

SYLLABUS
FSE 225, Funeral Service Management I
3 semester hours, 3 contact hours
Spring Semester, 2009
9:00 a.m. – 11:30 p.m. Thursday

- Instructor:** William Thompson
- Office:** 112-D Central Campus
- Office hours:** As posted on office door or by appointment
- Instructor contacts:** Office phone – 251.405.4439 or 251.405.4435
Office email – wthompson@bishop.edu
- Corequisite:** None
- Prerequisite:** Admission to FSE Program
- Required textbook:** _____. (1991). *Mortuary administration and funeral management*. Dallas: Professional Training Schools.
- Required on-line resources:** Please see the links in the Projected schedule of Instruction and Assignments.

Course objectives: This course is a study in the operations and management of a funeral home. To this end, the student is expected to be able to:

1. define and describe considerations, strengths and weaknesses related to the location and design of the funeral facility;
2. discuss the importance of and techniques for conducting the arrangement conference;
3. elicit and record vital statistics, biographical, and service data;
4. demonstrate through practical application and written documentation methods and procedures of compliance to rules established by agencies regulating the practice of funeral service;
5. demonstrate knowledge of the financial aspect of the funeral home;
6. demonstrate knowledge of funeral merchandise;
7. discuss theories and methods of merchandising;
8. demonstrate effective written and verbal communication skills;
9. collect, discuss, and analyze data representative of current trends in the practice of funeral service.
10. identify areas of weakness within the practice of the funeral profession,
11. develop a personal philosophy on the professional practice of funeral service;
12. develop/enhance skill as a change-agent, facilitator of positive change.

Catalog description: This course is a study of funeral home operations and management. Major topics of discussion will include site selection, financing, recruitment, and training of personnel, establishment of management policies, selection-room planning, and merchandising. Students will be able to relate theories of funeral home management and merchandising to practical funeral home operations.

Student Support Services: In addition to your instructor serving you as a primary resource, the College assists students to improve their academic performance and success. Information is available through the Division of Student Support Services in room 106 on the Central Campus.

Special accommodations: If you have need for any in-class accommodations or special test-taking arrangements because of a physical and/or perceptual limitation, please get in touch with the instructor at the earliest time possible to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunity.

Nondiscriminatory statement: The Alabama State Board of Education, through the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education, proclaims nondiscriminatory practices in Alabama's two-year institutions under the jurisdiction of the Alabama State Board of Education. It is the official policy of the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education and Bishop State Community College that no persons shall, on the basis of race, color, disability, sex, religion, creed, national origin, or age be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program, activity, or employment. Questions about this policy as it relates to two-year institutions should be directed to:

American with Disabilities Act of 1990,
Arvin Trotter, ADA Coordinator,
E-mail: [Dr. Arvin Trotter](#)

Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)
Dr. Terry Hazzard, Dean of Students,
E-mail: [Dr. Terry Hazzard](#)

Titles IV, VII, and IX,
Ms. Madeline R. Stokes
E-mail: [Ms. Stokes](#)

Attendance: The instructor will maintain a record of your attendance for each class meeting. Class attendance is strongly encouraged. Excessive absences may affect your final grade. Students are expected to attend all classes as scheduled and exercise regularity and punctuality in attendance. Absences will be recorded for each class, and no absences will be considered excused. Absences are counted from the first day of the student's registration in the course. Exceptions to any attendance policy will be made only for persons required to fulfill military duty, jury duty, or court witness obligations.

Students must request approval for these exceptions in advance and provide documentation to the Admissions Office on the appropriate campus prior to the scheduled dates of absence. Exceptions must be approved by the Dean of Students.

Students are responsible for all coursework from the first scheduled day of class.

Students must abide by coursework and test makeup policy indicated in the course syllabus.

Course policies and procedures

Technology: You are expected to maintain an active email account that is used to facilitate not only the learning of technology and course content but also to communicate with your instructor and classmates. It is suggested that you check your email at least twice per week. Accessing web-based materials is required in this course. For those of you who may not have a home computer, you may use those that are located in the various on-campus technology labs including the one in CE-117. Use of the computers in CE-117 is limited to times when class is not in session unless approved by the instructor.

