SW 617, Section 001
Death, Loss, and Grief
Fall, 2019
Room SSWB 3816
Tuesday 3:00-6:00 p.m.

Email: debmatt@umich.edu
Please put SW617 in the subject line. Please allow 24 hours for email response
Monday-Friday. Email is not monitored regularly on weekends.

Office Hours: I welcome meeting with any and all of you throughout the semester and am happy to make individually scheduled appointments to ensure that you have access to talk with me to discuss any class questions or concerns. I am usually available in the classroom prior to and after class and have regular office hours to discuss any class questions or concerns.
Scheduled Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:00-2:00 p.m. and I am regularly available other times, so feel free to stop in or schedule a time.

WELCOME: THANK YOU FOR BEING IN THIS CLASS
Thank you for choosing to invest your valuable elective hours in developing competencies and skills to assist persons who have experienced loss and grief. I believe that much of the work we do is at its core about loss and grief and that this course content will be universally relevant and applicable to your professional practice. Exploring and increasing your understanding of death, loss and grief will facilitate assessing, intervening and responding with compassion and competence in interactions with your clients, work places, colleagues and communities. I come to this course believing it will be very meaningful for you in a variety of contexts, both professionally and personally. I look forward to what we will experience and learn together.

The syllabus serves as our guiding contract agreement for the term. You are responsible for reading it no later than the beginning of our second class session. Students are responsible for reading the syllabus and assignment instructions/grading rubrics and self-monitoring due dates.

Please feel free to initiate asking questions early in the term to ensure you understand the plan for the course including assignments and due dates. Changes may be made in the syllabus as appropriate at any time at the instructor’s discretion. Course assignments, class powerpoints and other relevant documents can be found on Canvas at https://canvas.umich.edu
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All assignments are due and should be submitted to Canvas no later than 11:59 p.m. of the night BEFORE the due date.

Due to faculty vision accommodations, please also bring a hard copy of your WRITTEN assignments to class to turn in.

ASSIGNMENT CALENDAR

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<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
<th>Page Length</th>
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<td>RTAN 1</td>
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<td>Insight Interview</td>
<td>Oct. 29</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2-3</td>
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<td>Diversity Assignment</td>
<td>Nov. 12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTAN 2</td>
<td>Nov. 19</td>
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<td>Dec. 10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
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Learning is in service to our clients.

We each take responsibility to talk WITH each other rather than ABOUT each other.
1. ABOUT THE COURSE

1.1 COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course addresses the theoretical framework of human loss and grief from a culturally and philosophically diverse perspective. It seeks to provide information about why and how humans grieve and how grieving is affected by type of loss, socioeconomic and cultural factors, individual personality and family functioning. Attention is given to life span development and the meaning of death and loss at different ages. Various types of loss are discussed from an individual, family and socio/cultural perspective. The importance of understanding trauma and its relationship to grief and loss will be addressed. Coping and resiliency in loss are explored, emphasizing the diversity of human response and focusing on the significance of social groups in integrating loss. The formation and practice of rituals, and diversity in religious and spiritual experience as a component of coping with loss will be discussed.

While practical application of concepts will be encouraged and some interpersonal practice methods will be addressed, this course is NOT designated by the School of Social Work as a methods class.

1.2 COURSE OBJECTIVES
Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
1. Understand the implications for practice and policy of the changing patterns of death/dying in the U.S., regarding socioeconomic status, age, gender, and cultural/ethnic patterns.
2. Understand the different meanings of loss and the impact of loss on those grieving, caregivers, and larger social groups.
3. Identify and describe responses and reactions of the various caregivers (including social workers) to death and loss and the impact of these reactions on client systems.
4. Demonstrate increased awareness of the medical ethical issues in death and dying.
5. Summarize the different theoretical models for understanding bereavement and grieving.
6. Identify the practical issues and problems that arise for individuals and families following a death or major loss in the family and the significance of social groups in bereavement.
7. Examine the variables impacting mourning (e.g. ability, age, class, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation) in the experience and expression of grief for the family and/or person facing death and bereavement.
8. Discuss the ways in which violence affects the experience of death or loss, and the impact of layered loss when continually exposed to loss or violence.


10. Discuss dominant themes of complicated mourning, including multiple losses, traumatized loss; disenfranchised and stigmatized loss, cultural genocide, and historical transmission of loss.

11. Discuss typical ethical and legal concerns related to death, loss, and grief.

IPE Objectives
1. Values/Ethics: Work with individuals of other professions to maintain a climate of mutual respect and shared values.
2. Roles/Responsibilities: Use the knowledge of one’s own role and those of other professions to appropriately assess and address the needs of clients related to grief and loss.
3. Interprofessional Communication: Communicate with professionals in health and other fields in a responsive and responsible manner that supports a team approach to the promotion and maintenance of health.
4. Teams/Teamwork: Apply relationship-building values and the principles of team dynamics to perform effectively in different team roles in a learning environment and increase awareness of translation of these team concepts into interprofessional practice.

CSWE COURSE COMPETENCIES
Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) 2015
This course will address and support competency development in the following CSWE identified core competency areas:

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
Competency 4: Engage In Research-informed Practice
Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations & Communities
Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations & Communities

1.3 COURSE DESIGN FORMAT
This course uses a relationship-based engaged approach to learning. A variety of collaborative learning methods will be used to promote skill development including interactive lectures with active student participation, guest speakers, readings, in-class application exercises, role plays, practice clinical scenarios, videos and written assignments. Understanding core class concepts and the ability to apply these concepts will be emphasized.

