

# THANATOLOGY

## An Understanding of Death and Dying

This exam tests introductory level knowledge of the study of dying and death. Topics include: the nature, course and process of the experience of dying and death in American society, the different approaches to death and dying taken by people around the world and throughout history, and theories of death researchers. 3 s.h. PSY-300-TE

This is a two-hour examination in which you must answer 100 multiple-choice questions (worth 1 point each). A passing score is **60** out of 100 points.

### Here are the areas covered and their approximate importance on the test:

- I. ATTITUDES, BELIEFS, AND FEELINGS ABOUT DEATH (10%)  
Anxiety, denial, acceptance
- II. DEFINITIONS, DESCRIPTIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF DEATH (10%)  
Physical, psychological, biomedical, historical
- III. THE AMERICAN DEATH SYSTEM (5%)  
Characteristics, functions, changes over time
- IV. THE PROCESS OF DYING (10%)  
Universality, individuality, theoretical models, trajectories of dying
- V. DECISIONS THAT RELATE TO DYING AND DEATH (15%)  
Advance directive options, hospice, pain treatment, organ donation, funerals
- VI. SUICIDE, MURDER AND OTHER VIOLENT DEATHS (10%)
- VII. THE RIGHT-TO-DIE (10%)  
Euthanasia, assisted death, assisted suicide
- VIII. CHILDREN AND DEATH (5%)  
Their concepts of death, coping with another's death, coping with their own death
- IX. BEREAVEMENT, GRIEF, MOURNING AND FUNERALS (15%)
- X. LIFE AFTER DEATH (5%)  
Near-death experiences, historical/cultural/religious perspectives and beliefs
- XI. DEATH EDUCATION AND DEATH COUNSELING (5%)

### A textbook to help you prepare:

Kastenbaum, Robert J. *Death, Society, and Human Experience*.  
Current edition. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon

## SAMPLE QUESTIONS

1. Death systems are found in
  - a. past-oriented, low-technology societies
  - b. mass, high-technology societies
  - c. societies in transition
  - d. all societies
2. Death anxiety tends to
  - a. increase as people reach their 70s
  - b. decrease in the later adult years
  - c. develop during adolescence
  - d. revolve around fears of violent death
3. What interpretation of death was most common in the ancient world?
  - a. Death is nothing.
  - b. Death is an enfeebled form of life.
  - c. Death is perpetual development.
  - d. Death is waiting.
4. Life expectancy at birth is longest in \_\_\_\_\_ and shortest in \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. North America; Latin America
  - b. North America; Africa
  - c. Europe; Latin America
  - d. Europe; Asia
5. Hospitalized patients are most likely to be treated as socially dead if they are on a(n)
  - a. lingering trajectory
  - b. malingering trajectory
  - c. expected quick trajectory
  - d. crisis trajectory
6. The Kubler-Ross stages of dying are said to begin when the patient
  - a. first becomes ill
  - b. gives up hope
  - c. becomes aware that the illness is terminal
  - d. experiences a spiritual transformation
7. About what percentage of terminally ill Americans receives hospice care?
  - a. 25%
  - b. 10%
  - c. 5%
  - d. 2%

8. The principle of informed consent means that
- patients have the right to refuse medical treatment after being adequately informed about their condition and treatment options
  - doctors have the right to refuse to treat patients who resist being informed about their condition and treatment options
  - doctors have the right to withhold information from patients if they believe the knowledge will be emotionally detrimental
  - patients have the right to insist on treatment regardless of their condition
9. According to the *Five Wishes* advanced directive option, when someone can no longer make their own health care decisions, who makes them?
- A wish administrator
  - A health care agent
  - A health assistant
  - A care giving manager
10. The highest suicide rates in the U.S. are found in
- southern states with relatively high homicide rates
  - states with higher educational levels
  - low density states such as Nevada and New Mexico
  - high density states such as New York and Massachusetts
11. About how many people in the U.S. die each year as the result of accidents?
- 10,000
  - 50,000
  - 100,000
  - 500,000
12. It is estimated that between \_\_\_\_\_ Americans exist in persistent vegetative states at the present time.
- 500 and 1,000
  - 3,000 and 5,000
  - 6,000 and 8,000
  - 10,000 and 25,000
13. Most of the people for whom Dr. Kevorkian provided an assisted death were
- terminally ill
  - suffering severe pain
  - neither (a) nor (b)
  - both (a) and (b)

14. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in children is often expressed by
  - a. repetitive play in which aspects of the trauma are represented
  - b. recurring anxious dreams of the traumatic event
  - c. difficulties in concentrating
  - d. all of the above
  
15. Bereavement is defined as
  - a. the objective fact that somebody in one's life has died
  - b. a change in grief status
  - c. the expression of sorrow over the loss of a loved one
  - d. the personal feelings one has after a loved one dies
  
16. "Accept the reality of death in order to liberate one's self from the strong attachment one had to the lost object." This statement represents the basis of
  - a. grief-work theory
  - b. family systems theory
  - c. chronic stress theory
  - d. symbolic reconstruction theory
  
17. The typical traditional funeral in the U.S. costs
  - a. \$2,000 - \$4,000
  - b. \$6,000 - \$8,000
  - c. \$10,000 - \$12,000
  - d. \$15,000 - \$18,000
  
18. All of the following findings have been reported regarding NDE's (near-death-experiences) EXCEPT which one?
  - a. Some survivors return with nightmarish experiences.
  - b. Many people who report NDE's were not actually close to death.
  - c. Almost all people who had close encounters with death also had NDE's.
  - d. People who were in severe pain were more likely to have an out-of-body experience.
  
19. Studies of hospice caregivers have found that most
  - a. report that they regularly pray with their families
  - b. have become more religious as a result of their experiences with dying patients
  - c. seldom pray
  - d. pray often, but privately, for their own strength and renewal

20. "People who consider themselves to have full and satisfying lives are less anxious about death."  
This concept is the basis of
- a. respect theory
  - b. regret theory
  - c. double aspect theory
  - d. notional theory

### **ANSWERS TO SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

1. **d**   2. **b**   3. **b**   4. **d**   5. **a**   6. **c**   7. **a**   8. **a**   9. **b**   10. **c**  
11. **c**   12. **d**   13. **c**   14. **d**   15. **a**   16. **a**   17. **b**   18. **c**   19. **d**   20. **b**