

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  
STEVE HICKS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**Course Number:** SW 360K

**Professor's Name:** Dede Sparks, LMSW

Preferred pronouns: she/her/hers

**Unique Number:** 60645

**Email address:** dsparks@austin.utexas.edu

**Semester:** Spring 2019

**Preferred Phone:** 512-731-3705

**Meeting Time/Place:** W 5:30 – 8:30 pm  
SSW 2.130

**Office:** SSW 3.124B

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 4:00 – 5:00 pm  
and by appointment

**PATIENT AND PROVIDER HEALING: TOPICS ON  
DEATH, DYING AND RESILIENCE**

**I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Practitioners face palliative and end-of-life decisions with patients who are dying but are often ill-equipped to cope with the intensity of the feelings and conversations around these decisions. This course will help students to reframe these challenging interactions as opportunities to form meaningful connections with patients, families and caregivers, and to understand the significance of self-care, self-compassion, and the cultivation of resilience in the face of difficult situations. The course will concentrate on cultural, historical and theoretical components of death, dying and resilience in healthcare; communicative, psychological, and sociological approaches to terminally-ill patient communication and care; and methods of achieving wellness and resilience in the face of adversity.

**II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

1. Communicate an understanding of cultural, historical and theoretical perspectives of death, dying and resilience for both patients and healthcare providers.
2. Discuss significant concepts and vocabulary related to health, wellness, illness, death and dying as they relate to resilience.
3. Evaluate processes and practices surrounding end-of-life care for patients and self-care for practitioners.
4. Communicate an understanding of the impact of anticipatory grief and social support on resilience for patients, caregivers, and healthcare providers, and discuss the diversity of human responses regarding anticipatory grief.
5. Critically evaluate ethical issues around the intersection of healthcare systems, policies and practices and provider resilience and self-care.
6. Discuss essential elements of effective interprofessional communication.

**III. TEACHING METHODS**

This course is designed to include a variety of teaching and learning methodologies to achieve the course objectives. These activities may include reading, writing, discussion, lecture, guest

speakers, TED Talks, film, in-class group activities and presentations, experiential exercises and self-reflection. This course will highlight issues specific to diverse populations, including health disparity and disproportionality, and diverse perspectives related to end of life care from both the patient and provider's perception. Issues of the impact of race, ethnicity, religion, spirituality, gender, age, sexual orientation, and culture will be emphasized throughout the course, including reading materials, Ted Talks, lectures and guest speakers.

#### **IV. REQUIRED TEXT AND MATERIALS**

##### **Required Text**

Lipsky, L.V., Y Burk, C. (2009) *Trauma stewardship: An everyday guide to caring for self while caring for others*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Additional readings will be available on Canvas. The reading list for this course was designed to explore issues of diversity and inclusion.

#### **V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

##### **Class Attendance and Contribution**

**10 pts**

Class contribution grade will be determined in two ways:

**First**, due to the format and content of the course, regular and punctual attendance is imperative. The class experience is co-constructed and students are expected to attend class regularly and to participate in an interactive framework between collegiate students and professor. Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class and should be well prepared to participate in discussions and experiential learning assignments. Failure to attend class and demonstrate the thorough discussions that one had comprehended the readings will be considered in assigning the final grade. Punctuality is an important professional practice. Class will begin promptly at 5:30 pm. Students will be allowed one unexcused absence. If a student misses more than the allotted excused absence, the professor reserves the right to lower that student's grade by one point for each class missed beyond the one allowed.

**Second**, to support informed class interaction, students will be divided into small groups with each group asked to prepare two or three questions from the readings for at least one class during the semester. The question should address some issue or concern raised by the readings for that week that may be of special interest to the students or perhaps an issue that seems unclear. The questions need to be typed and double spaced, and the small group will present the question and lead a brief class discussion concerning the issue during the scheduled portion of their assigned class. The questions will then be turned in to the instructor. Grades on a scale of 1-10 will be given for the questions and will be determined by both the quality of the questions, and the ability to elicit informed involvement of the class.

All three of these aspects of class contribution: attendance and punctuality, questions prepared for class and on-going participation and interactions during class will factor into the 10 points for attendance and contribution.

## Personal Reflection/Loss Autobiography Assignment

30 pts

(This assignment is modified from an existing assignment found in The Grief Assessment And Intervention Workbook by E. Pomeroy and R. Garcia (noted in bibliography).