Why Powerpoint Presentations are posted AFTER class
I share the following evidence-based abstract with you for your consideration regarding note taking. Given this research, I will not be posting powerpoints on Canvas prior to class. I will often provide note-taking outlines to assist with lecture notes.

"Taking notes on laptops rather than in longhand is increasingly common. Many researchers have suggested that laptop note taking is less effective than longhand note taking for learning. Prior studies have primarily focused on students’ capacity for multitasking and distraction when using laptops. The present research suggests that even when laptops are used solely to take notes, they may still be impairing learning
because their use results in shallower processing. In three studies, we found that students who took notes on laptops performed worse on conceptual questions than students who took notes longhand. We show that whereas taking more notes can be beneficial, laptop note takers’ tendency to transcribe lectures verbatim rather than processing information and reframing it in their own words is detrimental to learning.”

1.4 RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO FOUR CURRICULAR THEMES

Multiculturalism and Diversity
Will be addressed through the discussion of impact of various diversity factors including culture, ethnicity, race, gender, age, sexual orientation and social class. Case examples, readings and diversity focused assignment will reflect this theme.

Social Justice and Social Change
Will be addressed through discussion of social, environmental, ethical and legal policy issues which may result in discrimination and disenfranchisement and thus impact the grieving process.

Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, and Rehabilitation
Will be addressed through identification of ways to provide early intervention, guidance, and advocacy within systems, methods of preventing or mitigating later problems in loss and bereavement, and discussion of intervention theories and health care and social policies which support adaptive responses to loss that enhance later adjustment and seek to prevent complicated grief.

Behavioral and Social Science Research
Will inform this course, especially current research in the following areas: bereavement and complicated mourning, attachment and developmental requirements, response to violence/trauma and resiliency/coping/adaptation.

1.5 INTENSIVE FOCUS ON PRIVILGE, OPPRESSION, DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (PODS)
This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice and inclusion, illuminate injustices and oppression and are consistent with evidence-based and professional knowledge. Students are invited and expected to actively contribute from their experiences, field placement practice and knowledge of readings, etc. to help support and develop a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning in the context of grief and loss.

1.6 RELATIONSHIP OF THE COURSE TO SOCIAL WORK ETHICS AND VALUES
Social work ethics and values will be addressed in this course using the NASW Code of Ethics. This course will increase awareness of the medical-ethical issues and decision making in death and dying. In addition, students will evaluate ethical issues involved in
death and loss, and discuss the impact of the social workers values and reactions to these issues.

2. MY TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

2.1 LEARNING IS IN SERVICE TO OUR CLIENTS.

2.2 RELATIONSHIP FOCUSED PARTNERSHIP: MUTUAL LEARNING COMMITMENT
Many times learning experiences can be approached from expectations of what we will get from them. This approach focuses on the professor giving information and the student getting information. Relationship-based learning focuses instead on mutually “giving, getting and growing” together as we learn with and from each other and will be the learning philosophy used as the foundation for this course. My commitment is to provide organized, meaningful course material and opportunities for learning.

2.3 INTENTIONALITY
Intentional learning is not passive, but rather is focused on actively pursuing your learning goals. It happens when one intentionally chooses: what they want to achieve in this class, why these goals are important to them and how they engage and invest to reach these goals.

I invite you to enter this class with the intention that you are going to engage and invest in this intentional experience of learning.

2.4 INCREMENTAL SKILL BUILDING AND LEARNING

The course assignments are designed to be INCREMENTAL, building and demonstrating core competencies over time with a variety of SMALLER assignments rather than focusing only on a few larger assignments.

2.5 HOW WE COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER
It can often be easier to talk about people than talking with them. Talking with people often requires taking the risk to be honest, courageous and humble. Providing feedback is a core competency all social workers need and we will use this class to further develop this skill.

We take responsibility to talk WITH each other rather than ABOUT each other.

Please provide feedback on your learning needs, how the class is going for you and suggestions for improvement throughout the class. We will do a mid-term and final evaluation, however the opportunity to respond to feedback is much more beneficial for both professors and class members if it is ongoing and not just provided at the
end of the term. **You are encouraged to proactively address any concerns or needs with your class colleagues and myself as they arise.**

**Guiding Principles and Commitments for Learning**
1. Our commitment to learning is in service to our clients.
2. We commit to maintaining a confidential space for open discussion and keep what is shared in class by a specific individual confidential and do not repeat classroom remarks that link a person with his/her/their identity.
3. We seek to replace assumptions with curious questions and invitations to share and listen.
4. We seek to diminish fear, shame and blame that immobilizes the learning process.
5. We find ways to be curious and humane in our interactions.
6. We expect to make mistakes and will honor this as a valuable part of the learning process.
7. We view the challenges of not yet “knowing” as a part of life-long learning and as preferable to stagnation and ignorance.
8. We validate that there is a difference between being uncomfortable and being unsafe.
9. We seek mutual growth, learning and benefit from sharing with each other.
10. We respect even when we disagree or have conflict. Disagreeing, not disconnecting.
11. We recognize and honor that each person is at a different point in their life learning and experience.
12. We will not assume or pre-judge the intent or motivation of others.
13. We will explore multiple perspectives on a topic, trying to understand and practice empathy, and respect that others may have a different lens than our own. We also understand that different perspectives may be attached to different positions of power.
14. We acknowledge that sexism, classism, racism, heterosexism, and other forms of discrimination (religion, age, ability, language, education, size, geographic location etc.) exist and may surface from time to time.
15. We recognize the differences between intent and impact and acknowledge the implications of both.
16. We acknowledge and take appropriate responsibility for the impact of our behaviors and actions.
17. We will practice forgiveness as we are learning and growing. However, we acknowledge are not entitled to someone’s forgiveness and it should not be presumed.
18. We will be aware of what we carry into the classroom space with us-- our mood, energy, experiences, beliefs, values…and what we carry out.
19. We will notice our preferences and resistances.
20. We will commit to moving outside our comfort zones to our learning edges. We may experience conflict, feel annoyed, anxious, angry, confused or defensive or some other feeling that may be uncomfortable. We will use these as a part of the learning experience to expand our knowledge and understanding.
21. Others you would like to add…..

