



THANATOLOGY 2231F (570)
Bereavement & Grief: Overview & Interventions
Fall/Winter 2024 - 2025

Course Information

Calendar Description: A study of bereavement and grief, with a review of topics such as attachment theory, the normal course of grief, current research and trends in bereavement theory and interventions, factors influencing the grief response, and specific types of loss and specific populations and grief.

Prerequisite(s):

Antirequisite(s):

Extra Information: 3 lecture hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: THANAT

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Kings University College at Western University
Thanatology 2231F (570)
Bereavement and Grief: Overview and Interventions
Fall 2024

Instructor: Dr. Adrienne Sauder
Email: asauder5@uwo.ca

Course Description

This course will explore the adjustment to change, transition, and loss from the perspective of bereavement theory and research. Students will examine concepts relevant to a variety of losses which are not necessarily associated with a death event, but which are associated with grief and adjustment issues. Topics such as non-finite loss, chronic sorrow, ambiguous loss, and non-death loss will be explored for their unique aspects. Relevant issues such as infertility, aging, loss of functionality, chronic illness and degenerative conditions, divorce and separation, immigration, adoption, and loss of employment will be included in course discussions and materials.

Course Objectives

1. Identify and describe death and non-death losses across the lifespan.
2. Discuss traditional and contemporary theories related to grief and bereavement.
3. Define concepts such as chronic sorrow, complicated grief, non-finite loss, ambiguous loss, tangible and intangible losses, and non-death loss.
4. Situate everyday loss experiences and grief responses to loss within broader societal and political contexts.
5. Reflect upon and analyze their own losses using scholarly works.
6. Discuss common interventions in supporting the bereaved.

Structure of the Course

This course begins on Wednesday, September 11, 2024, and continues until Wednesday, December 4, 2024, honouring all important dates derived from University approved guidelines and academic policies (<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/academic-dates-and-events/>).

This course incorporates both lectures and dialogic discourse and is designed to promote engaged critical thinking. It is important to **complete all required readings, videos, and any other materials BEFORE CLASS** in order to best engage your colleagues in a discussion of various topics relating to the field of Thanatology. Students are expected to participate by asking relevant questions and/or by providing appropriate critiques and examples. The responsibility for a successful learning experience is shared by all the participants – students and professor alike. I am trusting that you will share in the responsibility in making this a successful learning experience.

Texts and Readings

Required:

McCoyd, J. L. M., Koller, J. M., & Walter, C. A. (2021). *Grief and loss across the lifespan: A biopsychosocial perspective* (3rd ed.). Springer Publishing.

AND

One of the following for the book review (your choice, though you are welcome to read all four).

- Bacon, A., & Miller, N. (2012). *Griefland: An intimate portrait of love, loss, and unlikely friendship*. Globe Pequot Press.
- Bialosky, J. (2011). *History of a suicide: My sister's unfinished life*. Washington Square Press.
- Deraniyagala, S. (2013). *Wave*. Vintage Books.
- Gilbert, A., & Baker Kline, C. (2006). *Always too soon: Voices of support for those who have lost both parents*. Seal Press.

Strongly Recommended Text (*used in all Thanatology courses*)

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.).

Evaluation

1. Participation and Attendance	10%
2. Personal Loss Assignment	30%
3. Book Review/Theory Integration Assignment	30%
4. Final Exam	30%

Participation and Attendance

Students are expected to attend class having read assigned readings and prepared to engage in discussion. Attendance will be monitored via sign-in sheet at the end of every class. If you need to leave class early, please speak with the instructor before class or during the break. Students that miss three (3) or more classes are at risk for debarment from the final exam (see below).

There will be opportunities to present personal experiences and feelings to the class. We must respect each person's contribution of what may often be painful experiences (at the same time appropriate limits to self-disclosure or to the time allotted to individuals will be upheld when personal narratives are shared) and agree to hold each other's contributions **strictly confidential**. This is an academic course, and all participants are required to complete the course requirements to a high standard to receive credit. One's strong feelings or experiences will not substitute for effort, scholarly engagement, and academic achievement.

Personal Loss Assignment (due October 30, 2024 by 11:30am)

This assignment will be 8-10 written pages PLUS a title page and reference page. As a means to encourage creativity, students will also include a PowerPoint, video, or other visual format (photo, drawing, painting, collage, concept map, etc.) to represent their own loss timeline. Further guidelines are available on OWL under Assignments.

Book Review/Theory Integration Assignment (due December 4, 2024 by 11:30am)

The book review will be 8-10 written pages PLUS a title page and reference page. Students will select one book to review from a predetermined list (see Texts and Readings above). Further guidelines are available on OWL under Assignments.

Final Exam

This exam will be scheduled during the December exam period. This exam will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions and will cover material from the entire term. Students are responsible for material covered in the lectures, all supplementary readings on OWL, the assigned chapters in our textbook, as well as in-class discussions.

****Tokens****

All students have one (1) “token” which can be used to have a 2-day extension on any regular assignment (not including final exams) as long as Dr. Sauder is notified by email no later than the day the assignment is due (no explanation or documentation required).

Bonus Assignment - Optional (10%; due October 4, 2024 by 5:00pm)

On Thursday September 19, 2024, a Grief Literacy Symposium and Photovoice Exhibit is being held at King’s University College. Attend any event that day (there are several panels and exhibits) and complete the assignment (details available on OWL).

