



**Psychology 3800 – Grief and Bereavement
Spring 2017**

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Course Description

This course equips the professional practitioner to understand and respond effectively to individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities that have experienced both symbolic and tangible loss and grief reactions. The topics covered in the course, include theories of normal and complicated grief, grief reactions and the factors that influence them at different stages of the life span, cultural and spiritual influences, vicarious trauma and the impact of loss and working in close contact with grief on professionals, and skills and strategies that address therapeutic needs of vulnerable and resilient populations.

The textbook, experiential exercises and Internet resources included in the course have been chosen for their themes of loss, which are relevant to the topic of the course. However, some of the material may elicit unanticipated emotional reactions, particularly if students have experienced loss in their own lives. There may also be material in some of the supplementary audiovisual recommendations that can be objectionable to some viewers. To facilitate learning and insure emotional safety, choices are offered in video and written assignments. Students should exercise discretion and self-care in making choices and completing course assignments.

Student Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course students will:

1. Identify one's own personal philosophy and issues regarding death and loss and how these may impact on your work with individuals and families experiencing loss
2. Identify and understand normal grief and factors that contribute to unresolved loss and complicated bereavement
3. Describe the impact of different types of losses at different stages of the life cycle.
4. Demonstrate sensitivity to, and awareness of, social and cultural attitudes and practices related to death and loss and describe how these influence coping with grief.
5. Describe diverse therapeutic interventions, including individual grief therapy and bereavement counseling as well as support groups and the circumstances in which they may be used effectively
6. Demonstrate increased comfort as well as knowledge about death, loss and grief

Text Required

Walsh, K. (2011). *Grief and Loss: Theories and Skills for the Helping Professional* (2nd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.

Course Requirements

1. Course Readings & Classroom Participation (40 points)

This class will cover a great deal of information, so it is imperative that you keep up with the readings and assignments. **It should be common practice for you to read the week's assigned readings prior to coming to class.** All concepts within your readings will not be covered in class, but you will be responsible for the information. The majority of the class time will be devoted to discussions and activities instead of lecturing. This means that **you will need to come to class prepared to ask questions and actively participate in discussions and activities.** Participating in classroom discussions could earn you up to 40 points.

Classroom participation is defined as arriving to class on time, prepared for the class discussions, participating in in-class activities, and remaining for the entire class period. ***In order to receive all points, you must participate in classroom discussions and group activities in every class meeting that we have.*** Please note that just by showing up in class but not participating will not earn you points. Absences will be excused for those specific reasons stated in the Undergraduate Catalogue. No other reasons for absences will be excused.

2. Individual and Group Assignments (100 points)

You will be completing two (2) individual and one (1) group assignments. Please see pages 10 through 13 for descriptions of the assignments. Assignments should be submitted during class time by the due date. ***Late submissions will not be accepted – no exceptions.***

3. Movie Presentation (40 points)

In groups of **five (5)** you will choose a movie to present in class exploring the nature of the grief presented. The movie chosen must be approved by me by **January 31st**. You will choose a **3 to 5 minute** clip to show to the class that exemplifies the grief/stage/level chosen. You will be presenting your case to the class for no more than **20 minutes**. Please be creative; i.e. you may choose to roleplay a counseling session based on the issues presented in the movie or you may choose to use the audience as your colleagues consultants to come up with a treatment plan. Students from previous classes presented talk shows, therapy sessions and panels. Your presentations must be emailed to me by **April 9th** in order to receive full credit.

You must make sure that you are able to connect your computer to the classroom's system and be able to see and hear the movie. You will only be given 5 minutes to deal with any technical difficulties. I am providing a day to meet with your group to go over your presentation and check the classroom system.

Your presentation should provide the following:

1. Any necessary background about the story and characters needed for context.
2. Why you chose the clip?

3. How is it important?
4. What themes from your text it covers?
5. What are your thoughts about the issues presented?
6. What recommendations do you have for the family or individuals?

Please be thorough and cover as much as related material as possible. This is your chance to showcase everything that you have learned in this course. Make sure to get the class involved by engaging them (i.e. ask for their thoughts, post questions for them). Presentations will take place during the last 3 weeks of the semester.

***** Note that you are not allowed to present on a movie that you have already chosen for your individual paper.**

*****You are required to attend all presentations and provide anonymous evaluations to the groups.**

4. **Final Paper** (100 points)

This reflective paper is your final assignment and it is due on **April 28th (Friday)**. The final paper will be available to you starting April 3rd via D2L (under “Assignments”). Once you complete it you will upload to D2L and submit it. I will not accept final papers via email.

