



<b>Course title:</b>	Death, Loss, and Grief
<b>Course #/term:</b>	SW 617   Section 002   Spring/Summer 2022
<b>Time and place:</b>	Tuesdays   1p – 5p EST   <i>In-person</i>   <b>Room B780 SSWB</b>
<b>Credit hours:</b>	3
<b>Instructor:</b>	Daphne M. Brydon, PhD, LMSW
<b>Pronouns:</b>	She/Her(s)
<b>Contact info:</b>	<b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:dmbrydon@umich.edu">dmbrydon@umich.edu</a> <b>Phone:</b> 734-272-5634 (call/text) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Please include “SW 601” in the subject line of emails</i></li><li>• <i>Allow 24-48 hours for a response.</i></li><li>• <i>Weekend correspondence (after 1p on Fridays) will be returned on Mondays</i></li></ul>
<b>Office hours:</b>	By appointment

## 1. Course Statement

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### a. Course description

This course will address the theoretical framework of human loss and grief from a culturally and philosophically diverse perspective. Students will be provided with 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 will be focused on life span development and the meaning of death and loss at different ages. Various types of loss will be discussed from an individual, family, and socio/cultural/ecological perspective.

The importance of understanding trauma and its relationship to grief and loss will also be addressed. Coping and resiliency in loss will be 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.

## **b. Course objectives and competencies**

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

- Identify primary needs, concerns, and issues that arise at end of life including ethical, legal and decision-making challenges and conflicts.
- Compare evidence-informed primary grief theoretical models for understanding bereavement and the grieving process
- Explain foundational interventions that support griever and facilitate the grief process
- Illustrate the impact of the different types of loss for diverse populations grieving both death-related and non-death related losses
- Apply a developmental life span approach to understanding the grief process including historical transmission of loss
- Analyze factors affecting diverse responses and reactions as well as their impact to death and loss client systems, the grief process, and expression of grief
- Assess types and risk factors of complicated grief and/or prolonged grief disorder
- Evaluate clinician's loss history and death system, potential impact on working with clients, and maintaining resiliency through self-exploration

## **c. Course design**

Lecture, discussion; in-class large and small group activities, guest speakers, interactional processing of emotionally dense content.

## **d. Intensive focus on 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, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing 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.

## 2. Class Requirements

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- a. **Text and class materials.** One of the following four books will be required for this course. You will be invited to select the one of your choosing for your first major assignment

Devine, M. (2017). *It's Ok That You're Not Ok: Grief and Loss in a Culture that Doesn't Understand*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True.

Frankl, V. (1959). *Man's Search for Meaning*. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press. \*\*the most recent edition was published in 2006\*\*

Ward, J. (2014). *Men we Reaped: A Memoir*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.

Wolterstorff, N. (1987). *Lament for a Son*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company

I will be using the following texts for our didactic content. These textbooks extend beyond the cost-of-materials threshold I have for classes, so I am not requiring you to purchase them. However, I want you to know the sources from which I am drawing our content, in the event you are compelled to engage them on reserve at the library or purchase them to support your learning.

DeSpelder, L.A., & Strickland, A.L.(2019). *The Last Dance: Encountering Death & Dying*. 11<sup>th</sup> ed. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Worden, J. (2018). *Grief Counseling & Grief Therapy*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.

Additional materials are housed on the University's web-based course management platform, "Canvas." Session materials will be available at least one week in advance, organized in the "MODULES" tab by class date. You are expected to engage all requisite course material (aka: "Pre-Session Content") prior to class each week.

Canvas Log In: <https://canvas.umich.edu>

**Expectations for student time.** This is a 3-credit graduate course offered during the Spring/Summer 2022 term. This means that, as a student, you are expected to spend a total of 112.5 hours on this course throughout the 11 instructional weeks (i.e., 10-11 hours per week), including synchronous and asynchronous class time. For more information, you can check out the UM Center for Academic Innovation at <https://ai.umich.edu/>.