*Sources: CRLT; Forward Space Guidelines by Zaharaa Hadi and Aubree Sepler, UM Program on Intergroup Relations.*
DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

“The University of Michigan cannot be excellent without being diverse in the broadest sense of that word. We also must ensure that our community allows all individuals an equal opportunity to thrive.”
--Mark Schlissel, President

At the University of Michigan, our dedication to academic excellence for the public good is inseparable from our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. It is central to our mission as an educational institution to ensure that each member of our community has full opportunity to thrive in our environment, for we believe that diversity is key to individual flourishing, educational excellence and the advancement of knowledge.

Diversity: We commit to increasing diversity, which is expressed in myriad forms, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, culture, national origin, religious commitments, age, (dis)ability status and political perspective.

Equity: We commit to working actively to challenge and respond to bias, harassment, and discrimination. We are committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status.

Inclusion: We commit to pursuing deliberate efforts to ensure that our campus is a place where differences are welcomed, different perspectives are respectfully heard and where every individual feels a sense of belonging and inclusion. We know that by building a critical mass of diverse groups on campus and creating a vibrant climate of inclusiveness, we can more effectively leverage the resources of diversity to advance our collective capabilities.

Learn more about SSW DEI and how to get involved
https://ssw.umich.edu/about/diversity-equity-inclusion/toolkit
https://diversity.umich.edu/about/defining-dei/

3. EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

3.1 PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN LEARNING

Personal Accountability shifts the focus from not solely being about what one is taught, to self-determination and about what one consciously chooses to learn.

Your learning is not just about academic learning but also involves learning and improving life skills and professional use-of-self. Students are expected to take personal responsibility and be committed to their own learning experience by being active and response-able members of each class session.

Students are invited and expected to be active and engaged partners in the learning process by coming to class prepared, ready, willing and able to contribute to meaningful discussion and learning.
An optimal individual learning experience is one that is **active**, **self-directed** and requires **engagement**.

### 3.2 PROFESIONAL USE OF SELF

**Respect for Others**

- Students are encouraged and expected to demonstrate openness to ideas and perspectives different from one’s own interests, views, belief and preferences.
- Listening and learning require a safe place and we commit to provide this safe space in this class.
- Sharing differing ways of thinking and how one sees the world is not always focused on changing others’ minds, but about cultivating a way of being with others that fosters curiosity and a desire to see and hear another’s point of view.
- We will be mindful that in our desire to advocate for our own beliefs and values, that we do not commit the very acts of aggression, devaluation, marginalization, disenfranchisement and dismissal of others we are trying to prevent and advocate not happen to others or ourselves.

### 3.3 APPLICATION OF NASW CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL USE OF SELF IN THE CLASSROOM

The NASW Code of Ethics outlines a set of core values that form the basis of the Social Work profession’s purpose and perspective. The Code encourages behaviors which promote professionalism and respect **not only for clients, but for colleagues and employers as well**.

- “Social workers should treat colleagues with respect...”  “Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in verbal, written and electronic communications with clients or with other professionals.” Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues’ level of competence or to individuals’ attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical disability.” (NASW Code of Ethics, 2.01a and b)
- It is expected that all students conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the Code of Ethics and demonstrate professional use-of-self behaviors in class including respect, courtesy and **ACTIVE** listening with fellow students, the instructor and guest presenters. See Use-of-Self documents on Canvas.
- As professionals, you are expected to **maintain confidentiality and respect** differences. You are asked to honor confidentiality of the information shared by professor, colleagues and guest speakers in order to support a safe atmosphere for sharing and learning.

For further elaboration of the values and ethical standards inherent in social work, students are encouraged to access the Code of Ethics in the UM SSW Student Guide or [https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ms_ArtLqzeI%3D&portalid=0](https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=ms_ArtLqzeI%3D&portalid=0)

### 3.4 CLASS PRESENCE

**Showing up for class is not enough**. Presence is about **how** you show up, **who** you demonstrate you are in the class and **what** attitude and intention you bring.
Presence is a professional skill. Being present is more than just “showing up.” It involves attention and intention. Presence is perhaps one of the most important interventions we offer to our clients and thus we will practice the art of presence throughout this semester in this class.

Presence is crucial to our ultimate goal of service to our clients. Predictability, reliability and consistency (“being there”) are core to any strong relationship as well as being incredibly important to our clients and our employers. Thus, “being here” with predictability, reliability and consistency is an important core competency for this class. Our colleagues and guest speakers who share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences with us have a right to anticipate and receive our presence and demonstration of professional use-of-self.

As a graduate student, class presence, attendance, completion of assigned readings for each class, participation and engagement are highly valued as these behaviors contribute to the quality of learning for both oneself and the class as a whole.

