



Clayton State University
PSYC 3800 Selected Topics in Psychology
Grief and Bereavement
Fall Semester 2010

3.0 Semester credit hours

Instructor: Sonya N. Tucker

Email: SonyaTucker@mail.clayton.edu

Website: <http://>

Office hours: TBA

Major Student Activities:

Reading and studying from the course text book

Working assigned homework problems

Taking notes during class

Answering and asking questions during class

Taking quizzes and examinations

Watching and participating in demonstrations of physical principles

Course Learning Outcomes:

- Course Outcome 1: Be able to communicate effectively and professionally both orally and in writing.
- Course Outcome 2: To gain an understanding of the theoretical perspectives concerning grief and bereavement
- Course Outcome 3: To allow examination of and reflection upon basic beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to death and dying

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MISSION STATEMENT & LEARNING GOALS:

The Mission of the Department of Psychology is to provide students with the highest quality instructional preparation for immediate employment in occupations such as human services or for graduate programs in areas such as counseling, social work, and psychology. The program faculty members are dedicated to providing academically sound instruction in an environment that model for students the highest standards of professional, ethical, and caring behaviors.

- ❖ To understand and apply the major concepts, findings, and theoretical perspectives of Psychology.
- ❖ To evaluate research critically and apply research methodologies used in psychology.
- ❖ To communicate effectively and professionally both orally and in writing.
- ❖ To demonstrate an understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and career opportunities for those with psychology-related degrees.

- ❖ To understand and apply the ethical standards set forth by the American Psychological Association.

Required Text(s)/Readings:

1. Worden, J. W. (2009) *Grief counseling & grief therapy: A handbook for the mental health practitioner*, Fourth edition. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company. (primary text – available through Amazon.com)
2. James, J.W. & Friedman, R. (2009) *The grief recovery handbook, 20th anniversary expanded edition: The action program for moving beyond death, divorce, and other losses including health, career, and faith*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc. (available through Amazon.com)
3. Albon, Mitch (1997) *Tuesdays with morrie: An old man, a young man, and life's greatest lesson*. New York, NY: Doubleday Publishing Company.

Other non-required but highly recommended texts include:

For adults and all grievers:

Kubler-Ross, Elizabeth. On Death and Dying.

Lewis, C.S. A Grief Observed.

Bonnanno, George A. The Other Side of Sadness: What the New Science of Bereavement Tells Us About Life After Loss.

Rando, Therese A. How to Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies.

For those working with children:

Wolfelt, Alan. Helping Children Cope With Grief.

COURSE DESCRIPTION/OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to provide an examination of the psychological foundations and correlates of attitudes toward death, death anxiety and grief; abnormal grief reactions and complicated mourning; death education; stages of children and adolescents' awareness; grieving special types of losses; cross-cultural perspectives; legal issues surrounding death; and attitudes toward the afterlife. Expected outcome is the development of a comprehensive appreciation of the difficult process of grieving and exposure to important counseling/helping skills in this area.

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- ❖ Demonstrate increased self-awareness of how one's own personal values and beliefs about death and other grief related losses affect one's ability to communicate with others.
- ❖ Understand gender differences in the manner in which men and women grieve.
- ❖ Be familiar with the basic concepts of the social psychology of grieving and the various forms of grief.
- ❖ Understand the basic concepts of Worden's Model of Grieving and Grief Therapy.
- ❖ Gain exposure to the importance of symbols, ritual, and communication, especially as it relates to cross-cultural perspectives, to the grieving process.
- ❖ Gain an understanding in the appropriateness and limitations of counseling for uncomplicated grief counseling.

Methods of Assessment/Evaluation:

1. Two exams including the final
2. Ten reaction papers – journal style writings based on specific questions and topics; each page should be one typed page, Times New Roman 12 pt., double spaced.
3. One paper on the non-fiction book, Tuesdays With Morrie; minimum of two typed pages based on specific questions and content as outlined by instructor
4. One paper on the movie *Ordinary People*; minimum of two typed pages; instructions given by the instructor
5. One presentation on topic assigned by instructor; rubric will be given in class
6. One project – Death and Dying Arrangements – instructions given by instructor

Grading policy:

In order to receive full credit, all work must be completed and turned in on time. Grading will be on a 10 point scale.

Reaction Papers (10)	20
Non-fiction book review	10
Grief & the Movies	10
Presentation	10
Project	10
Class Participation	10
Mid-Term Exam	15
Final Exam	<u>15</u>
	100

Grading System:	A= 90-100%
	B= 80-89%
	C= 70-79%
	D= 60-69%
	F= below 60%

Course Requirements

Course Reading: This class will cover a great deal of information, so it's imperative that you keep up with the reading and assignments! When a chapter is listed on your schedule for a given day, please read that chapter prior to coming to class. We will not always discuss every piece of information from your reading, but you are responsible for it nonetheless. I will make the assumption that each student is an adult who will read the assigned text chapters and will ask questions about concepts that are unclear. So, please remember that your responsibilities are to read and ask questions.

Exams: The exams will cover both material in the reading and material covered in class that is not in your reading. Therefore, it is very important that you be in class. If you must miss class, please be sure to get the notes from a classmate. Tests may include multiple choice, true/false, and short answer.

University Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend and participate in every class meeting. Instructors establish specific policies relating to absences in their courses and communicate these policies to the students through the course syllabi. Individual instructors, based upon the nature of the course, determine what effect excused and unexcused absences have in determining grades and upon students' ability to remain enrolled in their courses. The university reserves the right to determine that excessive absences, whether justified or not, are sufficient cause for institutional withdrawals or failing grades.

