The University of Texas at Austin
Steve Hicks School of Social Work

Course Number: SW 387R1
Unique Number: 61300
Semester: Spring 2021
Meeting Time: Monday 2:30-5:30pm
Meeting Place: Zoom

Professor: Erin Spalding, LCSW-S
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Office Hours: Mondays/Fridays or by appt

LOSS AND GRIEF: INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

I. Standardized Course Description

The course examines issues of death and dying, placing a special emphasis on non-death losses that elicit grief responses and exploring ways the mourner finds meaning in life after a significant loss. We will look at grief from individual, family, community and society views and the impact (impede or facilitate) these systems have on the grief experience. An emphasis will be placed on examining multiple cultures and the impact culture has on grief response. The course will provide many opportunities (formal and informal) to examine personal grief histories, perceptions and beliefs about death, dying and loss, and how personal beliefs, experiences and culture can impact professional development and therapeutic services with diverse populations. The philosophy underlying this course is in line with the "Statements on Death, Dying and Bereavement" (1994) of the International Work Group on Death, Dying and Bereavement. The introduction states: "Death, dying and bereavement are fundamental and pervasive aspects of the human experience. Individuals and societies can only achieve fullness of living by understanding and appreciating these realities. The absence of such understanding and appreciation may result in unnecessary suffering, loss of dignity, alienation, and diminished quality of living. Therefore, education about death, dying and bereavement is an essential component of the educational process at all levels, both formal and informal." (IWG, 1994) We will explore how this statement on death, dying and bereavement extends to include all areas of grief work, including disenfranchised grief.

II. Standardized Course Objectives

At the end of this course, students are expected to be able to:

1. Critically analyze and assess values and ethical dilemmas regarding death, dying, grief and loss (such as end of life decision making).

2. Demonstrate and appraise diverse cultural, geographical, spiritual, ethnic, and

psychosocial factors related to grief, loss, and mourning;

3. Demonstrate strategies designed to reduce discrimination and oppression regarding death and dying issues and explore the various determinants of grief and their impact on the tasks of mourning with various populations at risk;

4. Compare and contrast theories examining the developmental impact of bereavement, grief, and mourning within the life span of an individual, family, groups and communities;

5. Examine and critically evaluate various community referral networks for loss-specific services and policy implications of end-of-life decision making;

6. Identify their own loss histories and beliefs and differentiate their personal boundaries from their professional roles and apply a health perspective in assessments and clinical interventions;

7. Critically evaluate research issues relating to the emotional, behavioral, cognitive, physical and spiritual expressions that accompany bereavement, grief, and mourning;

8. Demonstrate practice competence in grief and loss issues within an ecological framework.

III. <u>Teaching Methods</u>

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. <u>Text and Readings</u>

Required Text

Harris, D. L., & Bordere, T.C. (2016) *Handbook for Social Justice in Loss and Grief: Exploring Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.* New York, NY: Routledge.

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

Neimeyer, R. A., Harris, D. L., Winokuer, H.R., & Thorton, G. F. (2011). *Grief and Bereavement in Contemporary Society: Bridging Research and Practice.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Optional Text (Some of these readings will be made available on Canvas)

Additional readings will be available on Canvas.

V.   Course Grading Criteria

Assignment   **Total Points**

1. Attendance Class Participation   30 points
2. Learning Reflection Papers (2)   30 points
3. Loss History/Personal Awareness Assignment   70 points
4. Community Interview Paper   70 points
5. Group Presentation   100 points

Total   **300 points**

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

Point Total		Grade
376-400 points	(94.0 and above)	A
360-375 points	(90.0-93.999)	A-
348-359 points	(87.0-89.999)	B+
336-347 points	(84.0-86.999)	B
320-335 points	(80.00-83.99)	B-
308-319 points	(77.0-79.999)	C+
296-307 points	(74.0-76.999)	C
280-295 points	(70.0-73.999)	C-
268-279 points	(67.0-69.999)	D+
256-267 points	(64.0-66.999)	D
240-255 points	(60.0-63.999)	D-
239 points or below	(59.999 and below)	F

VI.   <u>Classroom Policies and Practices</u>

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 2:30 and end by 5:15. A student is considered absent if they arrive more than 10 minutes late to class, leave early, or are unable to come to class. Each student has one excused absence without explanation. Absences may result in a reduction by one letter grade. If a student is going to be absent, efforts should be made to contact the professor in advance. Students are responsible for any material missed due to absence.

