

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
The University of Texas at Austin

SPRING 2015
Course: SW 387R1

Loss and Grief: Individual, Family, and Cultural Perspectives

Schedule: Mondays, 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Classroom: SSW 2.122

Instructor: Allan H. Cole Jr., Ph.D.

512.471.9824

Office: SSW 2.202c

ahcole@austin.utexas.edu

Office Hours: Mondays, 1:15 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.

Administrative Assistant: Kelly McCoy

k.mccoy@austin.utexas.edu

I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will give students an opportunity to explore and understand their perceptions and beliefs of death and dying and how individual cultural differences influence that experience and to prepare them for working with clients on grief and loss.

II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the cultural factors involved in grief and loss.
2. Identify social work values and ethics involved in grief work.
3. Demonstrate a basic working knowledge of grief reactions experienced by children, adults, and elderly within a cultural context.
4. Demonstrate an increased awareness of their own grief reactions and how this awareness can help them to develop skills and tools in grief work.
5. Demonstrate an ability to manage feelings of personal loss and client needs in a healthy way.

III. TEACHING METHODS

This course is designed to include a variety of teaching/learning methodologies to achieve the course objectives. These activities will include readings, writings, discussions, lectures, speakers, videos, in-class group activities, student presentations, self-reflection, and community experiences.

IV. READINGS

- Required Texts (available for purchase at University Co-op)

Hooyman, N. R., & Kramer, B. J. (2006). *Living through loss: Interventions across the life span*. Columbia University Press. ISBN 978-0-231-12247-4

Irish, D. P., Lundquist, K. F., & Nelsen, V. J. (Eds.). (1993). *Ethnic variations in dying, death, and grief: Diversity in universality*. Taylor & Francis. ISBN 1-56032-278-0

Pomeroy, E., & Garcia, R. (2008). *The grief assessment and intervention workbook: A strengths perspective*. Brooks Cole. ISBN 978-0-495-00841-5

- Recommended Text (available for purchase at University Co-op)

Worden, J. W. (2009). *Grief counseling and grief therapy: A handbook for the mental health practitioner, 4th ed.* Springer. ISBN 978-0826101204

- Additional readings will be available on reserve in the Perry-Castañada Library (PCL), and a portion of these readings will be posted on the Canvas learning management system and drawn from:

Attig, T. (1996). *How we grieve: Relearning the world*. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 0-19-507456-4

Becvar, D. (2001). *In the presence of grief: Helping family members resolve death, dying, and bereavement issues*. Guilford Press. ISBN: 1-57230-697-1

V. CLASSROOM POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND EXPECTATIONS

Attendance and Participation. Students are expected to attend class regularly and to participate in an interactive process with other students and the professor. Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to class and should be prepared to engage in discussions and experiential learning assignments. Failure to attend class and to demonstrate through discussions that one has comprehended the readings will be considered when assigning the final course grade.

Class will begin promptly at 2:30 p.m. and end by 5:15 p.m. Students are considered absent if they arrive more than five minutes late to class, leave early, or are unable to attend class. Efforts should be made to contact the professor in advance of any absence or class conflict. Students are responsible for material missed due to absence. Tardiness and more than one unexcused absence will result in a reduction of the course grade.

Written Assignments. Social workers must write in a professional manner. Written work for this course must be typed (unless specified otherwise) and edited for grammatical, spelling, and

typographical errors. All written work must adhere to the guidelines for references and citations in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th edition)*.

Except in the case of emergencies, and then only with the permission of the professor, late assignments will not be accepted without penalty. Students are expected to submit all required assignments by the beginning of class on the due date. Assignments turned in after class begins will be considered late. Assignments should be uploaded to the class page on Canvas unless specified otherwise.

If accepted, late assignments will be assessed point penalties at the rate of five (5) points for each day late. If the due date is a problem, the student should meet with the professor to establish another due date well in advance of the original due date.

Communication. Student feedback is welcome. If students are concerned about class performance, the professor is eager to work with them to help improve their understanding of the course material prior to the end of the semester. Students are encouraged to provide feedback during office hours, by phone, or appointment. The professor will return phone calls and emails promptly, and typically within 24 hours.

Confidentiality. All students are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding all shared professional and personal information related to agencies, clients, or the experiences of other students, as required by Section 1.07 of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.

