

**The University of Texas at Austin
School of Social Work
Summer 2013**

Course Number: SW N387 R1

Professor's Name: Dede Sparks, LMSW

Unique Number: 94615

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Semester: Summer, 2013

Office Phone: 512-471-9063

Meeting Time/Place: T/TH 2:00-4:30
SSW 2.122

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Office: SSW 3.24B

LOSS AND GRIEF: INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

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 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 may include reading, writing, discussion, lecture, guest speakers, film, in-class group activities, student presentations, self-reflection, and community experience.

IV. Recommended Readings

Required Text (at University Co-op)

Pomeroy, E., & Garcia, R. (2008). *The Grief Assessment and Intervention Workbook: A Strengths Perspective*. Brooks Cole.

Required Readings

A course packet of required readings (Sparks) will be available for purchase by enrolled students at Speedway Printing (512-478-3334), located at 715 W. 23rd Street, Suite N. The readings will also be available on Blackboard. Additional readings may be assigned as required or recommended readings throughout the semester as appropriate.

V. Classroom Policies and Practices

1. **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.
2. **Attendance:** Punctuality is one of the many important standards of professional behavior. Class will begin promptly at 2:00 and end at 4:30. A student is 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. Students are allowed **one excused absence**. 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.
3. **Professional Conduct in Class:** The classroom is an opportunity to practice professional demeanor and mutual respect. We share the class as a time to learn in a safe and nonjudgmental environment. Here, we will be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and we will not always, nor should we, agree with the ideas expressed by others. Differences in values, opinions, and feelings of class members and guest speakers will be respected. Consequently, disrespect toward others is not tolerated and will be handled directly and in the context in which it occurs. In order to facilitate classroom communication and learning, cell phones and all communication devices are restricted from being on, or should be placed in 'silent' mode while in class. Laptop computers will not be used during class unless specifically authorized by the professor for a particular student or situation.
4. **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.
5. **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 – 5th edition) guidelines for references and citations.
6. **Class Performance:** If students are concerned 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.**

7. **Confidentiality:** Learning about grief and loss can elicit difficult emotions and may involve self-disclosure. The instructor and classmates have the ethical responsibility to see that differences in values, opinions, and feelings of class members and guest speakers will be respected and that an emotionally safe class environment is maintained. All students are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding all shared professional and personal information related agencies, clients or the experiences of other students, as required by Section 1.07 of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.
8. **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.
9. **Course Evaluation:** Social work practitioners are assertive and function as team members. Therefore, feedback about the course is welcome, and the course will be viewed as a joint effort between students and the instructor. Feedback can be given during office hours, by phone, email or appointment, as may be convenient and comfortable for the student. The professor will always return phone calls and emails during scheduled office hours, and will do so intermittently throughout the work week.
10. **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.
11. **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). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. 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/>.
12. **Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty:** Social work practitioners assume responsibility for themselves. Students are often encouraged to study and work together; however, all independent work is expected to reflect your own work and to conform to rules of scholastic honesty as described in the General Information Bulletin of The University of Texas at Austin. 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://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/>).
13. **Religious Holidays:** A student who is absent from a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project for the observance of a religious holy day may complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence, if proper notice has been given. Notice of the dates the student will be absent must be given at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled. For religious holy days that fall within the first two weeks of the semester, notice should be given on the first day of the semester.

14. **Use of Email 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 changes to their email address. Students should check their email regularly and frequently – daily, but at a minimum of 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 email address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.
15. **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 among 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>.
16. **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:
 - i. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
 - ii. If you require assistance to evacuate, inform the professor in writing during the first week of class.
 - iii. In the event of an evacuation, follow the professor’s instructions.
 - iv. Do not re-enter a building unless you’re given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

VI. Course Grading Criteria

Attendance and Participation	10%
Loss History/Personal Awareness Assignment	30%
Cultural Diversity & Grief Interview	30%
Group Presentations	30%
TOTAL	100%

VII. Course Schedule (subject to change due to the need to reschedule guest speakers)

June 6

Topics:

- Introduction to the Course
- Personal Awareness & Defining Loss
- Theoretical Perspectives - Theories of Grief and Loss
- Practice Models - Frameworks for Coping with Loss
- Importance of Self-Care

Readings:

- Pomeroy and Garcia (2008). Chapter 1: Understanding Grief and Loss – An Introduction
- Pomeroy and Garcia (2008). Chapter 2: Grief Interviewing and Assessment

June 11

Topics:

- Disenfranchised Grief
- Culture and Grief

Readings:

- Doka, K. (1989). *Disenfranchised grief: recognizing hidden sorrow* (pp. 13-23). Massachusetts/Toronto: Lexington Books.
- Doka, K. (2002). *Disenfranchised grief: new directions, challenges and strategies for practice* (pp. 23-38). Champaign, Illinois: Research Press.
- Doka, K. and Davidson, J. (1998). *Living with grief: who we are and how we grieve* (pp. 71-106). Philadelphia, PA: Brunner/Mazel.
- Doka, K. and Davidson, J. (1998). *Living with grief: who we are and how we grieve* (pp. 249-260). Philadelphia, PA: Brunner/Mazel.