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. 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, unless otherwise stated in the guidelines for the assignment.

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

7. **Classroom 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. 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 FERPA regulations as well. Discussions with individuals outside of the educational context are 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, 3.2, and 3.2 of the Standards for Social Work Education.

VII. University Policies

COVID-19 RELATED INFORMATION. The University's policies and practices related to the pandemic may be accessed at: https://protect.utexas.edu/

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.

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/.

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 race, 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. This atmosphere includes working intentionally to recognize and dismantle racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism in the classroom. 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 ocial 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://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php.

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.

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

USE OF E-MAIL FOR OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE TO STUDENTS. Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements.

Students are responsible for keeping the university informed about a change of e-mail address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at https://it.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy.

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 he student must miss a class, examination, work assignment, or project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

TITLE IX REPORTING. In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the University of Texas at Austin is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct on the basis of sex https://titleix.utexas.edu/. 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, dating 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. Further information, including student resources related to Title IX, may also be found at https://titleix.utexas.edu/.

CAMPUS CARRY POLICY. The University's policy on concealed firearms 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.

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 have concerns about their behavioral health, or if they are concerned about the behavioral health of someone else, students may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns. 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 visit https://safety.utexas.edu/behavior-concerns-advice-line.

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.

VIII. Course Schedule (subject to change)

Other methods of teaching, such as podcasts and videos will be added onto Canvas throughout the semester. Students are expected to check the Canvas modules for additionally assigned material.

***Please note that all assignments will be posted on Canvas with requirements and instructions.

Date:	Topic:	Readings:	Due:
Monday, Jan. 25	Introduction to the Course Personal Awareness & Defining Loss Theoretical Perspectives - Theories of Grief and Loss Practice Models -	Pomeroy and Garcia (2008). Chapter 1: Understanding Grief and Loss – An Introduction Harris & Bordere. Chapter 1: *Social Justice Conceptualizations in Grief and Loss*	
Sunday, Jan. 31			**1st Learning Reflection Due**

Monday, Feb. 1	Continuation of Theories of Grief and Loss Practice Models - Frameworks for Coping with Loss Ambiguous and Disenfranchised Grief Intro	***Trauma Stewardship: Ch. 1 & 2*** Doka, K. (2002). *Disenfranchised grief: New directions, challenges, and strategies for practice* (pp. 23-28 Neimeyer, R., et. al (Eds). Ch. 18: *Giving Voice to Nonfinite Loss and Grief in Bereavement.* Chung, D. (2008). *Supporting Women After Domestic Violence:*	
Monday, Feb. 8	Children and Teens	***Trauma Stewardship: Ch. 3*** Pomeroy and Garcia (2008). Chapter 5: *Grief Reactions in Children and Adolescent.* Lopez, S.A. (2011). *Culture as an influencing factor in adolescent grief and bereavement.* Webb, N., (Eds). Ch. 1: *The Child and Death* Dawson, A., Brookes, L., Carter, B., Larman, G., & Jackson, D. (2013). *Stigma, Health and*	
Monday, Feb. 15	Grief with Special Populations (Veterans, LGBTQ, Incarcerated Individuals, Persons with Intellectual Challenges, Persons with Mental Illness, etc.)	Harris & Bordere. Chapter 12: *The Silenced Emotion: Older Women and Grief in Prison.* Neimeyer, R., et. al (Eds). Ch. 20: *Traumatic Death in the United States Military: Initiating the Dialogue on War-Related Loss.* Neimeyer, R. et. al (Eds). Ch. 19:	