Electronics. Social work requires being fully present with and attentive to clients in practice. The classroom provides a setting in which students may model practices of presence and attention. In order to do so, and to facilitate classroom communication and learning, students may not use social media, the Internet, email, or cell phones (including texting) during class. Doing so distracts the user, those seated nearby, and the professor. Laptops or other devices used exclusively for the purpose of note taking or related course matters are permitted.

VI. 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 www.utexas.edu/student/cmhc/.

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 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 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://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

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.

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.

VII. COURSE GRADING CRITERIA

1. Attendance (10 points)
2. Assignment #1: Loss History Timeline/Personal Reflection (15 points)
3. Assignment #2: Group Presentation (35 points)
4. Assignment #3: Assessment and Referral Paper (40 points)

VIII. GRADUATE GRADING SCALE

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

IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Assignments
Week 1 1.26.15	Introductions, Syllabus Review, Defining Terms	In-Class Videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding Grief (Hospice Foundation of America): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIwQn4nmzYY • The Adventure of Grief: Geoff Warburton at TEDxBrighton https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juET61B1P98
Week 2 2.2.15	The Social Worker's Own Experience with and Awareness of Loss	Required Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hooyman & Kramer (2006), Ch. 14 • Pomeroy & Garcia (2009), Ch. 8 Complete Case 8.1 (answering questions 1-6) *Your responses to the case will not be graded but will serve to inform classroom discussion. In-Class Video: Self-care for Health Care Professionals: Strategies to Address Caring Work (Webinar) with Dr. Brenda Sabo: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95kHDIuENVU In-Class Exercise: Personal Loss History <u>Supplemental Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worden (2009), Ch. 8
Week 3 2.9.15	Theoretical Perspectives on Loss, Grief, and Mourning	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> Assignment #1 Due: Loss History Timeline/Personal Reflection </div> Required Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hooyman & Kramer (2006), Chs. 1 and 2 <u>Supplemental Reading</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worden (2009), Ch. 1

<p>Week 4 2.16.15</p>	<p>Practice Models and Frameworks for Coping with Loss</p>	<p>Required Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hooyman & Kramer (2006), Ch. 3 • Pomeroy & Garcia (2009), Ch. 1 Complete Case 1.1 (answering questions 1-5) *Your responses to the case will not be graded but will serve to inform classroom discussion. <p>In-Class Videos: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kecFjC1R0WE https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16zBE7WOr28 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgKc1MICWIE</p> <p><u>Supplemental Reading</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attig (1996), Ch. 4
<p>Week 5 2.23.15</p>	<p>Practice Models and Frameworks for Coping with Loss</p>	<p>Required Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pomeroy & Garcia (2009), Chs. 2 and 3 Complete Cases 2.1 and 3.1 (answering all questions) *Your responses to the case will not be graded but will serve to inform classroom discussion. <p><u>Supplemental Reading</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worden (2009), Chs. 2, 3, and 4
<p>Week 6 3.2.15</p>	<p>Complex and Complicated Bereavement</p>	<p>Required Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pomeroy & Garcia (2009), Chs. 4 and 7 Complete Case 4.1 (answering questions 1-7) *Your responses to the case will not be graded but will serve to inform classroom discussion. <p>In-Class Video: Complicated Grief: Q&A with Dr. M. Katherine Shear https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aAEfYSOS8W8</p> <p>In-Class Exercise: Case Study</p> <p><u>Supplemental Reading</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worden (2009), Chs. 5 and 6

Week 7 3.9.15	Cultural and Environmental Influences on Bereavement	<p>Required Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irish et al. (1993), Introduction • Rosenblatt (1993), in Irish et al., Ch. 1 • Lundquist & Nelsen (1993), in Irish et al, Ch. 3 <p>In-Class Exercise: Case Study</p> <p><u>Supplemental Reading</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nelsen, V. J. (1993), in Irish et al., Ch. 2
Week 8 3.16.15	Spring Break (class does not meet)	<p>-----</p> <p>-----</p> <p>-----</p>
Week 9 3.23.15	Children and Loss	<p>Required Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hooyman & Kramer (2006), Chs. 4 and 5 <p>In-Class Video: Supporting the Grieving Child (The Dougy Center, 2012)</p> <p><u>Supplemental Reading</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pomeroy & Garcia (2009), Ch. 5
Week 10 3.30.15	Adolescents and Loss	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>Group 1 Presentation: Cultural Variations and Loss</p> </div> <p>Required Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hooyman & Kramer (2006), Chs. 6 and 7 <p>In-Class Video: Helping Teens Cope with Death (The Dougy Center, 2010)</p> <p><u>Supplemental Reading</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pomeroy & Garcia (2009), Ch. 5
Week 11 4.6.15	Young and Middle-Aged Adults and Loss	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>Group 2 Presentation: Cultural Variations and Loss</p> </div> <p>Required Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hooyman & Kramer (2006), Chs. 8 and 9 OR • Hooyman & Kramer (2006), Chs. 10 and 11 <p>In-Class Exercise: Case Study</p>

