

Brant Davis – MRTS 1301 Contemporary Funeral Service Practice
Course Syllabus: Fall 2026

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



Instructor: Brant Davis, Credentials
Office: Microsoft Teams Virtual Office
Phone: Available By Appointment
Email: bdavis@ntcc.edu
Virtual Office: Microsoft Teams Virtual Office

Office Hours	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Online
	9:00 – 11:00	9:00 –12:00	2:00 – 4:00	1:00 – 4:00	By Appt	<i>Link to my virtual office can be found in the introduction to your course folder*</i>

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:

Survey of general principles related to customs, religions, human relations, and social behavior. Presentation of the requirements for burial, cremation, donation, and burial at sea. An introduction to funeral counseling as a basis for fulfilment of responsibilities. (Fall, Spring)

3 credit hours. 3 lecture hours. 0 lab hour.

Prerequisite(s): Program Director permission or acceptance to the Funeral Service Program

Student Learning Outcomes:

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

- Role of the Modern Funeral Director
- Historical and Contemporary Funeral Service Practices.
- Purpose and Value of the Funeral.
- Elements of Grief within Different Cultures.
- Terminology for Funeralization, Memorialization, and disposition of the Dead.
- Legal Parameters of Serving Various Religions, Humanists, Military, etc.
- Values of Various Cultures as Expressed in their Funeral Practices.
- Treatment and Disposition of the Dead Human Body.

Add or remove bullet points as needed.

Evaluation/Grading Policy:

There will be 5 exams, including the final.

Category	Detail	Points
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Exams	4 Exam's 100 pts; Final 200 pts	600
Quizzes	5 Quizzes 12.5 pts each	62.5
Assignments	9 Assignments pts; Final Project 12.5 pts	112.5
Discussions	2 Discussion Boards 12.5 pts each	25
Homework / Projects	2 Projects 75 pts each	150
Virtual Class	2 Projects 25 pts each	50
TOTAL COURSE POINTS		1,000

Grade	Percentage	Points	
A	92–100%	920–1,000	
B	85–91%	850–919	
C	80–84	800–849	
D	75–79%	750–799	
F	74% and below	Below 749	

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

Final Exam grades must be 75% or higher to pass the class, regardless of the weighted calculation determined. If a student has a weighted grade of 80% or higher and does not receive a final exam grade above 75%, the student will receive an “F” in the class.

Required Instructional Materials:

Types of Funeral Services and Ceremony

Publisher: Funeral Service Education Resource Center (FSECR) **ISBN Number:** 978-0-692-67590-8

One World Sociology & Funeral Service (1st Edition)

Publisher: Funeral Service Education Resource Center (FSECR) **ISBN Number:** 978-0-692-67592-2

Optional Instructional Materials:

None, Appropriate readings will be supplied in Blackboard and through independent research.

Library Resources:

Need library resources but do not 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 <http://libguides.ntcc.edu/c.php?g=634483>.

The final exam in this course is required to be proctored live by the course instructor or their designee.

The proctored Final Exam grade must be 75% or higher to pass the class, regardless of the weighted calculation determined. If a student has a weighted grade of 80% or higher and does not receive a final exam grade above 75%, the student will receive an “F” in the class.

Once a student has completed all requirements for graduation, the student's name will be certified with the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards (ICFSEB) to register for the National Board Exam (NBE). All students will receive an “Incomplete” for this course. The student must show proof that they have taken the National Board Exam (NBE) – Arts section.

Evidence of NBE – Arts completion will be submitted via email to Ms. Gardner. Once proof has been submitted, regardless of passing or failing, the final course grade will be released. Completion of the NBE is required within 45 days of the last official class day. Please note that there are fees associated with taking the NBE and are covered by student fees. The current exam fee is \$285 for the NBE-Arts section.

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 (PowerPoint)
- Document scanning capability
- Windows laptops, PC, or MacBooks are acceptable. Chromebooks, Tablets, or iPads are incompatible with the learning management system and will not allow full utilization of resources in the course.

Required Computer Literacy Skills:

Students are expected to have reliable access to a computer and be proficient in the following technology skills:

- Using Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Using Adobe software (Reader, Acrobat, or other commonly required programs)
- Attaching and submitting documents in standard file formats
- Accessing and utilizing online programs, including Blackboard and textbook support websites
- Navigating the internet and performing database searches for academic articles

When available, automated classroom recording technology may be used to record synchronous (live/virtual) class activities. These recordings are intended solely to supplement the course/program in which they occur and will not be distributed otherwise. Students with concerns regarding the recording of synchronous activities should contact the Program Director prior to the scheduled virtual session.

