



WINEBRENNER
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

“Winebrenner equips leaders for service in God’s Kingdom.”

Term:

Course: CC 6550; Counseling the Dying and Grieving

Instructor:

Phone:

Email:

Office/Contact Hours:



COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an overview of the grief and loss cycle. Students will learn how to assist others who experience emotions produced by death and loss. The issue of the meaning of life in various contexts will also be addressed. *(3 credit hours)*

COURSE OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

This course addresses the following 2024 CACREP standards for Clinical Mental Health Counseling Programs. At the conclusion of this course, the successful student will be able to:

1. Understand the counselors’ roles, responsibilities, and relationships as members of specialized practice and interprofessional teams, including (a) collaboration and consultation, (b) community outreach, and (c) emergency response management. **(3.A.3)**
 - Assessment occurs through guided reflections, forum participation, and final project.
2. Explain the influence of heritage, cultural identities, attitudes, values, beliefs, understandings, within-group differences, and acculturative experiences on individuals’ worldviews and beliefs about death, loss, and grief. **(3.B.2))**

- Assessment occurs through guided reflections, forum participation, group resources & presentation and final project.
3. Recognize the influence of heritage, cultural identities, attitudes, values, beliefs, understandings, within-group differences, and acculturative experiences on help-seeking and coping behaviors related to grief and loss. **(3.B.3)**
 - Assessment occurs through guided reflections, forum participation, group resources & presentations, Grief Recovery journal entries, and final project.
 4. Explain the role of religion and spirituality in clients' and counselors' psychological functioning in times of grief and loss. **(3.B.11)**
 - Assessment occurs through guided reflections, forum participation, group resources & presentation, Grief Recovery journal entries, and final project.
 5. Understand, apply, and practice structures for affective relationships, bonds, couples, marriages, and families experiencing grief and loss. **(3.C.6)**
 - Assessment occurs through Grief Recovery journals, partner and small group discussions, guided reflections, discussion forums, and final project.
 6. Identify models of resilience, optimal development, and wellness in individuals and families across the lifespan. **(3.C.7)**
 - Assessment occurs through guided reflections, forum participation, and final project.
 7. Recognize models of psychosocial adjustment and adaptation to illness and disability. **(3.C.8)**
 - Assessment occurs through guided reflections, discussion forum participation, and final project.
 8. Apply knowledge of biological, neurological, and physiological factors that affect lifespan development, functioning, behavior, resilience, and overall wellness. **(3.C.10)**
 - Assessment occurs through guided reflections, discussion forum participation, and final project.
 9. Apply knowledge and understanding of systemic, cultural, and environmental factors that affect lifespan development, functioning, behavior, resilience, and overall wellness. **(3.C.11)**
 - Assessment occurs through guided reflections, discussion forum participation, group resources & presentations, Grief Recovery journal entries, and final project.
 10. Identify the influence of mental and physical health conditions on coping, resilience, and overall wellness for individuals and families across the lifespan. **(3.C.12)**
 - Assessment occurs through guided reflections, forum participation, and final project.

11. Recognize and understand the effects of crises, disasters, stress, grief, and trauma across the lifespan. **(3.C.13)**
 - Assessment occurs through guided reflections, forum participation, and final project.
12. Review theories and models of counseling, including relevance to clients from diverse cultural backgrounds who are experiencing grief and loss. **(3.E.1)**
 - Assessment occurs through class discussions, partner and small group discussions, and final paper.
13. Demonstrate case conceptualization skills using a variety of models and approaches. **(3.E.3)**
 - Assessment occurs through guided reflections, forum participation, and final project.
14. Understand culturally sustaining and responsive strategies for establishing and maintaining counseling relationships across service delivery modalities. **(3.E.7)**
 - Assessment occurs through guided reflections, discussion forum participation, and group resources & presentations.
15. Identify and practice counselor characteristics, behaviors, and strategies that facilitate effective counseling relationships. **(3.E.8)**
 - Assessment occurs through class, partner, and small group discussions.
16. Identify and practice interviewing, attending, and listening skills in the counseling process. **(3.E.9)**
 - Assessment occurs through class, partner, and small group discussions.
17. Identify and utilize evidence-based counseling strategies and techniques used to facilitate the client change process, prevention, and intervention. **(3.E.11 & 15)**
 - Assessment occurs through guided reflections, discussion forum participation, completing Grief Recovery Handbook activities and journal entries, and final project.
18. Understand the referral process to promote independence, optimal wellness, empowerment, and engagement with community resources. **(3.E.17)**
 - Assessment occurs through class discussions, guided reflections, discussion forum, and final project.
19. Identify and understand various crisis intervention, trauma-informed, community-based, and disaster mental health strategies related grief and loss. **(3.E.20)**
 - Assessment occurs through class discussions, guided reflections, and discussion forums.