<p>Week 12 4.13.15</p>	<p>Older Adults and Loss</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>Group 3 Presentation: Cultural Variations and Loss</p> </div> <p>Required Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pomeroy & Garcia (2009), Ch. 6 Complete Case 6.1 (answering questions 1-6) *Your responses to the case will not be graded but will serve to inform classroom discussion. • Hooyman & Kramer (2006), Chs. 12, 13 <p>In-Class Video: Grief, Loss and Older Adults (Mental Health Outreach Network/Terra Nova Films)</p>
<p>Week 13 4.20.15</p>	<p>Ambiguous and Disenfranchised Loss</p>	<p>Required Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pomeroy & Garcia (2009), Ch. 7 Complete Cases 7.4 and 7.5 (answering all questions) *Your responses to the case will not be graded but will serve to inform classroom discussion. <p>Guest Speaker: Shannon Johnson, Ph.D. Student</p> <p>In-Class Videos: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zcqvpsdM6Zo https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EU3QE59b Oc</p>
<p>Week 14 4.27.15</p>	<p>Religious and Spiritual Perspectives on Loss, Grief, and Mourning</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>Group 4 Presentation: Cultural Variations and Loss</p> </div> <p>Required Reading At least two of these three:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cytron (1993), in Irish et al., Ch. 8 • Truitner & Truitner (1993), in Irish et al., Ch. 9 • Gilanshah (1993), in Irish et al., Ch. 10 <p><u>Supplemental Reading</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bliatout (1993), in Irish et al., Ch. 6 • Brokenleg & Middleton (1993), in Irish et al., Ch. 7 <p>In-Class Exercise: Case Study</p>

<p>Week 15 5.4.15</p>	<p>Funerals and Rituals following Loss</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>Assignment #3 Due: Assessment and Referral Paper</p> </div> <p>Required Reading At least one of these three:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perry (1993), in Irish et al., Ch. 4, • Younoszai (1993), in Irish et al., Ch. 5 • Irish (1993), in Irish et al., Ch.11 <p>Guest Speaker: Laurens Fish, III</p> <p>In-Class Video: Grief Rituals, Kim Mooney https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byqL903gCYY</p> <p><u>Supplemental Reading</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irish (1993), in Irish et al., Ch. 12 • Nelson (1993), in Irish et al., Ch.13 • Becvar (2001), Chs. 11, 12, and 13
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Assignment #1

Loss History Timeline/Personal Reflection

Due Date: Monday, February 9, 2015

GOAL: This assignment assists students with developing awareness of the many dimensions and expressions of loss, and of the unique, personal, and changing responses each of us has to loss throughout our lives. It is essential to recognize how your own experiences and styles of coping with loss influence your social work practice. Understanding your attitudes, values, and reactions surrounding loss and responding to remaining grief-related issues will be an important part of the reflection that prepares you for work with bereaved clients.

Maximum length: 6 double-spaced pages (excluding loss history timeline)
Please label each section of the paper with its corresponding heading.

Part I: Loss History Timeline as an Assessment Tool

Considering the broad definition of loss discussed in the course, construct a loss history timeline that represents the loss events in your life. On an 8.5" x 11" piece of unlined paper, draw a timeline lengthwise on the paper. This timeline represents your life span up to your current age. Label the time line with the various losses you have experienced throughout your lifetime, including losses due to death and other types of losses.

Indicate:

1. Your age at the time of each loss
2. The nature of the loss: move, pet death, parents divorced, job loss, etc.

You may have had losses that you choose not to disclose. The main goal in this exercise is to learn to use the tool while thinking about how the losses in your life influence your social work practice with individuals who are dealing with issues of bereavement.

Feel free to be creative by adding symbols or graphics or anything else. Use anything that you think will add meaning or value to this assessment tool.