General - You are encouraged and expected to engage behaviors that foster and promote learning. Therefore, you should be punctual and in attendance for all classes. Your attendance greatly enhances the collaborative learning techniques used to build our learning community. To further enhance our learning and interactive participation you are expected to have read and completed assignments before class. While you are reading and preparing assignments, you are advised to create notes, graphs, charts, or other tools that enhance your learning (these will also be great review and study materials for licensure exams). As you read and study be sure to note any questions that come to mind and we will use these in class to clarify our readings. You are expected to actively listen and participate in class by offering your viewpoints and asking questions. Please be considerate of your fellow classmates and instructor by leaving and reentering the classroom during class session **only for emergencies**. All personal communication devices such as **paggers and cell phones** should be **turned off** during class time.

Procedures

Price Lists – The purpose of this assignment is for students to gain knowledge of the format and structure of a price list that meets FTC requirements and demonstrate knowledge of funeral pricing. To complete this assignment each student will produce a general, casket, and outer burial container price list reflecting the contents of our on-campus merchandising laboratory and the stand-alone caskets. You are expected to complete these in full and strict compliance with FTC requirements. Additionally, you must include a minimum of five outer burial containers. Your final price list may be submitted as one complete or three separate price lists. In addition to the above criteria, spelling will be considered as part of your grade. Your draft and final price list(s) should

be submitted on or before the due date. There is no make-up available and any price list submitted past the due date will be assessed a five-point deduction for each day (including weekend days) beyond the due date that it is not submitted.

Portfolio – The purpose of this assignment is to allow students to demonstrate knowledge and use of the various forms completed by the funeral director and, to the extent possible, user's knowledge of software specific to the funeral industry. To complete this assignment, you should secure one obituary notice (provide a copy to the instructor) from various sources including in-print and online newspapers. Based on the information contained within the obituary you select, you should complete the various forms appropriate to that notice.

You should place a cover sheet over the array of documents you produce that explains what forms were submitted completely. In addition, you should explain what forms were completed partially or excluded from your portfolio. For those incomplete or excluded documents you should offer a written explanation of what criteria or action by the funeral director would be necessary to complete the information. In addition to the above criteria, spelling will be considered as part of your grade. There is no make-up available and any portfolio submitted past the due date will be assessed a 5-point deduction for each day (including weekend days) beyond the due date that it is not submitted.

Sales presentation – The purpose of this assignment is to develop students' written and oral skills sufficiently to professionally present funeral merchandise to consumers and within legal guidelines established by the FTC. Completion of this assignment is accomplished through written (scripts) and oral (sales presentation) requirements.

The written portion will consist of a review of the caskets and fractional units and other merchandise located in and around the area of the merchandising laboratory. Additionally, you should address a minimum of five outer burial containers. Your script should include the features, advantages, and benefits of each item of merchandise. In addition, you should include explicit information that describes the differences between various units of the same merchandise.

The oral portion of your sales presentation will be offered in the presence of the instructor and at least one other student who serves as a peer evaluator. You will make your sales presentation to one of your classmates or to a non-funeral service individual selected by the instructor.

Your grade on both the scripts and oral sales presentation will be derived from the accuracy of your description of merchandise, advantages, and benefits, their differences, and your strict compliance with FTC regulations. As usual, your spelling will be considered in assigning your written grade. Your grammar and verbal responsiveness will be considered in your oral grade.

In class, we will assign presentation dates to each student. In the event that you miss your assigned presentation time, another time MAY be scheduled for you, if convenient. If rescheduled, your grade will be lowered by one letter if you fail to inform the instructor

prior to the absence. Otherwise, you will make your presentation one-on-one to the instructor at a mutually convenient time.

Position/Change theory paper – The purpose of this assignment is for students to demonstrate knowledge of those factors that contribute to change processes within the practice of funeral service and to serve as foundation for projection of needed change in the future.

To complete this assignment, you will write a paper of no less than five and no more than seven pages in which you identify your philosophy of funeral service; what changes you think the funeral service profession or you as an individual need to embrace; and, lastly, what changes you see occurring within the funeral industry over the next 10–15 years. Your paper should be entirely double spaced with an appropriate coversheet and bibliography. Because of the individualized nature of this assignment, I will provide relatively few guidelines on what is expected within your writing. However, you should include in your writing those most important or salient points as viewed by you that emerge from the text, change theory article, and topics discussed each week. You should strive to synthesize the information from your various sources around common themes emerging from the data.