Course Structure and Overview:

16-week online course delivered through the Blackboard Ultra Learning Management System. Students are required to access and submit all graded activities through the designated links in Blackboard.

A typical class will include participation in discussions related to funeral service topics and procedures being studied. Students are expected to:

- Check email and blackboard frequently for announcements and updates
- Complete online work, discussion forums, projects, and exams assigned
- Stay current with course materials and deadlines (this is **not** a self-paced course)
- Watch instructional videos and read assigned course textbook(s)
- Submit all assignments in Blackboard by the posted due dates

Active participation and consistent engagement with course content are essential for success.

SCANS Skills:

Basic Skills: reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematical operations, listening, speaking. **Thinking Skills:** creative thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, visualization, knowing how to learn, and 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, and works with diversity.

Systems: understanding systems, monitors and corrects performance, improves or designs systems. **Technology:** works with a variety of technologies.

Didactic: Lectures, PowerPoint Presentations, Discussions, Case Studies, Videos/DVDs, Worksheets, Presentations, Written Assignments, Computer-based Assignments, Tutorials, and Assessments.

Communications:

NTCC student and faculty email serve as the official forms of communication for this course. Blackboard Ultra and Microsoft Teams may also be used to communicate with your instructor(s). **All written correspondence must come from your NTCC student email account.**

- **Response Time:** Student emails and phone calls will be answered within 48 hours. Messages sent after 12:00 p.m. (CST) on Friday, or over the weekend, may not be answered until Monday. Please plan and submit any questions about tests or assignments well before the due date, as instructors are not available 24/7.
- **Email Use:** Emails must be sent from your NTCC student account; messages from personal accounts will not receive a response.
- **Assignment Submission:** Assignments must be submitted through Blackboard. Work submitted via email will not be accepted.
- **Class Communication Spaces:**
- **Discussion boards, Blackboard Collaborate, and virtual sessions** are intended for open questions and class conversation.
- **Private email** should be used only for matters you do not wish to share publicly.
- **Group email** is visible to all recipients. Please use it appropriately when posting information, ideas, opinions, or questions intended for the class.

Students are encouraged to check in frequently and actively participate in both group and individual communications.

To help you develop your professional communication skills, I am instituting a (somewhat) formal email etiquette policy. When you send me an email, please make every attempt to adhere to the following recommended guidelines:

- Use a properly descriptive subject line that consists of the course number ("MRTS 1301") followed by a very brief phrase that summarizes the subject of your message, such as "Homework 1, Problem 2" or "Appointment request."
- Start the body of your email with a proper greeting, such as "Hello, Mrs. [Last Name]," or something similar.
- Please make sure you know the difference between they're, their, and there. Similarly, make sure you know when to use its versus it, you're versus you're, and to, two, and too.
- Please capitalize the first letter in each sentence, not the entire sentence.

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" message that will politely ask you to rewrite your email and send again. Microsoft Teams communications should follow the email etiquette policy outlined above. All communication should be respectful and professional.

Institutional/Course Policy:

Attendance:

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

Since 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:

Students will have five days to submit late work; however, 10% of the total possible points will be deducted for each day; the assignment is late; 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 not be accepted in any Funeral Service course unless discussed with the instructor of record prior to submission.

Late work is not accepted beyond the 14th week of class.

Grading:

It is the goal of the funeral service faculty to have all grades and feedback returned to students within one week of the assignment's due date. Occasionally, certain 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 on 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.

Students enrolled in Funeral Service courses, including external learning experiences (Internships), must 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 exists. 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 check could keep you from being licensed by the state in which you plan to practice. Please speak with the Program Director if you have a question about your background and licensure. 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.

Statement Regarding the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Technology:

Employees and students shall be permitted to explore artificial intelligence (AI) and implement its use in and out of the classroom in accordance with policy and administrative regulations. The use of AI shall only be as a support tool to enhance student outcomes or as necessary to engage in research and shall never take the place of faculty, staff, and student decision-making. Any use of AI must comply with law, policy, and administrative regulations relating to student and employee privacy and data security. A student shall only use AI tools with faculty permission and shall be expected to produce original work and properly credit sources, including AI tools used in creating the work.

Example:

APA (7th edition)

OpenAI. (2026). ChatGPT (March 25 version) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com/>

MLA (9th edition)

OpenAI. ChatGPT. 25 Mar. 2026, <https://chat.openai.com/>.

Employees or students who use AI tools to deceptively harm, bully, or harass others shall be disciplined in accordance with policy. [See DH, DIA series, FFD series, FFE, FLB, and the FM series] AI Use by Employees and Students. Northeast Texas Community College 225500 TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES CRB ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (LOCAL) DATE ISSUED: 12/8/2025 1 of 1 UPDATE 50 CRB(LOCAL)-AJC Adopted: 12/16/2025

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 accommodation 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 accommodation as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodation. 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 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.

