

HDC6310: A Developmental Approach to Grief and Loss Summer Session

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Course Description:

This course is designed to acquaint the student with a richer understanding of loss through the life span. Loss as discussed in class will include not only the realized separations that occur through death but also those psychological, physical and situational changes that occur throughout life and affect us all.

The course of grief varies with individuals and change resulting from loss can be transformative or life-threatening as each person strives to entertain new meanings and review long-held assumptions. In addition to examining the variations in an individual's path through grief and loss, a more general grieving paradigm will be presented. Students will gain a more complex understanding of how age and developmental stage affect perceptions and coping style. Special types of losses will be reviewed. Students will have the opportunity to practice helpful responses to loss as they learn how to facilitate healthy adaptation to change. A specific focus on death and dying and related treatment concerns will also be addressed.

HDC 6310 is offered to graduate students from a variety of disciplines who are interested in helping others make powerful life changes. This course will utilize didactic presentation, discussion, case studies, experiential exercises, and videotape materials. Outside speakers will be invited to share their knowledge and experience.

Required Reading:

Worden, J.W. (2009). *Grief counseling and grief therapy: A handbook for the mental health practitioner* (5th ed.), New York: Springer Publishing.

Recommended Reading:

James, J.W. & Friedman, R. (2001). *When children grieve: For adults to help children deal with death, divorce, pet loss, moving and other losses*. New York: HarperCollins Publishing, Inc.

Kubler-Ross, E. & Kessler, D. (2007). *Finding the meaning of grief through the five stages of loss*. New York, NY: Scribner.

Neimeyer, R.A. (Ed.) (2001). *Meaning reconstruction and the experience of loss*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association

Resources

Compassionate Friends

Dougy Center: Children's Grief Services

Grief Net.org

Grief Recovery Institute

National Child Traumatic Stress Network

National Alliance for Grieving Children

Course Objectives:

1. Recognize personal loss and grief as a generic process resulting from a variety of experiences and occurring throughout the life span.
2. Identify a general grief paradigm including stages and tasks to be addressed across the life span.
3. Learn to identify and address unrecognized loss such as those losses associated with disenfranchised and anticipatory grief.
4. Identify situational variables affecting the individual's course of grief and distinguish complicated grief from normal bereavement.
5. Articulate the relationship between loss and transformation.
6. Recognize differences in reaction to loss as they relate to culture, development and transitions through the lifespan.
7. Acquire a framework and strategies for assisting individuals who are going through transition as a result of personal loss.
8. Increase sensitivity to the needs of bereaved individuals and how to be a more compassionate caregiver.
9. Increase understanding of your own loss history and how compassion must extend to the caregiver as well as those in need of care.
10. Increase awareness of support in community as an important resource for healing

Course Outline

	<u>Weekend One</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Friday	Historical/Cultural Attachment Loss Defined:	Introduction to Grief & Loss Worden - Ch. 1,2 (text) Doka & Martin, Ch. 22 DeSpelder & Strickland, Ch. 1
Saturday	Models/Tasks of Grieving Unresolved Loss Dual Process Special Losses: Traumatic Loss	The Nature of Grief Worden- Ch. 3,4, 5 (text) Rubin, et al. Stroebe & Shut Shear
	<u>Weekend Two</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Friday	Ages and Stages of Grieving Drawings, Rituals Movie: In America	Children and Loss Worden, Ch. 6&8 (text) DeSpelder & Strickland, Ch. 2 Crenshaw, Ch. 19
Saturday	The School's Response to Loss Family and Loss Children at Risk; Grief Groups Compassionate Friends	Adolescents, Families, Parental Grief School Crisis Guide, NEA Haine Shapiro, Ch. 8 Cacciatore, Killian, Harper

Weekend Three

Friday

Death and Dying: Working with the Terminally Ill
Alive Hospice
Anticipatory Loss

Readings

Death and Dying

Worden, Ch. 7, 9 (text)
Rando Ch. 8, 11
Koenig & Gates-Williams
Hiuang, 2016
Bonavita, et al, 2018
Holly & Mast, 2009

Saturday

Bioethics
Disenfranchised/Psychosocial Loss
Book Reviews
Constructivist Approaches
Resilience & Loss
Counselor Self Care
Ritual

Special Topics

Corr, 2002
Neimeyer & Jordan, 2002
Blank, 2011
Neimeyer, 2003
Bonnano, 2004
Kumar, Ch. 3, 5, 10

Assignments

Take Home Final or Research Paper

- Take home exam will be comprehensive. Questions will be designed to address both conceptual understanding and practical application of theories. (10-12 pages)
- Research Paper may be written on an area of interest related to grief and loss. Please discuss topic in advance with instructor. (10-15 pages)
- For both assignments, use APA style manual (6th ed.)