June 13**Topics:**

Community Tragedy and Trauma
Disoriented Grief

***Loss History/Personal Awareness assignment due*

Readings:

- Webb, N. (2010). *Helping bereaved children: a handbook for practitioners* (pp. 190-214). New York: Guilford Press.
- Lattanzi-Licht, M. and Doka, K. (2003). *Living with grief: coping with public tragedy* (pp. 139-189). New York: Brunner-Routledge.
- Malone, P., Pomeroy, E., and Jones, B. (2011). Disoriented grief: a lens through which to view the experience of Katrina evacuees. *Journal of Social Work in End-of-Life and Palliative Care*, 7:23, 241-262.

June 18**Topics:**

Reproductive Grief & Loss
Perinatal Loss
Grief Associated with Abortion

Readings:

- Brier, N. (2008). Grief following miscarriage: a comprehensive review of the literature. *Journal of Women's Health*, 17. pp. 451-464.
- Angelo, E.J. (1992). Psychiatric sequelae of abortion: the many faces of post-abortion grief. *Linacre Quarterly*, Vol. 59, no. 2.

June 20**Topics:**

Adults & Geriatrics

Readings:

- Pomeroy and Garcia (2008). Chapter 3: Expected Grief Experience in Adults
Pomeroy and Garcia (2008). Chapter 4: Complex Grief in Adults
Pomeroy and Garcia (2008). Chapter 6: Grief Reactions in the Older Adult Population

June 25**Topics:**

Adolescents & Teens

Readings:

Christ, G., Christ, A., and Siegel, K. (2002). Adolescent grief: "it never really hit me.. until it actually happened." *Journal of American Medical Association*, Vol. 28, No. 10.

June 27**Topics:**

Children

Readings:

Pomeroy and Garcia (2008). Chapter 5: Grief Reactions in Children and Adolescents
Webb, N. (2010). *Helping bereaved children: a handbook for practitioners* (pp.3-47).
New York: Guilford Press.

July 2**Topics:**

Sudden and Traumatic Death
Suicide

Readings:

Armour, M. (2007). Violent death. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 14:4, 53-90.
Zayas, L. (2011). *Latinas attempting suicide: when cultures, families and daughters collide* (133-158). New York: Oxford University Press.

Recommended Reading:

Jordan, J. (2008). Bereavement after suicide. *Psychiatric Annals* 38:10.

July 4

No class today in observance of Independence Day.

July 9**Topics:**

Living with Chronic Illness

****Cultural Diversity & Grief Interview assignment due**

Readings:

Doka, K. (2006). Grief: the constant companion of illness. *Anesthesiology Clinics of North America*, 24, 205-212.

July 11**Topics:**

End of Life Issues
Hospice and Palliative Care

Readings:

Brody, J. (2009). Guide to the great beyond (pp. 9-22). New York: Random House.
Brody, J. (2009). Guide to the great beyond (pp. 73-93). New York: Random House.

July 16**Topics:**

Adoption and Foster Care
Role of Culture in Grieving

Readings:

- Schachter, S. and Schachter, J. (2011). Adoption: a life begun with loss. *Counting Our Losses: Reflecting on Change, Loss and Transition in Everyday Life*, pp. 75-89.
- Lifton, B. (2010). Ghosts in the Adopted Family. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 30: 71-79.
- Edelstein, S., Burge, D., and Waterman, J. (2001). Helping foster parents cope with separation, loss and grief. Child Welfare League of America, pp. 5-25.

July 18**Topics:**

- Complicated Grief & Mourning
Medicalization of Grief
Grief with Special Populations (Veterans, Incarcerated Individuals, Persons with Intellectual Challenges, Persons with Mental Illness)

Readings:

- Pomeroy and Garcia (2008). Chapter 7: Grief Reactions and Special Considerations
- Doka, K. and Davidson, J. (1998). *Living with grief: who we are and how we grieve* (pp. 161-206). Philadelphia, PA: Brunner/Mazel.
- Rando, T. (1993). *Treatment of complicated mourning* (pp. 149-184). Illinois: Research Press.

Recommended Reading:

- Matthews, L. and Marwit, S. (2004). Complicated grief and the trend toward Cognitive-behavioral therapy. *Death Studies*, 29: 849-863.

July 23

- Group Presentations: *Cultural Diversity and Illness, Death and Grief*

July 25**Topics:**

- Compassion Fatigue & Secondary Trauma
PTSD with Social Workers and Critical Care Team Members
Support Groups, Social Support and the Role of Social Media in Grieving

Readings:

- Bride, B. (2007). Prevalence of secondary traumatic stress among social workers. *Social Work*, Vol. 52, No. 1. pp. 63-70.
- Hesse, A. (2002). Secondary trauma: how working with trauma survivors affects therapists. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, Vol. 30, No. 3. pp. 293-309.
- Webb, N. (2010). *Helping bereaved children: a handbook for practitioners* (pp.345-373). New York: Guilford Press.

July 30**Topics:**

- Transcendence, Transformation & Hope
Importance of Continued Self Care for Social Workers
Personal Awareness Revisited

Readings:

- Pomeroy and Garcia (2008). Chapter 8: Practice Implications for the Professional

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

100 – 94 points = A
93 – 90 points = A-
89 – 87 points = B+
86 – 84 points = B
83 – 80 points = B-
79 – 77 points = C+
76 – 74 points = C
73 – 70 points = C-
69 – 67 points = D+
66 – 64 points = D
63 – 60 points = D-
59 and below = F

