Multicultural and Multigenerational Approaches to Healing Loss and Grief

Spring 2005

SW 566B  Lynn Carrigan
206-221-7459  Rm. 112C
LTC@u.washington.edu

Accommodation

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz, 206-543-8924 (V/TTY). If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to me so we can discuss the accommodations you might need for the class.

“Thus think of all this fleeting world: a star at dawn, a bubble in a stream, a flash of lightning in a summer cloud, a flickering lamp, a phantom, and a dream.” The Diamond Sutra

I. Course Goals:
This class is designed to help students understand variations of the loss and grief experience, and offers three perspectives in working with clients to help them heal.

• Students will review a wide variety of anthropological studies and cross-cultural literature to stimulate critical analysis about societal and culture-bound elements in current theories of grief work. Students will gain the ability to provide culturally sensitive grief assessments and interventions with clients suffering a variety of losses.
• Students will learn to apply developmental theory, attachment theory, constructionism, meaning-making and narrative therapy and other current theories to multigenerational grief work with adults, children, families, and elders. Use of group interventions for specific populations or types of loss will also be explored.
• Students will also examine policy issues and macro-level approaches for creating relevant social change regarding the delivery of services for loss and grief.
• Students will gain awareness of the ways their own experiences, beliefs, values, and responses to loss affect their practice, and will examine the ethical implications of working across cultures and the challenges of using a social justice model in clinical practice.

Initial sessions will be focused on essential concepts of the loss experience and grieving processes across cultures, an overview of bereavement research, and exploration of the students’ own experience with grief, in order to provide a necessary foundation upon which more advanced clinical and contextual learning may proceed. Political, economic, and structural issues related to loss and grief at a societal level will be addressed so that students can consider policy and advocacy approaches necessary for social justice. The course will introduce the student to assessment of grief resulting from various types of losses (death, divorce, HIV/AIDS, traumatic events, sudden incapacity, etc.), using multigenerational and multicultural perspectives. Finally, the course will expose the student to a range of approaches for helping clients work through their grief constructively and make new meanings out of loss.
II. Learning Objectives: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1) Describe the nature and manifestations of loss and grief, its universality and variations, and differentiate between loss, grief, bereavement, and mourning;

2) Identify a) the helper’s personal loss and grief issues and style; b) his/her own emotional and cultural filters, and c) ways these can impair or enhance ethical and effective practice;

3) Define, compare, and apply at least three of six traditional and emerging theories related to loss, grief, and bereavement work with clients (Bowlby, Parkes, Worden, Klass, Neimeyer, Walter); and summarize relevant research and evidence-based methodologies informing clinical practice in grief work.

4) Discuss the cultural aspects and variations in the understanding and expression of grief and loss, including spiritual as well as secular approaches to healing. Students will explore several forms of grief ceremonies, rituals, and alternative healing methodologies, including use of humor and the creative arts, in addition to Western models of intervention;

5) Develop a beginning competence in a life span approach on working with grief with children, adolescents, adults, and older adults; and with a multicultural model for working with clients across difference, including race, ethnicity, gender, class, ability, sexual orientation, spiritual beliefs, and other distinguishing characteristics.

6) Define, compare, and apply at least three of six traditional and emerging theories related to loss, grief, and bereavement work with clients (Bowlby, Parkes, Worden, Klass, Neimeyer, Walter); and summarize relevant research and evidence-based methodologies informing clinical practice in grief work.

7) Differentiate acute grief as an initial response to loss from the grieving/mourning process that occurs over time as an adaptation to loss,

8) Analyze the issues, problems, and useful approaches involved in helping clients address and heal specific types of loss, including losses due to death, divorce or separation, HIV/AIDS, physical and mental disability, trauma, relocation, and cultural identity challenges.

9) Develop a beginning understanding of the differences, similarities, respective strengths, and limitations, and appropriate use of grief counseling, grief therapy, and self-help grief support groups, as well as tools such as assessment formats and rating scales.

10) Recognize societal and structural issues which influence clients’ experience of loss and grief, and identify examples of advocacy-based macro-level interventions for social change.