Monday, Feb. 22	Reproductive Grief & Loss (including Perinatal Loss & Grief Associated with Abortion) Ambiguous and Disenfranchised Loss continued	*Trauma Stewardship: Chapter 5* Harris & Bordere. Chapter 5: *Inequality, Exclusion and Infant Morality: Listening to Bereaved Mothers.* McBain, T. D., & Reeves, P. (2019). *Women's Experience of Infertility and Disenfranchised Grief* Fernańdez-Alcántara, M., García-Caro, M. P., Pérez-Marfil, M. N., Hueso-Montoro, C., Laynez-Rubio, C., Cruz-Quintana, F. (2016). *Feelings of loss and grief in parents of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder*	
Sunday, Feb 28			**Personal Loss History Paper**
Monday, March 1	Death & Dying	*Trauma Stewardship: Chapter 6* Neimeyer, R., et. al (Eds). Ch. 3: *Attachment and Coping with Bereavement: Implications for Therapeutic interventions with the Insecurely Attached.* Neimeyer, R., et. al (Eds). Ch. 6: *A Task-Based Approach to Counseling the Bereaved.*	

Monday, March 8	Adoption and Foster Care	*Trauma Stewardship: Chapter 7* Schachter, S. and Schachter, J. (2011). *Adoption: A life begun with loss.* Mitchell, M. B. (2018). "*No one acknowledged my loss and hurt": Non-death loss, grief, and trauma in foster care.* Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal, 35(1), 1–9. Edelstein, S.B., Burge, D., & Waterman, J. (2001). *Helping foster parents cope with separation, loss, and grief.* Child Welfare, 80(1), 5-25. Gupta, A., & Featherstone, B. (2020). *On hope, loss, anger, and the spaces in between: Reflections on living with/in adoption and the role of the social worker.* Child & Family Social Work. Morgan, H. C., Nolte, L.,	
Monday, March 15	**Spring Break**		**Have Fun!!!**
Monday, March 22	Adult and Geriatrics Living with Chronic Illness Caregiver Grief **Group Assignments**	*Trauma Stewardship: Chapter 8* Pomeroy and Garcia (2008). Chapter 6: *Grief Reactions in the Older Adult Population* Harris & Bordere. Chapter 21: *Care for the Caregiver: A Multilayered Approach* Utz, R. L, et al. (2002). *The effects of widowhood on older adults' social participation: An evaluation of activity, disengagement, and continuity theories. Gerontologist 42(4).*	
Sunday, March 28			**Community Interview Paper**

Monday, March 29	Disoriented Grief Community Tragedy & Trauma	***Trauma Stewardship: Chapter 9*** Lattanzi-Licht, M. and Doka, K. (2003). *Living with grief: Coping with* *public tragedy* Malone,P., Pomeroy, E., and Jones, B. (2011*). Disoriented*	
Monday, April 5	Complicated Grief & Mourning	***Trauma Stewardship: Chapter 10*** Rando, T. (1993). *Treatment of complicated mourning* (pp.149-184).	
Monday, April 12	Sudden and Traumatic Death Suicide	Armour, M. (2007). Violent death. Zayas, L. (2011). *Latinas attempting suicide: When cultures, families and daughters collide.*	
Sunday, April 18			**2nd Learning Reflection Due**
Monday, April 19	Support Groups, Social Support and the Role of Social Media in Grieving **Group Presentations**	Neimeyer, R., et. al (Eds). Ch. 28: *Technology and Grief Support in the 21st Century: A Multimedia Platform.* Wolfet, A.D. (2007). Growing through grief: The role of support groups. From: Center for Loss and Life Transition.	
Monday, April 26	Trauma Stewardship Compassion Fatigue and Secondary Trauma **Group Presentations**	***Trauma Stewardship: Chapter 12*** Harris & Bordere. Chapter 22: *The Liberating Capacity of Compassion.*	
Sunday, May 2			**All Group Project Reports Due**

| Monday, May 3 | Transcendence, Transformation & Hope Importance of Continued Self Care for Social Workers Personal Awareness | *Trauma Stewardship: Conclusion* Pomeroy and Garcia (2008). Chapter 8: *Practice Implications for the Professional* | |

IX.   Bibliography

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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.

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