COURSE TITLE/SECTION: SOCIAL WORK 7366 (15896):

Grief & Bereavement Therapy

**TIME:** 6:00pm-9:00pm Thursday SPRING 2011

**FACULTY:** Sandra A. Lopez, LCSW, ACSW, DCSW **OFFICE HOURS**:

Tuesday 12-2pm Wednesday 12-2pm Thursday 4:30pm-6pm

By appt

**E-mail**: slopez@uh.edu **Phone**: 713-743-8104 **FAX**: 713-743-8149

#### I. Course

## A. Catalog Description

Cr.3.(3-0). Stages of grief and bereavement with a variety of social treatment interventions to assist the bereaved client in dealing with the grieving process.

# B. Purpose

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the processes of death and dying, and to help them become aware of a variety of social treatment interventions used to deal with the complex phenomena of grief and bereavement. This course should help students to be better prepared to assist clients in dealing with the interconnectedness with the Health Care Specialization curriculum and to other courses such as Crisis Intervention and Social Treatment with the Aged.

## II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1. develop a theoretical understanding of the processes of death and dying, and the consequent grief and mourning phases;
- 2. understand the impact of cultural, ethnic, and spiritual responses to the grieving process;
- 3. relate the understanding and role of social work practice, values, and ethics to grief and bereavement therapy;

- 4. acquire and develop diagnostic and assessment skills relevant to the understanding of those clients experiencing grief and bereavement;
- 5. acquire knowledge and understanding of the implementation of a variety of social work intervention procedures used in grief and bereavement therapy;
- 6. acquire an increased awareness of the student's own feelings and attitudes with regard to death and dying; and
- 7. demonstrate practice skills applicable to working with grieving persons of diverse backgrounds, including but not limited to the following populations: minorities of color, women, gay and lesbian persons, the most severely economically disadvantaged and other issues pertaining to social class.

#### III. Course Structure

Class time will include a combination of lecture, discussions, case reviews, and experiential exercises. Guest lecturers will be invited to present on specific course content areas. Blackboard Vista will be utilized as a means of providing students with additional readings, resources, and class updates.

# IV. Textbooks

# **Required:**

Albom, Mitch. (1997). Tuesdays with Morrie. New York: Doubleday.

Callanan, M. & Kelley, P. (1997). <u>Final Gifts: Understanding the Special Awareness, Needs and Communications of the Dying.</u>
New York: Bantam.

Worden, William J. (2009). <u>Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy.</u> (4th Ed.) New York: Springer Publishing Company.

## **Recommended:**

Wolfelt, Alan D. (2006). <u>Companioning the bereaved.</u> Fort Collins, CO: Companion Press.

# V. Course Requirements

# A. Reading Assignments/BlackboardVista

The course outline, attached separately, contains weekly topics to be covered. Supplementary readings will be assigned to students via vista throughout the course. Students are required to check in periodically to vista to access acquired readings and resources for classes. Class time will be designed to clarify, and supplement the understanding of assigned readings. It is critical that students remain current with reading assignments to fully participate in class discussions.

# **B.** Reflection Paper

Students will be responsible for the preparation of a reflection paper which addresses their own personal experiences with grief and loss issues. Specific guidelines for the preparation of the reflection paper will be distributed separately.

# C. Issue Paper & Intervention Guidelines

**These two assignments are connected.** Students will select a topic area for focus of study throughout the semester. The area must relate to the field of grief and bereavement and will be approved by the Professor. Students will prepare a short theoretical paper about this chosen area. Students will then develop practical guidelines for providing intervention to that area of grief and loss. Specific guidelines for these assignments will be distributed separately.

## D. Exam

The exam will be comprehensive in nature, covering the entire content of the course—readings and lectures. The exam is designed to help students in assessing their learning of grief course content.

# VI. Evaluation and Grading

# A. Grades will be assigned on the following basis:

Class Attendance & Participation	15%
Reflection Paper	10%
Issue Paper	25%
Intervention Guidelines	25%
Exam	25%

## B. Final course letter grades are based on the following scale:

A	96 - 100	C+	76 – 79.9
A -	92 - 95.9	C	72 - 75.9
B+	88 - 91.9	C-	68 - 71.9
В	84 - 87.9	D+	64 - 67.9
B-	80 - 83.9	F	Below 64

# C. Class Attendance and Participation

Attendance and class participation are critical to the successful learning in this course. Both will be observed and recorded. Should a student's grade be marginal attendance and class participation records will influence the final outcome.

