

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA  
UNCOMMON READ  
COURSE SYLLABUS  
FALL/2016

<u>COURSE NUMBER</u>	IDH 3931, Section 02DH
<u>COURSE TITLE</u>	An (Un)Common Read <i>Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End</i> by Atul Gawande
<u>CREDITS</u>	1
<u>PREREQUISITES:</u>	None
<u>FACULTY</u>	Jeannie P. Cimiotti, PhD, RN, FAAN Associate Professor and Dorothy M. Smith Endowed Chair Director, Florida Blue Center for Health Care Quality jcimiotti@ufl.edu HPNP 2220 (352) 273-6342 office Office hours: by appointment  Toni L. Glover, PhD, GNP-BC, ACHPN Assistant Professor tglover@ufl.edu HPNP 3229, (352) 273-6334 office, (352) 494-7215 cell Office hours: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Medicine has triumphed in modern times, transforming the dangers of childbirth, injury, and disease from harrowing to manageable. But when it comes to the inescapable realities of aging and death, what medicine can do often runs counter to what it should. Through eye-opening research and gripping stories of his own patients and family, Gawande reveals the suffering this dynamic has produced. Nursing homes, devoted above all to safety, battle with residents over the food they are allowed to eat and the choices they are allowed to make. Doctors, uncomfortable discussing patients' anxieties about death, fall back on false hopes and treatments that are actually shortening lives instead of improving them. And families go along with all of it.

Atul Gawande, a practicing surgeon, has fearlessly revealed the struggles of his profession. In *Being Mortal* he examines its ultimate limitations and failures – in his own practices as well as others' – as life draws to a close. And he discovers how we can do better. He follows a hospice nurse on her rounds, a geriatrician in his clinic, and reformers turning nursing homes upside down. He finds people who show us how to have the hard conversations and how to ensure we never sacrifice what people really care about. Gawande writes, "People with serious illnesses have priorities besides simply prolonging their lives. Surveys find that their top concerns include avoiding suffering, strengthening relationships with family and friends, being mentally aware, not being a burden on others and achieving a sense that their life is complete. Our system of technological medical care has utterly failed to meet these needs, and the cost of this failure is measured in far more than dollars. The question therefore is not how we can afford this system's expense. It is how we can

build a health care system that will actually help people achieve what's most important to them at the end of their lives.”

“For human beings life is meaningful because it is a story.” We will read and discuss the book over the first 9 weeks of the semester. Experiential activities are planned for the later part of the course with the goal of deepening the discussion of our unique stories.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Describe the current state of end-of-life care in the United States.
2. Consider the factors that prevent individuals from planning for the end of life.

### REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Gawande, A. (2014). *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End*. New York, NY: Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt and Company, LLC.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

This course is primarily an in-person, experiential course. Additional course resources will be available through the [E-Learning](#) course management system. There are several tutorials and student help links on the E-Learning login site. If you have technical questions call the UF Computer Help Desk at 352-392-HELP or send email to [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).

### COMMUNICATION COURTESY/NETIQUETTE

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all class discussion, email messages, and twitter chats. Familiarize yourself with the [UF netiquette policy](#). Failure to follow the rules of common courtesy may result in a grade reduction.

### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Reading, class attendance and participation, experiential activities, reflective papers.

### ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

Assessment methods will include class attendance and participation in class discussions, completion of the readings, and three brief reflective papers. Since this is a discussion-based class attendance and participation are vital. Missing the Death Over Dinner event or the field trip will result in an extra individual assignment. Your final grade will be dropped one letter grade for each absence after one missed class. Requirements for class attendance and assignments and other work in this course are consistent with [university policies](#).

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Points</u>
Class Attendance	15
Class Participation	30
Reflective Papers (3/15 points each)	45
Twitter Chat	10
	100

### GRADING SCALE/QUALITY POINTS

A	93-100 (4.0)	C	73-76 (2.0)
A-	90-92 (3.67)	C-	70-72 (1.67)
B+	87-89 (3.33)	D+	67-69 (1.33)
B	83-86 (3.0)	D	63-66 (1.0)
B-	80-82 (2.67)	D-	60-62 (0.67)
C+	77-79 (2.33)	E	59 or below (0.0)

For more information on grades and grading policies, please refer to University's [grading policies](#).

### UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the [UF Student Honor Code](#).

The [UF Counseling and Wellness Center](#) offers many resources to assist students maintain their emotional and psychological well-being.