3.5 CLASS PARTICIPATION
Beyond physical presence through attendance, class participation is vital to the learning experience of this course and focuses on being emotionally and intellectually present and engaged in class each week. Active engagement and sharing of your diverse ideas, perspectives and experiences are highly valued and expected.

Students are expected to verbally contribute in class and should be prepared each week to initiate and to be invited to contribute knowledgeable sharing of their understanding, ideas, reactions and applications from readings and integration across progressive weeks of class.

Participation is not simply about frequency, but also about the level and quality of preparedness and thoughtful and integrative analysis and application of concepts. Some may feel uncomfortable speaking in class. In service to our clients, we must learn to use our voices on their behalf. Class participation provides the opportunity to develop speaking, advocacy and discussion/facilitation/persuasion skills, as well as the ability to listen effectively. Thus, verbal participation will be an opportunity to practice and develop skills even when it can be sometimes challenging and/or uncomfortable.

Ways to contribute to our class learning include your valuable suggestions, appropriate amplifications, alternative interpretations and perspectives, constructive criticism and relevant observations. Students are expected actively participate in and take pair/share and small group activities seriously as each student’s learning is dependent upon each other’s engagement.

In addition to responding to questions and discussions in class, there are a number of ways to prepare to speak in class:

- Prepare a response to share in weekly check-ins
- Preparing a comment about the assigned readings
• Bring an example, experience, observation of how course material applies to real life
• Prepare and raise a question you have been pondering to the whole class
• Prepare a response to share in weekly check-out

We will utilize designated activity-related roles to encourage safe spaces, engagement and mutual accountability for all voices to be heard in this class.

3.6 DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP: USE OF PHONES, COMPUTERS AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES
The concept of “digital citizenship” is a complex topic that has become increasingly important and will continue to evolve as we explore the impact of technology on individuals and communities. In this class, we will be intentional about digital etiquette and respectful and ethical use of electronic devices for professional use. Research regarding portable technology (laptop computers, phones, PDAs, etc.) confirms that these devices can be a supportive classroom tool when used with a clear goal (i.e. note taking, interactive exercises) while also having negative consequences such as time spent on non-course tasks (i.e. emails, texting) and disruption to others (CRLT Occasional Papers, No. 30 Use of Laptops in the Classroom: Research and Best Practices).

To foster an environment of safety, openness and presence, the focus of class time will center on understanding and discussion of the content presented, asking questions, sharing integrative ideas, giving examples, taking notes, practicing active listening and presence, or otherwise deepening yours and other’s knowledge of the material in some way.

• Using electronic devices to assist in note taking and specifically directed class activities is encouraged for those who find this beneficial.

  • If you feel you must monitor email and text messages, you are respectfully asked to do so during breaks and/or to leave the classroom to do so.

• Audio and/or video recording in class of lecture and/or class discussion is prohibited without written permission of professor and students.

Presence is a professional use-of-self skill. Therefore, use of non-class related computer/phone/electronic devices/reading materials will be considered as the equivalent of being absent from class and will impact attendance and class participation grades with automatic associated deductions.
3.7 CLASS ATTENDANCE and ABSENCE POLICY

You and Your Learning are Important to the Class

A significant part of learning in this course is interactive and experiential with discussion, in-class activities and guest speakers which cannot be fully replicated or replaced by make-up work. Therefore, both your learning and the learning of your colleagues are benefitted by your attendance. The School of Social Work Class Attendance Policy states: “It is expected that students attend classes and instructors are encouraged to monitor attendance.” Attendance, participation and engagement are expectations and requirements (See Student Guide). Class grades include evaluation of attendance, participation and engagement. This class focuses on learning and demonstrating competencies in service to our clients. Therefore, grades are based on points earned through demonstration of competency and class participation.

Students have requested that their educational experience provide preparation for professional practice environments. Thus, our attendance policy seeks to prepare one for practice by addressing impact and professional behavior when absent. Life happens and each individual may have absences from personal choices made regarding prioritization of competing demands as well due to uncontrollable events and circumstances. Professional behavior in academic and professional practice environments involves taking initiative and responsibility for what is missed when absent in service to our clients.

In this class, absences ARE NOT determined as “excused” or “unexcused” but rather as a reality that may occur. Students are asked to demonstrate professional behavior by providing the instructor with advanced notification for known planned absences and notification when reasonably able after an unanticipated absence.

As relevant preparation for professional practice, students are responsible for class readings, assignments and in-class competence learning that occurred in their absence. Therefore, an opportunity is given for students to take initiative for class content missed when absent for any reason by completing a competency make-up assignment.

3.7.1 COMPETENCY DEMONSTRATION MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS

Completion of Competency Make-Up Assignments is a choice students have after any absence.

Standard Competency Make-Up Assignment instructions for all absences are provided in Canvas and must be completed by the second class following the absence by submitting a completed hard copy of the assignment. Make-up assignments will be graded as Pass-Marginal-Fail.

Competency Deduction for Absences without Student Initiated Make-Up

NOT submitting Competency Make-up Assignments for any absence within the required make-up timeframe will result in a 2 point competency deduction per each class missed.
3.7.2 Partial Absences
Promptness in attendance is also valued as it conveys professionalism, respect and courtesy and creates a safe environment for sharing among one another and our guest speakers. We will begin and resume class promptly after designated break(s).