## **D.** Incomplete Grades

The grade of I (incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are passing a course but, for reasons beyond their control, have not completed a relatively small part of all of the course requirements. Students are

responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not being able to meet the course requirements (Source: University of Houston Graduate and Professional Studies Policy).

# E. Late Assignments

Instructor will allow for submission of late assignments **only** if the student has made prior arrangements to do so and for appropriate and compelling reasons. Late assignments **will** result in the lowering of the otherwise earned grade.

# F. Pagers. Cell Phones, & Laptops

Please show respect and consideration of others by taking responsibility for keeping pager and cell phone interruptions to a minimum.

Laptop use will be allowed solely for note taking purposes and those students needing to do so must make formal written request to the Professor at the beginning of the course.

# VII. Policy on Academic Dishonesty and Plagarism

Students are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one's work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "I" for the class with a recommendation that a grade of F be assigned, subsequent to a College hearing, in accordance with the University Policy on academic dishonesty. Other actions may also be recommended and/or taken by the College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty.

All papers and written assignments must be fully and properly referenced using APA style format (or as approved by the Instructor), with credit given to the author whose ideas you have used. If you are using direct quotes from a specific author (authors), you <u>must</u> set the quote in quotation marks <u>or</u> use an indented quotation form. For all direct quotes, you must include the page number (s) in your text or references. Any time that you use more than four or five consecutive words taken from another author, you must <u>clearly</u> indicate that this is a direct quotation. Please consult the current APA manual for further information.

Academic dishonesty includes using <u>any</u> other person's work and representing it as your own. This includes (but is not limited to) using graded papers from students who have previously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper to more than one class. If you have any specific questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please raise these questions in class or make an appointment to see Instructor. This statement is consistent with the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty that can be found in your UH Student Handbook.

## VIII. Consultation

Students are encouraged to consult with the Professor, especially as it pertains to student's performance in the course. Professor's office is located in room 204 of the Social Work Building. Professor's email is <a href="mailto:slopez@uh.edu">slopez@uh.edu</a> and office phone number is 743-8104.

**Addendum:** Whenever possible, and in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, the University of Houston will attempt to provide reasonable academic accommodations to students who request and require them. For more information and/or assistance, please contact the Center for Students with DisAbilities at 713-743-5400. Instructors may not provide accommodations without supporting documentation from the UH Center for Students with DisAbilities.

#### **COURSE OUTLINE**

January 20	Introduction and Overview of Course & Expectations The Horse on the Dining Room Table Explore Grief Research Interests
January 27	Understanding Attachment, Loss, Grief and Mourning (Part I)  Worden. Ch. 1 – Attachment, Loss, and the Experience of Grief 2 – Understanding the Mourning Process
February 3	Understanding Attachment, Loss, Grief and Mourning (Part II) Worden. Ch. 3 – The Mourning Process: Mediators of Mourning *Submit proposed topic for intervention guidelines
February 10	Assessment & Treatment of Normal & Complicated Grief (Part I)  Worden. Ch. 4 – Grief Counseling: Facilitating Uncomplicated Grief Ch. 5 – Abnormal Grief Reactions: Complicated Grief Ch. 6 - Grief Therapy: Resolving Complicated Mourning Ch. 7 – Grieving Special Types of Losses
February 17	Assessment & Treatment of Normal & Complicated Grief (Part II)
	Wolfelt – Companioning the Bereaved
	Reflective Paper Due (bring to class)
February 24	Clinical Intervention Skills & Strategies - Practice Worden. Ch. 10 – 10 Training for Grief Counselors
March 3	Grief & Developmental Stages of Life Readings to be assigned

March 10	Grief and Families  Worden. Ch. 8 - Grief and Family Systems
March 17	Spring Break
March 24	Understanding the Process of Death and Dying Tuesdays with Morrie (entire book) Final Gifts (entire book) NASW Standards for Palliative Care (resource)
March 31	Grief after Traumatic Deaths: Accidents, Suicides & Homicides Readings to be assigned
April 7	The Impact of Culture, Ethnicity, and Spirituality on Grief
	Readings to be assigned
	Submit final draft of intervention guidelines to Professor (via Blackboard Vista) for approval
April 14	Presentation of Intervention Guidelines
	Intervention Guidelines Due
April 21	Sustaining Hope and Competence in Working with Grief <b>Worden. Ch. 9 – The Counselor's Own grief</b>
	Issue Paper Due (submit via Blackboard Vista)
	Course Evaluation/Wrap-up
April 28	Exam (Blackboard Vista)

ASSIGNMENT: REFLECTION PAPER

# **OBJECTIVE**

One of the underlying principles of this course is that it is important for social workers working with clients who are experiencing grief and bereavement to be aware of their feelings, thoughts, and attitudes about the subjects of death, dying, and loss. The objective of this reflection paper is to provide a stimulus for those students who have not yet formulated or organized these ideas and feelings into a cohesive and meaningful manner. For those students who have already dealt with the subjective meaning of death, dying, and loss, this paper will provide further opportunity to refine, integrate, and consolidate those feelings and thoughts.

