

# Grief and Bereavement Counseling

## COU 699 / HRE 371

(3 Hours)



Professor: Gerry Allen

Phone (402) 213-5560

E-Mail: gerry.allen@doane.edu

**Course Description.** This is a specialized course in the study of grief and the techniques of grief and bereavement counseling. The subject of this course is grief, bereavement, and grieving. The central focus of study involves the social psychology of grief, causes or foundations of grief; the processes of grieving; and grief counseling. Participants will become familiar with counseling skills that may provide assistance during situations of grief and crisis.

This course in grief and bereavement counseling satisfies one Doane Plan Liberal Learning requirement for undergraduate students EXCEPT Human Relations majors. It serves as a Human Relations elective for HRE majors who have entered Doane PRIOR TO Fall 1995. It is an elective for graduate students in Doane's Master of Arts Counseling Program. There are no required prerequisites for this course.

The course involves the study of grief as it relates to losses. These include losses in the following areas: status, work, and economics; personal, family, community, and societal losses; one's own death or the death of a loved one; loss of health or loss of one's youth; loss of hope or the taking of a dream; crisis or changes in relationships and divorce; loss of dignity; role loss or change; and perceptual losses. Additionally, the course involves the process of establishing a helping relationship and the application of basic counseling skills in grief and bereavement counseling. This aspect of the course includes activities designed to increase self awareness with respect to attitudes and feelings about death and other grief related losses as a necessary prerequisite to counseling. The course is complimented by reading and discussion of articles, book excerpts, and research studies that have shaped our study and understanding of grief and bereavement. These selections are organized topically around major areas of concern and study regarding grief and related counseling skills. Other course activities include values clarification exercises, demonstrations, role-playing, practice counseling, and visiting local cemeteries.

Course participants are required to write a reflective journal, which is due one week after completion of the course, prepare and present group projects, and demonstrate appropriate grief or bereavement counseling skills. Other writing and discussion projects will take place during the course on a group basis. Groups will give presentations of their projects during the course. Additionally, participants will provide brief presentations outlining noteworthy selections from their reflective journals during the final class sessions. Grading (and evaluation to determine whether or not the learning objectives are achieved-See Page 6 of this syllabus) will be based on attendance, preparation, individual oral presentations and participation in-group discussions, course projects, and the quality and conceptual development of the course journal.

**Course Goals.** This course is designed to be a challenging academic and personal learning experience. Goals of the course are for participants to grow as a result of this collaborative, scholarly endeavor and to gain an understanding of the theoretical perspectives concerning grief and bereavement; to become familiar with programs and services available in the areas of grief and bereavement; and to acquire counseling skills and techniques utilized in this field.

**Course Learning Objectives.** Through intellectual dialogue and critical evaluation of course materials, activities, and other sources of information, at the course's conclusion, participants should:

1. Be more aware of the way they communicate with others.
2. Recognize personal values and beliefs about death and other grief related losses, which may affect their communication with others.
3. Listen accurately to the content of what others are saying and be able to paraphrase that content when desired.
4. Perceive accurately the feelings others are expressing and to let them know you are sensitive to those feelings, and can reflect them when desired.
5. Establish helping type relationships exhibiting warmth, genuineness, and respect.
6. Be familiar with spirituality as it relates to grieving and the bereavement process.
7. Understand gender differences in the ways that women and men grieve.
8. Understand the basic concepts of the social psychology of grieving and the various forms of grief.
9. Understand the basic concepts of Worden's Model of Grieving and Grief Therapy.
10. Understand the basic points of Horacek's Heuristic Model of Grieving.
11. Understand the importance of symbols, ritual, and communication to the grieving process.
12. Gain an understanding in the appropriateness and limitations of counseling for "normal" grieving.

**Course Content and Outline:** The course focuses on objectives and values of counseling as a helping activity within the context of losses and resulting grief, the relationships of personal values and self-awareness to counseling, and the development of a counseling-like relationship with clientele and staff. The first part of the course may involve out of classroom experiences for course participants, such as visiting local cemeteries, funeral homes, counselors, or other assigned projects.

The second part of the course is devoted to course orientation and activities and discussion intended to help participants gain an understanding of grief and grief counseling and therapy and to help course participants become more clearly aware of their own attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about grief, the experience of grieving, and the relationship between attitudes, beliefs, and communication.

Another important aspect of this phase of the course is intended to provide a basic understanding of important counseling/helping skills, the "core conditions" and "micro counseling techniques." Course participants are expected to develop an understanding of these "core conditions" and "micro counseling techniques," which are outlined below, and to develop related behavioral skills.

