
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**Course Number:** SW 387R**Instructor:** Elaine Cavazos, LCSW**E-mail:** ehcavazos@utexas.edu**Unique Number:** 62130**Phone/Text:** 512-922-4784**Office:** 3.124G**Semester:** Spring 2017**Office Hours:** Mondays, 12:30-1:30p**Meeting:** Rm 2.122, Mondays 2:30-5:30p

Loss and Grief: Individual, Family, and Cultural Perspectives**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.

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.

TEACHING METHODS:

A variety of teaching methods will be utilized (e.g. discussion, lecture, and group exercises); experiential learning (e.g. volunteer project, role playing, & active learning) will be emphasized.

Use of Canvas in Class: The instructor will use Canvas —a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu> to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, and to submit assignments (if noted). Students can access support in using Canvas at the ITS Help Desk by calling 512-475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Please plan accordingly. Additionally, the Learning Resource Center at the SSW (1st floor) has computers and can provide some computer assistance.

Required Text and Readings:

Lipsky, L.V. (2009). *Trauma stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Pomeroy, E., & Garcia, R. (2008). *The Grief Assessment and Intervention Workbook: A Strengths Perspective*. Brooks Cole. ISBN 978-0-495-00841-5

Recommended:

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

Additional readings will be assigned and posted on Canvas.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation and Preparedness:

- A. Writing Prompts:** There will be 5 in class writing prompts assigned during the course. These writing prompts will be over reading assignments noted on the course syllabus. The class will be divided into writing prompt groups and those groups will discuss the prompt and provide a written response. Being prepared for class by reading assigned material is part of the professional expectations for this course.
- B. Attendance and In Class Contributions:** Please review the policy regarding “time management” for more information about attendance and the points deducted when missing class or arriving late. It is expected that all students will contribute to course discussions in a thoughtful and meaningful way.

Case responses are required for most classes. Completing the case responses will help facilitate class discussions. Case responses will be submitted via Canvas and they will be graded complete/incomplete. Several “incomplete” grades on case responses will result in a lowering of the class participation and preparedness points.

A self-evaluation for both attendance and participation will be given to students at the end of the course and that, along with the professors notes and attendance sheets, will determine the amount of points awarded.

Total points: 20

Personal Reflections of Loss and Loss Time-Line Inventory: There are 2 parts to this assignment. For part one, students will be asked to read and respond to a list of questions designed to help them think about and describe their personal loss history. Part two will be creating a loss time-line. A detailed description of the assignment and grading criteria will be given to students on the first day of class. **(15 points)**

Group Presentations: Students will be placed in groups to complete this project. Work for this project will be done both during and outside of class time. Each group will select a population/community to research and better understand their unique issues related to illness, mental health, death, and grief. The groups will be asked to propose a program to serve this population that reflects sensitivity to their unique cultural considerations. The group will be required to present their final project during class. A detailed description and grading criteria will be given to students at the beginning of the semester for this assignment. **(35 points)**

Final Paper: Students will be given two options to choose from to write a final paper. A detailed description for both options along with the grading criteria will be given to students at the beginning of the semester. This paper will be due the last week of class. **(40 points)**

Course Assignment Table:

Class Participation and Preparedness	20 points
Personal Loss/Time-Line Inventory	10 points
Group Presentations	30 points
Final Paper	40 points
Total	100 points

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

Classroom Policies:

Professional Accountability/Conduct in Class: The professor expects students to act like 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. We will not, nor should we, always agree with one another. In this environment, we should be exposed to diverse ideas and opinions, and sometime we will not agree with the ideas expressed by others. However, the professor does require that students engage one another with respect and professionalism.

Part of professional accountability includes treating others with respect and courtesy. Within the class this entails listening to the opinions and concerns of others with openness, offering suggestions and ideas in a positive and respectful manner, and being willing to promote group cohesiveness in the learning environment.

The student is expected to bring any concerns directly to the professor on an individual basis, if the issue is not appropriate to be discussed in class. Students should be prepared to discuss the concern openly, with willingness to accept feedback, and offer possible solutions.

Please turn off cell phones and laptops during class. Avoid side conversations. A description of proper classroom etiquette will be provided.

Time Management: A sign in sheet will be used to track attendance in class. The sign in sheet will be placed in the front of the room at the start of class and it is the student's responsibility to make sure they have signed in each time. Students are considered absent from class if they arrive after 2:40p (10 minutes late).

The professor will consider an absence excused when presented a note from health services or a physician documenting an illness, accident, or injury. The professor will also consider family emergencies excused if the student contacts that professor before class either via Canvas, email or phone.

Points will be deducted per unexcused absence in the following manner:**Absence 1:** 0 points deducted**Absence 2:** 5 points deducted**Absence 3:** 5 points deducted**Absence 4:** 5 points deducted (and mandatory meeting with the professor to discuss attendance, possible level review)**Absence 5:** 5 points deducted (and level review)

Four or more absences may result in the student being dropped from the course. Three late arrivals (arriving to class more than 10 minutes late) will be counted as one absence.

Classroom exercises, discussions, role-plays, guest speakers and other class experiential exercises are essential for the students' professional learning and continued development of self-awareness. This form of learning cannot be "made up" once missed. Students will be expected to contact their peers to secure any missed notes or handouts. The student may schedule an office visit with the professor if they wish to discuss missed classroom material in more detail.

Students are to notify the instructor prior to class at the given office number if they cannot attend class due to an illness or emergency.

Assignments and Due Dates: All assignments are due at the time posted on the course calendar. Assignments are submitted via Canvas unless instructed otherwise by the professor.

