

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

STEVE HICKS SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Course Number: SW 393R

Unique Number: 59775

Semester: Fall 2020

Meeting Time/Place: Wednesdays, 2:30-5:30
Zoom

Instructor: Erin Spalding, LCSW-S

Email: erinspaldinglcsw@utexas.edu

Cell Phone: 512-297-9888

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30--2:30
and other times by appt.

Grief Counseling

I. STANDARDIZED COURSE DESCRIPTION

The framework for this course involves theories of grief and loss and assessment and intervention with children, adolescents, adults, and families. The interplay between normal grief and bereavement and clinical syndromes are analyzed for the purpose of developing empirically-based interventions grounded in social work values and the ethical decision-making process. Childhood, adolescence, adulthood and aging, as distinct life stages, require different knowledge and skills to assess and treat varied grief reactions. Students will develop an advanced understanding of the grief process for people from diverse backgrounds, affirming, and respecting their strengths and differences. This course is designed for students to engage clients in appropriate working relationships and identify needs, resources, and assets for coping with grief reactions. Students will examine, in depth, their own responses and reactions to grief work.

II. STANDARDIZED COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the concept of loss and its implications for individuals during the life span;
2. Demonstrate the ability to assess, through empirical means, the physical and psychological responses to loss (both typical and atypical), coping mechanisms, and available support systems as they pertain to individuals and intergenerational families;
3. Demonstrate an advanced clinical knowledge of the relationship between adaptive mechanisms and counseling strategies of the grief processes of children, adolescents, adults and elders as they relate to the strengths, capacities and resources of those individuals and families.
4. Demonstrate the ability to adapt assessment models of normal and traumatic grief to reflect an understanding of persons from diverse backgrounds, including (but not limited to) race, ethnicity, culture, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, physical or mental ability, age, and national origin;
5. Demonstrate an ability to evaluate outcomes and effectiveness of grief interventions;
6. Demonstrate advanced knowledge of social work values and the ethical decision making

- processes as they relate to ethical dilemmas in grief work and practice.
7. Identify and evaluate counselor loss and grief, burnout, and healthy adaptation.

III. REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

Worden, J. W. (2018). *Grief counseling and grief therapy: A handbook for the mental health Practitioner* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Springer Publishing.

Neimeyer, R. A. (2016). *Techniques of Grief Therapy* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Taylor and Francis.

Social Work Desk Reference, 3rd Edition (required by the MSSW program)

Recommended:

Kosminsky, P. S., & Jordan, J. R. (2016). *Attachment-informed grief therapy: The clinicians guide to foundations and applications* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

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

Rando, T.A. (1993). *Treatment of Complicated Mourning*. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

All readings from the recommended section will be available in Canvas

IV. TEACHING METHODS:

A variety of teaching methods will be utilized, including: lectures, class discussions, case examples, video presentations, role plays, and guest speakers with information addressing diverse populations, including ethnicity, culture, gender, age, sexual orientation, and the economically and/or socially disadvantaged.

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course Assignments:

The course assignments are listed below. Detailed instructions for each assignment will be given to students during class well in advance of the due date. The due dates for each assignment are listed both on Canvas and the course schedule (below).

1. Class Participation 20 points

2. 2 Reflections	20 points
3. 2 Quizzes over readings	30 points
4. 2 Case Assessments	40 points
5. Non-Death Loss Literature Review	80 points
6. Psycho-social Grief Assessment Paper	80 points
7. Final Integration Paper	80 points

Total **350 points**

332.5-350	A
315-331	A-
304.5-314	B+
294-303	B
280-293	B-
269.5-279	C+
259-268	C

Graduate students must earn a minimum grade of C in the course for credit.

VI. GRADES

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

VII. CLASS 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 sometimes 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 during class.

Time Management: Students will lose 5% of the total point value per calendar day that an assignment is late. Please talk with the professor asap prior to the due date if you foresee any challenges with submitting on time. Assignments are due on Canvas by midnight on the due date (unless otherwise specified).

Attendance: It is important for students to be punctual and attendance is expected, as is handing in assignments on time. Students have one unexcused absence per semester in this course. Points will be deducted from the Class Participation/Attendance grade for each unexcused absence after that. Students missing more than two unexcused classes will lose a letter grade. Three or more unexcused absences may result in the student being dropped from the course. Late arrivals will be noted if the student is more than 10 minutes after the start of class. Three late arrivals will count as one unexcused 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 via email, canvas or text if they cannot attend class due to an illness or emergency.

The professor will evaluate each student's class participation based upon their willingness to engage in class discussions, group activities, attentiveness to lectures and guest speakers, and behaviors that reflect presence and readiness to learn. Students who are engage in side conversations or appear to be using their electronic devices for non-class related activities will have their participation grade lowered accordingly and may be asked to meet with the professor to discuss appropriate classroom behavior.

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.

VIII. 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 (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and other forms of electronic communication (e.g. blogs) 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: <https://studentaffairs.utexas.edu/>.

SHARING OF COURSE MATERIALS IS PROHIBITED No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

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/>.

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. 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, field instructors, staff, and/or teaching assistants in their supervisory roles are mandated reporters of incidents of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, stalking, interpersonal violence, or any other forms of 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>.