**b. Class schedule | Spring/Summer 2022** *(subject to change based on needs of the course)*

<b>CLASS SESSION</b>	<b>TOPIC FOR CLASS SESSION</b>	<b>REQUISITE PREP for CLASS SESSION</b> (due dates highlighted in yellow)
Week 1 5/10	<b>Introductions &amp; Course Overview</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring you + a ready attitude</li> <li>• Complete Pre-Session Content</li> </ul>
Week 2 5/17	<b>Impacts of Socialization, Culture, &amp; Policy on Death, Loss, and Grief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Pre-Session Content</li> </ul>
Week 3 5/24	<b>Theories and Models of Grief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Pre-Session Content</li> </ul>
Week 4 5/31	<b>Complicated Grief and Ambiguous Loss</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Synchro Session on this date</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Pre-Session Content</li> </ul>
Week 5 6/7	<b>Grief and Loss Across the Lifespan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children &amp; Youth → Adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Pre-Session Content</li> <li>• <b>Engagement &amp; Integration due</b></li> </ul>
Week 6 6/14	<b>When Loss is Sudden or Unexpected</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suicide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Pre-Session Content</li> </ul>
Week 7 6/21	<b>End of Life: Palliative Care &amp; Hospice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guest speaker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Pre-Session Content</li> </ul>
Week 8 6/28	<b>Clinical Intervention: Expressive Arts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guest Speaker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Pre-Session Content</li> <li>• <b>Advanced Directive due</b></li> </ul>
Week 9 7/5	<b>Clinical Intervention</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Synchro session on this date</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Pre-Session Content</li> </ul>
Week 10 7/12	<b>Clinical Intervention: Special Topics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Pre-Session Content</li> <li>• <b>Special Topic Presentations due</b></li> </ul>
Week 11 7/19	<b>Clinical Intervention: Special Topics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honoring death and loss</li> <li>• Personal and professional integration</li> <li>• Saying goodbye</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Pre-Session Content</li> <li>• <b>Final Assignment due 7/26 @ 5p</b></li> </ul>

**c. Assignments**

The assignments in this course are designed to support your learning, practice, and reflection as it relates to social work practice around the client system issues and experiences around death, loss, and grief.

Assignment guidelines will be posted to Canvas, organized by assignment within the “ASSIGNMENTS” tab of the navigation toolbar. I will offer weekly opportunities for y’all to ask questions about the assignments—to clarify expectations and ensure your understanding.

Your grade for this course will be based on:

Assignment	Due date	% of overall grade (points)
<b>MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS</b>	<b>VARIED—see below</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>1   Engagement &amp; Integration Book Club</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose: 1 of 4 pre-selected books</li> </ul>	June 7 @ 1p Submit in Canvas	(15)
<b>2   Advanced Directive Assignment</b>	June 28 @ 1p Submit in Canvas	(15)
<b>3   Special Topic Presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose: In-class or pre-recorded</li> </ul>	July 12 @ 1p Submit in Canvas	(25)
<b>4   Final Integrative Assignment</b>	July 26 @ 5p Submit in Canvas	(25)
<b>ATTENDANCE &amp; PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>ONGOING</b>	<b>20%</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student-centered Learning Opportunities (SLOs)</li> </ul>	Mondays @ 12N	(20)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall Engagement &amp; Rapport in Course</li> </ul>	July 19 @ 5p	(30)

A brief summary of each assignment is outlined below. Full guidelines—including due dates—will be posted to Canvas.

**Engagement & Integration Assignment.** Select one of the four required texts (from page 3) to read. Complete a brief written summary/reflection in preparation for in-class discussion on June 7. This assignment invites you to engage in course content and gives you the opportunity to critically explore its relevance to your life experience and/or practice.

**Advanced Directive Assignment.** You will be invited to engage in the process of completing a personal advanced directive.

**Special Topic Presentation.** In groups of 2 or 3, you will be asked to teach the class about supporting clients or client systems through grief in the context of particular topics (e.g., chronic illness, incarceration, immigration, life transitions, deployment, etc). Each group will choose a presentation format (i.e., in-class, pre-record). Presentations are expected to be approx. 15-20 minutes in duration.

**Final Integrative Assignment.** Your final assignment for this course is designed to demonstrate your clinical and integrative skills related to the course content.

**Student-centered Learning Opportunities (SLOs).** SLOs are regular touchpoints designed to provide opportunities to practice skills related to social work practice, critically reflect on and integrate course material, and individually engage with the instructor related to your learning.

**Overall Engagement & Rapport in Course.** This is an assessment of your overall engagement in the course and rapport with classroom colleagues. Please see page 7 for evaluation criteria.

#### **d. Attendance and class participation**

Attendance and participation reflect the basic elements of any social work relationship – to show up **and** remain present. Therefore, your attendance and active, focused participation is a requirement of this course.

I use both synchronous and asynchronous methods for instruction in this course.

**Synchronous** is when we engage course content during a formal meeting time.

**Asynchronous** is when you engage instructional content from the course (e.g., pre-recorded lectures, discussions, videos) outside of the formal meeting time.

This course will have a REQUIRED synchronous meeting time each week on Tuesdays (1p – 3:30p EST). Each session will include one break of approximately 10 minutes.