Partial absences also negatively impact learning and will result in class participation deduction. A partial absence include any of the following: Lack of engaged presence due to use of electronic devices for non-class related activities during class, late arrival after class start time, late return from break after class has resumed and/or early departure before class ends.

3.7.3 MORE THAN 3 ABSENCES FOR ANY REASON
More than three absences represent a significant percentage of the course which cannot be sufficiently addressed with standard make-up assignments. This level of absence will require further discussion with the instructor to explore options for demonstration of course learning knowledge and objectives. This process may result in the need for an incomplete grade, a course grade deduction and/or non-passing grade for the course depending on the percentage of the course missed.

3.8 ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND HONESTY
UM Students are held to the highest standards of academic and professional conduct. Cheating is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through use of any dishonest, deceptive or fraudulent means. Any form of cheating is unacceptable and inconsistent with the NASW Code of Ethics and the Code of Academic and Professional Conduct which applies to all students enrolled in the School of Social Work and will result in a failing grade for the relevant assignment and is grounds for expulsion.

Examples of cheating include: copying/use of someone else’s work, obtaining or sharing tests from previous semesters, re-use of assignments from other classes, plagiarism (verbatim copy of another’s material and not acknowledging the direct quotation or unacceptable paraphrasing which does not use one’s own words and structure, and failure to acknowledge that the content is not original) and/or aiding and abetting academic dishonesty. You are responsible for understanding the meaning of academic integrity and plagiarism. Please refer to the Student Guide to the Master’s in Social Work Degree Program or see http://www.lib.umich.edu/academic-integrity/resources-students and https://guides.lib.umich.edu/swintegrity for further information.

4. Additional Policies, Information and Resources
Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources. They include:
- Safety and Emergency Preparedness
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Teaching Evaluations
- Proper Use of Names and Pronouns
- Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
- Religious/Spiritual Observances
5. COURSE READINGS & ASSIGNMENT CRITERIA

5.1 COURSE READINGS

Required readings have been designed to provide you with a basic foundation while giving you some freedom to individualize supplemental readings. The amount of assigned reading will varying from week to week, but overall, are consistent with graduate level workload expectations.

Readings serve as the foundation for class discussions, activities and assignments. To fully engage in the course and become a more competent and skilled practitioner, it is expected that students will complete all weekly required readings prior to each class session. Grades of A will require completion of all assigned readings.

The quality and preparedness of responses illustrating completion of the readings will be used as a part earned grades for class participation and will differentiate grades of exceptional mastery (A) from grades of mastery (B). Superior ratings in Professional Use-of-Self will require completion of all assigned readings.

TWO REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

These two required texts have been placed on reserve in the UM Shapiro Undergraduate Library.


This text provides a broad overview and many additional reading references. It is important to have this revised edition which includes relevant updated material and references. If you choose to use a different edition, please be aware that assigned page numbers will vary and you are responsible for making these adjustments by investigating updates and assigned page differences.


This text serves as a clinical practice oriented text. Check interlibrary loans for on-line availability:
Barnes and Noble Textbook service is the University of Michigan preferred textbook provider. The course textbooks can be obtained through www.umichtextbook.com

Students often compare textbook prices on Amazon, Chugg, etextbook and other book suppliers for purchase and/or renting.

Useful Websites are listed in Canvas in Resource Folder.

Additional relevant handouts may be in Canvas and/or distributed in class for reading. Additional reference materials specific to class topics will be discussed throughout the term.

You are expected and encouraged to do literature searches and additional reading to meet some assignments and to pursue areas of interest.

5.2 COURSE ASSIGNMENTS
Assignment Descriptions and Rubrics

Assignments are designed to use a variety of evaluation methods including written papers, classroom activities and discussions and in-class quizzes to allow opportunities to address strengths and preferences of diverse individual students. The goal of the course assignments is to promote integration and meaning of the material and competency in services provided to clients. You are empowered to self-direct your learning and assignments with some opportunities to choose areas of interest.

Written assignment descriptions and grading rubrics have been provided to clearly explain assignment expectations and point values. Please review these prior to completing and submitting your assignments to help you meet assignment criteria. You are encouraged to initiate asking questions regarding assignments and grading well in advance of due date.

5.3 ASSIGNMENT WRITING SKILLS EXPECTATIONS
Written work should incorporate critical thinking, analysis and graduate level writing. Strong writing and communication skills are essential to effective professional practice. As professionals we will be continually assessed and judged on our ability to express ideas clearly and professionally on behalf of our clients, our organizations, our profession and ourselves.

Graduate level writing skills will be expected in this course including appropriate grammar, in-text citations, references, organization of thought, clarity of expression and creativity in your writing. The Writing Coordinator for the School of Social Work is open to meeting with students during any phase of the writing process. The Writing Coordinator's office is housed within the Career Services Office. The Career Services Office also offers workshops, resources and individual assistance to help improve skills and confidence in written communication. For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact:
Writing labs are also available through the Sweetland Writing Clinic in Angel Hall: [http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/); English Language Institute [http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli).

Do not heavily rely on direct quotations from your sources; instead summarize them in your own words and provide appropriate citations. Use and synthesize reading concepts to support your completion assignments.

APA format is the definitive source for standardized writing in the behavioral and social sciences and is required for assignments requiring referencing. Please refer to the [MLibrary APA Citation Guide](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/) as needed. The Purdue Owl website is another helpful resource for assistance with APA formatting.