Final exam – The final exam is comprehensive, covering all assigned readings and topics and will consist of approximately 50 multiple-choice questions. Make-up of the final exam is allowed only when the student has been prevented by illness or other justifiable cause from completing the test. A student who must miss a final examination has the responsibility of notifying the instructor of her/his absence and providing acceptable evidence concerning the cause of absence.

Grading: The grade scale for the FSE Program courses differs from and takes precedence over the grading information published in the *College Catalog*. The FSE grade scale is as follows:

- A – 93 – 100
- B – 84 – 92
- C – 75 – 83
- D – 60 – 74
- F – 59 or below

Successful completion of this course requires a final average of 75% or better. Your grade will be assigned as follows:

I. Price lists		15%
II. Portfolio		15%
III. Sales presentation	Scripts	15%
	Oral	10%
IV. Position/Change Theory Paper		20%
V. Final exam		25%

Projected Schedule of Instruction and Activities*

DATE/ SESSION	TOPIC	HAVE READ	CLASS ACTIVITIES	DUE
Jan. 15/1	Course overview			
Jan. 22/2	Compliance and Introduction to Change Theory	FTC Compliance Combined Price List General Price List OBC Price List Package Price List Change Theory pp. 89- 127		
Jan. 29/3	Arrangement conference	Communication Tips Interpersonal Communication Self-analysis pp. 11-18		
Feb. 5/4	Outer Burial Containers	Clark Vaults Doric Vaults Fiberglass Vaults Trigard Vaults Wilbert Vaults pp. 64 - 67	A/V Presentation Lecture/discussion Work on OBCPL	

Feb. 12/5	Caskets	Aurora Caskets Batesville Caskets Cherokee Child Caskets MILSO The York Group The Promethean Casket pp. 43 - 63		Draft Outer Burial Container Price List
Feb. 19/6	Selection Room Merchandising and Pricing	Fractional Display 2 Lankford Funeral Home Central Tendency Calculate central tendency Frequency distribution pp. 69 - 76		
Feb. 26/7	Preneed and Cremation	Alabama Preneed Bill of Rights Mississippi Preneed Preneed Research NFDA on Cremation CANA Cremation Process	Lecture/discussion Work on final price lists	Draft Casket Price List

Mar. 5/8	Death Benefits Records and Forms	Social Security Survivor Benefits Veterans Benefits pp. 19 – 42 pp. 167 - 198	Lecture/discussion Work on scripts Exam review	
Mar. 12/9			Exam Presentation prep	
Mar. 19/10	Sales Techniques	Sales Presentation Bottom Line Nonverbal communication	Lecture/discussion Work on scripts	Final Price List(s)
Mar.26/11	Spring Break			
Apr. 2/12	Philosophical Foundations Management History Change Theory Revisited	pp. 5 – 10 Change Theory	Lecture/discussion Review/revise sales script Work on portfolio	
Apr. 9/13	Establishing the Funeral Home	Bloodborne Pathogens Formaldehyde Standard Hazard Communication Compliance Guideline pp. 77-81	Lecture/discussion Sales Presentations Work on portfolio	Sales Script Sales Presentations
Apr. 16/14	Employer-employee relations	Fair Labor Standards Act Family Medical Leave Act	Lecture/discussion Sales Presentations	Sales Presentations

		Job Discrimination	Work on portfolio	
Apr. 23/15	Public Relations	p. 87	Lecture/discussion Sales Presentations	Sales Presentations Portfolio
Apr. 30/16	Student presentations Course review and evaluation		Oral Presentations Course review Course evaluation Review for final exam	Philosophical position/change theory paper
May 7/17			FINAL EXAM	

* The instructor reserves the right to modify the schedule and assignments in order to enhance the learning environment or to accommodate for unforeseen circumstances.

Disclaimer: Although every reasonable effort is extended to attain factual accuracy herein, no responsibility is assumed for editorial, clerical, or printing errors or error occasioned by honest mistake. Please call any suspected errors to the instructor's attention for clarification.

FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION PROGRAM
Bishop State Community College
Spring Semester 2009

Students' Acknowledgement of Policies and Procedures

By my signature, I indicate that I received a syllabus for FSE 225. I further attest that the instructor has reviewed that syllabus with me and that I have read and have understanding of all requirements for the successful completion of the above identified course. I further attest that I have been made aware of the *General Catalog* and *Student Handbook*, and understand that I am responsible for abiding by the policies and procedures contained therein.

Student's Signature

Student's Printed Name

Date

Instructor's Signature

Date