe you are eligible for services, please contact Arlene Stinson, the Director of Academic Support Services. Ms. Stinson's office is LB221, and she can be reached at (609) 570-3525.**