Part II: Autobiographical Reflection on Your Losses

Part IIa: Personal Style for Dealing with Loss

1. What losses have you experienced that you would consider significant? What determines significance for you?
2. How did you respond to/cope with your losses? How did your personality and learned coping strategies affect your responses to loss, positively and negatively? What patterns do you notice as you reflect on your response to various life losses?
3. How have the following influenced your coping styles:
 - people around you?
 - your cultural background, ethnicity, and/or religion?
 - your personal values, attitudes, and beliefs?

4. How have loss experiences earlier in your life impacted your responses to later losses?
5. How does your loss history influence your life choices today?

Part IIb: Impact of Personal Experience on Social Work Practice

1. How have personal loss experiences (or the absence of them) influenced your comfort level for working with others who are dealing with issues of bereavement?
2. How might your coping styles related to loss influence the way you work with others?
3. How else might your loss experiences have an impact on your work?

Part III: Potential Challenges or Dilemmas

Consider your experiences and your personal belief system.

- Are there specific issues or situations relating to loss that might be challenging or difficult for you?
- Identify any value-oriented or ethical dilemmas related to bereavement issues that may arise in your work.

Part IV: Coping Strategies/Identification of Resources

Identify coping strategies and/or resources (internal and external, existing and those to be acquired) that could assist you in dealing with the dilemmas or challenges identified in Part III.

Rubric for Evaluating Loss History Timeline/Personal Reflection

95-100%

Demonstrates exceptional insights related to the loss history, including the impact of losses, patterns of personal responses, and the ways in which this history may influence social work practice. The paper is written in a professional manner, demonstrating excellence in written communication skills.

90-94%

Demonstrates thoughtful insights related to the loss history, including the impact of these losses, patterns of personal responses, and the ways in which this history may influence social work practice. The paper is written in a professional manner, demonstrating proficiency in written communication skills.

80-89%

Provides a thorough timeline of losses that reviews these losses and any response patterns. Demonstrates several insights related to the impact of personal losses on life and work.

70-79%

Provides a thorough timeline of losses with limited review of responses to these losses and only a general explanation of how these losses impact life and work. Organization of the paper is uneven, and/or it contains spelling, grammatical, and/or mechanical errors.

60-69%

Provides a timeline of losses that includes deaths only, provides some description of responses to these losses but with little or no insight related to the impact of these losses on life or work. The paper is poorly organized and/or it contains spelling, grammatical, and/or mechanical errors.

50-59%

Provides a vague timeline of losses that includes death losses only, and provides a vague description of response to loss and little discussion of the impact on life or work. The paper is poorly organized and contains multiple spelling, grammatical, and/or mechanical errors.

49%

Does not provide the required assignment's content. The paper is poorly organized and/or written with multiple spelling, grammatical, and/or mechanical errors.

Assignment #2

Group Presentation: Cultural Variations and Loss

Due Dates:

Group 1	3.30.15
Group 2	4.6.15
Group 3	4.13.15
Group 4	4.27.15

GOALS

1. Encourage you to seek information and understanding about issues related to illness, health, and loss in a culture/community different from your own.
2. Remind you that one's cultural background can influence one's perception of other cultures' expressions of illness, death, and loss.
3. Provide a forum for the class to benefit from the information and knowledge that you have gained.

PARTS

Part I

Form a group of 3-4 students to work collectively on this assignment. You will be required to meet outside of class to complete the assignment and will receive a grade as a group. Group members will decide how to divide the assignment as well as how to divide responsibilities for the class presentation.

Identify a population/community of interest that differs from your own backgrounds (e.g., a different racial or ethnic heritage; a different religious or spiritual background; a different age cohort).

Part II

Identify a member of the community that you have selected who can be interviewed for 30-60 minutes to facilitate your understanding of this population.

Part III

Research the beliefs, values, customs and rituals of the members of your chosen group regarding the following:

- a. beliefs, values, and practices related to:

- illness and medical care
 - health and healing
 - euthanasia, suicide
 - death and the process of dying
 - spiritual beliefs related to death and the afterlife
- b. practices, customs and rituals following a death
 - c. cultural “norms” regarding grief (expression, duration, rituals)
 - d. societal and historical issues for the cultural group you are addressing
 - e. current social work literature discussing common issues and concerns for this group

You may want to include reflections on geographic or generational differences and issues of acculturation and social justice. Remember to use cultural humility throughout—recognizing that your cultural/ethnic/spiritual background will inform your understanding of other persons and cultures.