**Key components of APA format to be used in written papers include:**
- Title page with running head
- Double spaced 12 font with 1 inch margins
- **Number pages** except for title page in upper right corner
- Indent 5 spaces for first line of every paragraph
- Sources must be cited in the paper text (i.e. DeSpelder & Strickland (2015) state...)
- Reference page with all sources at the conclusion of the paper
- All direct quotes must be referenced with source and page number

**5.4 SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**
Students are responsible for reading the assignment instructions/grading rubrics and self-monitoring due dates. All papers must be typewritten.

**All assignments are to be submitted in BOTH of the following ways:**
1. **Submitted to Canvas by 11:59 p.m. on the night before the in-class due date.**
2. **Due to vision accommodation needs of the instructor, paper copies of written assignments are also to be submitted at the beginning of the class on the due date with all pages stapled together including relevant additional materials as indicated in the assignment description.**

**5.5 Late Completion of Assignments**
Meeting deadlines, planning ahead and timeliness in completing tasks are all important parts of our professional lives. Fairness goals guide consistent application of expectations for all students. **Therefore, late assignments will not be accepted without deduction unless the circumstances are both rare and compelling.**
Commonly occurring life experiences (i.e. multiple demands/busy schedule, traveling, computer problems) are NOT considered grounds for exceptions for late assignments without deductions. Late deductions will be one point for the first day past the due date and one-half point for each day thereafter.
6. GRADING

Academic standards matter to our clients and the responsibilities with which we are entrusted in our work with and on behalf of them.

Grades are the outcome of student efforts and demonstration of competency. They are “earned” not “given.” While this course has been designed to provide information and learning experiences, what you ultimately gain will largely depend on your use-of-self, your engagement in the class and your commitment to take responsibility for your individual learning.

I will provide written feedback and often pose questions and comments to encourage reflection, different perspectives, etc. Please let me know if you have questions and reactions to my comments and wish to discuss them. I am happy to meet with you.

All assignments will be graded with these criteria:

- Address specific assignment criteria defined in instructions and rubric
- Professional and academically sound writing skills (clarity of thought, organization and flow, APA referencing as appropriate)
- Ability to think critically and integrate concepts/content across the term
- Demonstrate professional use-of-self and social work values and ethics (PODS, strengths-based perspective)
- Integration and demonstration of completion and understanding assigned readings and additional literature when appropriate
- On time completion by assigned due date

Graduate school standards anticipate that for every credit hour spent in the classroom, students will spend 1-2 hours outside of the classroom to complete readings and assignments at a level of mastery. Time constraints are validated as a part of life. We acknowledge that while every assignment may not be completed at the exceptional mastery level of an A grade depending on one’s individual situation, goals and/or choices, meaningful learning can still occur.

Final Grades will be based on individual demonstration of course competencies and expectations including the quality of the work, demonstration of reading and ability to apply concepts and professional use-of-self and class participation as defined in course documents using a 100 point system.

The total accumulation of points earned reflect competencies demonstrated in the context of one’s normal life challenges regarding time, obligations, multiple demands and choices each individual makes. When considering an individual assignment grade (i.e. 9 out of 10 points earned), think of the score as points earned rather than a percentage.
For example, a 9 out of 10 on an individual assignment is not a 90% overall course grade but a loss of one available point out of 100 points.

**Final letter grades are defined by the School of Social Work as follows:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>A+ (100), A (95-99), and A- (90-94)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td>B+ (87-89), B (84-86), B- (80-83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td>C+ (77-79), C (74-76) and C- (70-73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>Below 70 Carries no credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td>No credit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grades of Incomplete**

Incomplete grades may be given in rare situations in which significant unforeseen, extraordinary and compelling reasons prevent completion of work AND there is a definite plan and date for completion pre-approved by the instructor by the last scheduled day of the course.

If more than one-third of required course assignments are incomplete and/or more than 3 classes are missed, an incomplete grade may be considered, but is not guaranteed.

In fairness to all students, incomplete grades will NOT be given based on requests for time extensions to complete assignments without a compelling reason and sufficient justification provided beyond common life experiences of having limited time or multiple class deadlines.

**Students are responsible for initiating advanced contact** well before the last day of class with the instructor to request an incomplete grade and to establish a specific plan for completion. If no contact has been initiated by the student with the instructor regarding incomplete work and/or no specific plan has been established to complete work by the last day of class, a grade will be given based on the completed work submitted thus far. This may potentially result in a grade which carries no credit.

**Additional Competency Credit and Revisions**

There may be some opportunity to earn extra points on quizzes and through other specified activities which provides some margin to impact earned grades. I am also open to discussing the possible option of accepting a revision of a regular written assignment that was turned in by original due date when a student initiates this request and provides sufficient rationale for request.

The MSW Student Guide policies on Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction as well as Student Grievance procedures and the policy for grading in special circumstances provide further details on grading policies. Here are also some resources regarding testing and grading from CRLT.
6.1 DISTRIBUTION OF PAPERS TO STUDENTS
The federal informational privacy act prohibits anyone other than the student access to that student’s papers. During the semester, papers will be returned directly to students. Papers submitted at the end of the term may be returned by mail to the student, if the student supplies a self-addressed, self-stamped envelope to the instructor no later than the last day of class for return by U.S. Mail. Uncollected papers will be destroyed at the end of the semester/grading period through confidential methods provided by the SSW.

7. WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE AND OVERVIEW
Class material can often be emotionally dense and incremental learning can be helpful to allow time to process smaller sections of our learning goals. Thus, class assignments are intentionally designed to be incremental, building and demonstrating core competencies over time with a variety of SMALLER assignments rather than focusing on only a few larger assignments. So, please consider not simply the number/frequency of assignments in evaluating and managing workload, but also the total pages of deliverable.

