I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will focus on the experiences of loss, death and bereavement as it is viewed by individuals, families and loved ones. How we cope with grief shapes our lives, it challenges our responses to change and it can determine how we form, maintain, and let go of relationships. This course will examine theories of grief and loss across the lifespan. Particular attention will be paid to various forms of grief (i.e. anticipatory, complicated, disenfranchised, etc.). In addition, we will consider how social factors i.e. culture, ethnicity/race, gender, class and sexual orientation may impact the grieving process. Further, the role of spirituality and coping will be explored and discussed to increase the clinician’s ability to work with this content in therapy.

In our clinical work with clients, we confront aspects of loss on a daily basis. Given our societal tendency to avoid the subject of loss, social workers can play a critical role in providing clients with an opportunity to grapple with painful and devastating losses in the clinical encounter. Despite this, most social workers report being ill prepared to explore these issues with clients. This course will address the role of the therapist and effective ways to use oneself with clients and their families in diverse settings and different modalities. Finally, we will consider interventions and resources needed to provide appropriate and effective services.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES
Upon completion of the course students will be able to fulfill the following:

- To identify and define the theoretical constructs of loss, grief, mourning and bereavement
- To apply theoretical knowledge to clinical practice and examine individual, family, and group treatment
- To analyze and discuss ethical dilemmas that may occur
- To identify and differentiate transference and countertransference in the clinical encounter. Students will determine ways to effectively use one’s self with clients and their families.
- To develop a greater understanding of the intersection of spirituality and coping with psychosocial challenges and to assist clients in examining these issues
- To increase one’s awareness of how culture and race impact choices in end-of-life care. Finally, to enhance one’s comfort level in exploring these issues within clinical practice.

III. COURSE FORMAT

The course will encompass a combination of diverse learning modalities and tools which may include, but are not limited to the following: didactic presentations by the instructor, small and large group discussions, case studies, videos, guest speakers, experiential exercises, computer-based, online activities.

The online teaching and learning environment provided by the University’s Blackboard Academic Suite™ System (http://blackboard.usc.edu/) will support access to course-related materials and communication.

IV. COURSE EVALUATION AND GRADING

All students are expected to regularly attend class and be on time. A student with more than two unexcused absences during the course of this class may receive a no credit. A student who is tardy three or more times to class may receive a grade of no credit. If a student receives a no credit grade in this seminar, they will be required to repeat this class.

Class grades will be based on the following:

- 3.85 – 4 A
- 3.60 – 3.84 A-
- 3.25 – 3.59 B+
- 2.90 – 3.24 B
2.60 – 2.87   B-
2.25 – 2.50   C+
1.90 – 2.24   C

Final Grade:

93 – 100    A
90 – 92     A-
87 – 89     B+
83 – 86     B
80 – 82     B-
77 – 79     C+
73 – 76     C
70 – 72     C-

**CLASS PARTICIPATION (NO MORE THAN 10%)**

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**
Detailed hand-outs describing the assignments and expectations will be distributed in class with ample time to complete the assignments.

Assignments are due on the day and time specified. Extensions will be granted only for extenuating circumstances, and is left to the discretion of the course instructor. If the assignment is late without permission, the grade will be affected accordingly.

A final grade of “Incomplete” can only be given under extreme circumstances.

Assignments must adhere to the citation and referencing standards put forth in the 2001 Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th Ed.).

**V. ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Students are expected to attend every class and to remain in class for the duration of the session. Failure to attend class or arriving late may impact your ability to achieve course objectives which could affect your course grade. Students are expected to notify the instructor by telephone or email of any anticipated absence or reason for tardiness.

University of Southern California policy permits students to be excused from class, without penalty, for the observance of religious holy days. This policy also covers scheduled final examinations which conflict with students’ observance of a holy day. Students must make arrangements *in advance* to complete class work which will be missed, or to reschedule an examination, due to holy days observance.
VI. COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES

Student Evaluation Students are expected to attend class sessions, participate in class discussions, and submit quality work on the date and time specified by the instructor.

Evaluation of the student’s academic productivity for the course will be determined as follows:

- Journals 20%
- Midterm Assignment 35%
- Final Assignment 35%
- Class Participation 10%

VII. REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

A reader is required for this class. A grief and loss reader may be purchased through Mozena Publishing (http://www.mozenapublishing.com or (800) 444-8398.

Recommended Texts:


VIII. ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the instructor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

IX. EMERGENCY RESPONSE INFORMATION
To receive information, call main number (213)740-2711, press #2. “For recorded announcements, events, emergency communications or critical incident information.”

To leave a message, call (213) 740-8311
For additional university information, please call (213) 740-9233
Or visit university website; http://emergency.usc.edu

If it becomes necessary to evacuate the building, please go to the following locations carefully and using stairwells only. Never use elevators in an emergency evacuation.

University Park Campus
MRF – Lot B
SWC – Lot B
WPH – McCarthy Quad
VKC – McCarthy Quad

City Center
Front of the building (12th & Olive)

Orange County Campus
Faculty Parking Lot

Skirball Campus
Front of building

Do not re-enter the building until given the “all clear” by emergency personnel.

X. COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Please note: the reading published earlier than 2000 are considered seminal works that can enhance one’s understanding.

Class 1
Class introductions
Defining concepts
Grief and loss in our society
Trajectory of illness
Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6


**Class 2**
- Types of grief (anticipatory grief, disenfranchised, complicated)
- Theoretical aspects of loss, death and mourning
- Good death vs. bad death
- Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 6


**Recommended:**


**Class 3**
- **Guest Speakers: Cecilia Fu, MD & Lorena Vega, LCSW**
- The role of the social worker
Ethical challenges
Objectives 1, 2, 3, 5


Recommended:


Hospice Palliative Care Nursing Standards of Practice. (Feb. 2002). CHPCA Nursing Standards Committee.

Class 4
Cultural diversity
Suicide
Treatment disparities
Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6


Recommended:


**Class 5**

**Spirituality**

Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6


Recommended:


**Class 6**

Adult loss
Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6


Recommended:


**Class 7**

Special case of parental loss

Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6


Recommended:


**Class 8**

Children and adolescents

Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6


Hogan & DeSantis. (1996). Basic constructs of a theory of adolescent sibling


Recommended:


**Class 9**

Working with dying children
Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6


Recommended:


**Spring Break – Week of March 17, 2008**

**Class 10**

Interventions with individuals


Recommended:
See Part III: Clinical Practice Issues in End-of-Life Care

**Class 11**
Interventions with families
Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6


Recommended:


**Class 12**
Interventions with groups
Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Pesek, E. (2002). The role of support groups in disenfranchised grief. In K. Doka (Ed.).


Recommended:


Class 13

Leadership in end-of-life care
Self care
Objectives 1, 3, 4, 5, 6


Recommended:

Miller, J. (1999). If not for myself: Caring for yourself as a caregiver for those who grieve. In J. Davidson and K. Doka (Eds.) Living with Grief at Work, at School and at Worship. Hospice Foundation of America. DC: Brunner Mazel

Class 14

Rituals
Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6


Recommended:


**Class 15**

Wrap-up