Late submissions will not be accepted – no exceptions.

5. **Extra Credit**

There will be plenty of classroom group work opportunities to earn extra credit!

*****All written work will follow the format of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.).**

Course Requirements	Points
Classroom Participation	40
Assignments	100
Movie Presentation	100
Final Paper	100
TOTAL	340

310+	A
279 - 309	B
218 - 248	C
187- 217	D
< 186	F

Make-up Policies

Missing Assignments: All assignments are to be completed by the due date. If assignment cannot be submitted as scheduled, it is the responsibility of the student to inform me prior to the due date. Missed assignments must be accompanied by formal documentation of an emergency that prohibited your attendance. ***Non-emergency doctor's appointments will not be honored.***

Missing Class: In the event of a missed class, it is your responsibility to obtain information on class news and assignments. I will not provide notes or review old lectures for missed classes.

Regarding students' grades

Students are responsible for keeping track of their own class averages during the course of the semester. Please contact me if you want an update of your grade during the course. All graded materials will be handed back in a timely fashion. ***Please remember that midterm grades will only reflect a percentage of the total grading scale, because all assignments and tests will not be required before calculating your midterm grade.***

General Information/Policies

- ❖ **Cell phones:** Cell phones are **not allowed** during class time. Turn them off or put them on silent. Please do not take calls, text or check your email, facebook, Instagram, etc. during class time. If you do engage in such activities you will be asked to leave the classroom and will be considered as absent. If you have an emergency and expecting a call, please let know prior to the beginning of the class, step outside and take the call.
- ❖ CSU campus policies prohibit class attendance by adults or children who are not registered for the class. Therefore, children **are not allowed** to attend classes with you, for any reason.
- ❖ E-mail: Expect an email response within 48 hours from the time you send it. If you have a more urgent issue, please use the phone number listed at the top of the syllabus.

In-class Use of Student Notebook Computers:

- ❖ Student notebook computers are **not allowed** during course instruction and discussion.

MISSION STATEMENT & LEARNING GOALS:

The Mission of the Department of Psychology is to provide students with the highest quality instructional preparation for immediate employment in occupations such as human services or for graduate programs in areas such as counseling, social work, and psychology. The program faculty is dedicated to providing academically sound instruction in an environment that models for students the highest standards of professional, ethical, and caring behaviors.

- ❖ To understand and apply the major concepts, findings, and theoretical perspectives of Psychology.
- ❖ To evaluate research critically and apply research methodologies used in psychology.
- ❖ To communicate effectively and professionally both orally and in writing.
- ❖ To demonstrate an understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and career opportunities for those with psychology-related degrees.

- ❖ To understand and apply the ethical standards set forth by the American Psychological Association.

Program Learning Outcomes:

General education outcomes:

The following link provides the Clayton State University Core Curriculum outcomes (see Area E):

http://www.clayton.edu/Portals/5/core_curriculum_outcomes_clayton.pdf

Learning Outcomes for Dept. of Psychology

1. Apply the major concepts, findings, and theoretical perspectives of psychology.
2. Evaluate research critically and apply research methodologies used in psychology.
3. Demonstrate effective, professional oral and written communication skills both individually and with groups.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and career opportunities for those with psychology-related degrees.
5. Apply the ethical standards set forth by the American Psychological Association.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of individual and cultural differences and their influences on beliefs, values, and interactions with others.
7. Interact effectively with people of diverse abilities, backgrounds, and cultural perspectives.

University Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend and participate in every class meeting. Instructors establish specific policies relating to absences in their courses and communicate these policies to the students through the course syllabi. Individual instructors, based upon the nature of the course, determine what effect excused and unexcused absences have in determining grades and upon students' ability to remain enrolled in their courses. The university reserves the right to determine that excessive absences, whether justified or not, are sufficient cause for institutional withdrawals or failing grades.

Course Attendance Policy

- ❖ Absences: You are given **1** absence to use as needed in this class. The instructor will not make a distinction between excused and unexcused absences. This class only meets once per week, therefore regular doctor's appointments etc. should be scheduled during non-class hours.
- ❖ Attendance will influence your grade. Regular attendance is strongly encouraged as test questions are created in large part from class notes; therefore class attendance strongly influences course grades.
- ❖ Tardiness: If class has begun when you arrive, please enter the room quietly. If you are **more than 10 minutes late**, you will be considered tardy and will affect your participation grade.
- ❖ Leaving class prior to dismissal is **strongly** discouraged and will affect your participation grade.

