

**University of Central Florida
School of Social Work**

**SOW 3740.0001 – Social Work Practice with Loss & Life’s
Transitions**

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Term: Fall 2009
Class Day: Tuesday
Class Time: 6:30-9:20 p.m.
Class Location: PSY 111

Course Description: This course will address a wide range of losses across the life span including death & dying, financial loss, natural disasters, relationships, injury, and chronic illness. From a strengths perspective, social work roles, assessment and interventions will be covered recognizing how cultural differences have a major impact on the process in working with the bereaved client.

Course Learning Objectives: By the end of the term, students will be able to:

1. Define and differentiate the concepts of loss, complicated grief and bereavement using a strengths perspective and its implications for individuals across the life cycle.
2. Critically assess the professional roles and functions of the social worker in assisting the bereaved client.
3. Analyze and assess grief reactions experienced across the life cycle within a cultural context.
4. Analyze the physical and psychosocial effects of loss and the impact of culture while working with multicultural clients.
5. Discuss major legal and ethical issues related to death and dying including end-of-life decisions and explore the various ways culture impacts the way people grieve and/or cope.
6. Demonstrate an increased awareness of personal grief reactions and how this awareness may assist in developing skills in grief work.
7. Evaluate the students' personal loss and grief reactions, compassion fatigue and healthy ways to adapt.
8. Critically evaluate the intervention strategies using the strengths perspective and how a person's grieving can be seen as an opportunity for growth.

Required Text: Hooyman, Nancy & Kramer, Betty, (2006). *Living through loss: Interventions across the life span*. NY; Columbia University Press.

Supplemental/Reserved Readings: throughout the syllabus there are articles either from books or journals that have been identified to assist in supplementing the textbook readings. It will be the student's responsibility to access these articles independently. See below for information about accessing journals and articles electronically or from the library.

Evaluation of Learning and Grading: Achievement of learning objectives will be measured as follows:

1. Mid-Term Examination - (October 6, 2009)

An exam will be given during week 7 covering weeks 1-6. A study guide will be provided. The exam may consist of multiple choice, true/false, short answer or discussion questions. **(25 points)**

2. Loss History/Personal Awareness Assignment – (Due September 29, 2009)

Each of us develops our own style of coping with grief and loss. Understanding your attitudes, values, and reactions and any remaining grief issues or unfinished business is important when working with clients. This assignment will ask you to describe how your own experiences and style of dealing with loss may influence your practice. You will be asked to conduct a loss history, describe your personal style of dealing with loss, the impact of your personal experience, potential challenges and ways of coping including resources available. Guidelines will be provided. **(25 points)**

3. Group Presentation – Understanding Grief & Loss (Due November 17, 2009)

Students will form groups and identify areas of interest related to any type of loss. You will be asked to research the loss, reactions to the loss, developmental considerations and specific values and customs that may have an impact on adjustment to the loss. An outline will be required of the information identifying key points for your presentation. The presentation will be 20-30 minutes in length and can include any type of visual effects you choose to assist students in gaining a better understanding of the type of loss and its impact. Guidelines will be provided. **(25 points)**

4. Final Exam – (Dec. 8, 2009) - an exam covering weeks 9-15 will be given during final exam week. (25 points)

A **final course grade** will be based upon the total number of points accumulated by a student on the above evaluations.

Due Dates:

Mid-term exam – October 6, 2009

Loss History/Personal Awareness Assignment – September 29, 2009

Group Presentation – November 17, 2009

Final Exam – December 8, 2009

GRADING SCALE

| | | | | | |
|----|----------|----|---------|----|------------|
| A | 95 - 100 | B- | 80 - 83 | D+ | 67 - 69 |
| A- | 90 - 94 | C+ | 77 - 79 | D | 64 - 66 |
| B+ | 87 - 89 | C | 74 - 76 | D- | 60 - 63 |
| B | 84 - 86 | C- | 70 - 73 | F | 59 or less |

Course Learning Methods: The instructor will use a variety of teaching strategies including: Lecture/discussion; case analysis; and small group activity. Video and audio illustrations will also be provided to spark student discussion.

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Electronic Course Reserve:

To access electronic course reserve materials, go to the library's home page (<http://library.ucf.edu>) and under the category "FIND" you will see Course Reserves. Click on it. You can search either by instructor's name, course number, author's name or title. To access the item, click on it and you will be prompted to enter your 14-digit library barcode and 4-digit password (last 4-digits of your PID).