Each of us develops our own unique style of coping with grief and loss. Understanding your beliefs, attitudes, values, reactions, grief issues, and cultural influences will be an important part of the work that you will do with clients who are terminally ill. The goal of this assignment is for you to describe how your own experiences and style of coping with loss may influence your clinical practice.

- A. Using a Loss History Graph as an Assessment Tool
  - a. Considering the broad definition of grief and loss discussed in class, construct a loss history graph that represents the loss events in your life. It can be as simple as a longitudinal graph or feel free to be as creative as you would like to be for this assignment to be meaningful for you.
  - b. If there are losses that you choose not to disclose, that is fine. The main goal is to learn to use the tool while thinking about how the losses in your life influence your own practice with individuals who are dealing with issues of grief and loss, and to understand how your own loss history and grief responses affect your personal resilience.
- B. Describe Your Personal Style of Dealing with Loss
  - a. How have you coped with these events?
  - b. How have the following influenced your coping style:
    - i. People around you?
    - ii. Your cultural background, ethnicity, gender, religion?
    - iii. Your personal values, attitudes, and beliefs?
- C. Impact of Personal Experience on Clinical Practice
  - a. How do you think that personal loss experiences (or the absence of them) have influenced your comfort level in working with others who are dealing with issues of grief and loss?
    - i. How might your experiences have an impact on your work?
      1. Do you think your experience will be helpful?
      2. Do you think your experiences might hinder your work in some way?
    - ii. How might your own coping style influence the way you work with others?
    - iii. How was your own coping style influenced (positively or negatively) by your culture (remember that culture is broadly defined to include many aspects of oneself)?
- D. Potential Challenges and Dilemmas
  - a. Based upon your experiences, your personal belief system, and your own coping style:
    - i. Are there any specific issues or situations that might be challenging or difficult for you?
    - ii. Identify any value-oriented or ethical dilemmas related to grief and loss issues that may arise in the work you are hoping to do.
- E. Coping Strategies/Identification of Resources

- a. Identify coping strategies and/or resources that could assist you in dealing with the dilemmas or challenges identified in Part D.

### **Cultural Heritage Paper**

**30 pts**

As we will discuss in class, health, illness, dying and death are socially and culturally constructed. In order to assist you in your ability to learn about, understand and respect cultures other than your own, this assignment will allow you to go deeply into the experiences of a cultural group different than your own.

The goals of the assignment are:

- 1) To encourage you to seek information about issues related to illness, health, and loss in a culture different from your own.
- 2) To encourage all of us to remember that our cultural background can influence our perception of other cultures' experience of illness, health, and loss. Our cultural beliefs can influence our interactions with clients, our assessment, intervention planning and evaluation of interventions, and our participation in interprofessional teams.

Identify a population of interest that differs from your own background (i.e., different racial or ethnic heritage; different religious or spiritual background).

Write a 5-8 page paper (using APA 6th edition) that addresses the following:

- Demographic and Geographic data
- Traditional health beliefs
- Definition of illness
- Definition of health
- Overall health attitude
- Beliefs about causes/sources of illness
- Methods of maintaining, protecting and restoring health
- Visits and use of M.D. or other health care resources
- Health care resources such as neighborhood health centers
- Anyone else in the community who looks after people such as traditional healers
- Child-bearing and child-rearing beliefs and practices
- Rituals and beliefs surrounding death and dying
- Views of social work intervention
- Current literature review of articles discussing common issues and concerns for this community in terms of healthcare access, delivery and healthcare services. Please make an attempt to ensure that at least 50% of the articles you include for this literature review are written by someone who identifies as being a part of the cultural group you are highlighting in this paper.

### **Workshop & Infographic Team Assignment (Group Presentation)**

**30 pts**

The capstone assignment for this course is a death, dying and resilience workshop. In teams, students will create a 30-45 minute workshop on how to communicate about death, dying, and resilience in a healthcare setting (i.e., how to talk with a palliative care patient; how practitioners can buffer against stresses of dying patients, etc.). Students

must support their information and activities based on theories and empirical findings discussed in class. The students will then present their workshops to the class. Students will also create a brief report and infographic that can be shared with the University of Texas at Austin Dell Medical School and Moody College of Communication Center for Communication. Not only does this assignment allow students to take theoretical constructs and apply them to real-world health scenarios, the workshop design can become a part of the student's professional portfolio. Additional information and requirements for this assignment will be provided through Canvas.