Computer Requirement

Each CSU student is required to have ready access throughout the semester to a notebook computer that meets faculty-approved hardware and software requirements for the student's academic program. Students will sign a statement attesting to such access. For further information on CSU's Official Notebook Computer Policy, please go to <http://www.clayton.edu/hub/itpchoice/notebookcomputerpolicy>.

Computer Skill Prerequisites

- Able to use the Windows™ operating system
- Able to use Microsoft Word™ word processing
- Able to send and receive e-mail using Outlook™ or Outlook Express™
- Able to attach and retrieve attached files via email
- Able to use a Web browser.

D2L (Online Classroom)

On-line activity will take place in D2L, the virtual classroom for the course.

- You can gain access to D2L, by signing on to the SWAN portal and selecting: “D2L” on the top right side. If you experience any difficulties, please email or call The HUB at TheHub@mail.clayton.edu or (678) 466-HELP. You will need to provide the date and time of the problem, your D2L username, the name of the course that you are attempting to access, and your instructor's name.

Basic Student Responsibilities and Student Handbook

Each Clayton State University student must abide by the rules and regulations pertaining to student conduct as indicated in the Student Handbook and the University Catalog. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain these documents and become familiar with this information.

Academic Dishonesty

Any type of activity that is considered dishonest by reasonable standards may constitute academic misconduct. The most common forms of academic misconduct are cheating and plagiarism. All instances of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero for the work involved. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Life/Judicial Affairs. Judicial procedures are described at <http://admins-services.clayton.edu/judicial/>.

Disruption of the Learning Environment

Behavior which disrupts the teaching–learning process during class activities will not be tolerated. While a variety of behaviors can be disruptive in a classroom setting, more serious examples include belligerent, abusive, profane, and/or threatening behavior. A student who fails to respond to reasonable faculty direction regarding classroom behavior and/or behavior while participating in classroom activities may be dismissed from class. A student who is dismissed is entitled to due process and will be afforded such rights as soon as possible following dismissal. If found in violation, a student may be administratively withdrawn and may receive a grade of WF.

A more detailed description of examples of disruptive behavior and appeal procedures is provided at:

<http://a-s.clayton.edu/DisruptiveClassroomBehavior.htm>

Disability Services

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations need to register with Disability Services in order to obtain their accommodations. You can contact them at 678-466-5445 or disabilityservices@clayton.edu. If you are already registered with DS and are seeking accommodations for this course, please make an appointment with me to discuss your specific accommodation needs for this course and give me your accommodations letter.

Tutoring

The Center for Academic Success (CAS) provides tutoring for this course. Appointments can be made through TutorTrac at <http://tutoring.clayton.edu> or by contacting the CAS at (678) 466-4070, lower level of the library.

Operation Study

At Clayton State University, we expect and support high motivation and academic achievement. Look for Operation Study activities and programs this semester that are designed to enhance your academic success such as study sessions, study breaks, workshops, and opportunities to earn Study Bucks (for use in the University Bookstore) and other items.

Hardship Withdrawal

Students who experience an unexpected event or circumstance beyond their control that directly interferes with their ability to continue to make satisfactory progress in class(es), such as serious illnesses or unexpected major life events, may petition the Dean of their major for a hardship withdrawal. In order to be considered for a hardship withdrawal, the student must have been passing the course at the time that the emergency or other hardship arose and notify his or her instructors or other University officials about the hardship situation as soon as possible after it arose (per University and BOR policy, —passing is defined as a grade of —D or above). Hardship requests that are not filed in a timely manner are subject to denial even if the student was passing and the hardship was legitimate. Students who attend class through the end of a term and complete all course requirements (i.e. final project or exam) are not eligible for hardship withdrawal. If you have taken a final exam, you may not request a hardship withdrawal.

