Course Objectives:

At the end of this course students should be able to demonstrate their ability to apply their knowledge of grief counseling and grief therapy to work with individuals, families, and groups, in brief therapy and educational models of intervention by:

• accurately assessing a client’s need for grief counseling or grief therapy and planning an appropriate intervention.

• demonstrating their familiarity with the literature supporting the intervention.

• demonstrating their understanding of the influence of society, race, culture, and spiritual beliefs on clients’ attitudes about and behavior relating to loss and death.

• identifying the effect of their own experiences with and/or beliefs about death, dying and bereavement on their role as helper.

Course requirements:

Students are expected to be on time for, attend, and actively participate in each class session. If a class is missed due to illness or a personal emergency, the student should contact the instructor prior to class to make arrangements to make up missed material. Student may fail class if more than 2 classes are missed.

Students are expected to do assigned readings prior to each class and to actively participate in class discussions and role-plays.

Students are expected to complete written assignments on time, unless they have made alternate arrangements with the instructor prior to the due date.

Textbooks and Readings:


Canvas Articles

Assignments

Class participation-20%

Active, thoughtful, regular participation that reflects a critical understanding of the readings and concepts covered in class is required. Class attendance is required. More than 2 missed classes will result in a lowered or failing grade for this class.
Assignment #1:
A critical reflection on personal losses
Worth: 25%

Part A: DUE WEEK 2 (10 points)
Create a clear & comprehensive timeline showing your lifelong experience with loss (a wide variety of losses should be shown). Highlight 3-4 loss experiences you consider to be particularly important/meaningful/influential in your life. Can be legibly hand written.

Part B: DUE WEEK 4 (10 points)
Create a short playlist of songs that represent your most important/meaningful/influential loss(es) in some way. Minimum of 3 songs required. Write 1-2 sentences about each song discussing why you chose it. There are no rights of wrongs, nor scholarly resources required here. Email your list to Lara at least a DAY BEFORE CLASS…

Part C: DUE Week 5 OR 6 (80 points)
Write a 6-8 page paper assessing one of your own significant loss experience(s) and how it/they have shaped you personally and professionally. Minimum of 6 scholarly references required. AT LEAST 2 of the cited readings MUST be a Neimeyer article or chapter. Scholarly resources must be woven throughout ENTIRE reflection to back up your thinking.

1. Describe a loss(es) that has been particularly influential in your life (20 points)
2. Assess the impact of your loss(es). –back up thoughts with scholarly literature (50 points)
   o Assess the impact on you specifically
   o Assess any impact on the significant people in your life
   o Explore the influence of your culture, family norms, and/or society on your experience of this loss
   o Utilize established theories on loss & grief to assess your own experience.
3. Discuss your professional interest in loss and grief and assess how your own losses have helped to shape you professionally. (20 points)
   o Explore how your own loss/grief experiences may constitute both professional strengths and challenges.
   Quality of writing and robust use of scholarly resources (10 points)

Assignment #2- Worth 25% CHOOSE ONE-DUE WEEK 11 OR 12

CHOICE ONE
Movie Reflection
Rachel Getting Married
Due week 11 OR 12
Use a minimum of 6 scholarly resources. Scholarly resources must be woven throughout entire reflection to back up your thinking.

4-5 pages

After viewing the movie Rachel Getting Married, please reflect upon the losses you see in one character and the family as a unit. Answer the following questions.

A) Assessing Grief of Chosen Character (35 points)
   What losses has this character suffered?
   How does the impact of loss manifest in the character you chose to explore?
   How has loss impacted the family as a whole?
   How does this family cope with their grief?

B) Explore this family from the lens of COMPLICATED GRIEF Does this qualify as complicated grief for your chosen character? Yes/no? Why?
   ALSO explore this using lens of either ambiguous loss OR disenfranchised grief. (35 points)

C) Reflect upon the impact of watching this movie on you personally and professionally. (20 points)
   How did it feel to watch this story unfold?
   Were issues of countertransference or compassion fatigue be relevant for you?
   How has this shifted the way you think about working with grieving families?
   Discuss your plan for growth with grieving families.