CLASS SCHEDULE (may be updated as needed to achieve the course objectives)

DATE	READING	DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	LECTURES/VIDEOS	LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS
August 25		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your field of study/future profession?</li> <li>• What inspired you to take this class?</li> <li>• What do you hope to learn?</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions</li> <li>• Syllabus, assignments</li> <li>• Sign up for Death Over Dinner on October 20 <b>or</b> October 27</li> <li>• Field Trip November 10</li> </ul>
September 1	<p>Introduction Chapter 1: The Independent Self</p> <p>Read <a href="#">The Way We Die Now</a>, by Diane Meier</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does Dr. Gawande mean when he says we've medicalized mortality (p. 9)? Should health professionals be educated on end-of-life care?</li> <li>• Did you know 10,000 Americans turn 65 years old each day! For the first time in human history, the number of older individuals exceeds the number of children less than 5 years of age. Take a look at the <a href="#">animated population graph</a> to view the impact of the aging baby-boomers (those born between 1946-1964) on the population distribution (scroll down to second picture to view animation). For the majority of your careers, this immense growth in the number of older adults will impact health care. What is your attitude toward old age? Is it something to deny or avoid, or a state in life to be honored? How does caring for aging relatives affect families?</li> </ul>	<p>Watch the Frontline documentary on <a href="#">Being Mortal</a> (54:11).</p> <p>Watch the video, <a href="#">Ain't the Way to Die</a> (3:24), by ZDoggMD.</p>	

DATE	READING	DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	LECTURES/VIDEOS	LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS
September 8	Chapter 2: Things Fall Apart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is mortality discussed in your family?</li> <li>• How do tradition and spirituality influence your concept of what it means to be mortal? What dying customs exist in your family?</li> <li>• Have you ever seen anyone die? What was it like? How did the experience affect your wishes for the end of your own life?</li> </ul>	<p>Watch the video, <a href="#">A Good Death, Molly's Story</a> (12:29).</p> <p>Watch the TED talk, <a href="#">What Really Matters at the End of Life</a>, (19:07) with BJ Miller.</p>	<p><u>Reflective Paper</u> Write a 2-3 page paper describing a personal experience with death (family, friend, pet, global tragedy). What do you fear most about the end of life? What constitutes a 'good death'?</p> <p><b>Due: September 11, 11:59 pm</b> <b>Submit on Canvas Assignments</b></p>
September 15	Chapter 3: Dependence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This chapter gives new meaning to the phrase 'there's no place like home.' Would you be happy living in the apartment Alice chose? What would you miss most about your home?</li> </ul>	<p>Watch the TED talk, <a href="#">There's a Better Way to Die and Architecture Can Help</a>, (4:39) with Alison Killing.</p>	
September 22	Chapter 4: Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Gawande discusses two divergent philosophies regarding the care of frail older adults: keeping them safe or encouraging independence. Discuss the statement "Assisted living isn't really built for the sake of older people so much as for the sake of their children" (pp. 105-106).</li> <li>• When you think about growing old, what kind of autonomy do you want to preserve? How might you do that?</li> </ul>	<p>For an inspiring look at communicating with patients with advanced dementia, watch <a href="#">Gladys Wilson and Naomi Feil</a> (5:46).</p>	

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September 29	Chapter 5: A Better Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did the addition of pets' trigger so many improvements among residents?</li> <li>• What do your own pets add to your life?</li> </ul>	<p>Watch the Vital Talk video, <a href="#">Sent from beyond death...</a>, (2:58) with Tony Back. (Scroll down to the January 14, 2016 video blog.)</p> <p>Vital Talk trains clinicians how to communicate with patients facing serious illness. If you are interested in communication, all the brief videos on Vital Talk are excellent. There's also a Vital Talk app.</p>	<p>Bring an object from nature to class.</p> <p><u>Haiku Reflections</u> I am a Haiku Seventeen syllables One Revelation</p> <p>At this moment now... Last words Haiku</p> <p>Reflect on <i>What is Dying in Me Today?</i></p>
October 6	<p>Chapter 6: Letting Go</p> <p>Read <a href="#">A Tender Hand in the Presence of Death</a>, by Larissa MacFarquhar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "25% of all Medicare spending is for the 5 percent of patient who are in their final year of life, and most of that money goes for care in the last couple of months that is of little apparent benefit" (p. 153). Why do you think it's so difficult for patient, families, and health care providers to refuse or curtail treatment?</li> <li>• How do we ethically and compassionately set priorities for end-of-life care?</li> </ul>		<p>Explore the <a href="#">Go Wish</a> game (there is a 'Try it Free' button on the left middle of the screen).</p> <p>We will play the Go Wish game and begin the discussion of advance care planning in class.</p>