III. Course Format:

To achieve the above learning objectives, we will use a dialogue and seminar format in which there will be ample opportunity for student-directed learning, participation and leadership. We will meet 10 times in the quarter (plus an additional individual meeting) for

a) critical analysis of required and recommended readings (examination of multiple perspectives, comparison and contrasting of theories, personal reflections, etc.);

b) case consultations, role plays and other experiential exercises for processing and reflection on the integration of theory and practice;

c) exploration of ethical considerations, decision-making, and social justice issues;

d) brief lecture presentations by instructor, guest speaker, and/or student(s);

e) personal exploration, discussion and exercises, to raise awareness of the student’s own background, biases, choices, and style in relationship to clinical practice as well as self-care.

f) review of community, professional, and web-based resources for enhancing grief work;

g) field trips to related to culture and bereavement , and/or to observe professionals in action.
Students are encouraged to present their own ideas, thoughts, feelings, readings, and projects; to raise issues of significance and priority. The course is designed to raise student awareness of their own experience of grief and loss in relation to ethical social work practice with clients; therefore, students may relate personal experiences to enhance the classroom teaching and learning process. Students may also choose not to share personal experiences or emotions, and may instead focus exclusively on cognitive learning. A dialogic approach requires that students demonstrate openness to and acceptance of others’ points of view, suspension of judgement, active inquiry, and compassionate listening. Each class will begin and end with a meditative ritual to be determined and facilitated by the instructor and class.

IV. Course Readings:

Required Texts (available at UW Bookstore):
3. Required Reader of multicultural and multigenerational articles available at Professional Copy and Print, 4200 University Avenue.

Recommended supplemental readings will be made available on Electronic Reserves. Other handouts will be made available to the student over the course of the quarter.

Recommended Book:

V. Assignments and Grading: Five assignments, two major and three minor, and classroom participation will be assigned points according to the following grid. Further information on assignments and requirements will be listed as appendices. Other assignments, such as exercises to be done in and outside of class, will not be graded, other than as participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graded Assignments</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One page reflection and response papers on weekly readings and class content (speakers, exercises, suggestions, questions, etc.).</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Weekly, end of class; and posted on discussion board the day before class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Exploration paper, analyzing personal background in relation to class. Keeping a journal during this class is recommended.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>May 3, Week 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief case presentation and discussion facilitation, relating case to readings/theory</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Signup for week 2-9</td>
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VI. **Outline of Course Content:** Depending on needs and interests of the class, course content will include but not necessarily be limited to:

**March 29, 2005  Session 1: Introductions, Course Overview, Course Context**
- Review of interests, learning goals and expectations of class;
- Course rationale, intentions, possibilities; setting a context for healing
- Review of syllabus, assignments, grading;
- Challenges of overlaying a multicultural focus on Western models of griefwork;
- Hopes and concerns; norm-setting to address concerns
- Overview of definitions, texts, theories of loss and grief to begin course.
- Signups for poster sessions and case presentations/consultations;
- Introduction of weekly personal exercises and plan for speakers, reading review, cases
- Experiential exercise: your Loss Line

**Required Readings (should be done PRIOR to each session; will be discussed on listed day).**

**Texts:**


**Required Reader:**


**Recommended Supplemental Readings:**


April 5, 2005 Session 2: Loss, the Origin of Grief: Research, Theory and Application; the Cultural Limitations of Western Research

- Case presentation and discussion
- Review of readings and application to case
- Theoretical review and analysis (Freud, Bowlby, Parkes, Klass, Neimeyer, Walter)
- Review of traditional bereavement research and applications
- Grief vs. Grieving and mourning: distinctions and dimensions
- Differing impact of losses: determining factors, developmental and cultural variables
- Cultural contexts and philosophies about life, loss, grief, death; mezzo/macro implications
- Healing vs. treatment and cure; what facilitates healing?
- Speaker: Stan deMello: Grief and Mourning in India

Required Readings for Discussion 1/15/03:

Texts:

Required Reader:


**Recommended Supplemental Reading**


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**April 12, 2005  Session 3: Assessment Variables**

- Case presentation and discussion/responses
- Review of readings and application to case
- Assessing grief and loss (tools, procedures, protocols; DSM-IV) (Rando)
- Healthy/normal grieving vs. complicated mourning;
- Disenfranchised grief (Doka)
- Multicultural and multigenerational factors in assessment: gender, age, race, culture
- Video: “Who We Are, How We Grieve”, National Hospice Foundation
- In-class experiential exercise and review: Actors and Witnesses: Cultural Perceptions

**Required Readings:**

**Texts**


**Required Reader:**


Recommended Supplemental Readings:


April 19, 2005 Session 4: General Healing Approaches: Grief Counseling for Uncomplicated Mourning - Adults

- Case presentation and discussion/responses/role plays
- Review of readings and application to cases (Worden’s Task Theory)
- The nature of uncomplicated grieving: manifestations, determinants, processes (Parkes)
- Spiritual and secular approaches; the individual and the collective; role of community
- Grief counseling: helping to facilitate uncomplicated grieving
- Organizing and facilitating self-help support groups;
- Guest speaker: Bereavement Support Group facilitator
- Multigenerational and multicultural approaches in healing
- Mezzo/macro implications for service delivery and advocacy

Required Reading:

Texts:

Required Reader:


**Recommended Supplemental Readings:**

International Workgroup on Death, Dying and Bereavement (1994).“Assumptions and Principles Regarding Bereavement” Statements on Death, Dying, and Bereavement (Ontario: King’s College), pp. 53-63.