<u>Core Conditions</u>	<u>Micro Counseling Techniques</u>
Accurate Empathy	Attending behavior
Warmth	Minimal encourages and questions
Respect	Paraphrasing content and meaning
Genuineness	Responding to feelings and emotion

**Required Texts:**

Worden, J. William. Grief Counseling & Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner. Third Edition, New York: Springer Publishing Co., 2002.

[Lisa Dale Norton](#). Hawk Flies Above: Journey to the Heart of the Sandhills. Published by Picador USA/St. Martin's Press. **Available as a used book at Amazon.com and BN.com.**

**Recommended for students especially interested in issues regarding children's grief:**

Children and Grief: When A Parent Dies. Guilford Publications, Inc., 2001

**Reader for all students: (Gerry will provide for students)**

ANNUAL EDITIONS: Dying, Death, and Bereavement 06/07. 9<sup>th</sup> Edition, McGraw-Hill Dushkin.

**Reference for Graduate Students' Presentation(s) – Provided by Doane College.**

Handbook of Bereavement Research: Consequences, Coping, and Care. Margaret Stroebe, Robert Hansson, Wolfgang Stroebe, and Henk Schut, (Ed.), American Psychological Association, 2001.

## Course Outline:



### Session One.

1. Introduction and explanation of the course and learning expectations.
2. Discussion of course requirements and assignments.
3. Introduction of course participants.
4. Discussion/Lecture Topics: Defining grief and bereavement  
Personal grief  
Social psychology of grieving  
Losses/Change as a basis of grief  
Transitions ~ The Neutral Zone  
Moving away from Kubler-Ross
5. Case Study: Personal Introspection
6. Video: "To Touch a Grieving Heart."
7. Discussion of video.
9. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

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Reading Assignment: Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy (Worden), Chapters 1, 2, & 3.  
(Read or Review prior to Class session)

### Session Two.

1. Discussion/Lecture Topics: Social influences on grieving - imitating behaviors  
Expectations regarding losses
2. Conceptual/Theoretical: Warden's Model of Grief and Grief Therapy
3. Interactive Video: "Windows," Part I. What have you lost?
5. Core Conditions: Accurate Empathy Warmth  
Respect Genuineness
6. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12.

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Reading Assignment: Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy (Worden), Chapters 4, 5, & 7.  
(Read or Review prior to Class session)

### Session Three.

1. Discussion/Lecture Topics: Family grief  
Gender roles in grief  
Death of a child  
Anticipatory grief  
Lingering grief
2. Conceptual/Theoretical Horacek's Heuristic Model of Grieving
3. Case Study: The Ameiche Family
4. Video: "Family in Grief."
5. Prepare reaction paper for video.
6. Discuss paper topics.
7. Interactive Video: "Windows," Part II. When you want to help.
8. Micro Counseling Techniques: Attending Behavior Minimal encourages and questions
9. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12.

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Interactive video:

Hannafor, M.J. and Michael Popkin. WINDOWS: Healing and Healing Through Loss.  
Atlanta: Active Parenting, Inc., 1992

Reading Assignment:  
(Read or Review prior to class session)

Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy (Worden), Chapter 6.  
Children and Grief: When A Parent Dies



**Session Four.**

1. Discussion/Lecture Topics: Importance of ritual in the bereavement process  
The meaning of place -- Visiting the grave  
When a parent dies  
When a sibling dies  
When a friend dies  
Community Grief  
Societal Grief  
Suicide
  2. Video: "Saying Good-bye." Pikes Peak Hospice, 1993.
  3. Prepare reaction paper for video.
  4. Classroom Activity: Prepare and share loss history graph.
  5. Two students present assigned article on suicide.
  6. Micro Counseling Techniques: Paraphrasing content and meaning  
Responding to feelings and emotion
  7. Prepare role-playing scenarios
  8. Role Playing: Practice Counseling
  9. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: All
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Reading Assignment: Handouts pertaining to funerals and cemetery visits  
(Read prior to class session) Read assigned article in Annual Editions.

**Session Five.**

1. Discussion Topics/Activities: Cemetery visits (Reaction paper to cemetery visit).  
Gravestones, epitaphs, memorials, honors.  
Personal epitaphs.  
Reflections regarding personal gravestone or memorial.  
Obituaries  
Personal obituary  
Importance of funeral and other rituals in grieving process
  2. Presentations of assigned articles dealing with funerals and ritual.
  3. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12.
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Reading Assignment: Children and Grief: When A Parent Dies  
(Read prior to class session) Read assigned articles in Annual Editions.