Student Services Resources:

At Northeast Texas Community College, we understand that students often need support that extends beyond the classroom. "Eagle Assist" is the place to start when looking for that type of assistance. Our support system is here to help you succeed in both your academic and personal growth. www.ntcc.edu/eagleassist

Services provided:

- Mental Health Counseling
- Classroom Accommodations
- NTCC Care Center Food & Hygiene Closet
- Financial Literacy
- Students with Children
- Emergency Aid
- Tutoring

Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, mental health, alcohol or other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

Mental Health Counseling Services are available on campus people and online—to all NTCC students at no cost. If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help is a courageous thing to do. You can also contact us directly at counseling-center@ntcc.edu

Tentative Timeline (*instructor reserves the right to adjust this timeline at any point in the term*)

Class Week	Month	Dates	Readings*	Topics / Notes	Assignments Due
1	AUG	24–31	The History /Evolution of American Funeral Practices	Course Introduction	Discussion Board (12.5 points) Respond us Quiz (12.5 points)
2	AUG/SEP	1–7	Video/Lecture	The Modern Funeral Director/Agencies in Funeral Service	The Modern Funeral Director Assignment (12.5 points)
3	SEP	8–14	Video/Lecture and Notes	American Religious Funerals Introduction Note: Labor Day – Mon Sep 7 Virtual Class #1 6:00pm	Quiz # 2 (12.5 points) Virtual Class #1 (25 points)
4	SEP	15–21	TFS&C Chapters 1- & 2- pages 1-40	Liturgical & non-liturgical	Chapter review assignment (12.5 points)
5	SEP	22–28	TFS&C Chapters 3 & 4 pages 41-76	The Church of Christ, Scientist Christian Science, The Mormon Funeral Rite (LDS/RLDS), The Jehovah's Funeral Rite & Roman Catholic Rite	Chapter Review assignment (12.5 points) Quiz #3 (12.5 points)
6	SEP/OCT	29–5	[Review all course work Modules 1- 5]	Exam #1 Introduction to Attend a Funeral Project	Quizlet Entry Assignment (12.5 points) Exam #1 (100 points)
7	OCT	6–12	TFS&C Chapters 5, 6 & 7, pages 77-113	The Eastern Orthodox Funeral Rite, The Orthodox Jewish Funeral Rite, The Conservative/Reformed Jewish Funeral Rite, & The Islamic Funeral Rite	Chapter Review Assignment (12.5 points) Quizlet Matching Assignment (12.5 points)
8	OCT	13–19	[[TFS&C Chapters 8, & 9, pages 114-134]	The Buddhist Funeral Rite, The Japanese Buddhist Funeral Rite, & The Baha'i'	[Quiz #4 (12.5 points) Discussion Board (12.5 points)]
9	OCT	20–26	[TFS&C Chapters 10 & 11, pages 135-153]	Funeral without God, Military Funeral, Funeral Organizations	Liturgical/Non-Liturgical Assignment (12.5 points)
10	OCT/NOV	27–2	Review Course Work Modules 7, 8, & 9	Exam #2	Project #1 Attend a Funeral Essay (75 points) Esam #2 (100 points)

11	NOV	3–9	OWS&FS Chapters 1- & 2- pages 1-31	Introduction to Sociology Social Changes that Impact Funeral Service Virtual Class #2 6:00pm	Quizlet Entry Assignment (12.5 points) Virtual Class #2 (25 points)
12	NOV	10–16	OWS&FS Chapters 3- & 4- pages 32-52	Social Factors that Impact Funeral Rites	Quizlet Matching Assignment (12.5 points)
13	NOV	17–23	OWS&FS Chapters 5 pages 54-63	U.S. Funeral Rites: A Contemporary Perspective Last Day to Withdraw: Tue Nov 17	Quiz #5 (12.5 points)
THANKSGIVING BREAK – Wednesday – Friday, November 25–27					
14	NOV/DEC	24–30	Review all course work for Modules	Exam #3 (No class Wed–Fri Nov 25–27)	Exam #3 (100 points)
15	DEC	1–7	Review all Sociology Glossary Terms	Exam #4 Interview a Funeral Director	Exam #4 (100 points) Interview a Funeral Director (75 points)
16	DEC	8–10		FINAL EXAMS (Tue Dec 8 – Thu Dec 10)	Final Exam (200 points)
FALL GRADUATION – Friday, December 11, 2026					

Textbook Key: TFS&C = Types of Funeral Services and Ceremonies 2nd edition
OWS&FS = One World: Sociology and Funeral Service 1st edition