

Art of Dying Hypothetical Symposium

Who	The College of Liberal Arts, University of Massachusetts Boston, with assistance from the Vice Chancellor of University Communications and Community Relations will co-sponsor a year-long symposium on death and dying.
What	<p>The Symposium will be organized around several themes or key questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do people die of? How has this changed through human history?• Is there a “good death” and can people be taught to prepare for it?• What can we learn from literary and artistic representations of death and dying? What place does personal narrative and storytelling have in death and dying? How do humor, euphemism, and metaphor help to articulate our feelings about death and dying?• What can other cultures and traditions show us about the art of dying?
Why	Death and dying are emblematic events about which there remains a certain taboo and mystique. We may feel grief at the loss of a family member or friend, curiosity about exactly how death occurs, or wish for some comfort or closure on behalf of a dying person, but whatever our perspective or reason for engaging with it, dying is one of only two universal experiences we share as human beings. The UMass Boston Symposium on the Art of Dying will initiate discussion and reflection around this important topic on many levels and through many lenses: the artistic and literary, the spiritual and compassionate, the physiological, the ethical, and the humorous.
How	<p>The College of Liberal Arts, through a mandate from the Dean of the College, will invite proposals from departments within the college to suggest timely and meaningful ways of showcasing UMB student and faculty talent with respect to the themes indicated above. For example:</p> <p>Art Department might ask students to create paintings, sculptures, lithographs, etc. on the themes of the symposium for an exhibition to be held in McCormick Gallery.</p> <p>Performing Arts Department might stage “Time to Go: Three Plays on Death and Dying, with Commentary on End-of-Life Issues” or a similar dramas that communicates the themes of death and dying. http://endeavor.med.nyu.edu/lit-med/lit-med db/webdocs/webdescrips/hawkins794-des-.html</p> <p>Religion Department might sponsor a debate on euthanasia.</p> <p>Anthropology Department might convene a panel discussion on rites of death and dying in other cultures.</p>

English Department might commission students in Creative Writing to create poetry, short stories, or other literary works on the themes of death and dying.

Philosophy Department might invite speakers from within their faculty to address ethical issues such as the right-to-die, or what constitutes a “good death.”

History and **Sociology** Departments might look at how practices related to death have changed over time.

College of Nursing students might look at the nursing issues associated with hospice, palliative care, or organ transplants.

Healey Library might mount displays and a speaker series on the place of narrative and storytelling in death and dying, including biographies.

Where

The Symposium events will all take place at the UMass Boston campus. Venues would include the Campus Center conference rooms, McCormack Gallery, Healey Library Gallery, and McCormack Theatre.

When

The Symposium would run from September, 2007 through May, 2008.