**Session Six.**

1. Discussion/Lecture Topics: Facing your greatest loss
2. Video: "I'm Really Going to Miss Me." Oregon Public Broadcasting, 1992.
3. Prepare reaction paper for video.
4. Working with dying persons and their families.
5. Spirituality as part of a holistic grieving and bereavement process.
6. Classroom Activity: Prepare and share relationship graph.
7. Review: Core Conditions ~ Micro Counseling Techniques
8. Role Playing: Practice Counseling
9. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: All

Reading Assignment: Children and Grief: When A Parent Dies  
(Read prior to course session) Special Assigned Reading.



**Session Seven.**

1. Discussion/Lecture Topics: Doing grief work  
Bereavement support groups
2. Classroom Activity: Prepare and share personal collages.
3. Role Playing: Practice counseling
4. Video: "Children in Grief."
5. Discuss video relative to support groups.
6. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: All

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Reading Assignment: Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy (Worden), Chapters 8 & 9.  
(Read or Review prior to class session) Children and Grief: When A Parent Dies

**Session Eight.**

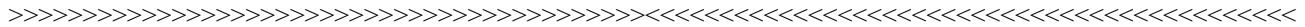
1. Discussion/Lecture Topics: The Counselor's own grief work  
Dealing with stress and burnout
2. Classroom Activity: Collaboration for dealing with stress.
3. Video: "Shadowlands." BBC/Gateway Films, 1985.
4. Discussion of the video relative to course learning objectives.
5. Presentations/Discussions about course papers' topics.
6. Course conclusion/discussion: Where do we go from here?
7. LEARNING OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: All

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**Session Nine for Graduate Students.**

Activities to be determined, based on student collaboration and input.

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**Student Presentation Schedule.**

A master schedule of presentations will be developed during the early class sessions. This is very dependent upon the number of students in the course and the class composition (graduate/undergraduate).



Please call or email me with any questions and/or comments about any aspects of the course.  
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**Course Requirements and Evaluations (Grading):**

1. Attendance and participation in class discussions. This includes being prepared to discuss assigned readings, handouts, videos, etc. Ten points toward the final grade will be based on participation and attendance. After reading the syllabus, you can understand that attendance is important to take full advantage of all the learning opportunities of this course. If you know in advance that you must miss a course session, speak to me so that I can give you assignments to make-up the absence. One absence can be made-up. Two absences will result in the loss of 10 points, plus will require make-up work. If you anticipate more than two absences, please enroll for the course at a time more convenient to your schedule.
2. Course Journal. Students will maintain a course journal in which they will enter insights and reflections about readings from the text, presentations by other students, and class discussions. The journal should be integrative in that insights and reflections are tied together and relate to one’s counseling practice. For each Worden chapter, generate brief questions or comments (maybe an insight or two), highlighting what’s interesting, convincing, unconvincing, confusing, or pointless, and what makes sense, and briefly explain why. For student presentations and videos, summarize what was presented in a few sentences and provide the same analysis as for the text chapters. In class, use your comments, summaries, and objections as a basis for your contributions (participation). The journal is worth 50 points and is due one week after the final class session.
3. Projects. Participation in course projects and presentations is worth 30 points. Evaluation is based on degree of participation in activities and presentation of results, and preparation and presentation of assigned articles.
4. Practice counseling accounts for ten points for the course. Evaluation is based on understanding of the counseling skills and ability to utilize techniques.

**Grading Scale:**

100-97=A+	79-77=C+
96-94=A	76-74=C
93-90=A-	73-70=C-
89-87=B+	69-67=D+
86-84=B	66-64=D
83-80=B-	63-60=D-

**Possible Points:**

Course Journal	60 points
Course Projects/Presentations	20 points
Counseling Skills	10 points
Attendance/ <u>Participation</u>	10 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 points</b>

5. Academic Integrity Policy. The Doane College Academic Integrity Policy will be adhered to in the course. All projects and work will represent your own work. The use of other's ideas and words shall be properly cited. Please ask if you are unsure as to how or when to include the proper citation of sources used in your paper or other work.
6. Critical Thinking. Remember, in seeking the elusive truth, we have two basic questions to ask:

*How do you know?...What does it mean?*

I hope that you will enjoy this learning and sharing experience.