Attendance

- ❖ Absences: Attendance will influence your grade. It is strongly encouraged as we only meet once per week. Any missed classes will need to be discussed with me prior to the absence.
 - ***Missing 2 classes unexcused will result in a drop of a letter grade.***
- ❖ Tardiness: Being punctual demonstrates professionalism; consistent tardiness demonstrates otherwise. If class has begun when you arrive, please enter the room quietly. If you are more than 15 minutes late for class you will be recognized as absent and not allowed to sign the roll.
- ❖ Absence on a test or quiz date results in a grade of zero unless previously arranged.
- ❖ Leaving class prior to dismissal is considered very unprofessional and disrespectful

Student Grades

Students are responsible for keeping track of their own class averages during the course of the semester. The mid-term grade in this course, which will be issued between October 5 and October 9 reflects approximately 30% of the entire course grade. Based on this grade, students may choose to withdraw from the course and receive a grade of "W." Students pursuing this option must fill out an official withdrawal form, available in the Office of the Registrar, or withdraw on-line using the Swan by mid-term, which occurs on October 9. [Instructions for withdrawing are provided at this link.](#)

Academic Dishonesty

Any type of activity that is considered dishonest by reasonable standards may constitute academic misconduct. The most common forms of academic misconduct are cheating and plagiarism. All instances of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of zero for the work involved. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Life/Judicial Affairs. Judicial procedures are described at

<http://admins-services.clayton.edu/judicial/>.

Disruption of the Learning Environment

Behavior which disrupts the teaching–learning process during class activities will not be tolerated.

While a variety of behaviors can be disruptive in a classroom setting, more serious examples include belligerent, abusive, profane, and/or threatening behavior. A student who fails to respond to reasonable faculty direction regarding classroom behavior and/or behavior while participating in classroom activities may be dismissed from class. A student who is dismissed is entitled to due process and will be afforded such rights as soon as possible following dismissal. If found in violation, a student may be administratively withdrawn and may receive a grade of WF.

A more detailed description of examples of disruptive behavior and appeal procedures is provided at:

<http://a-s.clayton.edu/DisruptiveClassroomBehavior.htm>

General Information

- ❖ Cell phones and pagers: All cell phones and pagers must be turned off prior to entering class.
- ❖ CSU campus policies prohibit class attendance by adults or children who are not registered for the class.
- ❖ E-mail: E-mail is the preferred method of communication.
- ❖ Final Exam: According to University policy, a grade of F must be recorded for the student who misses the final examination (or equivalent measure) unless prior arrangements have been made to assign a grade of Incomplete (I).
- ❖ All assignments are due on the assigned date. Late homework assignments will not be accepted.
- ❖ The general withdrawal policy for courses is described in the course catalog.
- ❖ The class will be conducted in an open, enthusiastic manner that should be enjoyable and interesting for everyone. Each student entitled to his/her opinion and each student should demonstrate respect as such.
- ❖ The use of **laptops in the class is limited only to relevant coursework**; therefore it can only be used in class if requested by the instructor.

Computer Access and Skills

Each CSU student is required to have ready access throughout the semester to a notebook computer that meets faculty-approved hardware and software requirements for the student's academic program. Students will sign a statement attesting to such access. For further information on CSU's Official Notebook Computer Policy, please go to <http://itpchoice.clayton.edu/policy.htm>.

Computer Skill Prerequisites:

- Able to use the WindowsTM operating system
- Able to use Microsoft WordTM word processing
- Able to send and receive e-mail using OutlookTM or Outlook ExpressTM
- Able to attach and retrieve attached files via email
- Able to use a Web browser.

In-class Use of Student Notebook Computers:

Student notebook computers will not be used in the classroom in this course. Computers will be required to access course materials and to communicate with your instructor.

Each student must obtain a campus e-mail account and use it during this class. Much information will be shared via a class listserv, and you will not have access to the listserv without using your campus account. E-mail will be used extensively during the semester for both instructional and communication purposes. Please check your email account regularly - at least once every other day.

You also have a web-based way to access your campus account - go to <http://mail.claytonstate.net/>, click on "Webmail" and follow the login instructions.

Make-up Policies

Missing Tests: Make-up exams will be dealt with on an individual basis. Students who find it unavoidable to miss a test must notify me by e-mail before the testing period and must a written excuse from a doctor or other competent authority. Otherwise, No Makeup Exam will be given and a zero will be assigned. At the Instructor's discretion, and when a valid documented reason for missing a given exam is presented and the instructor is notified prior to the exam, the Instructor may allow a make-up exam.

All exams are to be taken at the designated time and place on campus. If assignments cannot be submitted as schedule, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor immediately.

Missing Class: Each student should identify at least one student to partner with during the semester. In the event of a missed class, please contact your student partner to obtain any additional news, notes, etc

Basic Student Responsibilities and Student Handbook:

Please read the [Basic Student Responsibilities](#) document located at the Registrar website. It will be assumed that you have read and understood this document. Please also see the [CSU Student handbook](#) for details on the various policies regarding students and student life.

Each Clayton State University student must abide by the rules and regulations pertaining to student conduct as indicated in the Student Handbook and the University Catalog. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain these documents and become familiar with this information.

Disability Services

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations need to register with Disability Services in order to obtain their accommodations. You can contact them at 678-466-5445 or disabilityservices@clayton.edu. If you are already registered with DS and are seeking accommodations for this course, please make an appointment to discuss your specific accommodation needs for this course and provide your accommodations letter.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Loss is an integral part of living; learning to effectively deal with losses can strengthen us as individuals and as helping professionals. This course is designed to help individuals explore their own attitudes about loss and the grieving process in order to enable us to help others.