## VI. GRADES

The following scale will be used to determine your final letter grade:

94.0 and above	A
90.0 to 93.999	A-
87.0 to 89.999	B+
84.0 to 86.999	B
80.0 to 83.999	B-
77.0 to 79.999	C+
74.0 to 76.999	C
70.0 to 73.999	C-
67.0 to 69.999	D+
64.0 to 66.999	D
60.0 to 63.999	D-
Below 60.0	F

Attendance and Participation	10%
Personal Reflection/Loss Autobiography Assignment	30%
Cultural Heritage Paper	30%
Workshop & Infographic Team Assignment/Presentation	30%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 %</b>

## VII. CLASS POLICIES

**Class Participation:** Students are expected to attend class regularly and to participate in an interactive framework between collegiate students, professor and invited guest speakers. Students are expected to complete the readings prior to class and should be well prepared to participate in discussions and experiential learning assignments. Failure to attend class and demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended (or attempted to understand) the readings will be considered in assigning the final grade.

**Attendance:** Punctuality is one of the many important standards of professional behavior. Class will begin promptly at 5:30 p.m. A student may be considered absent if they arrive more than 10 minutes late to class, leave early, or are unable to come to class. Absences may result in a reduction by one letter grade. If a student is going to be absent, efforts should be made to contact the professor in advance. Students are responsible for any material missed due to absence.

**Late Assignments:** Except in the case of extended emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, **late assignments will not be accepted without penalty.** Students are expected to turn in all required assignments on the agreed upon due date **at the beginning of class.** Assignments turned in after class begins will be considered late. If accepted, late assignments will be assessed point penalties at the rate of three (3) points each day late. If the due date is a problem, the student can see the professor and negotiate another due date well in advance.

**Writing Assignments:** The ability to write in a professional manner is very important for social workers, particularly in settings where they work as members of interdisciplinary teams. Written work must be typed, edited for grammatical, spelling and typographical errors. Work will be graded based on the American Psychological Association (APA – 5<sup>th</sup> edition) guidelines for references and citations, unless otherwise stated in the guidelines for the assignment.

**Class Performance:** If students have concerns about their class performance, the professor is more than willing to work with them to help improve their understanding of the class material of the assignments *prior to the end of the semester.* **Final grades assigned in the course are not negotiable.**

## **VII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS HONOR CODE.** The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

**PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND CIVILITY IN THE CLASSROOM.** The professor expects students to act as professionals in class. This means students should arrive on time for class, be prepared to participate in the class discussion, and show respect for one another's opinions. A course brings together a group of diverse individuals with various backgrounds. Students are influenced and shaped by such factors as ethnicity, gender, sex, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, national origins, and sexual orientations, among others. We expect to learn from each other in an atmosphere of positive engagement and mutual respect. Social Work also deals with complex and controversial issues. These issues may be challenging and uncomfortable, and it would be impossible to offer a substantive classroom experience that did not include potentially difficult conversations relating to challenging issues. In this environment we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometimes we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. Nevertheless, the professor requires that students engage one another with civility, respect, and professionalism.

**UNANTICIPATED DISTRESS.** Students may experience unexpected and/or distressing reactions to course readings, videos, conversations, and assignments. If so, students are encouraged to inform the professor. The professor can be responsive and supportive regarding students' participation in course assignments and activities, but students are responsible for communicating clearly what kind of support is desired. If counseling is needed, students may contact a service provider of their choosing, including the UT Counseling Center at 512-471-3515 or online at <https://cmhc.utexas.edu/>.

**POLICY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION.** Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums, please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Social work students who use social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (i.e. blogs, etc.) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image.

Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in any form of electronic media, including *any* information that might lead to the identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in *any* way. Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by the Steve Hicks School of Social Work, the Texas Code of Conduct for Social Workers, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Social work students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as The University of Texas at Austin Steve Hicks School of Social Work program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities.

**POLICY ON SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY.** Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>.

**USE OF COURSE MATERIALS.** The materials used in this course, including, but not limited to exams, quizzes, and homework assignments, are copyright protected works. Any unauthorized duplication of the course materials is a violation of federal law and may result in disciplinary action being taken against the student. Additionally, the sharing of course materials without the specific, express approval of the professor may be a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty, which could result in further disciplinary action. This sharing includes, among other things, uploading class materials to websites for the purpose of distributing those materials to other current or future students.

**DOCUMENTED DISABILITY STATEMENT.** Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471- 6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). A student should present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed and followed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit: <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>.

