

MRTS 1191 – Special Topics – Current Events - HYBRID

Course Syllabus: Spring 2026

“Northeast Texas Community College exists to provide personal, dynamic learning experiences empowering students to succeed.”

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Office Hours: Via Appointment



This syllabus serves as the documentation for all course policies and requirements, assignments, and instructor/student responsibilities.

Information relative to the delivery of the content contained in this syllabus is subject to change. Should that happen, the student will be notified.

Course Description: 1 credit hour.

Lecture/Lab/Clinical: Three hours of lab each week.

Topics address recently identified current events, skills, knowledges, and/or attitudes and behaviors pertinent to the technology or occupation and relevant to the professional development of the student.
(Fall, Spring)

Prerequisite(s): MRTS 1301, MRTS 1330, MRTS 1342

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon the completion of this course, the student shall be able to demonstrate the following competencies with a minimum grade of 80%:

1. Examine the development of funeral service in order to bring significance to current practices;
2. Discuss and analyze the enduring values of various cultures as expressed in their funeral practices;
3. Examine the evolution of funeral merchandise, funeral transportation, and funeral homes;
4. Outline the progression and necessity of funeral service education;
5. Find the value of funeral service associations and their purposes;
6. Examine current events;
7. Identify trends in funeral service and how they impact management functions.

Evaluation/Grading Policy:

Percent

A 92 – 100
B 85 – 91
C 80 – 84
D 75 - 79
F 74 & below

Points

A 920-1000
B 850-919
C 800-849
D 750-799
F < 749

Exams:

There will be four exams, including the final.

Exam #1 @ 20 points

Exam #2 @ 100 points

Exam #3 @ 100 points

Final Exam @ 200 points

Total Exam Points = 420 (42% of final grade)

Projects:

Research Projects 1 @ 100 = 100 points

Current Events Projects 4 @ 25 = 100 points

Current Events Final Project 1 @ 100 points

Total Project Points = 300 (30 % of final grade)

Assignments:

Virtual Class 2 @ 50 = 100 points

Discussion Boards 2 @ 20 = 40 points

Quizzes 2 @ 20 = 40 Points

Journal 4 @ 25 = 100 points

Total Assignment Points = 280 (28% of final grade)

Total Course Points = 1,000 points

*A grade of C or better constitutes a passing grade in the Funeral Service Education program.

Required Instructional Materials: A Walk Through Time (AWTT)

Publisher: Thanos Institute

ISBN Number: 978-0-096479675-1n / 978-0-9647967-9-9

Appropriate readings will be supplied in Blackboard and through independent research.

Need library resources but don't know where to start? Ask a librarian! Research help is available in person at the Charlie and Helen Hampton Library Reference Desk, by phone at 903-434-8151, or by emailing the Director of Library Services, Ron Bowden at rbowden@ntcc.edu. The library's website, www.ntcc.edu/library, offers access to over 80 databases (including an eBook collection and a streaming video collection), a citation style guide, tutorials, and a link to their online catalog. The Funeral Service Education's library guide can be accessed by going to <https://libguides.ntcc.edu/c.php?g=634483>.

Minimum Technology Requirements:

- Regular (daily) access to high-speed internet via computer access
- Respondus Web Monitor (\$15), you will register for this in the “Start Course Here” folder
- Wired Webcam with microphone (for monitored test taking and recording projects)
- Word processing software (Word) and presentation software (Power Point)
- Document scanning capability
- Windows Laptop, PC, or MacBook are acceptable. Chromebooks, Tablets, or iPads are not compatible with the learning management system and will not allow full utilization of resources in the course.

Required Computer Literacy Skills:

Computer access is required in this course. Students must be comfortable using Word, opening and reading Excel documents, Power Point viewing, attaching documents in .DOC and .DOCX format, access and use online programs, use an internet browser, performing database searches for articles, Blackboard, and textbook support websites. Where and when available, automated classroom recording technology will be used to record virtual (Synchronous) activities. Such recordings will only be used to supplement the course(es) in which the recording took place. Please be sure to express concerns regarding synchronous activity recordings to the program director, prior to a virtual activity.

Course Structure and Overview:

This is a sixteen-week online course where students are required to access graded activities on the Blackboard Learning Management System. A typical class involves general participation by all members in discussions regarding funeral service and procedures being studied. Students are required to check email frequently, complete online homework, discussion forums, projects, and exams as assigned by the instructor. It is very important students keep up with course materials and assignments when issued by the instructor, as this is not a self-paced class. Students are expected to watch instructional videos, read course textbook, and complete online assignments located in the Learning Management System, Blackboard by the due dates.

SCANS Skills:

Basic Skills: reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematical operations, listening, speaking. Thinking Skills: creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, visualize, knowing how to learn, reasoning. Personal Qualities: responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity and honesty. Resources: time, money, materials and facilities, human resources. Information: acquires, evaluates, organizes, maintains, interprets, and uses computers. Interpersonal: participates in teams, teaches others, serves clients, exercises leadership, negotiates, works with diversity. Systems: understands systems, monitors and corrects performance, improves or designs systems. Technology: works with a variety of technologies. Lectures & Discussions: Didactic: Lecture, Power Point Presentations, Discussion, Case Studies, Videos/DVDs, Worksheets, Presentations, Written Assignments, Computer-based Assignments, Tutorials, and Assessments.

