



**MRTS 1320 – Crematory Operations**  
**Course Syllabus: FALL 2024**

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



**Instructor:** Savannah M. Toews, MS, FD/EMB  
**Office:** IA 111B  
**Phone:** 903.434.8315  
**Email:** [stoews@ntcc.edu](mailto:stoews@ntcc.edu)  
**Virtual Office:** <https://bit.ly/3QUzaY8>

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Online
<b>Office Hours</b>	Available by Appointment	Available by Appointment	9:00 AM – 2:00 PM (CST)  Virtual by Appt	9:00 AM – 2:00 PM (CST)  Virtual by Appt	Available by Appointment	<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:** A study of the general principles of crematory operations. Presentation of legal requirements, procedures, liabilities, records maintenance for cremation and disposition of cremated remains.

3 credit hours. 3 lecture hours. 1 lab hour.

**Prerequisite(s):** Program Director permission

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

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

1. Discuss the historical significance of cremation.
2. Identify the primary consideration for funeral directors working with those interested in cremation as a method of disposition.
3. Describe the importance of legislative and regulatory compliance.
4. Describe considerations recommended when using third party crematories.
5. Explain the importance of using appropriate paperwork to document cremation related decisions, including forms required by state and local agencies and those designed for legal protection.
6. Distinguish between cremation containers, containers for cremated deceased, and other related merchandising options.
7. Explain the specific elements of the FTC Funeral Rule that applies to cremation.
8. Identify services and trends in conjunction with cremation.

9. Describe options for proper disposition of cremated deceased including legal restrictions and local customs.
10. Demonstrate understanding of requirements for shipping cremated deceased.

**Evaluation/Grading Policy:** There will be five exams, including the final.

**Tests/Exams:**

There will be four exams, including the final.

Exam #1 @ 100 points

Exam #2 @ 100 points

Glossary Exam @ 100 points

Final Exam @ 200 points

**Total Exam Points = 500**

**Quizzes:**

Quizzes 6 @ 35

**Total Quiz Points = 210**

**Assignments**

Assignments 3 @ 50

Final Project @ 80

**Total Assignment Points = 230**

**Discussions**

Discussion Boards 4 @ 40

**Total Discussion Points = 160**

**Homework:**

Modules 8 @ 50

**Total Homework Points = 400**

**Total Course Points = 1500 Points**

Percent

A 92 - 100

B 85 - 91

C 80 - 84

D 75 - 79

F 74 & below

Points

A 1380-1500

B 1275-1379

C 1200-1274

D 1125-1199

F < 1125

\*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:**

*Cremation Standards for Funeral Service*

**Publisher:** NFDA

**ISBN Number:** 9780692024775

*Fires Of Change: A Comprehensive Exam of Cremation*

**Publisher:** FSERC

**ISBN Number:** 9780997926187

**Optional Instructional Materials:** None.

Appropriate readings will be supplied in Blackboard and through independent research.

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](mailto:rbowden@ntcc.edu). The library's website, [www.ntcc.edu/library](http://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 <https://libguides.ntcc.edu/c.php?g=634483>.

**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:**

Computer access is required in this course. Students must be comfortable using Word, opening and reading Excel documents, viewing PowerPoint, attaching documents in .DOC and .DOCX format, accessing and using online programs, using an internet browser, performing database searches for articles, Blackboard, and textbook support websites. Where and when available, automated classroom recording technology will be used to record virtual (Synchronous) activities. Such recordings will only be used to supplement the course(es) in which the recording occurred. Please express concerns regarding synchronous activity recordings to the program director before a virtual activity.

**Course Structure and Overview:**

This is a sixteen-week online course where students are required to access graded activities on the Blackboard Learning Ultra Management System. All assignments should always be accessed and submitted through the links in Blackboard. A typical class involves general participation by all members in discussions regarding funeral service and procedures being studied. Students are required to check email frequently, complete online homework, discussion forums, projects, and exams as assigned by the instructor. Students must keep up with course materials and assignments when issued by the instructor, as this is not a self-paced class. Students are expected to watch instructional videos, read the course textbook(s), and complete online assignments in the Learning Management System, Blackboard, by the due dates.

## 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: understands 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:

\*\*\*This course uses NTCC Student and Faculty email as the official form of communication.

Blackboard Learning Ultra System and Microsoft Teams are also acceptable forms of communication with the instructor(s). All forms of written communication should come from the student's NTCC student account.

Student emails and phone calls will be answered within 48 hours. Messages sent after 12:00 pm (CST) on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday may not be answered until Monday. If you need information related to a test or assignment, plan and submit your questions well before the due date. Your instructor is not online 24 hours a day, so please allow time for a response. Emails must be sent from an NTCC student email account or will not be answered. Assignments will not be accepted via email. All assignments should be submitted through Blackboard. Blackboard collaborate, virtual sessions, and the discussion boards are areas that should be used for open questions and conversation. Use private email for information you do not wish to share with everyone. Check-in frequently and respond to general conversations. Private email should be used only when you want to converse with someone privately.

Group email is seen by all and you will be asked to post information, ideas, opinions, and questions publicly.