The UCF Libraries has a full array of paper and electronic resources available for students and their research needs.

Students will be expected to utilize UCF library resources to search library databases for required readings. The following web sites which can help students find information, navigate through databases and learn how to use the library:

1. Library Instruction sessions - <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Instruction>
2. Library Research Tutorials - <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Instruction/LIToursTutorials.asp>
3. Streaming videos - <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Videos/Default.asp>
4. Research Guides - <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Guides/>
5. Ask a Librarian service - <http://library.ucf.edu/Ask/>
6. Consult with the librarian familiar with Social Work—Mr. Hal Mendolsohn

The UCF Libraries has a full array of paper and electronic resources available for students and their research needs.

In addition to paper copies of books and journals, UCF students have the ability to access a vast selection of journals and books in electronic format while on or off campus. The web address to the library's catalog is <http://library.ucf.edu/>. The Ask A Librarian service provides students the ability to contact a library professional either by phone, on-line chat or email, and ask for assistance on "how to" locate, research, and obtain library materials. The web address for Ask A Librarian is <http://library.ucf.edu/Ask/>. A series of streaming videos, showing students how to search for a book or journal article, has been developed and are available at <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Videos/Default.asp>. Research Guides for different majors, that list books, journals, databases, and web sites have been developed and are available in electronic format at <http://library.ucf.edu/Reference/Guides/>. Another service to help students conduct library research is called Research Consultation. After a student has conducted his/her research and is in need of additional information, s/he can work with a librarian to locate material with the help of his/her expert searching capabilities. To set-up a Research Consultation, students can either come into the library and sign-up at the Reference Desk or call the library Reference Office at 407-823-5880. Finally, students are always encouraged to visit the library and ask a Reference Librarian how best to conduct one's research. If a student has a simple question on how to locate either a book or journal title, the UCF Reference Libraries are happy to provide this type of service too.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Assignment guidelines and other course handouts are available through www.webct.ucf.edu

POLICIES

In addition to the information below, the student should become familiar with School of Work Student Handbook and The Golden Rule Handbook for UCF Students. All policies included in these handbooks apply to this class.

Modification of Syllabus

This syllabus may be modified at the discretion of the instructor. Changes will be discussed with students in class and/or via email. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the student's email address is current in eCommunity.

Cell phones, pagers and recorders

- Students are asked to turn off cell phones and beepers during class sessions.
- Permission to audiotape a class meeting(s), must be obtained from the instructor in advance.
- While the use of laptops is convenient for students to take class notes, it is expected that students WILL NOT engage in other laptop activities during class time that may include: internet activities, reading and responding to email, balancing a checkbook, etc. If this should occur, the instructor reserves the right to request that the student not use a laptop during class.

Classroom Decorum

- Side conversations are discouraged because they distract the class.
- The instructor expects students to respect the culture, values, beliefs and rights of their classmates. During class sessions, alternate points of view are encouraged and should be received by others with respect. Students should feel free to express their opinions and to refer to relevant personal situations without fear of disapproval or disrespect; however, the classroom is not the place where students should indulge in personal venting or support seeking.

Attendance and Participation

Student attendance and participation are integral parts of this course. Students are expected to attend each class, arrive on time, and remain for the duration of the class. Students are also expected to assume responsibility for their own learning and to actively involve themselves in class discussions and exercises. Students must be prepared for class (i.e., complete readings and other assignments *prior* to class). Furthermore, make-up exams will be given **ONLY** in extreme circumstances. These circumstances include exceptional health EMERGENCIES (that require that the student bring in medical documentation), and the make up exam will be an essay exam. Out-of-town vacations, trips, mild colds, and other similar circumstances do not qualify as extreme. Students who miss more than **three (3) absences** regardless of the reason will have their final grade lowered by one letter grade. The only exception to this is if the student has a documented extraordinary circumstance (student hospitalization; severe illness; death in the family; car accident) preventing the student from coming to class. In that case, the student must present written documentation to the instructor.

Attendance during Finals Week: It is university policy that all classes MUST meet for either a final exam or a class session.

Written Assignments

Effective written communication skills are essential to professional social work practice. Thus, students are expected to present their ideas clearly and properly and to adhere to accepted standards of writing.

Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are to be correct in all written materials submitted and will be considered in grading written assignments. All written assignments must be typed in a 12-font print, and all margins must be one inch. The cover page of a paper is not considered to be a page of text. Work not conforming to these standards or demonstrating serious deficiencies in common English usage will be returned ungraded. When required, references should be included in the APA documentation style. Students are encouraged to use the University Writing Center (UWC) for assistance in preparing written assignments. The UWC is located in MOD 608 (near the Communications Building). UWC staff may be reached at (407) 823-2197 or <http://www.uwc.ucf.edu/>.

The assignments will emphasize the integration of interviewing, verbal, conceptualization and writing skills in practice. All assignments will be evaluated and graded on the following criteria.

1. Appropriate use of APA writing style.
2. Adequate number of references cited.
3. Organization and clarity of ideas presented.
4. Ability to integrate theory and practice appropriately.
5. Ability to use analytical skills throughout the assignment.
6. Creative ways of responding to the instructions beyond the requirements.

Late Assignments

All assignments must be turned in to the instructor at the beginning of the class period or delivered to the instructor's mailbox *before class starts on the due date*. *It is the student's responsibility to see to it that her or his assignment is stamped with the date by the social work staff member who then places the assignment in the instructor's mailbox.* No assignments will be accepted by fax or email unless the instructor has given explicit prior approval. *Late assignments will lose a full letter grade for each week that they are late unless the student gained prior approval from the instructor.* No assignment will be accepted after the last day of class. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with the instructor regarding late assignments.

Incomplete Grades

In exceptional circumstances, an incomplete grade may be given per School and University policies. Individual arrangements must be made with the instructor for the completion of the course requirements, but in no case will the date set extend beyond the end of the following semester. Students who experience chronic medical or personal problems that prevent them from attending class regularly are encouraged to review policies relating to securing a leave of absence from their university studies.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism

Social workers must demonstrate high standards of integrity. Every student is expected to do his or her own work and all of the work produced will be expected to be completed in its entirety by the student who turns it in. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any acts of plagiarism, *including not acknowledging sources of information appropriately and in accordance with APA guidelines*, may result in a failing grade in the course. School and University policies on academic integrity will be strictly enforced. Students found to have cheated or plagiarized will receive no credit for the exam or assignment, receive a failing grade for the course and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. (See the UCF Golden Rule for further information.). Students who observe others violate this policy are expected to report this to the instructor.

Plagiarism and Cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result in an "F" for that assignment, the student may also receive an "F" for the entire course and may be subject to appropriate referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. (See the UCF Golden Rule for further

information.) It is assumed for this course that students will adhere to the academic creed of the University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. In other words, don't cheat by giving answers to others or taking them from anyone else. The instructor also adheres to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not ask for your grade to be changed without just cause or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

Turnitin.com

The instructor reserves the option to use turnitin.com; an online system which can determine if work has been copied from another source. The instructor will provide information on submitting assignments through this system at the beginning of the semester. For a more detailed look at this process, please visit <http://www.turnitin.com>

Disability Access Statement

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

THE UCF CREED

Integrity, scholarship, community, creativity, and excellence are the core values that guide our conduct, performance, and decisions.

- Integrity:** I will practice and defend academic and personal honesty.
- Scholarship:** I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of my membership in the UCF community.
- Community:** I will promote an open and supportive campus environment by respecting the rights and contributions of every individual.
- Creativity:** I will use my talents to enrich the human experience.
- Excellence:** I will strive toward the highest standards of performance in any endeavor I undertake.

Important Academic Dates: see website for dates.

Fall 2009 Holidays

- Labor Day.....Sept. 7 (Mon)
- Veteran’s Day.....Nov. 11 (Wed.)
- Thanksgiving.....Nov.26-27 (Thurs. & Fri.)