PSYC 3800 Grief and Bereavement– Spring 2016
Tentative Schedule

Date	Topics	Chapters
01/10	Introductions & Expectations Class Activity	Start Readings
01/17	Introduction to Grief and Loss Symbolic Loss	Chapter 1 Chapter 2
01/24	Movie presentation (Dr. Makri) Class activity	
01/31	Self-preparation and self-care for professionals encountering loss and grief <i>*Group movie approval due</i>	Chapter 3
02/07	Grief and Loss Across the Life Span: Childhood and Adolescents Individual Assignment #1 Due (Chapter 3)	Chapter 4
02/14	Grief and Loss Across the Lifespan: Young and Middle Adulthood **Midpoint	Chapter 5
02/21	<u>No Class Meeting</u> Please meet with your groups to finalize group assignment	
02/28	Loss and Grief Across the Lifespan: Older Adults Normal and Complicated Grief Group Assignment #2 Due (Chapters 4 & 5)	Chapter 6 Chapter 7
03/07	Spring Break!!! Enjoy ☺	
03/14	Cultural and Spiritual Influences Grief in the Context of Anticipated Loss	Chapter 8 Chapter 9
03/21	What Can We Do to Help Individuals and Families? Helping Groups and Organizations Individual Assignment #3 Due (Chapter 8)	Chapter 10 Chapter 11

	Communities and Traumatic Grief	Chapter 12
03/28	Self-Care: Sustaining Hope, helpfulness and competence in working with grief	Chapter 13
	NO CLASS MEETING Please meet with your groups in classroom and rehearse the group presentation	
04/03	<i>Final Paper available via D2L</i>	
04/09 (Sunday)	Presentations Due via email	
04/11	Group Movie Presentations	
04/18	Group Movie Presentations	
04/25	Group Movie Presentations	
04/28 (Friday)	Final Paper Due – Submit via D2L (under “Assignments”)	

**Assignments and dates associated with this syllabus are subject to modification at faculty's discretion.*

Chapter 3 Individual Assignment (Assignment #1) – 25 points

Due Date February 7th. No Late assignments are accepted.

Early experiences with death or loss significantly influence the way we react to the losses of others, both consciously and unconsciously. It is important to recognize these and how they might influence us in our daily work.

Instructions:

Take a few moments now to think about the following questions. Write down your responses and reflect on them as you progress through the rest of this text or use them as the beginning of a journal that you continue to keep.

- What was your earliest experience with death or loss? How old were you when it occurred? Where were you when you learned of the loss? Who did it involve? Describe what happened.
- How did the people around you respond to the loss? How did they respond to your reactions?
- How did your cultural and/or spiritual background influence your responses?
- What about loss makes you feel vulnerable now?
- Based on what you have learned since, what do you think can help make it easier to cope with death or loss now or in the future?

Your paper should be minimum of three (3) pages, not including the Title page.

If there are unresolved feelings about previous experiences with death that you have not worked through, it is important to find a way to address them so they do not negatively influence your work with others. Journaling, loss specific support groups, counseling, even courses on grief can be helpful. There are many forums, chat rooms and support groups available on the Internet that can be accessed through the links provided for this text. Choose the method that works best for you, but take the time you need to deal with your own losses. It will inevitably result in better care for others who are facing loss.

Chapters 4 & 5 Group Assignment (Assignment #2) –50 points
Due Date February 28th. No Late assignments are accepted.

Chapter 4: Identifying resources for children and families

The Internet is the fastest growing source of information about grief as well as other life experiences. To test this you could type the keyword grief into your favorite search engine. (More than 3 million hits were identified in my recent search). There is no question that the current and future generations of children will be accessing information and social support independently and in a way never experienced by previous generations, through the virtual world. They will even have an opportunity to test out identities, ways of behaving and interacting through the virtual world (e.g. Second Life). With access to millions of web sites, blogs and social networking forums, it will become increasingly difficult for parents to monitor children's interactions and for both children and parents to know which sources of information are the most credible and helpful.

In the Internet Resources for this chapter, you will find selected Websites that are used frequently by both professionals and consumers. To learn more about grief reactions at different stages of life and about what information is available, try the following activity.

- Each member must select a group/developmental stage (e.g. early childhood, ages 4-6) to research and archive information on a specific grief-related topic, such as death of a parent, divorce, pet loss, etc. You will then compile your information to share with the entire class.

Example: web link

Include a brief introduction or summary regarding the services offered. If it is an article, provide a brief summary of the article – no more than 5 complete sentences.

- Begin by visiting the links listed in the Internet Resources for this chapter and reading the information posted on a given topic at each of the sites. You might then use a search engine to see what children or parents would likely find if they were seeking information.