D) Quality of Writing, use of scholarly literature and APA style (10 points)

CHOICE 2

Process Recording
Due Week 11 or 12
Minimum of 6 scholarly references required

1. Part A-Process Record a session/part of a session (4-6 pages) with a client, couple, family or group that exemplifies ambiguous loss and/or disenfranchised grief. ALSO explain why this client is/is not experiencing complicated grief in your opinion. Use the column method for this process recording and get comments from your field instructor! Identify any theories/concepts from loss and/or grief literature that you feel (at the time or in hindsight) apply in this situation. (10 points)

2. Part B Write 4-5 page paper-supported by scholarly resources from the syllabus (and beyond if you want). Scholarly resources must be woven throughout ENTIRE reflection to back up your thinking.
   a. Reflect upon your work in this situation. Discuss your use of grief theory to guide your work from both an assessment and intervention standpoint. Discuss why you see this as ambiguous or disenfranchised grief. (30 points)
   b. Explore why you handled the situation with this client(s) as you did. Be sure to back your exploration up with literature. If literature did not guide your intervention you may explore what you could do if next time or if given a do-over. (30 points)
   c. Explore how it felt to do this kind of work during and after the session. Discuss relevant issues of use of self, boundaries, and/or
countertransference Discuss your plan for professional growth working with grieving clients. (20 points)
d. Quality of Writing, use of scholarly literature and APA style (10 points)

Assignment #3-Worth 20%

STUDENT GROUP PRESENTATIONS

ASSIGNED THROUGHOUT SEMESTER-date decided by week 4
Create a 50-60 minute experiential group project (4-5 students for each project)
8-10 scholarly references-include copy of your reference list to everyone
Provide copy of 4-5 local, internet and/or national resources to everyone
Provide full power point slides to Professor as well

o 20 minute POWERPOINT PRESENTATION-(50 points)
  o Briefly explore the kind of losses/grief experienced by your chosen population (i.e.- ambiguous loss related to sexual abuse, traumatic grief, divorce, infertility, grief related to death of a sibling) and how they are impacted by this kind of loss.
  o Discuss your chosen point(s) of intervention-individual, family or group based-why it fits the needs of your chosen population.
  o Present scholarly support to back up your choice. You may have to adapt evidence from other populations or unrelated to grief, but related to your chosen intervention.

o 20-30 minute EXPERIENTIAL PRESENTATION: (25 points)
  o Select one creative technique, using Neimeyer book as starting point, and teach it to the class. You may NOT choose a technique Lara is already teaching (NO Guided Imagery, Journaling, Collage or Wisdom Groups-sorry)
    o Describe your method of intervention
    o Defend your choice of intervention as it relates to the client(s) specific kind of loss/grief. Use relevant scholarly literature to explore.
    o Discuss any challenges you may face in trying to implement this program
    o Explain the relevance of the specific setting in which this intervention takes place
  o Quality of Presentation (10 points)
  o Quality of Handouts (15 points)
    ▪ Should include-reference list and resource list at a minimum
  o Creativity is highly encouraged. Make this interesting for us!!! Have fun.

Assignment #4-Worth 10%

Professional Growth Reflection

1 page –DUE week 13 or 14

Worth-10%

Please answer the following questions. There are no rights and wrongs here. Just be honest and open with yourself. No citations needed here.
1) Discuss your growth over the course of this class. How have you grown personally and professionally? What are you most surprised by? Most proud of? Most concerned about? How will your growth help you professionally?

2) What was your favorite topic(s) from this class and why?

3) List your favorite 3-4 readings. BRIEFLY share why they made an impact on you.

**COURSE CONTENT**

**Week 1: Course Introduction: Loss Through a Life Cycle 1/17/19**
- Recognizing Loss Through a Life Cycle
- Grieving from Birth to Death
- Defining Loss, Grief, Bereavement & Mourning
- Understanding Loss in Our Own Lives

Reading for this class is very important. Readings marked with **are considered foundational and will help frame that day’s discussion so please read them carefully. Active participation in class required that you demonstrate your understanding of each week’s reading concepts and this WILL be factored into your class grade. The Neimeyer book is an essential resource for this class and your clinical practice. Chapters are short and full of practical tools. Enjoy it!


**Week 2: Assessing the Impact of Loss: Individual, Family & Community 1/24/19**
- Loss Through the Life Cycle-Impact on the Family
- Bio Psycho Social Spiritual Assessment of Loss
- Impact of Culture on Loss and Grief
- Centrality of Loss
- Loss timelines

Part A-Assignment 1 DUE

**Gilbert, K.R. (1996). We’ve Had the Same Loss, Why Don’t We Have the Same Grief? Loss and Differential Grief in Families. Death Studies, 20: 269—283.**


**Neimeyer (2012)-Techniques of Grief Therapy Chapter 1, 2, 47 & 82**

**Week 3: Grief Theories: From Historical Foundations to Current Models -1/31/19**
- Attachment and Loss
- Freud and psychodynamic theorists
- Kubler-Ross and Stage Theories
- Dual Process Model
- Continued Bonds