**Student Absences.** If you need to miss a class, in part or in total, you are required to notify the instructor via email ([dmbrydon@umich.edu](mailto:dmbrydon@umich.edu)) or phone/text (734-272-5634) **at least 12 hours in advance of our class meeting time**. Failure to communicate an absence to the instructor (including last-minute notice that is within 12 hours of upcoming session) will result in an automatic deduction of (up to 3) points toward your final grade. Likewise, missing more than one class, in part or in total for any reason, will result in an automatic deduction of (up to 3) points per missed class session toward your final grade. Additionally, chronic and/or significant tardiness will count toward an absence.

You will have access to annotated synchronous session content for any missed class sessions, as appropriate, and will be welcome to complete any corresponding SLOs. I will not offer any “make-up” opportunities for students who are absent from class. **Exceptions to this student absence policy** will only be granted on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the instructor.

**Evaluation of Overall Engagement & Rapport in Course.** I recognize levels of engagement and rapport may vary based on comfort, other life events, interest in topics of discussion, and considerations inherent to adult learning. The dynamic mirrors one you will experience throughout your social work practice; I encourage you to be proactive in recognizing these moments for yourself and take action, as appropriate.

I will do my best to honor each student’s participation level in the course. Please communicate any difficulty you are experiencing related to course content or managing your student life balance and I will do my best to help resolve the matter or identify appropriate support services if requested.

I will use the following rubric/guide to determine this portion of your grade, in accordance with the [Policy on Class Attendance](#) found in the MSW Student Guide:

<b>Overall Engagement and Rapport in Course Grading Criteria</b>		
30 points	<b>Consistently &amp; Regularly</b>	No absences and arrive on time for class. Consistently demonstrate you have read/engaged the assigned material. Engage only in class activities while in the synchronous session. Actively attend to lectures/discussions and make helpful, relevant contributions to class discussions. Actively participate with discussion or project groups and challenge/encourage yourself and others to think about material in new ways. Use inclusive language and respect other students’ identities.
25-29 points	<b>Often &amp; Generally</b>	Attend class regularly and arrive on time. Often demonstrate you have read/engaged the assigned material. Engage only in class activities while in the synchronous session most times. Often attentive to lectures/discussions and generally make helpful, relevant contributions to class discussions. Often participate with discussion or project groups. Use inclusive language and respect other students’ identities most times.
15-24 points	<b>Occasionally &amp; Sometimes</b>	Occasionally absent from class and/or frequently tardy. Demonstrate occasional engagement w/ the assigned material. Engage in occasional activities not relevant to course requirements/content. Occasionally attentive to lectures/discussions with occasional contribution to class discussions. Sometimes participate with discussion or project groups. Use harmful language in class and sometimes do not respect other students’ identities.
0-14 points	<b>Rarely &amp; Irregularly</b>	Irregularly attend class and/or are often tardy. Unable to attend to lectures and discussions and do not demonstrate engagement with assigned material. Regularly engage in activities not relevant to course requirements/content. Rarely contribute to small group discussions and direct disrespectful verbal and/or non-verbal behaviors toward others in the classroom.

In sum, full credit for Overall Engagement & Rapport is achieved by students who:

- Attend every synchronous class and arrive on time
- Are attentive and present + responsive to and inclusive of others
- Engage in practice and discussion that is critical, curious, reflective, collaborative, culturally responsive, and demonstrates social work values
- Regularly contribute to discussion and demonstrate depth of engagement with course material

### e. Grading

Letter grades ranging from “A” to “E” are earned, with “+” or “-“distinguishing the degree of performance as follows:

A+ = 100%	B+ = 86 - 89.99%	C+ = 77 – 79.99%	D = 66 – 69%
A = 95 - 99.99%	B = 83 - 85.99%	C = 73 – 76.99%	E = < 66
A- = 90 - 94.99%	B- = 80 - 81.99%	C- = 70 – 72.99%	

*\*\*Please note: A grade of **B** indicates mastery of the subject content at a level of expected competency for graduate study. A B grade indicates the work has met the expectations of an assignment for graduate student performance. A grade in the **A** range is based on demonstration of skills beyond expected competency and at an exemplary, outstanding, or excellent degree. A **C** grade range indicates minimal understanding of subject content and significant areas need improvement.*

### For all assignments, you will be graded on:

- Meeting assignment parameters, including timeliness
  - *We will review parameters for each assignment ahead of time*
- Quality of writing and presentation skills: clarity of thought, organization, and flow
- Quality of critical reflection and integration
  - *Effort/ability to self-reflect, think critically, & integrate learning*
  - *Demonstration of social work values*
    - *For example: PODS, empathy, strengths-based thinking*
- Ability to discern which aspects of use of self would be important in SW practice

Specific expectations for each assignment will be provided via Canvas and reviewed in class. Both content and format will be considered in assigning grades. Failure to follow APA guidelines for citations will result in a lower grade.

