SWK-S 307 Grief & Loss Across the Life Span (3 cr.)

Course Information

Semester Year: Spring 2017
Section Number: XXXXX
Location: XXXXX
Day: XXXXX
Time: XXXXX
Instructor: XXXXX XXXXXXXXXXX
Office: XXX
Email: XXX
Phone: xxxxx
Office Hours: xxxxxxxxxxx

Course Description

This is an elective web-based course that will explore the complex components of grief and loss throughout the life span from an ecological and strength based theoretical perspective. The focus of the course will be to increase understanding, knowledge and compassion related to the impact of grief and loss on individuals, families, and communities at large. In addition, the course gives students an opportunity to explore and understand their perceptions and beliefs on death and dying, and how individual cultural differences influence that experience. The course also prepares students to work with clients dealing with feelings of grief and loss. Throughout the course, students will be challenged to apply critical thinking skills related to ethical dilemmas surrounding decision making as related to advance directives. A portion of the class will investigate the issues associated with disenfranchised grief as it relates to divorce, suicide, unfinished business, and relationships not accepted by society, i.e. same sex partners or extramarital affairs. In addition the course will explore environmental aspects of grief and loss as they relate to unemployment, natural disasters and chronic illness.

Societal values of this country impose a belief system that suggests one’s grief should be contained within a minimal time frame. This worldview only increases a mourner’s emotional turmoil, and lengthens the time in which a mourner may experience turmoil, behavioral changes, mood swings, forgetfulness, and loss of concentration. Connecting these personality changes to the events, whether psychosocial or symbolic, is often complicated by the time frame associated with the loss. Throughout the class an in-depth review of the current research as it relates to grief and loss will be examined.

Examining the issues associated with unresolved or complicated grief can be an underlying force for a grieving person’s current behavior. A well-trained professional’s ability in making the connection between current behavior and unresolved grief is a delicate balance of understanding grief and possessing the skill to decipher the hidden challenge to a grieving person’s return to emotional stability. Students will experience an opportunity to enhance their knowledge and proficiency in the area of grief and loss.

Course Objectives

As a result of having completed the requirements of this course, students will be able to:

S307-01 Increase their understanding of the impact of grief and loss as it relates to daily coping skills following a divorce, chronic/terminal illness, death of a loved one from a terminal illness or sudden event i.e. cardiac arrest, stroke, or suicide and environmental influences that include natural disasters and job loss.

S307-02 Gain understanding of grief, loss and mourning in working with a diverse population.
Gain knowledge related to society’s view of death and dying and the ethical dilemmas intrinsic in end-of-life decision making.

Increase understanding of the emotional, psychosocial, and spiritual needs of a grieving heart, dying patient and caregiver from an ecological and strengths based theoretical perspective.

Enhance knowledge of the current trends in dealing with grief and loss, crisis intervention, palliative care and end-of-life care issues.

Augment their knowledge of end of life realities.

Increase their knowledge of available community resources in the area of grief, loss, death and dying.

Analyze effective strategies in working with individuals attempting to cope with the multiple losses associated with a chronic illness from a holistic approach.

Required Texts


Resources
• You may want to visit the following websites as resources for mastering the APA writing format:
  • APA Style
  • Webster Website
  • Wooster Website
  • Purdue Owl

Course Outline
Module 1
Dates:

Overview
A. Intro to Course
B. Getting to know you: Please introduce yourself to the class via “Chat”

Assignments
1. Forum Discussion 1

Readings
1. The Grief Assessment and Intervention Workbook: Chapter 1- Understanding Grief and Loss – An Introduction
2. Disenfranchised Grief: Chapter 22 –How We Grieve: Culture, Class, and Gender
3. Disenfranchised Grief: Chapter 24 –Incorporating Disenfranchised Grief in the Death Education Classroom
Module 2

Dates:

Assignments
1. Forum Discussion 2

Readings
1. The Grief Assessment and Intervention Workbook: Chapter 2 – Grief Interviewing and Assessment, Grief Interviewing Using the Strengths-Based Framework
2. Disenfranchised Grief: Chapter 14 – *Psychosocial Loss and Grief*

Module 3

Dates:

Assignments
1. Forum Discussion 3

Readings
2. The Grief Assessment and Intervention Workbook: Chapter 3 – *Expected Grief Experience in Adults*
3. Disenfranchised Grief: Chapter 10 – A Later Loss: The Grief of Ex-Spouses

Module 4

Dates:

Assignments
1. Forum Discussion 4

Readings
1. The Grief Assessment & Intervention Workbook: Chapter 6 – *Grief Reactions in the Older Adult Population*
2. Disenfranchised Grief: Chapter 12 Disenfranchised Grief in Caregivers