Part IV

In addition to illness and death-specific beliefs and practices, discuss other attitudes, beliefs, and values within this population/culture that may influence your social work interactions with members of this group (i.e., attitudes about seeking help, comfort with disclosure of personal information, etc.). How do social work values and ethics inform your work with this group?

Part V

Re-contact your interviewee and share with her/him your research findings. Ask her/him to reflect upon this information and its relevance (or not) to her/his specific life experiences. The goal is not to have perfect agreement but to integrate the academic research with real life experiences. Each interviewee is the expert in her/his own life and culture. This second conversation may result in changes in your presentation so allow enough time before your scheduled date to do so.

Artifacts

You are required to hand in a detailed written outline of the research and information, including references. The outline should communicate your key points in this presentation. Follow the content outline from the assignment. Bring copies of your outline and handouts to distribute to the class. You also may use a PowerPoint, Keynote, Prezi, or similar format in your presentation.

- Include a list of references or sources of information in APA format.
- Include the name of the person you interviewed, telephone number, and agency or organizational affiliation (if relevant).
- List the dates you interviewed her or him.

As always, you are encouraged to be creative with this assignment. Feel free to include photography, artwork, poetry, popular culture, videos, food, visual aids, music or anything that will illustrate your points about the culture that you are researching.

Each group will have 45 minutes for its presentation.

Assignment #3 (Choose either Option A or B)**Due Date: May 4, 2015****Option A****Assessment and Referral Paper****GOALS**

1. Identify and describe the distinct features associated with a particular kind of loss.
2. Identify potential warning signs associated with complicated grief for that particular type of loss.
3. Become familiar with the range of resources that are available for use with clients experiencing losses of this nature.

PROCESS: Identify a loss event of interest.

- **PRODUCT:** Using the following headings and guidelines, produce a paper 7-8 pages long. You must use course materials and other empirical and anecdotal (memoirs, essays, blogs) literature to inform your responses. You must create a reference list or bibliography page in APA format.

Section I. Loss Event and Rationale

Identify the loss event that you have selected for this assignment.

- a. Based upon the literature (and perhaps your personal and/or professional experience), describe the elements of this loss and the possible secondary losses associated with it.
- b. Discuss the relevance of having an understanding of this type of loss even for social work practice.
 - How common is it?
 - How can social workers make a difference in the lives of those experiencing this type of loss event and bereavement?
 - Why is social work an appropriate profession to assist clients who are experiencing this type of loss and bereavement?

As you respond, think about the values and philosophies underlying social work practice as well as social work's mission.

- c. Write about why you chose this particular kind of loss. Does it hold personal or professional interest for you? Why?

Section II. Distinctions Specific to the Loss

For Sections II and III, please list or "bullet" the responses rather than writing about them in sentence/paragraph format.

Identify the key distinctions and/or difficulties of this loss. This section should be a list of what someone who experienced this particular kind of loss might anticipate, in the way of internal responses and, possibly, reactions from others. You may have explanatory text at the beginning or end of your list.

Section III. Warning Signs of Complicated Grief

This section will be a list of indicators (specific to this particular kind of loss) of the possible need for professional help. You may have explanatory text at the beginning or end of your list.

Section IV. Potential Referral Resources

- a. Based upon the social work literature (and perhaps your personal and/or professional experience), list potential service-related and resource-related needs (consider immediate and long-term needs).
- b. Consider resources that might be useful to a client dealing with this loss event. Create a mini-directory with *at least one* resource in each of the following categories that might be appropriate as a referral resource to address the loss event you have chosen.
 - community or national agency or organization—briefly describe the loss-related services they provide;
 - local support group (based in the community or online)
 - educational materials (e.g., books, videotapes, pamphlets, and online information)

Include enough information about each resource for a client to access the resource if desired (i.e., copy of the resource or information about how to obtain it; the name of contact person and telephone number, website address, etc.).

Option B

Ethnographic Interview

Goals

1. Gain an understanding of what it means to live with grief and loss from the perspective of a bereaved person, also known as the informant, who has experienced a death-related or non-death-related loss.
2. Utilize an ethnographic approach to qualitative research. In ethnography, because informants are living day-to-day with their loss, they are considered the experts. Approach the interview from the position of a naïve learner. Allow the informant to teach you about his/her experience and to identify what he/she thinks is important for you to learn about the daily life of one who is living with loss.