Field Project

Visit an agency, hospital or other institution that works with grief/loss populations or concerns.

- Interview staff or sit in on a support group.
- Obtain general information about the agency or institution you visit. (What is their mission; What population do they serve, What are staff roles and services offered).
- What are your thoughts and feelings associated with the visit? Were any of your “world” assumptions affected by the visit?
- How do readings and class discussion help you understand the work the agency does? (If sitting in on a support group, what from text or class help you explain the experience and the dynamics observed?) (4 pages)

Reaction Paper

- Read a book or five articles or five children’s books and write a review. Books may be fiction or nonfiction. Include a) a brief summary, b) your reaction to the reading, c) your critique as it relates to bibliotherapy (would it be a good book to recommend to a client or clients on loss). (2-3 pages)

Reflection Paper on Loss

- Write about a loss you have experienced (cognitive, physical, psychosocial). Include your age, developmental stage, temperament at time, past coping adjustment prior to loss with regard to home, school and past experience with death and loss.
- Include type of loss (death or other), whether anticipated or sudden, any anticipatory grieving, presence of trauma, ritual following or prior to loss if any, how you said goodbye if you did, meaning of loss to you and grief reaction.
- How did others react to loss? How did others react to you as a result of the loss? What were grief reactions (patterns) in family of origin? How did other systems respond to you regarding the loss (school, church, peers)? How did your beliefs change as a result of the loss? If adding references, use APA style. (8-10 pages)

Attendance and Participation

- Active participation related to readings, class discussion and exercises is expected. Please come prepared to discuss material from assigned readings and complete any assignments if required. Please make arrangements with instructor if you are planning to miss any sessions.

Written work will be graded on the following basic criteria:

- Clarity, depth of thinking and critical analysis
- Incorporation and comprehension of class material
- Use of data and citations using APA Style
- Organization, flow, spelling, and grammar

Late papers may lose five points for every day late unless approved by the instructor.

Course Requirements, Grading and Due Dates:

Take Home Final Exam/Research Paper	100 pts.
Field Project	30 pts.
Reaction Paper	10 pts.
Reflection Paper	40 pts.
Attendance	<u>20 pts.</u>
Total:	200 pts.

Grading Scale:

A	94-100	C+	77-79
A-	90-93	C	74-76
B+	87-89	C-	70-73
B	84-86		
B-	80-83		

Policy on Instructional Modification

Vanderbilt University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities that may affect your ability to complete course assignments or otherwise satisfy course requirements. If you may require accommodations, please contact the Office of Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Disability Services at Baker Building, Suite 108 (615) 322-4705 (V/TDD) to discuss and determine any accommodations. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation in Vanderbilt University classes and have not contacted them, please do so as soon as possible. You are also encouraged to see your instructor(s) privately in regards to this matter, ideally no later than the second week of the semester, so that we can ensure that your needs are met appropriately and in a timely manner.

Diversity Statement

It is our intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is our intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity including gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, religion, culture, perspective, and other areas of human difference. Your suggestions about how to improve the value of diversity in this course are encouraged and appreciated. (Adapted from: <http://www.education.uiowa.edu/dean/policies/syllabus#diversity>).

Note:

At times this semester, we will be discussing topics that may be disturbing and even traumatizing to some students. If you ever feel the need to step outside during one of these discussions, either for a short time or for the rest of the class session, you may do so without academic penalty. You will, however, be responsible for any material you miss. If you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to this material, either with the class or with me, I would welcome such a conversation as an appropriate part of your professional development. Learning to manage personal reactions to potentially disturbing material that our clients discuss is an important part of preparing to be a counselor.

(Adapted from: <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2014/05/29/essay-why-professor-adding-trigger-warning-his-syllabus>)

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