Module 5

Dates:

Assignments
1. Forum Discussion 5

Readings
1. Disenfranchised Grief: Chapter 13 Nursing Home Staff Reactions to Resident Deaths

Module 6

Dates:

Assignments
1. Forum Discussion 6

Readings
1. The Grief Assessment & Intervention Workbook: Chapter 4 – *Complex Grief in Adults*
Module 7

Dates:

**Overview**
A. Exam 1

**Assignments**
1. Forum Discussion 7

**Readings**
1. The Grief Assessment & Intervention Workbook: Chapter 5 – *Grief Reactions in Children and Adolescents*

Module 8

Dates:

**Assignments**
1. Forum Discussion 8

**Readings**
1. Disenfranchised Grief: Chapter 18 – *Youth and Disenfranchised Grief*
2. Chapter 19 – The Disenfranchised Grief of Children

Module 9

Dates:

**Overview**
A. Exam 2

Module 10

Dates:

**Assignments**
1. Forum Discussion 9

**Readings**
1. The Grief Assessment & Intervention Workbook: Chapter 7 – *Grief Reactions and Special Considerations*
2. Disenfranchised Grief: Chapter 15 – *Disenfranchising the Brokenhearted*

Module 11

Dates:

**Assignments**
1. Forum Discussion 10 – 11/5
   2. Work with your group on the final assignment

**Readings**
1. Chapter 16 – Disenfranchised Grief and the Loss of an Animal Companion
Module 12

Dates:

**Assignments**
1. Forum Discussion 11

**Readings**
1. Disenfranchised Grief: Chapter 17 - Unrecognized Losses in Child Adoption
2. Chapter 20 – Disenfranchised Grief and Individuals With Developmental Disabilities

Module 13

Dates:

**Assignments**
1. Forum Discussion 12

**Readings**
1. The Grief Assessment & Intervention Workbook: Chapter 8 – *Practice Implications for the Professional*
2. Disenfranchised Grief: Chapter 8 – The Role of Support Groups in Disenfranchised Grief

Module 14

Dates:

**Assignments**
1. Forum Discussion 13
2. Final Assignment

**Readings**
1. Disenfranchised Grief: Chapter 7 – A Pastoral Counselor Looks at Silence as a Factor in Disenfranchised Grief
2. Chapter 9 – The Role of Ritual in the Treatment of Disenfranchised Grief

Module 15

Dates:

**Overview**
A. Exam 3

**Assignments**
1. Forum Discussion 14

Module 16

Dates:

**Overview**
A. Final Exam
Assignments and Grading

Although this is a web-based course, and there will be no face-to-face opportunities for learning, you will gain from the variety of teaching-learning methods used in this course. By mastering these assignments, you will meet the objectives of this course.

Completion of the reading assignments will provide you with knowledge about current theories, systems, human development and diversity. Participation in forum discussions will demonstrate your ability for critical thinking. Writing a paper and developing a power point presentation will assess evidence of your understanding of grief and loss experienced by life stages, and the way in which knowledge of the theories impact your work with clients.

In addition, this is what I expect of students:

1. To contribute to forum discussions, sharing experiences, opinions, issues, and ideas.
2. To treat all participants in the class with respect.
3. To turn in assignments on time.
4. To read assigned material and to think critically about the material offered in the course.
5. To take personal responsibility for the learning process.

What students can expect from the instructor:

1. To treat students with respect
2. To be available for feedback and guidance about the course.
3. To have assignments graded promptly (except in rare cases this means by the very next class period).
4. To be prepared for class and to work to make the class both informative and enjoyable.
5. To gain feedback from students and to take action to correct those things that hinder the learning process.
6. To be fair.

After two absences I reserve the right to drop your final class grade by a full letter. I measure absences by checking to see if students have participated in the forum discussions as required in our class presentations. If you are unable to meet the time requirements, please contact me as soon as possible.

More specific instructions for each assignment will be posted on Canvas. Instructor also will discuss details or answer any questions related to assignment during the class and office hours.

All assignments should be produced on a word processor (or typed), double spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides, carefully edited and proofed, using no smaller than a 12 point font, and conforming to APA style (6th ed.)

Assignments

1. Self Reflection Paper
   a. DUE: .............................................date
   b. Final Grade Percentage: ......9%
2. Exams
Assignments Details:

Discussion Postings, worth 70 points. Due weekly. Questions will be posted to “Forums” on Sundays, and discussion postings are due by 11:00 pm the following Saturday. Each of the 15 discussion postings is worth five (5) points. To receive full credit for each posting, the posting must be submitted on time, be an appropriate response to the discussion item, reflect a clear understanding of the material, be in response to a classmate’s posting, and the discussion should cite the textbook to support your statements. Integrating quotes from the textbook into your discussion are also encouraged. Postings that contain spelling and grammar errors will not receive full credit.