To help you develop your professional communication skills, I am instituting a (somewhat) formal email etiquette policy. While in the past, I have had a certain amount of patience for email messages that are written in an informal style—that is, without much attention to structure, grammar, spelling, and style—I am quite concerned that your future employer(s) and other professional colleagues will be less tolerant. They may think that if you are that inattentive in your writing, you might be just as careless when interacting with families. (For example, please read [this article](#))

Therefore, when you send me an email, please make every attempt to follow my recommended guidelines for acceptable email etiquette:

- Use a properly descriptive subject line that consists of the course number ("MRTS 1330") followed by a very brief phrase that summarizes the subject of your message, such as "Homework 1, Problem 2" or "Appointment request." Please refrain from using short, nonspecific subject lines that have little to do with the actual message (like "hi," "class," "Comp Bio," "python," "question," "help," or just leaving the subject line blank.)

- Start the body of your email with a proper greeting, such as "Hello, Mrs. G," or something similar. **(As a side benefit, this prevents you from accidentally addressing me by my first name)**
- Please make sure you know the difference between they're, their, and there. Similarly, make sure you know when to use it's versus its, your versus you're, and to, two, and too. (There are people who write entire books to convey the wrath and fury they feel when they see examples of such abominations of punctuation and spelling.)
- Please **capitalize the first letter in each sentence, not the entire sentence.** To encourage you to get in the habit of better email etiquette, my plan is as follows: 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" (pre-written) message that will politely ask you to rewrite your email and send again. It does not have to be perfect (even I screw up sometimes), but assuming you made a decent attempt to do the right thing, then I will be much more likely to provide an actual, personal, and timely response.

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 in 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.

Additionally, 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 could keep you from being licensed by the state in which you plan to practice. Please speak with the department chair 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.

### **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 accommodations 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 accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to request accommodations. 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 general 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.

## **Eagle Assist Services**

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](http://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- in person 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](mailto:counseling-center@ntcc.edu)

**SEE COURSE CALENDAR ON NEXT PAGE**

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

<b>Class Week</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Readings*</b>	<b>Topics/Notes</b>	<b>Assignments Due</b>
1	JAN	21-27	<i>CSFSP</i> Ch 1  <i>FOC</i> Ch 1	Course Introduction  Cremation History	Discussion Board #1 (40 points)  Respondus Syllabus Quiz #1 (35 points)
2	JAN/ FEB	28-3	<i>FOC</i> Ch 12-13	Cremation Trends and Statistics	Discussion Board #2 (40 points)  Lab Module 1 (100 points)  Quiz #2 (35 points)
3	FEB	4-10	<i>CSFSP</i> Ch 2  <i>FOC</i> Ch 6	Process of Cremation	Lab Module 2 (100 points)  Quiz #3 (35 points)
4	FEB	11-17	<i>FOC</i> Ch 11	Alkaline Hydrolysis  <b>Virtual Class #1</b> <b>Tuesday, February 11, 2025</b> <b>@ 7:00 p.m. (CST)</b>	Discussion Board #3 (40 points)
5	FEB	18-24	<i>CSFSP</i> Ch 3  <i>FOC</i> Ch 6	Crematory Operations and Maintenance	Lab Module 3 (100 points)  Exam I (100 points)
6	FEB/ MAR	25-3	<i>CSFSP</i> Ch 4  <i>FOC</i> Ch 3	Cremation Authorization	Forms & Procedures Project (50 points)  Quiz #4 (35 points)
7	MAR	4-10	<i>CSFSP</i> Ch 5-6  <i>FOC</i> Ch 2	Identification and Due Diligence	Lab Module 4 (100 points)  Discussion Board #4 (40 points)



8	MAR	11-17	CSFSP Ch 9  FOC Ch 5	Liability and Preventative Procedures	Lab Module 5 (100 points)  Quiz #5 (35 points)
<b>**SPRING BREAK MARCH 17-25, 2025**</b>					
9	MAR	25-31	CSFSP Ch 7  FOC Ch 4	Shipping Remains and Final Disposition	Exam II (100 points)
10	APR	1-7	CSFSP Ch 8	Crematory Operator Safety	Lab Module 6 (100 points)  Glossary Assignment (50 points)
<b>LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM CLASSES WITH A "W" – Thursday April 10, 2025</b>					
11	APR	8-14			Lab Module 7 (100 points)  Lab Final Module (50 points)
12	APR	15-21	FOC Ch 7-8	Cremation Containers	Quiz #6 (35 points)
13	APR	22-28	CSFSP Ch 5.3  FOC Ch 9	Caskets and FTC  <b>Virtual Class #2 Tuesday, April 15, 2025 @ 7:00 p.m. (CST)</b>	FTC Project (50 points)
14	APR/ MAY	29-5	CSFSP Ch 10  FOC Ch 10	Community and Customer Relationships	Cremation Arrangement Assignment (80 points)
15	MAY	6-12		Review	Glossary Exam (100 points)
16	MAY	13-15		<b>FINAL EXAM- Comprehensive</b>	<b>Final Exam</b> (200 points)
<b>Spring Graduation ~ **Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup>**</b>					

**Textbook Key:**

CSFSP = *Cremation Standards for Funeral Service Professionals*

FOC = *Fires of Change*