DATE	READING	DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	LECTURES/VIDEOS	LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS
October 13	<p>Chapter 7: Hard Conversations</p> <p>Read <a href="#">5 End-of-Life Stats Everyone Should Know</a> on The Conversation Project website</p> <p>Read <a href="#">When Advance Directives Are Ignored</a>, by Paula Span</p> <p>Read <a href="#">A Hand to Hold</a>, by Chris Feudtner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Gawande describes three types of relationships patients have with physicians (pp. 200-201): paternalistic, informative, and interpretive. What type of relationship would you want with your healthcare provider if you faced serious illness?</li> <li>• How prepared do you feel to do and say the right thing when that time comes for someone in your life?</li> <li>• In the Coping with Cancer study (p. 177), two-thirds of patients reported having no conversations with their physicians about their goals of care, despite being on average four months from death. Do you have an advance directive? Do members of your family have one? How would answers the questions on page 179?</li> </ul>	<p>Watch the <a href="#">emmi video</a> on Advance Directives (under the side box, Interactive Videos, free registration).</p> <p><b>Optional Activity:</b> Watch the movie <a href="#">Wit</a> (1:39), a play made into a movie that focuses on end-of-life care.</p>	<p>Explore websites which focus on advance care planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">The Conversation Project</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">PREPARE</a></li> </ul> <p>In class, we will review various formats for advance care planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UF Health Advance Directive</li> <li>• 5 Wishes</li> </ul>
October 20	Chapter 8: Courage Epilogue		Allie, the facilitator for the Death Over Dinner event, will email the readings and learning activities two weeks before your dinner.	<u>Death Over Dinner</u> (no class) Meet at the <a href="#">Blue Gill Restaurant</a> at 5 pm (dinner is on us – enjoy!)
October 27			Allie, the facilitator for the Death Over Dinner event, will email the readings and learning activities two weeks before your dinner.	<u>Death Over Dinner</u> (no class) Meet at the <a href="#">Blue Gill Restaurant</a> at 5 pm (dinner is on us – enjoy!)

DATE	READING	DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	LECTURES/VIDEOS	LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS
November 3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow-up discussion on Death Over Dinner led by Allie</li> </ul>		<p><u>Reflective Paper</u> Write a 2-3 page description of your experience participating in the Death Over Dinner Event. What was the dinner experience like for you? Were you uncomfortable talking about your death? How has this dinner changed or expanded your thoughts about death? Can you imagine initiating a Death over Dinner conversation with your family or friends? How can you support the end-of-life wishes of those closest to you? Connect the homework materials and the Death Over Dinner experience with the reading of <i>Being Mortal</i>.</p> <p><b>Due: November 2, 11:59 pm</b> <b>Submit on Canvas Assignments</b></p>
November 10				<p><u>Field Trip</u> Meet at the <a href="#">Prairie Creek Conservation Cemetery</a> at 4 pm Share your experience on social media (Twitter, Facebook). Details will be provided in class.</p>
November 17				No class
November 24	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY			



DATE	READING	DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	LECTURES/VIDEOS	LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND ASSIGNMENTS
December 1	Wrap-up, class feedback and class party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share a class activity or experience that meant the most to you?</li> <li>How can we improve this class?</li> </ul>		<p><u>Reflective Paper</u>  This last assignment allows creativity and individual expression. Choose from one of the options below. Feel free to discuss alternate ideas with your instructors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Write a 2-3 page description of what you want your final days to be like. Where do you want to be? Who is with you? Incorporate your care priorities from the <i>Go Wish</i> game.</li> <li>Draw a floor plan or build a model of an environment conducive to end-of-life care. Describe what features would be most important to include.</li> <li>Complete your own Advance Directive using your preferred format (UF Health AD Form, 5 Wishes, Conversation Project). Describe your plan to share this with your family and healthcare provider.</li> <li>Construct a <i>Before I Die</i> wall display in Hume Hall. Collect responses for at least one week. Photograph your wall. Write about the experience, common responses, and reaction from colleagues. This could be a team activity.</li> <li>Perform a renga (group poem in which individual poets link their haiku verses around a common theme) at the last class. Write about your experience with writing haiku.</li> <li>See Assignment for additional ideas.</li> </ul> <p><b>Due: December 4, 11:59 pm</b>  <b>Submit on Canvas Assignments</b></p>