

**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY  
CANTON, NEW YORK**



**COURSE OUTLINE**

**FSAD 111 - THE STUDY OF FUNERALS: PAST AND PRESENT**

Prepared by: Barry Walch

**SCHOOL OF SCIENCE, HEALTH & CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
Funeral Services Administration Program**

Revised: April 28, 2015

## FSAD 111 - THE STUDY OF FUNERALS: PAST AND PRESENT

- A. TITLE:** The Study of Funerals: Past and Present
- B. COURSE NUMBER:** FSAD 111
- C. CREDIT HOURS:** 3
- D. WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE:** No
- E. COURSE LENGTH:** 15 weeks
- F. SEMESTER(S) OFFERED:** Fall semester
- G. HOURS OF LECTURE, LABORATORY, RECITATION, TUTORIAL, and ACTIVITY:**  
Three hours lecture per week.
- H. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**  
This course discusses the role of funeral directors and other death-related professions in contemporary American society. Terminology, duties, and responsibilities of the funeral director during the removal of deceased, the wake, funeral, and committal service are extensively covered.  
Historical methods of preservation and memorializing the dead will be reviewed and discussed. Religious, historical and present day funeral customs in this and other countries are examined. Special focus on military protocols and procedures that are utilized for active duty deaths  
Each student will review his or her own personal response to death and pre-arrange his or her own funeral and/or burial. Each student will write an obituary for themselves or someone they know.
- I. PRE-REQUISITES/CO-COURSES:** N/A
- J. GOALS (STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES):**  
**By the end of this course, each student will:**

Course SLO	Institution SLO
1. Determine and discuss personal response to death or loss. Each student will write a eulogy and pre-arrange a funeral	3. Prof Competence, 4. Interpersonal skills
2. List and define basic funeral terminology	3. Prof Competence
3. Identify historical mortuary behavior and the rise of American funeral directing.	3. Prof Competence
4. Compare religious responses to death; including Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Greek Orthodox and Mormon	1. communication
5. Explain the basic principles of grief psychology and sociology	3. Prof Competence
6. Discuss inter and intra professional responsibilities of death care related professions.	4. Interpersonal Skills

**K. TEXTS:**

Iserson, K. *Death to Dust, What Really Happens to Dead Bodies*, Galen Press Ltd., Tucson, AZ, 1994

Habenstein and Lamers, revised by Howard C. Raether, *The History of American Funeral Directing*, National Funeral Directors Association, Milwaukee, WI, 1995

**L. REFERENCES:**

Text and other materials will be on reserve in the Library

**M. EQUIPMENT: None**

**N. GRADING METHOD: A – F.**

**O. MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS:**

Homework

Quizzes

Hourly exams

Comprehensive Final exam

FSAD students must obtain a grade of “C” or better in this course.

**O. DETAILED TOPICAL OUTLINE:**

I. Funeral Directors: Who are they and what do they do?

A. The Job Description

B. Characteristics of a Good Funeral Director

C. Basic Funeral Directing Terminology

II. The Complete Funeral Process

A. The Removal of the Deceased

B. The Embalming Process

C. The Arrangement Conference

D. Calling Hours

E. The Funeral Service

F. The Committal Service

III. Methods of Memorializing the Dead

A. Funeral Service VS Memorial Service

B. Unique memorializations of a life lived

IV. Methods of Disposition

A. Direct burial or cremation

B. Cremation

C. Burial

1. Vaults

2. Cemeteries

V. Epitaphs, Elegy, Eulogy, and Effigies

A. Epitaphs - history of them and well known ones

B. Elegies

C. Eulogy - how to write one, review some well known ones

D. Effigy

VI. Historical Responses to Death

A. Egyptian Mortuary Behaviors

B. Greek Responses to Death

C. Roman Traditions

D. Early European & Hebrew Traditions

- E. Scandanavian Traditions
- F. Colonial & Early American Responses
- VII. Religious Responses to Death
  - A. Catholic Traditions
  - B. Protestant responses
  - C. Jewish Traditions
  - D. Mormon
  - E. Greek Orthodox
  - F. Christian Science
  - G. Islamic
  - H. Humanistic
- VIII. Fraternal & Military Protocols in Death Response
  - A. Fraternal Traditions:  
Order of Eastern Stars, BPOE, Knights of Columbus, Masons, etc.
  - B. Military Protocols:  
Clergy, Escorts, Order of Service, Burial Benefits,