Assignments total 100 points of written work and two in-class quizzes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
<th>Page Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competency Quiz 1</td>
<td>Sept. 24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTAN 1</td>
<td>Oct. 1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency Quiz 2</td>
<td>Oct. 22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insight Interview</td>
<td>Oct. 29</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity Group Assignment</td>
<td>Nov. 12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTAN 2</td>
<td>Nov. 19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTAN 3</td>
<td>Dec. 3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTAN 4</td>
<td>Dec. 10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Self Rating Form</td>
<td>Dec. 10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions/ Roles</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Changes may be made in the syllabus as appropriate at any time at the instructor’s discretion.

7.1 SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS
Students are responsible for reading the assignment instructions/grading rubrics and self-monitoring due dates.

All assignments will be graded with these criteria:
- Address specific assignment criteria defined in instructions and rubric
- Professional and academically-sound writing skills (clarity of thought, organization and flow, APA referencing as appropriate)
- Ability to think critically and integrate concepts/content across the term
• Demonstrate professional use-of-self and social work values and ethics (PODS, strengths-based perspective)
• Integration and demonstration of completion and understanding assigned readings and additional literature when appropriate
• On time completion by assigned due date

Due to vision accommodation needs of the instructor, paper copies of written assignments are to be submitted at the beginning of the class on the due date with all pages stapled together including relevant additional materials as assigned. If you are unable to submit written assignments in class, please make other arrangements to get a paper copy of your assignment to class or to my office by the assignment due date and time.

7.2 WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

1. Written application & discussion assignments: 4 journals /30 Total points
   RTAN Assignments: Read/Think/Analyze/Notice
   These written assignments are designed to help integrate course readings and class discussions. Students should be prepared to be called on to share ideas and reactions from RTANS in weekly class discussions.
   Please see separate Canvas documents for specific RTAN assignment topics and questions.

2. In-Class Response to Assigned Roles/Questions 10 points (3 extra credit points available) Please see Canvas for details.
   Presence and active engagement with in-class activities will focus on helping us deepen our understanding of course concepts and real-world application.

   As you are completing the required readings, actively consider the following questions:
   • How would you summarize or paraphrase the reading(s)?
   • What are the author(s) main themes and take-away points of this reading?
   • What did you learn from the reading(s): new concepts, theories, perspectives, terminology?
   • What reflections and/or questions do you have about the readings?
   • How does this reading relate to other information about the topic; other course concepts we have discussed in previous sessions?
   • How might the information you take from this article apply to your Social Work practice?

3. Insight Interview 15 points
   This assignment gives you the opportunity to interview someone about a loss in his/her life while applying and integrating your understanding of course concepts along with your personal insights and awareness. Specifics of this assignment are detailed in a separate Canvas document.
4. Diversity Interprofessional Group Presentation Assignment 15 points
   This is an opportunity to topic regarding grief and loss in an area of interest and learning about it with and from your interprofessional classmates. Please see assignment specifics in Canvas.

5. Two In-Class Competency Quizzes   Total of 20 points
   You must be present to take quizzes
   This is your opportunity to demonstrate reading and understanding of course concepts and your ability to apply them. The quizzes will cover concepts from the readings and class discussions and will be cumulative. They will focus on designated core course competencies. Please see separate Quiz Core Competency document for details and dates of the quizzes.

6. Professional Use Self                                                   10 points
   Class attendance, participation and professional use of self are core behaviors that are highly valued in this class and are a part of the learning experience which has relevant application to future professional practice. As social workers and other helping professionals, it is important to be able to speak out to advocate for clients and to learn on their behalf. A silent worker can have limited impact.
   Class participation involves sharing and discussing class concepts and their application to our work. Participation is not simply talking and sharing your opinions. Each week come prepared to discuss what you have read, concepts from the class that apply to your field placement, what is happening in the news and current events/TV that applies to death, loss and grief, etc. The quality of participation is important and effectively comes from reading the assigned texts, analyzing theories and concepts and then noticing how to apply them to working with clients and organizations. Expectations are further defined in a separate Canvas document called Professional Use of-Self and a Class Participation Self-Evaluation Rubric document.

Learning is in service to our clients.

We commit to talk with each other rather than about each other.
Course Schedule and Assigned Readings

Sept. 3  IN-CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTION(S) PREPARATION
#1  Read the syllabus prior to class and come prepared with questions you have about the syllabus and your thoughts about the Pomeroy article.

Today’s Topics
Overview of Course
Historical Perspective and Present Views on Death and Dying

Required Readings:
DeSpelder and Strickland: Chapter 1

Sept. 10  NON-WRITTEN IN-CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTION(S)
#2  What is your understanding of the distinctions between palliative care and hospice care?

Today’s Topics
Health Care Systems
Palliative Care and Hospice Care

Readings:
DeSpelder & Strickland: Chapters 5 and 7
Worden: Chapter 1 (Optional)

Sept. 17  IN-CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTION PREPARATION
#3  Which of theoretical approaches discussed in the readings do you find most useful in understanding grieving? Be prepared to provide a rationale for your choice as well as articulating the strengths and weaknesses you see in each model?