Communications:

***This course uses NTCC Student and Faculty email as the official form of communication. Blackboard Learning System on the NTCC website may also be used in this course.

Student emails and phone calls will be answered within 48 hours. Messages sent after 12:00pm (CST) on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday may not be answered until Monday. If you need information related to a test or assignment, plan ahead and submit your questions well ahead of the due date. Your instructor is not online 24 hours per day, so please allow time for response. Emails must be sent from a NTCC student email account, or they will not be answered. Assignments will not be accepted via email. All assignments should be submitted through Blackboard. Blackboard collaborate, virtual sessions, and the discussion boards are areas that should be used for open questions and conversation. Use private email for information you do not wish to share with everyone. Check in frequently and respond to general

conversations. Private e-mail should be used only when you want to converse with someone privately. Group e-mail is seen by all and you will be asked to post information, ideas, opinions, and questions publicly.

As part of an effort to help you develop your professional communication skills, I am instituting a (somewhat) formal email etiquette policy. While in the past I have had a certain amount of patience for email messages that are written in an informal style—that is, without much attention to structure, grammar, spelling, and style—I am quite concerned that your future employer(s) and other professional colleagues will be less tolerant. They may think that if you are that inattentive in your writing, you might be just as careless when you are interacting with families as well. (For example, please read [this article](#))

Therefore, when you send me an email, please make every attempt to follow my recommended guidelines for acceptable email etiquette:

- Use a properly descriptive subject line that consists of the course number (“MRTS 1191”) followed by a very brief phrase that summarizes the subject of your message, such as “Homework 1, Problem 2” or “Appointment request.” Please refrain from using short, nonspecific subject lines that have little to do with the actual message (like “hi,” “class,” “Comp Bio,” “python,” “question,” “help,” or just leaving the subject line blank.)
 - Start the body of your email off with a proper greeting, such as “Hello Mr. Osorio,” or something similar. (As a side benefit, this prevents you from accidentally addressing me by my first name)
 - Please make sure you know the difference between they’re, their, and there. Similarly, make sure you know when to use it’s versus its, your versus you’re, and to, two, and too. (There are people who write entire books to convey the wrath and fury they feel when they see examples of such abominations of punctuation and spelling.)
 - Please capitalize the first letter in each sentence, not the entire sentence.
- To encourage you to get in the habit of better email etiquette, my plan is as follows: If I receive an email message from you that does not make a sincere attempt to follow the recommendations outlined above, I may respond with a “canned” (pre-written) message that will politely ask you to rewrite your email and send again. It doesn’t have to be perfect (even I screw up sometimes), but assuming you made a decent attempt to do the right thing, then I will much more likely to provide an actual, personal, and timely response.

Institutional/Course Policy:

Strong attendance is imperative to successful learning. Being that this is an online course, attendance is counted through exams, assignments, discussion boards and quizzes. Make sure to log in at least three times a week to check for new materials and announcements.

Late work will not be accepted in any Funeral Service course, unless discussed with the instructor of record, prior to submission. If an assignment is turned in late, with the permission of the instructor, 10% of the total possible points will be deducted for each day the assignment is late. Students will have five days to submit late work, on the fifth day the paper will be docked 50% of the grade, following the 10% per day policy. After the fifth day, late work will no longer be accepted.

It is the goal of the funeral service faculty to have all grades and feedback returned to students within one week of the assignment due date. On occasion certain types of assignments (i.e. projects and essays) may take longer to grade and return. Your instructor will inform you when to expect a delay in returned grades. The CURRENT AVERAGE posted in the Blackboard course site is a calculated grade that represents your current course grade average based on the work you have turned in. It will not calculate correctly if you have missed assignments that have not been filled in with a zero.

Attendance is crucial due to the nature of this course. Success in this course is dependent on your active participation and engagement throughout the course. As such, students are required to complete all assignments by the due date, and to actively participate in class discussions.

Additionally, students are expected to:

- Log on at least three times a week – on different days in order to complete weekly assignments, assessments, discussions and/or other weekly deliverables as directed by the instructor and outlined in the syllabus;
- Participate in the weekly threaded discussions, this means that, in addition to posting a response to the thread topic presented, students are expected to respond to each other and comment and questions from the instructor and/or other students;
- Check NTCC's student email regularly, as this is the primary method of communication in the Funeral Service program.

**** Students enrolled in Funeral Service courses which include external learning experiences (Internships) are required to comply with the program dress code. A copy of this dress code can be found in the documents section in your Student Portfolio. It is suggested (and in some cases required) by the Funeral Service program that students purchase personal protective equipment for courses in which exposure to biohazards exist. Please refer to the Funeral Service Student Handbook for specific policies.**

For students in this course who may have a criminal background, please be advised that the background could keep you from being licensed by the state in which you plan to practice. If you have a question about your background and licensure, please speak with your faculty member or the department chair. You also have the right to request a criminal history evaluation letter from the applicable licensing agency.