Course Outline and Schedule

**Weeks 1 & 2 – Orientation to Social Work Practice with Loss & Life’s Transitions
August 25 & Sept. 1, 2009**

Content

1. Orientation to course
2. Define and differentiate the theoretical perspectives on grief
3. Define complicated and traumatic grief including cultural variations in the grief process
4. Identify the types of losses across the life span

Readings:

1. Hooyman, N. & Kramer, B. (2006). Living through loss: Interventions across the life span
Chapter 1 "Theoretical perspectives on grief concepts of loss and grief"
Chapter 2 "The grief process"
Chapter 3 "Resilience and capacities to cope"
2. Rando, T. (1993). *Treatment of complicated mourning*. Chapter 2 "A perspective on loss, grief, and mourning", (pp.19-60 only) **Reserved Reading**

**Weeks 3 & 4 – Grief & Loss in Childhood
Sept. 8 & 15, 2009**

Content

1. Grief & loss in childhood
2. Developmental concerns
3. Traumatic grief (types of loss)
4. Interventions for grieving children
5. Assessment and techniques
6. Cultural considerations

Readings:

1. Hooyman, N. & Kramer, B. (2006). Living through loss: Interventions across the life span
Chapter 4 "Grief & loss in childhood"
Chapter 5 "Interventions for grieving children"
2. Rosenfeld, L., Caye, J., Ayalon, O. & Lahad, M. (2005). When their world falls apart.
Chapter 3 "Children & disasters: The child's reaction". **Reserved Reading**

**Weeks 5 & 6 – Grief & Loss in Adolescence
Sept. 22 & 29, 2009**

Content

1. Grief & loss in adolescence
2. Developmental concerns
3. Types of loss including gang violence/violent death
4. Interventions for grieving adolescents
5. Suicide & teens
6. Assessment and techniques
7. Cultural considerations

Loss History/Personal Awareness Assignment Due**Readings:**

1. Hooyman, N. & Kramer, B. (2006). Living through loss: Interventions across the life span
Chapter 6 "Grief & loss in adolescence"
Chapter 7 "Interventions for grieving adolescents"

**Week 7 – Mid-term exam weeks 1-6
October 6, 2009**

**Week 8 – Trauma & Disasters/Community Response
October 13, 2009**

Content

1. Identification of disasters
2. Community responses
3. Professional training to be first responders

Readings:

1. Rosenfeld, L., Caye, J., Ayalon, O. & Lahad, M. (2005). When their world falls apart. Chapter 1 "Introduction to disasters"
Chapter 10 "Postdisaster intervention" **Reserved Reading**
2. Williams, S. (2008). Impact of natural disasters: Implications for human and social services. Journal of Social Service Research – available <http://jssr.haworthpress.com>

Weeks 9 & 10 – Grief & Loss in Young Adulthood October 20 & 27, 2009

Content

1. Grief & loss in young adulthood
2. Developmental concerns
3. Types of loss
4. Interventions of grieving young adulthood
5. Assessment and techniques
6. Cultural considerations

Readings:

1. Hooyman, N. & Kramer, B. (2006). Living through loss: Interventions across the life span
Chapter 8 "Grief & loss in young adulthood"
Chapter 9 "Interventions for grieving young adults"
2. Jackson, S. & Hough, S. (fall 2004). Adjustment to the Process of Grief Following Spinal Cord Injury/Dysfunction, *Psychosocial Process*. **Reserved Reading**

Weeks 11 & 12 – Grief & Loss in Middle Adulthood (Midlife) November 3 & 10, 2009

Content

1. Grief & loss in middle adulthood
2. Developmental concerns
3. Types of loss
4. Interventions of grieving middle adulthood
5. Assessment and techniques
6. Cultural considerations

Readings:

1. Hooyman, N. & Kramer, B. (2006). Living through loss: Interventions across the life span
Chapter 10 "Grief & loss in middle adulthood"
Chapter 11 "Interventions for grieving midlife adults"
2. Rando, T. (1993). *Treatment of complicated mourning*.
Chapter 2, A perspective on loss, grief, & mourning, pp. 19-60 only. **Reserved Reading**

**Weeks 13 & 14 – Grief & Loss in the Older Adult
November 17 & 24, 2009**

Content

1. Grief & loss in the older adult
2. Developmental concerns
3. Types of loss
4. Interventions of the grieving older adult
5. Assessment and techniques
6. Cultural considerations

Group Presentations Begin – Outline Due November 17, 2009

Readings:

1. Hooyman, N. & Kramer, B. (2006). Living through loss: Interventions across the life span
Chapter 12 “Grief & loss in old age”
Chapter 13 “Interventions for grieving older adults”