Below are some questions that will serve as a guide and basis for writing this reflection paper. Students are asked to use the questions below as a frame of reference for developing a clear and helpful understanding of experiences and reactions to grief and loss. These papers will be held in strictest confidence and will not be shared with anyone. It is hoped that students will take the opportunity to visit these thoughts and feelings so as to further enhance their future social work practice with grief and bereavement clients.

# **AREAS OF FOCUS**

- 1.Describe the first funeral you attended. Who died? How old were you? What were your reactions to this experience with death? How do you feel about attending funerals now? 2.What was the most painful feeling you had around the experience of loss (divorce, separation, death of a loved one or a pet)? What were the circumstances? Why was it so painful? How did you cope with the pain of that loss? How was the situation resolved?
- 3. Of all the important persons in your life at this time, whose death would be the most painful and difficult to accept and to handle? Why?
- 4. Describe the most recent death or loss experience you have had? Who was involved in the situation? What were your feelings related to that experience? How did you express your feelings at the time? Have you resolved the traumatic aspects of this situation? If not, how do you propose to cope with these feelings?
- 5. Have you ever experienced the loss of a close, intimate relationship due to separation, divorce, betrayal, or relocation? What feelings were evoked by this experience? How did you cope with the situation? How do you feel now about that past loss?
- 6. Based on your responses and reactions to the above questions, how do they relate to your current views, beliefs and attitudes regarding death? Address how these experiences might have contributed to your thoughts about the meaning of death, how death relates to life, theological, religious, spiritual views of death, heaven, hell, etc. Where are you personally with the issue of death? Are you accepting of death or are you afraid of death?
- 7. Explore how you cope with losses in your current life. How will this impact your work with clients who are grieving a loss?
- 8. Identify specific areas or types of clients, related to grief and loss, where it may be difficult for you to provide help or services. Why are they difficult? How will you confront these issues as a social worker?

The above questions should serve as a frame of reference for more effectively understanding your own feelings and thoughts about death, dying and loss. Remember that many of our clients

will be struggling with these same questions as they cope with death and loss issues.

# **FORMAT**

This reflection paper should be typewritten and double-spaced, and accompanied by a cover page. References or footnotes are not required since this is not considered a theoretical paper. Length of paper may vary depending on written responses of the student.

#### **EVALUATION**

This reflection paper is worth 10% of your total grade. Your grade will be based on the clarity of the expression of your thoughts and feelings and the meaningfulness of the content as it relates to the subject, as well as the ability to fully explore all areas as requested.

# **ASSIGNMENT: ISSUE PAPER**

## **OBJECTIVE**

The objective of this assignment is to assist students in gaining further knowledge about key issues which relate to grief and bereavement. The issue paper and intervention guideline assignment are connected in terms of chosen topic area.

# **AREA OF FOCUS**

Students will have the responsibility for first, selecting a topic area that relates to grief and loss and seeking approval by the Professor. Students will then undertake comprehensive research of the literature about this issue, and will develop a meaningful yet concise discussion about its relevance to the arena of grief and bereavement and its implication for social work practice. There are a broad range of topics students may choose from as long as they relate to issues of grief and loss. Students are highly encouraged to select topics that are well documented in the literature and that are supported by research in the field.

#### **FORMAT**

The issue will be explored in a short theoretical paper ranging from a minimum of 9 pages to a maximum of 12 pages, typed, and double spaced, accompanied by a cover page and references. Specific areas to be addressed include--

A Statement of the Issue

Review of the Literature

Discussion of Relevance to Grief and Loss

Implications for Social Work Practice

A minimum of **ten** professional citations and references about the issue are required. References must be books or journal articles and no more than two reputable internet resources. Paper must follow APA guidelines.

# **EVALUATION**

The issue paper is worth 25% of the total grade. Grade will be based on student's ability to fully address the required four required areas of the paper.

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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<sup>\*</sup>Practical and helpful books for adults/children