Group Paper & Power Point Presentation, worth 150 points. Due by 11:00pm on December 3. Working in groups, please complete Student Activity 6 in The Grief Assessment and Intervention Workbook. You will work together to write a research paper using APA writing format, and will be required to cover all sections of the assignment. In addition, you will be required to develop a power point presentation by summarizing your paper and submitting it to the class as a “teaching tool”. (You will also submit it to me as part of your assignment grade.)

Grading Standards

Papers are graded on the quality of the final product not on the effort you extended completing them. The grade of A is reserved for truly outstanding work that goes beyond basic requirements.

Grades of A reflect Excellence. Excellent scholarly products and academic or professional performances are substantially superior to the “good,” “the high quality,” “the competent,” or the “satisfactory.” They are unusual, exceptional, and extraordinary. Criteria for assignments are not only met, they are exceeded by a significant margin. Excellence is a rare phenomenon. As a result, relatively few BSW students earn A grades.

Grades of B signify good or high quality scholarly products and academic or professional performance. Grades in the B range reflect work expected of a conscientious student in a professional program. Criteria
for assignments are met in a competent, thoughtful, and professional manner. However, the criteria are not exceeded and the quality is not substantially superior to other good quality products or performances. There is a clear distinction between the good and the excellent. We expect that most BSW students will earn grades in the B range—reflecting the good or high quality work expected of competent future helping professionals.

Grades of C and C+ signify work that is marginal in nature. The scholarly products or professional performances meet many but not all of the expected criteria. The work approaches but does not quite meet the standards of quality expected of a student in a professional school. Satisfactory in many respects, its quality is not consistently so and cannot be considered of good or high quality. We anticipate that a minority of BSW students will earn C and C+ grades.

Grades of C- and lower reflect work that is unsatisfactory. The products or performances do not meet several, many, or most of the criteria. The work fails to approach the standards of quality expected of a student and a future BSW-level professional. We anticipate that a small percentage of BSW students will earn unsatisfactory grades of C-, D, and F.

Grading scale
Grade minimums are as follows [Note: grades below a C are Unsatisfactory in the BSW Program]:

- A 93% Excellent, Exceptional Quality
- A- 90% Superior Quality
- B+ 87% Very Good, Slightly Higher Quality
- B 83% Good, High Quality (expected of most BSW students)
- B- 80% Satisfactory Quality
- C+ 77% Marginal, Modestly Acceptable Quality
- C 73% Marginal, Minimally Acceptable Quality
- C- 70% Unsatisfactory Quality

Course Policies

Assignment
Students are expected to submit all assignments on time. If you need to extend a deadline you MUST speak to me in advance of the due date to get an approval and an agreement will be reached. Late submission (except by prior agreement) will be marked down 5% per day late. IU has a subscription with the Turnitin plagiarism detection service, and faculty members have the right to submit student papers to the service to check for originality. Turnitin.com service will be used for all student papers in this course.

Attendance and participation
Students are expected to attend and participate in all class sessions. Students should complete readings and homework as assigned and come to class prepared for discussion and questions. Because of the nature of this course and group assignments, regular attendance is required and extremely important. Class attendance and active participation in class activities are considered essential for the satisfactory completion of the course.
objectives. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to get notes from other students regarding materials covered during your absence. If you are absent on the day when an assignment is due, you need to submit your assignment before the beginning of the class. Missing more than 2 of the scheduled classes will result in a letter-grade deduction for the course. Late arrivals and early departures will also lead to course point deductions. It’s up to instructor’s discretion to decide the deduction points. If you miss five or more classes you will fail the course.

1. Students are expected to interact respectfully and professionally at all times. Students are expected to respect the ideas of others, even when they differ from their own.
2. Since the class is designed for learning by participating, experiencing, and practicing, your attendance and active interaction are expected and reflected as a percentage of your total grade in the course.
3. No make-up quizzes or examinations will be given.
4. Students are to be prepared for each class session by having completed the assigned reading as listed for each class. Participation through asking questions and making thoughtful comments on course content is encouraged. Because class discussions need to contribute to knowledge for professional practice, comments need to be supported with information drawn from social work readings, and not be just the opinions or experiences of an individual and her or his associates.
5. Assignments will generally be graded and posted by the class session following the assignment date. Any student with a question or concern about her or his grade or correct answers for missed questions should e-mail me.