Part A. Preliminary Work

1. Select an informant who is:
 - NOT related to you
 - NOT a friend or classmate
 - Currently experiencing or has experienced a loss
or
 - Currently experiencing a chronic/serious physical illness
2. Unlike a clinical interview that focuses on gaining information for assessment and intervention, the ethnographic interview focuses on three main dimensions from the informant's point of view:
 - the meaning of the loss
 - the types of strategies used to cope with the loss
 - the way in which the informant organizes his/her world in the context of the loss
3. Confidentiality must be upheld and discussed with the informant before the interview occurs. You must make sure the informant completes the consent form provided with the syllabus and assure the informant that her/his real name will not be used in any way in your verbal or written work.
4. Interviews are generally 1 to 2 hours long; you may take detailed handwritten notes during the session if this is agreeable to the informant. You may not record the interview. The interview should be fairly open, yet focused enough so that you can develop an understanding of what it is like to live with the person's loss, illness/disability, or terminal illness.
5. Acquaint yourself with the informant's type of loss prior to the interview
6. Develop an interview guide to help you during the interview. The following are suggestions for what you might want to include in your interview guide:
 - How did the informant find out about the loss event?
 - What were the informant's initial feelings/response to the loss event?
 - How has the informant attempted to make sense of his/her loss (i.e., what kinds of explanations/theories about "why me?")?
 - How does the informant's culture, ethnicity, age, gender, race, socioeconomic class, philosophical or religious beliefs affect his/her grief experience?
 - How does she/he cope with the loss on a daily basis?
 - What is the impact of the loss and /or medical treatment on self, family life, work, career plans, social relationships, etc.?
 - What is her/his experience of accessing grief/bereavement services and of interactions with service providers?

Part B: Written Interview

Summarize the informant's experience as you understand it from your interview in five double-spaced typed pages (removing all identifying names). Include direct quotes from the informant, and relevant citations from the grief and loss literature included in the syllabus or from a literature search, and address all of the questions below.

1. What is your understanding of the informant's loss experience? List sources you utilized to reach this understanding.
2. Discuss the impact on the psychosocial life of the informant from her/his perspective. How does she/he cope with the loss? What strategies does he/she use to cope with/adapt to/live with the loss?
3. What was the most compelling thing you learned about the informant's experience from an insider's perspective? How will you incorporate this learning in your practice as a professional social worker?
4. How well do you think you elicited information from the informant about his/her loss experience?
 - a. What areas do you wish you had covered in the interview but did not?
 - b. How connected did you feel to the informant and why?
 - c. In what part of the interview was it most difficult for you to remain present and track with the informant and why?
5. How were the service delivery system(s), provider agency(s), and/or managed care system(s) barriers and/or resources for the informant and/or family? Analyze how these systems enhanced, challenged, or were neutral influences on the well-being of the consumer and family.
6. Given the grief and loss literature and the speakers in class, what recommendations would you make to help this person or his/her family?
7. Attach your interview guide to your paper and submit both to the instructor.

**School of Social Work
The University of Texas at Austin**

Informed Consent for Student Class Project

Project Title: _____

Student Name(s): _____

Phone(s): _____

Email(s): _____

Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Allan H. Cole Jr., Professor and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
The University of Texas at Austin School of Social Work
1925 San Jacinto Blvd. (MC D3500), Austin, TX 78712
Phone: (512) 232-3548 | Fax: (512) 471-7268
Email: ahcole@austin.utexas.edu

You are being asked to take part in a study for a student class project. The purpose of this project is to help students learn more about personal experiences of loss. If you choose to take part, we will ask you to share personal information about your experiences of loss. We expect that it will take 1–2 hours of your time to complete one or two interviews. You may contact the faculty member at the above address and phone number to discuss the project.

The risks of participating in this project are no greater than those of everyday life. There are no costs for participating. You will not directly benefit from participating. The information you provide today will not be shared outside of the classroom during this semester, but it will be discussed in class. Real names will not be used in the class project report; rather, pseudonyms will be employed and every effort will be made to ensure anonymity.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may decide not to participate, choose not to answer any question, or stop participating at any time **without any penalty**. If you want to withdraw from the project, simply stop participating. If you have any questions, contact the faculty member listed above. Your decision whether or not to participate will have no affect with your relationship with The University of Texas at Austin

If you have any questions about the study, please contact the faculty sponsor, whose contact information is provided.

This is not a research study. It has not been reviewed/approved by the University Institutional Review Board. This is a class project for educational use only.

If you are willing to participate, please indicate by signing below.

Signature of Subject

Date