Chapter 5: Identifying resources for Young and Middle Adulthood

- Each member must select a type of loss that is unique to adults in the young or middle stage of adulthood. (Examples: divorce, death of a child, disability of a child, child launching into adulthood, substance dependence and associated losses)
- Search academic articles and credible web resources that can inform your practice with clients experiencing this kind of loss. (For example, AARP, the American Association of Retired Persons publishes information on adaptation to retirement). Identify key concepts from the resources you have found that address the challenges and opportunities for adults experiencing the type of loss you have selected.

- Construct an **annotated bibliography** of six sources (each member) that you have found most useful and credible and identify, in your annotation, the key concepts from these sources that you believe are most important for professional caregivers to be aware of. You will then compile your information to share with the entire class.

Please note that since this is a group assignment, the same grade will be assigned to all members. I encourage you to make sure that the work load is divided evenly and that all members are involved to avoid any issues. In case that issues do take place, please try to resolve them within the group and if there is no resolution then you can contact me as a group to discuss it further.

Chapter 8 Individual Assignment (Assignment #3) – 25 points

Due Date March 21st. No Late assignments are accepted.

Select a movie or video that depicts loss and grief **within a specific cultural context**. (This exercise includes a list of suggested movies, although you may know of others that should be available at your local library or local video rental outlets. Internet retailers also sell them and provide reviews online). Read the following questions before you watch the movie and be prepared to write your answers. Make sure that your answers will be thorough and well thought.

1. Identify the types of losses (symbolic and tangible) the characters have experienced.
2. Discuss your observations of the behavior of the individuals who have experienced loss.
3. What aspects of these were similar to the practices of your own cultural or religious group?
4. What aspects are different?
5. Of the rituals, practices or behaviors you have observed in the videos or your own life, which seemed particularly helpful for those who have experienced a loss?

Your paper should be minimum of three (3) pages, not including the Title and Reference page (if applicable).

Suggested movies:

- Soul Food (African American)
- My Girl (Christian Caucasian)
- Ordinary People (White Anglo Saxon Protestant)
- Smoke Signals (Native American)
- Steel Magnolias (Christian, Southern)
- To Live! (Chinese)
- The Kids are Alright (LGBT)

Note: The movies on this list have been chosen for their themes of loss. However, some of the material may elicit unanticipated emotional reactions or may be objectionable to some viewers. You may want to read reviews before making a selection and remember to exercise discretion and self-care in making choices and completing this exercise.

Scoring Rubric for Movie Paper and Final Presentation

Category	Scoring Criteria	Total Points	Score
Organization (15 points)	The type of presentation is appropriate for the topic and audience.	5	
	Information is presented in a logical sequence.	5	
	Presentation appropriately cites requisite number of references.	5	
Content (45 points)	Introduction is attention-getting, lays out the problem well, and establishes a framework for the rest of the presentation.	5	
	Technical terms are well-defined in language appropriate for the target audience.	5	
	Presentation contains accurate information.	10	
	Material included is relevant to the overall message/purpose.	10	
	Appropriate amount of material is prepared, and points made reflect well their relative importance.	10	
	There is an obvious conclusion summarizing the presentation.	5	
Presentation (40 points)	Speaker maintains good eye contact with the audience and is appropriately animated (e.g., gestures, moving around, etc.).	5	
	Speaker uses a clear, audible voice.	5	
	Delivery is poised, controlled, and smooth.	5	
	Good language skills and pronunciation are used.	5	
	Visual aids are well prepared, informative, effective, and not distracting.	5	
	Length of presentation is within the assigned time limits.	5	
	Information was well communicated.	10	
Score	Total Points	100	

Videos with Themes of Loss and Grief
(An additional list is provided via D2L under “Content”)

A Woman under the Influence
Antwone Fisher
Beaches
Corrinna, Corrinna
Crazy Heart
DAD
Death at a Funeral
Fearless
Fried Green Tomatoes
Garden State
Ghost
Imaginary Heroes
In America
Life as a House
Lorenzo’s Oil
My Girl
My Life
Never Let Me Go
Ordinary People
Philadelphia
Ponette
One True Thing
Rabbit Hole
Reign Over Me
Simon Birch
Soul Food
Stand By Me
Steel Magnolias
Smoke Signals
Spitfire Grill
Terms of Endearment
The Descendants
The Kids are Alright
The Hurt Locker
The Other Woman (Natalie Portman)
Things We Lost in the Fire
This is Where I Leave You
To Live!
Up
Wristcutters: A Love Story