**Writing skills.** Papers and assignments are expected to be well organized, clearly written, and show minimal grammatical errors. In this class you are asked to demonstrate proper grammar, spelling, and general rules of the *American Psychological Association Publication Manual* (7th edition). **Note: Student papers are not required to have a cover/title page and/or running head for this course.** You are not required to purchase the manual; however, I do encourage you to access it and other online writing resources such as (but not limited to):

- <http://apastyle.apa.org/>
- <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>
- <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/> )

When you cite a source for one of your papers, use APA style citation. Please be aware that there will be a deduction of points for poor writing skills, including grammatical errors. I encourage you to use the Sweetland Writing Center if you require writing assistance.

Another helpful resource: <http://www.lib.umich.edu/academic-integrity/resources-students>. Please note that using web resources increases your risk of “accidental plagiarism.” Do not let that happen to you.

**Plagiarism.** Don't do it. Representing someone else's words, statements, ideas of works as one's own without proper acknowledgement or citation – is a serious violation of academic integrity and will be grounds for failure on an assignment and other disciplinary action as described under the School's policies on academic and professional conduct:

<http://archive.ssw.umich.edu/studentGuide/2012/page.html?section=12&volume=1>

**Incompletes.** Are given only when it can be demonstrated that it would be unfair to hold the student to the stated time limits of the course. The Student Guide, Vol. 1, Sec. 8.01 states that an “I” grade *is used when illness or other compelling reasons prevent completion of work, and there is a definite plan and date for completion of the course work approved by the instructor.* The student must formally request an incomplete from the instructor prior to the final week of classes.

#### **f. Class Recording and Course Materials**

Individual students' audio and video recording of in-class lectures and discussions is prohibited without the advance written permission of the instructor. Taking screenshots during formal and informal synchronous class time is also prohibited. Students with an approved accommodation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities permitting the recording of class meetings must present documentation to the instructor in advance of any recording being done.

The instructor reserves the right to disallow recording for a portion of any class time where privacy is a special concern. If the instructor chooses to record a class, they will decide which classes, if any, are recorded, what portion of each class is recorded, and whether a recording is made available on the course management website. On days when classes are recorded, students will be notified a recording is occurring. Class recordings and course materials may not be reproduced, sold, published or distributed to others, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the instructor.

#### **g. COVID-19 Statement**

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. Your participation in this course is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University. Applicable safety measures may be described in the [Wolverine Culture of Care](#) and the [University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19](#).

#### **h. Health-Related Class Absences**

Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and coming to campus if you are ill. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment. School of Social Work students who miss class due to illness of any kind will be given opportunities to access course materials online or provided with alternative learning opportunities. Please notify me by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that I can make accommodations. Please note that documentation (a doctor's note) for medical excuses is *not* required.

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*
- *Military deployment*
- *Writing skills and expectations*
- *Academic integrity and plagiarism*

### 3. Additional Course Information

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**Professor Brydon's notes on the classroom environment.** Quality social workers must be self-aware, self-reflective, and open to exploring our own histories and issues regarding any given concern or population. **Be prepared to reflect on and explore your own family history, social systems, experiences, identity, cultural background and assumptions regarding all forms of diversity.** There will be a variety of ways you can do this through critical thinking, assignments and active participation in class discussions and activities. My hope is to co-create a class environment where we will feel safe enough to take some risks - in sharing who we are and the questions we are grappling with related to the course content. This is yet another reason I stress the importance of participation and attendance.

I expect we will be honest, sensitive, and respectful with one another in preparation for quality social work practice. It is my hope that you will share opinions and feedback with others in discussions and exercises, and when you do so, please try to state them in a *respectful* and *constructive* manner. Also, prepare yourself to hear varying opinions and feedback non-defensively, and to use those data or challenge them constructively. Please practice tolerance, not expecting yourself or your classmates to be polished in discussions about issues that can be challenging and confusing.

We can expect to blunder and make mistakes in the classroom so that we are better prepared when we are in the field. This is an important and necessary part of the learning process; please ***honor the process – for yourself and for your colleagues.***

**Professor Brydon's notes on feedback.** I try to provide clear, thoughtful feedback on your SLOs and assignments—designed to help you to deepen your awareness of self in the process of working with others, who you are in the work you do (strengths and challenges), themes that arise in work, writing, communication skills, and the like. Know that my goal is to support your development as a practitioner I'd like to work alongside and/or refer to others. ***If I write or say something that confuses or upsets you, please make an appointment so we can discuss it!*** Likewise, if I write or say something that helps you deepen your understanding of something (or yourself) that is helpful for me to know too.

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**Use of names and pronouns.** All students will be referred to by the names and pronouns (e.g., they, ze, she, he) they use. If you have a name or pronouns that differs from what appears on the roster, please let me know before the 2<sup>nd</sup> class session so we can use your correct name and/or pronouns.