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.

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.

CLASS RECORDINGS. Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

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>.

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.

COVID CAVEATS. To help keep everyone at UT and in our community safe, it is critical that students report COVID-19 symptoms and testing, regardless of test results, to [University Health Services](#), and faculty and staff report to the [HealthPoint Occupational Health Program](#) (OHP) as soon as possible. Please see this [link](#) to understand what needs to be reported. In addition, to help understand what to do if a fellow student in the class (or the instructor or TA) tests positive for COVID, see this [University Health Services link](#).

IX. COURSE SCHEDULE

8/26/20	Review Syllabus and Ethical Obligation of Self-Care	Assigned Readings: The Syllabus Canvas: Bordere "Social Justice Conceptualizations in Grief, and Loss" Listen to: http://www.insocialwork.org/episode.asp?ep=157
8/30/20	Assignment	1st One-Page Reflection Paper Due
9/2/20	Theoretical Perspectives and terminology for Grief and Loss Practice. DSM Overview of Grief	Assigned Readings: Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy, Worden, Ch. 2, Techniques of Grief Therapy, Ch. 1 and 2 Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMX_1yeKNoI
9/9/20	Assignment	Submit Topic for Non-Death Loss Paper
9/16/20	Theoretical Perspectives Continued & Theories behind Trauma Counseling	Assigned Readings: Techniques of Grief Therapy, Ch. 3 Scaer, "The Dissociation Capsule" Listen to: "1: In Love and Memory," From the podcast, "Terrible, Thanks for Asking."

9/23/20	Affect of Developmental Level on Bereavement in Children and Teens	Assigned Readings: Pomeroy and Garcia, “Grief and Youth in Crisis” Attachment-Informed Grief Therapy, Ch. 10, Other readings TBD
9/30/20	Overview of Assessment and Interventions for Adults with Grief, Loss and Trauma	Assigned Readings: Review Assessment questions from “The Grief Assessment Intervention Workbook” Pomeroy and Garcia “Techniques of Grief Therapy”, Neimeyer, ch.6-9
10/4/20	Assignment	1st Case Assessment Due
10/7/20	Issues related to Grief, Loss & Trauma	Assigned Reading: “Predictors of grief following the death of one's child: the contribution of finding meaning,” Worden, Ch. 4 additional readings on Canvas
10/11/20	Assignment	Non-Death Loss Literature Review Due
10/14/20	Grief and Cultural/Gender Differences Class Panel Discussion	Assigned Readings: Martin & Doka, “Men Don’t Cry” and Goldman/Livotti, “Grief in GLBT Populations: Focus on Gay and Lesbian Youth” and Rosenblatt, “Cultural Competence and Humility” Stewart, “The Rhetoric of Shared Grief” Listen to: http://www.insocialwork.org/episode.asp?ep=227 and https://storycorps.org/listen/bill-jones-and-stu-maddux-150220/
10/21/20	Ambiguous Loss and Disenfranchised Grief	Assigned Readings: “Disenfranchised grief following a non-fatal road traffic incident: A case study exploring a mother’s experience,” “Disoriented Grief: A Lens Through Which to View the Experience of Katrina Evacuees” Techniques of Grief Therapy, ch. 25 and 27 Listen to: https://storycorps.org/listen/robert-patterson-and-his-wife-karen/
10/25/20	Assignment	2nd Case Assessment Due
10/28/20	Complicated Grief	Assigned Readings: Worden, Ch. 5 and Neimeyer, Ch. 14 Attachment-Informed Grief Therapy, Ch. 4
11/4/20	Clinical Skill Development: Exploring Resistance	Assigned Readings: Worden, Ch. 6 and additional readings on Canvas Attachment-Informed Grief Therapy, Ch. 8 and 9 Listen to: https://www.apmpodcasts.org/ttfa/2017/11/happyish-h
11/11/20	Unexpected Traumatic Loss: Homicide, Suicide and Crisis Intervention Guest Speakers	Assigned Readings: Neimeyer Ch. 4, and Shapiro, “EMDR Treatment of Recent Trauma” Listen to: https://storycorps.org/listen/leslie-hurd/

11/15/20	Assignment	2nd One-Page Reflection Due
11/18/20	Specialized Populations	Assigned Readings: Damianakis & Marzaili, “Older Adults Response to the loss of a spouse”, Hendry, “Incarceration and the Tasks of Grief”, Aday and Krahill, “The Silenced Emotion: Older Women and Grief in Prison: other readings TBD
11/22/20	Assignment	Psychosocial Grief Assessment Due
11/25/20	NO CLASS Happy Thanksgiving!	
12/2/20	Secondary Trauma & Self Care Final Class Goodbye	Assigned Readings: Goelitz & Stewart-Kahn, “You can be affected too”, Trauma Stewardship readings on Canvas
12/8/19	Assignment	Final Integration Paper Due

X. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- InSocialWork Podcast #227 - Dr. Kristie Seelman: Sexual Minority Older Adults: Addressing Health Disparities and Promoting Healthy Aging. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.insocialwork.org/episode.asp?ep=227>
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