**CAMPUS CARRY.** Information on The University's policy on concealed firearms (Campus Carry) may be found here: <https://campuscarry.utexas.edu/>

**RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS.** By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, examination, work assignment, or project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

**TITLE IX REPORTING.** In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, The University of Texas at Austin is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct based on gender. Faculty, instructors, agency-based field instructors, staff, and/or teaching assistants in their supervisory roles are mandated reporters of incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or sexual misconduct. Students who report such incidents will be informed of University resources. Incidents will be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinator and/or the Title IX Liaison for the SHSSW, Professor Tanya Voss. Students, faculty and staff may contact Professor Voss to report incidents or to obtain information. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may also be found at <http://socialwork.utexas.edu/dl/files/academic-programs/other/qrg-sexualharassment.pdf>.

**CLASSROOM CONFIDENTIALITY.** Information shared in class about agencies, clients, and personal matters is considered confidential per the NASW Code of Ethics on educational supervision and is protected by regulations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as well. As such, sharing this information with individuals outside of the educational context is not permitted. Violations of confidentiality could result in actions taken according to the policies and procedure for review of academic performance located in sections 3.0, 3.1, and 3.2 of the Standards for Social Work Education.

**USE OF E-MAIL FOR OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO STUDENTS.** Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible for keeping the university informed about a change of e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

**SAFETY.** As part of professional social work education, students may have assignments that involve working in agency settings and/or the community. As such, these assignments may present some risks. Sound choices and caution may lower risks inherent to the profession. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to agency and/or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

**BEHAVIOR CONCERNS ADVICE LINE (BCAL).** If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership between the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

**EMERGENCY EVACUATION POLICY.** Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors in the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor's instructions.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you are given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

## **IX. COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Methods of teaching, such as assigned readings, TED talks and videos will be posted on Canvas and may be updated throughout the semester. Students are expected to check the Canvas modules on a regular basis for additionally assigned material. Please note that all assignments will be posted on Canvas with requirements and instructions. Below are topics assigned to each class period. More information, including required readings and assignments, will be available on Canvas. Any changes to the course schedule will be noted on Canvas.**

January 23rd	Creating a Common Language around Death, Dying & Resilience The Importance of Meaning Making at the End of Life
January 30th	Historical, Theoretical and Empirical Components of Death, Dying and Resilience in Healthcare Interprofessional Teams in Hospice and Palliative Care
February 6 <sup>th</sup>	Cultural and Spiritual Components of Death, Dying and Resilience in Healthcare Person-Centered Care at End of Life – Part 1 Practitioner-Centered Self-Care at End of Life – Part 1 Cultural Considerations for Diverse Racial and Ethnic Groups at End of

## Life – Part 1

February 13 <sup>th</sup>	Communicating with Patients who are Terminally Ill, their Families & Caregivers Creating a Interprofessional Collaborative Culture for Teams Working with Terminally Ill Patients Cultural Considerations for Diverse Racial and Ethnic Groups at End of Life – Part 2
February 20 <sup>th</sup>	Defining Empathy for Practitioners Working with Patients who are Terminally Ill Disenfranchised Grief: A Significant Barrier to Healing and Hope End of Life Care with LGBTQA Patients and Their Caregivers <b>Personal Reflection/Loss Autobiography Assignment Due</b>
February 27 <sup>th</sup>	Balancing the Art and Science of Healthcare with Patients who are Terminally Ill Person-Centered Care at End of Life – Part 2 Practitioner-Centered Self-Care at End of Life – Part 2
March 6 <sup>th</sup>	The Influence of Pain (Physical, Emotional and Spiritual) on Patient and Provider Stress, Trauma and Resilience Cultural Considerations for Persons Living with Mental Illness or Intellectual Disabilities at End of Life
March 13 <sup>th</sup>	Stress and Resilience from a Systems Perspective Healthcare Practices and Policies that Help and Hinder Resilience For both Patients and Practitioners Cultural Considerations for Persons Experiencing Homelessness at End of Life
March 20 <sup>th</sup>	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS
March 27 <sup>th</sup>	The Significance of both Formal and Informal Support Groups Interventions that Support Healing, Grieving and Building Resilience <b>Cultural Heritage Paper Due</b>
April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	The Influence of Stress Across the Lifespan Ethical Practice for End of Life Care
April 10 <sup>th</sup>	Compassion Fatigue and Burnout in Healthcare The Effect of Social Media on Wellness, Illness, Dying & Death
April 17 <sup>th</sup>	Trauma Stewardship

April 24th	<b>Group Presentations (Workshop &amp; Infographic Assignment)</b>
May 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Group Presentations (Workshop &amp; Infographic Assignment)</b>
May 8th	Patient, Caregiver, and Provider Panel on Death, Dying & Resilience

## **X. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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