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**April 26, 2005  Session 5: General Healing Approaches: Children and Families**
- Case presentation and discussion/responses/role plays
- Review of readings and application to cases
- Working with families who have lost a child (Klass)
- Attachment & developmental issues in working with children and youth (Bowlby)
- Counseling and therapy for the bereaved child and adolescent
- Art and play therapy, drawing, sand-tray, puppetry; other cultural approaches
- Mezzo/macro resources and implications
- Guest speaker: Jackie Kite, Children’s Hospital Journey Program

**Required Reading:**

**Texts:**

**Required Reader:**


**Recommended supplemental readings:**


May 3, 2004  Session 6: Working With Sudden and Traumatic Loss

- Case presentation and discussion/responses
- Review of readings and application to case
- Working with victims of violence, public tragedies, critical incidents
- Multicultural tools and approaches to historical trauma and oppression
- Political and societal responses, advocacy, and approaches
- Guest speaker Fanny Correa, Virginia Mason Separation and Loss Institute
- ASSIGNMENT DUE: SELF EXPLORATION PAPER

Handout: Harvard Trauma Questionnaire

Required Reader:


Recommended supplemental Reading:


May 10, 2005 Session 7: General Healing for Complicated Grief: Grief Therapy

- Case presentation, discussion/responses
- Review of readings and critical analysis, case application
- Determinants of Grief (mode of death, relationship, gender, age, personal vulnerability).
- Complicated mourning: The nature of complicated grieving; characteristics and needs
- Grief therapy: Goals, procedures, methods, and treatment
- DSM-IV guidelines differentiating grief from depression from PTSD
- In-class experiential exercise and review: Draw Your Grief

Required Readings:

Text:

Required Reader:


Recommended Supplemental Reading:


May 17, 2005 Session 8: Working with Immigrants & Refugees, Other Losses

- Case consultation and review/response
- Review of readings and applications to case
- Adoption, displacement, aging, loss of physical or mental function, etc.
- Tools and approaches for special populations
- Links to recovery, wellness, rehabilitation, health
- Poster presentations on resources for griefwork, organizations, etc.
- Guest Speaker: Rafaelita Arviso, Harborview International Clinic

Required Readings:
Text:

Required Reader:


Recommended Supplemental Readings:


May 24, 2005  
**Session 9: Alternative Approaches to Healing Loss**

- Case presentation and discussion
- Review of readings and application of theory to case (Neimeyer, Walter)
- Non-western healing approaches: ritual, metaphor, story, ceremony, personal mythology,
- Work with elders: narrative therapy, life review, memory books, planning
- Spiritual approaches in dealing with loss and grief; the HOPE assessment tool
- Poster session and review of resources; discussion re applicability to cases
- Class exercise: Write a Eulogy; Ceremony of Remembrance: BRING A SYMBOL

**Required Readings:**

Texts:
Chaps. 4, 5, 6, 8, 12 in Parks, Lougani and Young, *Death and Bereavement Across Cultures*, op. cit., pp. 52-130, 147-166, 218-232.

Required Reader:


**Recommended Supplemental Readings:**


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**May 31, 2005 Session 10: The Counselor’s Own Loss and Ethical Considerations**

- Humor as cathartic process in grief counseling
- Self-care, self-awareness, future learning
- Ethical considerations in grief counseling: boundaries, limits
- Review of classroom learning and accomplishments, suggestions for future
- Presentations and discussions of final papers (10 minutes about your learning)
- Course evaluation and celebration: Closing the Circle (BRING A POEM OR STORY)

**Required Readings:**

**Text:**


Laungani and Young, Chap. 12, “Conclusions I: Implications for Practice and Policy,” in Parkes, Loungani and Young’s Death and Bereavement Across Cultures, op. cit., pp. 218-232.

**Required Reader:**


And all that Memory loves the most
Was once our only Hope to be,
And all that Hope adored and lost
Has melted into memory.

-George Gordon, Lord Byron

Hold to the reins of Love and don’t be afraid.
Hold to the real behind the false and don’t be afraid.
You must know
That the Beloved you seek is none other than you.
Hold to this truth and don’t be afraid.
- Rumi

For all that has been: thanks.
To all that shall be: yes.
- Dag Hammerskold