Today’s Topics
Grief Models and Theories

Required Readings:
DeSpelder & Strickland: Chapter 9 (pp. 341-354)
Worden: Chapters 2 & 3; Appendix (pp. 283-284)
Optional Readings: Worden Introduction (pp. 1-11)

Sept. 24  COMPETENCY QUIZ 1 (See Competency Quiz Document)
#4  IN-CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTION(S) PREPARATION
Be prepared to present an example of complicated grief you have seen or read about (you can use your own experience, movies, news stories, clinical case examples, etc.) Apply your knowledge of the specific mediators identified by Worden you see illustrated in your example.
Today’s Topics
Complicated Grief Reactions
Theories of Complicated Mourning
Definitions, Symptoms, and Syndromes

Required Readings:
DeSpelder & Strickland: Chapter 9 (pp. 355-376)
Worden: Chapters 5 & 6

Oct. 1
#5
RTAN 1 DUE (Please see assignment document in Canvas)
IN-CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTION(S) PREPARATION
What is your reaction to the Japanese “mizuko”? What cultural, socioeconomic, and other diversity factors are involved? How might a ritual like this impact the grieving process? What factors might impact how a similar ritual or tradition might be viewed in the U.S.?

Today’s Topics
Loss and Grief in Adulthood
Models of Adult Bereavement; Life Stage Issues

Required Readings:
DeSpelder and Strickland: Chapter 11

Oct. 8
#6
IN-CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTION(S) PREPARATION
Be prepared to discuss an example you have observed of children responding to death. Consider your own experience, clinical experience, movies, books, news story, etc. Be prepared to illustrate your ability to apply the theory regarding children and loss/death discussed in the readings to this example.

Today’s Topics
Loss and Grief in Childhood and Adolescence
Developmental Considerations

Required Readings:
DeSpelder and Strickland: Chapter 2 (pp. 50-66) and Chapter 10

Oct. 15
NO CLASS: FALL STUDY BREAK

Oct. 22
#7
COMPETENCY QUIZ 2 (Please see Competency Quiz Document in Canvas)
Ambiguous Loss and Grief
Required: WATCH Video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fl0w9n4hZfU
No required readings. 😊
Oct. 29
#8

INSIGHT INTERVIEW WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE
(Please see assignment document in Canvas)

IN-CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTION(S) PREPARATION
Be prepared to give your rationale for which of the three
philosophies you support regarding who should receive grief
counseling with consideration of strengths and weaknesses,
diversity considerations, cost issues, etc.

Today’s Topics
Clinical Intervention and Counseling Principles in Facilitating Grief

Required Readings:
DeSpelder & Strickland:  Chapter 9 (pp. 376-383)
Worden: Chapter 4
Optional: Worden Chapter 8

Nov. 5
#9

IN-CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTION(S) PREPARATION
What impacted or surprise you most about today’s readings
regarding violence in our world today? What insights can you
share about various forms of other traumatic losses discussed
in the readings (i.e. suicide, terrorism, etc.)? What ideas do
you have about reducing violence?

Today’s Topics
Violence, PTSD, Suicide

Required Readings:
DeSpelder & Strickland: Chapter13

Nov. 12
#10

DIVERSITY AWARENESS ARTICLE DISCUSSION AND PAPER

Today’s Topics
Grief with Diverse Losses and Populations
Spirituality and Grief

Required Readings:
Self-Selected Article of Choice

Nov. 19
#11

RTAN 2 DUE (Please see assignment document in Canvas)

IN-CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTION(S) PREPARATION
After today’s readings, thoughtfully consider how would you
define “life” and “death” and be prepared to share this in class.
What might impact our choice of definitions? How might these
diverse definitions impact the grieving process?

Today’s Topics
Ethical and Legal Issues
Medical Ethics and Technology; Rights and the Dying
Advanced Directives and End of Life Decision Making
Nov. 26 #12

What impacted or surprised you most about the discussion of suicide in today’s readings? What are risk factors and assessment areas to consider?

Today's Topics
Suicide and Grief
Assessment
Risk Factors

Required Readings
DeSpelder & Strickland: Chapter 4 (pp. 151-173) and Chapter 6

Dec. 3 #13

RTAN JOURNAL 3 DUE
(Please see assignment document in Canvas)

IN-CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTION(S) PREPARATION
Which funeral practices discussed in the texts resonated with you, disturbed you, raised questions and/or surprised you? What are your thoughts about how rituals may be useful in grieving losses other than death?

Today's Topics
Coping Mechanisms for Survivors/Rituals and Funerals
Honoring the Dead; Finding Meaning; Spirituality

Required Readings:
DeSpelder and Strickland: Chapter 8
Optional: DeSpelder and Strickland: Chapter 14

Dec. 10 #14

RTAN JOURNAL 4 DUE (See assignment document in Canvas)
PRINT, COMPLETE AND TURN IN “USE OF SELF RATING RUBRIC FORM (See form in Canvas)

IN-CLASS DISCUSSION QUESTION(S) PREPARATION
How does Worden’s comment that “In addition to challenging our ability to be helpful, the experience of bereavement in others also touches the counselor personally in at least three ways” apply to you? What are your personal warning signs for burnout/compassion fatigue? What strategies do you use/plan to use to prevent burnout and deal with ongoing exposure to loss, pain, trauma, etc. in your future work?

Today's Topics
Personal and Professional Issues Related to Death, Loss, and Grief
Caring for Self; Compassion Fatigue and Resilience
Final Reflections and Review
Required Readings:
Worden: Chapter 9
Optional: DeSpelder and Strickland: Chapter 15

THANK YOU AND CONGRATULATIONS ON A MEANINGFUL SEMESTER