**Week 4: Grief Theories: - Contemporary Theory 2/7/19**
- Constructivist Grief Theory-Meaning Making
- Continued Bonds
- Playlists and Meaning Deconstruction
- Meaning Reconstruction

**PART B-ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE**


**Neimeyer (2012)-Techniques of Grief Therapy Chapter 1, 14, 38, 42 & 54**

**Week 5: Grief Theories: Current Models II -2/14/19**
- Dual Process Model
- Neimeyer film-Darla
- Journaling and Analogical Listening Techniques
- Meaning Reconstruction
- Resilience in grief and loss
- Spirituality and loss
**ASSIGNMENT 1-PART C DUE DATE OPTION 1**


*Neimeyer, R.A. (2012)- *Techniques of Grief Therapy* Chapter 69


**Week 6: Ambiguous Loss & Chronic Sorrow 2/21/19**
- Recognizing & Treating Ambiguous Loss
- Journaling for Healing
- Living Losses
- Chronic Sorrow

**ASSIGNMENT 1-PART C DUE DATE OPTION 2**

*Fishbowl Role Play-Lillia*

**READ BOSS & TELL ARTICLES PLUS TWO OTHERS OF INTEREST TO YOU**


**SELECT TWO MORE BELOW-**Be prepared to share what you learn with the class


**Week 7: Creative Healing Techniques for Grieving Clients 2/28/19**
- The Mind Body Connection
- Guided Imagery
- Mindfulness
- Art Therapy

**STUDENT PRESENTATION**

**Lara- Guided Imagery with Grieving Clients**


**Neimeyer (2012)-Techniques of Grief Therapy Chap. 17, 18 (Krawchuk), 19, & 20, 58**

**Recommended readings: Choose 2**


SPRING BREAK 3/7/19

**Week 8: Traumatic Losses: Impact and Intervention 3/14/19**

**GUEST LECTURER-Catherine Revak, MSW, LSW, DSW candidate**
- Trauma, Loss & Grief
- Moral Injury
- Homicide Losses
- Poetry-Slamming Open the Door-Katherine Sheeder Bonanno

Read Arta, Asaro, Basham and 1 other


Week 9: Disenfranchised Grief 3/21/19
- Seeds of Disenfranchisement
- Supporting disenfranchised grievers
- Understanding when grief is complicated
Week 10 Complicated Grief 3/28/19

- Assessing and Treating Complicated Grief
- Understanding the Impact of Traumatic Losses
- Narrative Retelling
- RACHAEL GETTING MARRIED
Read Jordan, Neimeyer, Shear and one other


**Neimeyer, R.A. (2012)- *Techniques of Grief Therapy* Chapters 22**


Week 11- Supporting Aging Clients through Loss and Grief-4/4/19

- Caring for Older Adults
- Dementia and Loss
- Legacy Building
- Anticipatory Mourning
- End of Life Care

READ BERZOFF & BOUCHAL AND TWO OTHERS

DUE DATE Option 1-RACHEL GETTING MARRIED/Process recording ASSIGNMENT DUE

STUDENT PRESENTATION


**Week 12: Supporting Grieving Children and Adolescents  4/11/19**
- **Challenge of Adolescent Grief-Lillia role play**
- Neurobiology and Loss
- Grief in School
- Assessment of children Adolescents
- Treating Grieving Children and Adolescents

**DUE DATE Option 2-RACHEL GETTING MARRIED/Process recording ASSIGNMENT DUE**

**STUDENT PRESENTATION-children/adolescents**

*Read Boyd-webb, Crenshaw, Lytje and one other*


**Recommended reading**


**Week 13: Healing Techniques for Grieving Clients-Traumatic Losses 4/18/19**
- Creative Healing
- Legacy Building
- *Writing for Healing: Virtual Dream Stories & Corresponding with the Deceased*

**STUDENT PRESENTATION-Children/adolescents**

**STUDENT PRESENTATION-Adults/Older Adults**


**Neimeyer (2012)-Techniques of Grief Therapy Chapters 23, 35, 45, 46, 48, 52, 57, 58, 67, 68, 70, 77**

**Week 14: Compassion Fatigue & Self-Care for Social Workers/Wrap-Up 4/25/19**
- Compassion Fatigue & Vicarious Trauma
- Sustaining Professional Resilience
- *Healing Wisdom Circle*
- Wrap up Celebration

**FINAL REFLECTION ASSIGNMENT DUE**

**STUDENT PRESENTATION**


**Neimeyer (2012)-Techniques of Grief Therapy Chapters 92 (Krawchuk), 93, 94