***Instructions regarding assignments** - Evaluation for all assignments will include professionalism, academic integrity, and adherence to APA formatting (7th ed.). Regular assignments are due **by 11:30am on the date indicated** unless an extension is granted **prior** to the deadline. All written assignments turned into OWL via the assignment tab **must be in Word format (not pdf or any other format)**. If submitted in any other format, it will be marked as late and the student will be asked to resubmit.

Late Penalties

Normally, the only acceptable reasons for late or missed assignments are illness (for which a doctor’s note may be required) or extreme compassionate circumstances. Unexcused late assignments will be penalized as follows: Assignments handed in after 11:30am but no later than 11:55pm on the due date will lose 2%. Assignments handed in a day late will lose an additional 3%. After that, an additional 5% per day penalty will apply and assignments will not be accepted more than 7 days after the due date unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.

Policy Re: Make-Up Exams and Extensions of Deadlines

If, on medical or compassionate grounds, you are unable to write a midterm test or final examination or complete course work by the due date, you should follow the instructions below. In addition, you must demonstrate that there are compelling medical or compassionate grounds that can be documented **before** academic accommodation will be considered.

You should understand that **academic accommodation will not be granted automatically on request**. Instructors are under no obligation to offer more than one opportunity to write a make-up exam. Please note that any requests for discretion by the instructor will be decided on the basis of the issue that is brought to the instructor’s attention and the instructor’s obligation to ensure fairness to all students in the classroom. The instructor will not agree to any concessions or accommodations that would be unfair to the other students in the class.

Debarment of Students from Writing the Final Examination

1. A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the academic year.

2. Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class in any course will be reported to the Chair of the Department of Thanatology (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the department chair, and with the permission of the Academic Dean, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

AI and Chat GPT. King's is committed to fostering a culture of professionalism, honesty, and academic integrity, and all members of our community—faculty, staff, and students—have a role to play in promoting an ethical learning environment. Furthermore, through the work they submit for academic evaluation, students develop important habits of critical thinking, independent inquiry, and creativity. Thus, it is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor.

Within this course, use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools [such as Chat GPT] is not permitted for written work submitted for evaluation. Western's scholastic discipline policy can be found [here](#).

Classroom Etiquette. It will be expected that all cell phones will be silenced during class time. **Any student found texting or using his/her/their cell phone during class time will be asked to leave the class.**

Tardiness and Early Departure from Class. We all contribute to the integrity of our learning environment and therefore it is important to arrive on time and to be fully present for the entire class time. Although it is understandable that occasionally circumstances can result in a few minutes' delay, **it is unacceptable (and rude) to habitually arrive late or leave earlier than the class is dismissed by the instructor.** Students with extenuating circumstances may advise the instructor in advance of these circumstances to request occasional accommodation if necessary. **Any accommodations requested will be granted on the basis of fairness to all students in the class.**

Email Etiquette. Email is for short answers or setting up appointments. If you have content- or course-based problems, please email me to set up an appointment or come to student hours at my office. In the **email subject line**, please include the course that you are emailing about (THAN 2231F).

Please consider how you address me in your salutation. This is an academic class and I am your professor. Also, consider the tone of your email. I will respond to your email **within 2 business days**. If you have not heard from me **after 2 business days**, then please feel free to contact me again. I will not respond to emails over the weekend.

Note on Changing Marks. Marks will not be changed.

If a student seeks to change their grade without legitimate ground for such changes they will be directed to the Academic Dean's Office.

I know students are in the habit of sharing and comparing marks. I don't encourage this because it just causes problems and competition between one another. Do not worry about what grades other students receive. Your work is not being graded against the quality of work that is presented by other students. Please

do not tell the instructor how to grade other students. I will only discuss your marks with you, not another student's marks.

Drop Date

The final date to drop a half course without academic penalty is November 30, 2024.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 - September 11, 2024: Course Introduction/Grief and Loss – Theories and Context

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-28)

Week 2 - September 18, 2024: Perinatal Attachment and Loss

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 2 (pp. 29-57)

Week 3 - September 25, 2024: Infancy, Toddlerhood, and Preschool

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 3 (pp. 59-78)

Week 4 – October 2, 2024: Elementary School-Age Children

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 4 (pp. 79-106)

Week 5 - October 9, 2024: Tweens and Teens

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 5 (pp. 107-129)

Reading Week – October 14 -18, 2024 – NO CLASS

Week 6 - October 23, 2024: Emerging Adults

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 6 (pp. 131-156)

Week 7 – October 30, 2024: Young Adulthood **Personal Loss Assignment due**

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 7 (pp. 157-176)

Week 8 – November 6, 2024: Middle Adulthood

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 8 (pp. 177-203)

Week 9 - November 13, 2024: Retirement and Reinvention

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 9 (pp. 205-226)

Week 10 - November 20, 2024: Young-Old Adulthood: The Third Age

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 10 (pp. 227-246)

Week 11 - November 27, 2024: Older Adulthood: The Fourth Age

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 11 (pp. 247-267)

Week 12 – December 4, 2024: Assessments and Interventions **Book Review due**

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Conclusions (pp. 269-278)

December Final Exam

Date: To Be Scheduled

General Course Policies

2024–25

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Considerations for Absence/Missed Assessments

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration using the extranet portal (www.extranet.uwo.ca). Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs and further consideration may be denied. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

Academic consideration for examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar always requires documentation.

The policy on academic consideration is found here:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the final examination, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup final examination).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred.

See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

For policy on accommodation for religious holidays, see:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College:

<http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools are permitted in the course, including generative AI (e.g. ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools). Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/TurnItIn.html>

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright of their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.