

*University of Texas Dallas*  
*Psy 4V90: Death and Dying*

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*Fall 2014*

*Tuesday/Thursday 11:30-12:45am*  
*Callier Richardson, room 1.212*

**Contact Information**

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Office hours are available as needed. I will be available prior to class or by appointment. Please email me to schedule a meeting.

**Course Description**

This course will focus on gaining knowledge of death, dying, mourning and grief across the lifespan (infants through late adulthood) along with interventions for bereaved. Students will be prepared to interact with individuals who have experienced loss in different context, such as loss of life, loss of health, loss of relationships, etc. This course will emphasize theorist, theories and models of grief and loss. Students will explore their own perspectives of loss and gain understanding of how their perspective impacts their response to others. In addition, a focus on how faith, culture and religion will impact ones understanding and acceptance of death and dying. Students will gain the skills to develop plans and interventions to work with individuals and families who are experiencing death.

**Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes**

To assist students:

1. Gain understanding of ones own perspective and awareness of death, dying and loss.
2. Understand the difference between the stages/ages of people in their understanding of death and mourning process.
3. Identify factors that affect the nature of the grief experience especially individual, cultural, spiritual, and religious influences.
4. Understand the theory and theorist regarding the stages of grief, dying and bereavement
5. Plan appropriate interventions and clinical approaches to work with the terminally ill and the bereaved.
6. Demonstrate an awareness of ethical and legal issues related to death.
7. Have an awareness regarding the psychological issues affecting caregivers.

## Course Policies

### *Late Work:*

All assignments are due at the beginning of the class on the date specified on the course outline. Request for extensions must be based on significant extenuating circumstances and must be discussed with the professor before the assignment is due. Each day the assignment is late 5 points will be deducted. The assignment will not be accepted after one week.

### *Class Attendance:*

A significant part of the learning in this course is interacting and participating in class lectures. Consequently, your learning and that of your colleagues is dependent on your attendance and the attendance of your classmates. **Class attendance is required.** If an unusual situation or major illness occurs please contact me at the earliest possible time and determine whether it is possible to arrange appropriate supplemental assignment to make up the work. Missing any classes may impact your class participation grade. Absence from classes reduces your learning opportunities and negatively affects the interactive process with other students. Students who miss 6 or more class meetings of this course will not achieve a passing grade.

### *Expectations:*

1. It is each student's responsibility to sign the attendance log at the beginning of each class. The log will be up away 15 minutes into class and students will not be able to sign in.
2. All assignments are due at the beginning of the class, double spaces, stapled, free of grammatical and spelling errors and in APA format.

The information covered in this class has the potential to be emotionally intense and students need to be aware of strong emotional reactions to the issues covered. Students are expected to participate in class discussions and share their ideas openly but no student will be required to share personal information or information that they are not comfortable discussing. Students are encouraged to voice any concerns with the topics to the professor in or out of class.

### *Make-up assignments and exams:*

Request for make-up assignments and exams will be granted on a case by case basis. Make ups should not be expected and are rare.

### *Extra Credit:*

The student may select one book to read and write and 4 to 6 page book review. The student must make the professor aware of his/her intentions to do the extra credit and receive additional instructions on the paper. (May receive up to 10 points and is due week 16)

### *Classroom Citizenship:*

Classroom will consist of lecture, discussion, student-led training presentations, videos, and guest with the potential of on and off campus meetings

## UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

## **Suggested Textbooks and Materials**

Hooyman, Nancy R. & Kramer, Betty J (2006). *Living Through Loss: Interventions across the life span*. New York: Columbia University Press.

DeSpelder, L.A. & Strickland, A.L. (2005). *The Last Dance: Encountering death and dying* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: McGraw Hill.

Doka, K.J. (Ed.). (2002). *Disenfranchised grief: New direction, challenges, and strategies for practice*. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

## **Assignments & Academic Calendar**

*Topics, Reading Assignments, Due Dates, Exam Dates*

Week 1- first week of class

Review syllabus, assignments, and books

In class assignment

Week 2-

Death awareness and countertransference issues

Theoretical Framework: attachment and loss

Week 3-

Stages of grief and mourning

Week 4-

Reflection due

Socialization influences, historical and cross-cultural perspective, ethical issues

Week 5-

Health care and School system

Defining death and Facing death

Week 6-

Living Will due

Infancy and Preschool

Week 7-

School age and Elmo Video

Week 8- Midterm

Reflection due

Adolescents and Under the Surface (Teen Bereavement)

Week 9-

Adulthood and Late adulthood

Week 10-

Consider the Conversation

Week 11-

Book project due

Resilience and interventions

Suicide, Military, Animal and other types of loss

Week 12-

Hospice and End of life issues  
Religion, spirituality

Week 13-

Ceremonies and rituals  
Perspectives on Death

Week 14- Class interest

Reflection due (Tuesday)

Week 15- Presentation in class

Presentation due

Week 16- Review

TBA- Final Exam

### **Assignments**

Class participation (70 points)  
Will deduct 2 points each class activity missed

Living Will (15 points)

Reflection papers: (15 points each)

Book Project (40 points)

Case Study Presentation: (30 points)  
• Present your patient to the class. (10 points)

Midterm: (15 points)

Final Exam: (20 points)

**Total of 240 points offered in class.**

### **Grading Policy**

A	91-100
B+	86-90
B	80-85
C+	79-76
C	70-75
F	Below 69

*The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.*

## **Reflection Paper**

- Reflect upon the topics discussed in the prior weeks.
- Do not re-teach the topics
  - Discuss your awareness
  - Personal feelings
  - Struggles
  - Disagreements
  - Additional information or thoughts
- Must cite at least 2 outside peer-reviewed articles
  - Articles need to be printed and submitted with your assignment
- Papers should not be over 3 pages.

## **Living Will**

- Complete a living will
- Will complete an advance directive

## **Book Paper**

- Review death education/story books
- Analyze the information, content, and details
  - Who would this book appeal to
  - What age of children should read this
  - What information is missing
  - What did you like about the book
  - What did you dislike/how would you change it
- Paper should be 3-5 pages

## **Case Study and Psychosocial Assessment of Patient**

Choose a case study of a “patient,” and backstory dealing with a topic we have discussed that applies to your future professional goals. Act as if you are working in the field and this “patient” becomes your patient/Student/Friend seeking advice or education and interventions

- Identify the patient, age/ age range and discuss important developmental concerns
  - Developmental Level: (Cognitive, Language, Fine Motor, Gross Motor, Social)
  - Diagnosis, Identify a location (e.g. school, hospital, church, family friend)
  - Discuss Patient's history: religion, culture and other of societies influences
  - Apply aspects of learning to your story. What type of loss is being experienced, is this their first experience with death, what stage of grief, what will the death ritual look like (cremation, burial)
  - Assessment of Patient Coping, Understanding of Hospitalization/location
  - Possible Interventions, Possible Procedures,
- Parents/Caregivers, Siblings/Children
  - Discuss anticipated issues or topics that the family/patient should be aware of
  - What education (book, handouts, movies) are you going to give
- Self-awareness
  - Identify areas of concern and awareness do you have for yourself? How are you going to cope?

Present your patient to the class.