Alternate Operations During Campus Closure and/or Alternate Course Delivery Requirements:

In the event of an emergency or announced campus closure due to a natural disaster or pandemic, it may be necessary for Northeast Texas Community College to move to altered operations. During this time, Northeast Texas Community College may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include, but are not limited to, online through the Blackboard Learning Management System, online conferencing, email messaging, and/or an alternate schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor NTCC's website (<http://www.ntcc.edu/>) for instructions about continuing courses remotely, Blackboard for each class for course-specific communication, and NTCC email for important general information.

Additionally, there may be instances where a course may not be able to be continued in the same delivery format as it originates (face-to-face, fully online, live remote, or hybrid). Should this be the case, every effort will be made to continue instruction in an alternative delivery format. Students will be informed of any changes of this nature through email messaging and/or the Blackboard course site.

NTCC Academic Honesty/Ethics Statement:

NTCC upholds the highest standards of academic integrity. The college expects all students to engage in their academic pursuits in an honest manner that is beyond reproach using their intellect and resources designated as allowable by the course instructor. Students are responsible for addressing questions about allowable resources with the course instructor. Academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, and collusion is unacceptable and may result in disciplinary action. This course will follow the NTCC academic Honesty and Academic Ethics policies stated in the Student Handbook. Refer to the student handbook for more information on these subjects.

ADA Statement:

It is the policy of NTCC to provide reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals who are students with disabilities. This College will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws,

regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations. An appointment can be made with the Academic Advisor/Coordinator of Special Populations located in Student Services and can be reached at 903-434-8264. For more information and to obtain a copy of the Request for Accommodations, please refer to the special populations page on the NTCC website.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's educational records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are considered "eligible students." In essence, a parent has no legal right to obtain information concerning the child's college records without the written consent of the student. In compliance with FERPA, information classified as "directory information" may be released to the general public without the written consent of the student unless the student makes a request in writing. Directory information is defined as: the student's name, permanent address and/or local address, telephone listing, dates of attendance, most recent previous education institution attended, other information including major, field of study, degrees, awards received, and participation in officially recognized activities/sports.

SEE COURSE CALENDAR ON NEXT PAGE

Tentative Course Timeline (*note* instructor reserves the right to make adjustments to this timeline at any point in the term):

Class Week	Month	Dates	Topics/Notes	Assignments Due
1	JAN	20-26	Course Introduction	Respondus & Syllabus Exam I (20 points)
2	JAN/FEB	27-2	History AWTT Ch. 19, p. 111-122 & p. 235-236 Introduction to Mass Fatality Research Project	Journal I (25 points)
3	FEB	3-9	Current Events -Ethics AWTT Ch. 33, p. 207-218	Discussion Board I (20 points) Current Event Project – Part I (25 points)
4	FEB	10-16	Values and Culture AWTT Ch. 32, p. 201-206 Virtual Class #1 Tuesday, February 10, 2026 6:00 pm (CST)	Discussion Board II (20 points) Virtual Class (50 points)
5	FEB	17-23	Current Events	Journal II (25 points)
6	FEB/MAR	24-2	Funeral Merchandise AWTT Ch. 17, p. 89-98	Journal III (25 points)
7	MAR	3-9	General Price List Federal Trade Commission Current Events	Journal IV (25 points) Current Event Project – Part II (25 points)
8	MAR	10-16	Funeral Transportation AWTT Ch. 16, p. 81-88	Exam II (100 points)
SPRING BREAK!! MARCH 17-23, 2024 ENJOY, BE SAFE, RELAX AND RECHARGE!				

9	MAR	24-30	Current Events Mass Fatality	Mass Fatality Research Project Due (100 points)
10	MAR/ APR	31-6	Evolution of Funeral Homes	Current Event Project – Part III (25 points)
11	APR	7-13	Current Events-Opioids Virtual Class #2 Tuesday, April 7, 2026 6:00 PM (CST)	Current Event Project – Part IV (25 points) Virtual Class (50 points)
12	APR	14-20	Opioids Continued	Quiz (20 points)
LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM CLASSES WITH A “W” Thursday, April 16, 2026				
13	APR	21-27	Funeral Service Education AWTT Ch. 28, p. 173-184	Funeral Service Education Quiz (20 points)
14	APR/ MAY	28-4	EXAM III	Exam III (100 points)
15	MAY	5-11	Funeral Service Associations AWTT Ch. 29, p. 185-190	Current Event Project – Final Part (100 points)
16	MAY	12-14	FINAL EXAM - Comprehensive	Final Exam (200 points)
Spring Graduation ~ Saturday, May 16, 2026 @ 11:00 am (CST)				

*AWTT = “A Walk Through Time” textbook