**Week 15 – Professional Self-Awareness & Self-Care
December 1, 2009**

Content

1. Challenges for professionals working with the bereaved
2. Compassion fatigue and burn-out
3. Personal loss, beliefs, and experience with grief
4. Self-care strategies

Readings:

1. Hooyman, N. & Kramer, B. (2006). Living through loss: Interventions across the life span
Chapter 14 “Professional self-awareness and self-care”

Final Exam December 8, 2009 (during final exam week covering weeks 8-15)

Bibliography

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- Auslander, W. & Freedenthal, S. (2006). Social work and chronic disease: Diabetes, heart disease, and HIV/AIDS in Handbook of Health Social Work, Gehlert, Brown, editors. New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Byock, Ira. (2004). The four things that matter most: A book about living. NY, NY: Free Press.
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- Collings, C. (2007). That's not my child anymore! Parental grief after acquired brain injury (ABI): Incidence, nature and longevity. *British journal of social work*. 38, 1499-1517.
- Csikai, E. (2004). Social worker's participation in the resolution of ethical dilemmas in hospice care. *Health & social work*. 29(1), p. 67-76.
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- Himebauch, A., Arnold,R., May, C. (2008). Grief in children and developmental concepts of death. *Journal of palliative medicine*, 11(2), pp.242-243.
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- Jackson, K. (July/August 2005). Culturally competent end-of-life care. *Social work today*. 5(4), pp.29-31.
- James, J. & Friedman, R. (2009). *The grief recovery handbook: The action program for moving beyond death, divorce, and other losses including health, career, and faith*. New York, NY: Harper-Collins Publishing.
- Keigher, Sharon M. (2001). Clinical ethics, living and dying: New challenges for changing times. *Health and Social Work*, 26(3).
- Livneh, Hanoch. (2001). Psychosocial adaptation to chronic illness and disability: A conceptual framework. {Electronic Version} *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, 44(3).
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- Rosenfeld, L., Caye, J., Ayalon, O. & Lahad, M. (2005). *When their world falls apart: Helping families and children manage the effects of disasters*. Washington, DC: NASW Press.
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- Spitzer, William, J. (2003). *Ethics in health care: A social work perspective*. Petersburg, Va.: The Dietz Press
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- Waldrop, D. (August 2007). Caregiver grief in terminal illness and bereavement: A mixed-methods study. *Health & Social Work*. 32(3), pp. 197-206.
- Williams, S. (2008). Introduction: Impact of natural disasters: implications for human and social services. *Journal of Social Service Research*. 34(3), 1-3.

RESOURCES

New Hope for Kids
900 N. Maitland Ave.
Maitland, Florida 32751
407-599-0909

National Spinal Cord Injury Center
The Zalco Building
8701 Georgia Ave., Suite 500
Silver Spring, MD. 20910
800-962-9629
Website: <http://www.spinalcord.org>

American Lung Assoc.
1333 W. Colonial Drive
Orlando, Florida 32817
407-425-5864

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Assoc. (ALS)
220 Fallen Drive
Casselberry, Florida 32707
407-695-8170

Brain Injury Association of Florida
988 Woodcock Road, Suite 200
Orlando, Florida 32803
407-898-0056

Centaur (Central Fl. AIDS Unified Resources)
741 W. Colonial Drive
Orlando, Florida 32804
407-849-1452

Center for Independent Living
720 N. Denning Avenue
Winter Park, Florida 32789
407-623-1070

Hospice of the Comforter
480 W. Central Parkway
Altamonte Springs, Florida 32714
407-379-0496

Hospice of Orange/Osceola
4111 Metric Drive
Winter Park, Florida 32792
407-599-5079

United Cerebral Palsy
3305 S. Orange Ave.
Orlando, Florida 32806
407-852-3300

Vitas Healthcare Corporation of Central Florida
5151 Adanson Street, Suite 200
Orlando, Florida 32804
407-875-0028

Journals

Death Studies
Journal of Social Work in End-of-Life &
Palliative Care
Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior
Health and Social Work

Websites

Grief Assessment and Intervention Workbook:
A Strengths Perspective
[www.Academic.cengage.com/social_work/pome
roy](http://www.Academic.cengage.com/social_work/pomeroy)
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
www.afsp.org
National Institute of Mental Health
www.nimh.nih.gov
National Strategy to Prevent Suicide
www.mentalhealth.org/suicideprevention
American Association of Suicidology
www.suicidology.org