The professor expects the student to communicate **in advance** if an assignment will be submitted after the due date. The student is responsible for setting up a plan with the professor for an adjusted deadline. In most cases, points will be deducted unless the student has documentation from a university center (such as health services) that support the need for an extended deadline. Failure to communicate in advance with the professor or provide documentation may result in the student receiving a "O" on the assignment.

5% points will be deducted for each day (24-hour period) that an assignment is late. This policy applies to all assignments in the class except for those designated in the syllabus as "no late submissions accepted." No late assignment will be accepted if it is 7 or more days past the original deadline.

Contacting the Professor: The professor is available to discuss any issues that arise related to class during office hours or by appointment. Additionally, the student can email the professor via Canvas with questions regarding assignments and/or concerns. The student should be prepared that it could take 24-48 hours for the professor to respond.

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.

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. More information may be found at <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>.

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 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/conduct/>).

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.

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.

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.

CAMPUS CARRY POLICY. The University's policy on concealed fire arms may be found here: <https://campuscarry.utexas.edu>. You also may find this information by accessing the Quick Links menu on the School's website.

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 <https://cio.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy>.

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.

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, 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 Deputy for the SSW, 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>.

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://operations.utexas.edu/units/csas/bcal.php>.

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.

Course Schedule:

1/23	Course Introduction Introduction to Grief: Types and Terminology	RA: Review the Syllabus and please watch the movie, "The Descendants"
1/30	Use of Self in Grief Work	RA: The Grief Assessment Workbook, Ch. 8, Trauma Stewardship, Intro and Ch. 1, pp 1-18 and Working with Loss, Death and Bereavement: A Guide for Social Workers, pp. 150-168, found under "files" on Canvas In Class: Writing Prompt (Dry run, no points) Due: Case Response 1: Cases 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3
2/6	Theoretical and Practice Frameworks for Grief Work	In Class: Writing Prompt 1 RA: Trauma Stewardship, Ch. 2, pp 19-41 and Living Through Loss, Ch. 1-2, located under "files" on Canvas
2/13	Theoretical and Practice Frameworks for Grief Work, Cont	RA: Living Through Loss, Ch. 3 and The Grief Assessment and Intervention Workbook, Ch. 1 and Trauma Stewardship, Ch 3, pp. 41-47 Optional: listen to "After Life," A Radiolab Podcast, http://www.radiolab.org/story/91680-after-life/ Due: Case Response 2: Cases 1.1, 1.2
2/20	Field Trip: Cooke Walden Funeral Home Guest Speaker: Mitzi	RA: How Can I Help, Chs 1-3 (pp. 3-16), found under "files" on Canvas, Trauma Stewardship Ch. 4, pp. 47-64 and The Grief Assessment Workbook, Chs. 2 & 3 Due: Personal Reflections of Loss and Loss Time-Line Inventory
2/27	Grief Assessment and Cultural Considerations	In Class: Writing Prompt 2 RA: Trauma Stewardship, Ch. 4 pp. 64-113 and Ethnic Variations in Dying, Death, and Grief, Introduction and Chs. 1-2 (pp. 1-26), The Grief Intervention Workbook, Ch. 2 Due: Case Response 3, Cases 2.1, questions 1-6, and Case 2.2, questions 1-5
3/6	Complicated Grief Guest Speaker: Brittany Neece	In Class: Writing Prompt 3 RA: Trauma Stewardship Ch. 5 pp. 116-130 and "A Cognitive Model for Prolonged Grief," and Identifying Prolonged Grief Reactions in Children: Dimensional and Diagnostic Approaches found under "files" on Canvas;

		<p>The Grief Assessment Workbook, Ch. 4</p> <p>Due: Case Responses for 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4</p> <p>Please alert the professor in advance if you plan to attend SW Advocacy Day and will not be in class</p>
3/13	No Class	Spring Break
3/20	Traumatic Loss Guest Speaker: Julie Dickerson	<p>RA: Trauma Stewardship, Ch. 6 pp. 130-144 and “Coping with Grief Responses Among African American Family Members of Homicide Victims,” found under “files” on Canvas</p> <p>As assigned by our Guest Speaker and please watch the movie, “Ordinary People,”</p>
3/27	Perinatal Loss and Infant Death	<p>In Class: Writing Prompt 4</p> <p>RA: The Grief Assessment Workbook, Ch. 7 and “Meaning Reconstruction among Women Following Stillbirth: A Loss Fraught with Ambiguity and Doubt,” located under “files” on Canvas and listen to: “http://www.npr.org/2009/07/27/111063912/parents-of-stillborn-babies-find-joy-in-grief,” –Podcast, NPR</p> <p>Due: Case Response, 7.3</p>
3/28	Otis Lecture Series	<p>March 28 @ 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm</p> <p>The Dean Jack Otis Social Problem and Social Policy Lecture presents</p> <p>Wendy Davis</p> <p>Embracing Feminism: The Case for Civic Engagement</p> <p>Pre-registration Required</p> <p>Register here.</p>
4/3	Spirituality and Loss	RA: As Assigned and Trauma Stewardship, Ch. 8, pp. 147-172
4/10	Disenfranchised Grief	<p>In Class: Writing Prompt 5</p> <p>RA: Trauma Stewardship, Ch. 9 pp 172-184 and “Youth Mental Illness and the Family: Parents’ Loss and Grief,” located under “files” on Canvas</p>
4/17	Group Presentations	RA: Trauma Stewardship, Ch. 10 pp. 184-208
4/24	Group Presentations	RA: Trauma Stewardship, Ch. 11 pp. 208-227

5/1	Field Trip: The Austin Center for Grief and Loss Class Co-Facilitated with Rachel Saffer	RA: Trauma Stewardship Ch12 and Conclusion, pp. 227-247 and "Creating Relationship Trees with Grieving Clients: An Experiential Approach to Grief Counseling," found under "files" on Canvas
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