20. Identify techniques and interventions for the treatment of grief and loss. **(5.C.5)**
 - Assessment occurs through guided reflections, discussion forum participation, completing Grief Recovery Handbook activities and journal entries, and final project.
21. Embody Christ-likeness through professional dispositions. **(CWSLO)**
 - Assessment occurs through participation in class meetings, class project, class roundtable discussion, and forum participation.
22. Practice effective forms of communication in her/his ministry context. **(CWSLO)**
 - Assessment occurs through participation in grief recovery group, group project, forum participation, and final project.
23. Integrate personal reflection that leads to personal growth. **(CWSLO)**
 - Assessment occurs through participation in grief recovery groups and Grief Recovery Assignments and Grief Recovery Journal Entry.
24. Align skills with principles to promote context transformation. **(CWSLO)**
 - Assessment occurs through the final project.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

James, J. W., & Friedman, R. (2009). *The grief recovery handbook: The action program for moving beyond death, divorce, and other losses*. 20th anniversary edition. Harper Perennial.

Koller, J., McCoy, J. L. M., Walter, C. A., Ambler, C. (2021). *Grief and loss across the lifespan: A biopsychosocial perspective*. Springer.

For MACC students only—official writing style is APA format:

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

For MAPT, MDIV, and ICS students only—official writing style is Turabian format:

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. FitzGerald. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 9th ed. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2018. ISBN 978-0-226-43057-7.

MDiv/MAPT Students:

Elliot, Elisabeth. *Suffering is Never for Nothing*. Nashville, TN: B & H Books, 2019. ISBN: 978-1535914154.

and/or

Lewis, C. S. *A Grief Observed*. New York, NY: HarperOne, 2015. ISBN: 978-0060652388; or New York, NY: Warbler Classics, 2023. ISBN: 978-1959891543.

(See *Assignments* for more information regarding this additional reading.)

Additional required reading available on Populi.

METHODOLOGY

The course will utilize a variety of learning approaches and elements including, but not limited to, readings, lecture and discussion, personal reflection, multimedia presentations, interviews, forum discussions, and small group participation assignments designed to help students foster critical thinking skills and equip them for service in the context(s) of their ministries.

Furthermore, class discussions are powered and enriched by everyone processing and sharing what has been discovered from assigned reading and videos and from personal experiences. Learning is synergistic; it deals with abstract or theoretical ideas that have not yet been fully understood or assimilated, and constructing learning and mastering concepts requires the community of learners sharing together. It is not solely a repetition of facts, because people and their experiences are seldom “typical” or status quo; thus, applying knowledge to real life cases is necessary. Our class sessions are safe, learning spaces where we all can ask questions, make assertions, share concerns or doubts, express opinions, navigate new ideas, and encounter new ways of thinking. Everyone’s input is vital to the learning environment.

EVALUATION AND GRADE SCALE

Grade Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage
A+	99-100%
A	94-98%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-73%
F	Below 70%

A course grade of F will not meet the requirements for degree credit.

Pluses and minuses are regularly assigned. The student's GPA is determined by dividing the total points by the number of trimester hours completed.

Calculation of grade will be based on the following:

Participation	9 pts.
Guided Reflections & Discussion	21 pts.
Group Projects & Presentations	10 pts.
Grief Recovery Journal Entries	40 pts.
Final Project	20 pts.
TOTAL	100 pts.

Participation grades are limited to 10% of the course grade and may include, but is not limited to, classroom engagement, attendance, on time arrivals, timely responses to instructor emails, completion of required readings, engagement in synchronous sessions (online), and discussion board posts that meet the instructor's standards for quality and quantity (online). Consult the participation section of the syllabus for more details.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students must satisfactorily complete each of the course projects. Grades will be calculated on a total of 100 points for the course. Format for projects is double-spaced with appropriate documentation of sources, utilizing the *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th edition (MACC Students), or *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*, 9th edition (MDiv/MAPT).

ASSIGNMENTS/EXAMINATIONS:

- 1. Participation** – A portion of your grade will depend upon your level of participation during class each week. Students are expected to arrive to class on time, stay for the duration of class, and remain focused during the allotted class time. Students are also expected to be prepared for class by bringing textbooks, articles, and other course material to class each week. Additionally, reading required materials and viewing required videos prior to class time is essential as students cannot enter class discussions and activities with relevant questions and comments if they are not prepared. Spontaneous assessments may be given to assess student preparedness. As we strive to provide a biblically-based approach to counseling, it is expected that you evaluate all readings and discussions from a Christian perspective and work to integrate biblical truth into your life, thought, and work.
- 1. Guided Reflections & Forum Participation (KPI 1)** – Students will complete Guided Reflections of readings and apply their knowledge of the content to case studies. Reflection questions will be posted on Populi. Guided reflection questions will be used to initiate in-class discussions. *Assignment instructions and scoring rubric will be provided in class and on Populi.*
- 2. Group Project & Presentation (KPI 6)** – **MACC students** will be assigned to groups and will research and present information about the beliefs, customs, and/or rituals related to grief and loss in *diverse populations**. *The instructor will provide a list of possible presentation subjects.* Groups interested in researching different subjects should meet with the instructor for approval. **MDiv/MAPT students** will read either *Suffering is Never for Nothing* by Elisabeth Elliot or *A Grief Observed* by C.S. Lewis and will create a meaningful and applicable “project” for their ministries (ex., daily devotional readings for the bereaved, a sermon (or sermon series), or a small group book study, etc.). Further instructions and scoring rubric for the presentation will be provided in class and on Populi.
- 3. Grief Recovery Journal Entries (KPI 3)** – Students will write four (4) journal entries reflecting upon their thoughts, discoveries, and experiences with the Grief Recovery Assignments and reading. The paper will be written in journal entry-form (i.e., *first person narrative*; **no Turabian/APA-format**) and will include personal (a) revelations, (b) meanings, (c) experiences, and (c) plans for moving forward. *Assignment instructions and scoring rubric will be provided in class and on Populi.*
- 4. Final Project (KPI 1)** – Interview a person you know who has experienced a loss (i.e. job loss, death of a significant other, divorce, health diagnosis, destruction or property loss, empty nest, loss of identity, etc.) within the past 5 years. Write a **6-10 page** (including cover page & references) APA/Turabian formatted paper outlining the loss, issues related to the developmental stage of the subject, relevant scriptures, and counseling implications. *Assignment instructions and scoring rubric will be provided in class and on Populi.*

CLASS SCHEDULE (Please note: Group Presentations will be assigned during the first week of class.)

Week/Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments Due
1	Introduction Biopsychosociospiritual Aspects of Grief & Theories of Grief Presentation Discussion & Planning Meetings	Read Ch. 1 <i>Grief & Loss Across the Lifespan (G&L-AL)</i>
2	Understanding Problems of Grief Partner Meeting One	Read Ch. 1-5 <i>GRH</i>
3	Perinatal Attachment & Loss Partner Meeting Two	Read Ch. 2 <i>G&L-AL</i> and Ch. 6-9 <i>GRH</i>
4	Preparing for Change: Starting to Recover Infancy, Toddlerhood, and Preschool MACC Group Presentation	Read Ch. 3 <i>G&L-AL</i> Journal Entry #1 Due
5	Elementary School-Aged Children Prolonged Grief Disorder MACC Group Presentation	Read Ch. 4 <i>G&L-AL</i> View Interview and Complete Guided Reflection #1
6	Finding the Solution (<i>GR</i> Part 1) Tweens & Teens Partner Meeting Three	Read Ch. 10 & 11 <i>GRH</i> & Ch. 5 <i>G&L-AL</i> Journal Entry #2 Due
7	Emerging Adults MACC Group Presentation Discussion Board #1 (Perinatal Loss & Elementary School-Aged) Class Forum	Read Ch. 6 <i>G&L-AL</i> View Interview Online Complete Guided Reflection #2 Participate in Class Forum Final Project (Part 1) Due
8	Finding the Solution (<i>GR</i> Part 2) Young Adulthood Partner Meeting Four	Read Ch. 12 & 13 <i>GRH</i> & Ch. 7 <i>G&L-AL</i> Journal Entry #3 Due
9	Middle Adulthood MACC Group Presentation Discussion Board #2 (Emerging Adults) Class Forum	Read Ch. 8 <i>G&L-AL</i> Participate in Class Forum
10	More on Choices and Other Losses Retirement & Reinvention Partner Meeting Five MDiv/MAPT Group Presentation Class Discussion: Middle Adulthood Video	Read Ch. 14 & 15 <i>GRH</i> & Ch. 9 & 10 <i>G&L-AL</i> Journal Entry #4 Due
11	Older Adults Suicide MDiv/MAPT Group Presentation	Read Ch. 10 <i>G&L-AL</i> Participate in Class Forum View Interview and Complete Guided Reflection #3 Final Project (Part 2) Due
12	Course Evaluation MDiv/MAPT Group Presentation Discussion Board (Older Adults and Suicide Loss) Class Forum <i>Miss Jane</i> Case Study Final Discussion	Read Ch. 11 <i>G&L-AL</i> Participate in Class Forum

WEBSITES

American Counseling Association (ACA)

<http://www.counseling.org/>

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP):

<http://www.cacrep.org>

Ohio Counseling Association (OCA)

<http://www.ohiocounseling.org/>

Purdue Owl APA Writing Assistance

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu>

State of Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, Marriage & Family Therapist Board

<https://www.cswmft.ohio.gov/>

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

The Master of Arts in Clinical Counseling Program has adopted a set of dispositions to be demonstrated by all students. These dispositions include:

- **Commitment** – including counselor identity, investment, advocacy, collaboration, and interpersonal competence.
- **Openness to ideas** – including learning, identifying needed changes, giving and receiving feedback to and from others, and engaging in self-development.
- **Respect for self and others** – including honoring diversity, self-care, and wellness.
- **Integrity** – including personal responsibility, maturity, honesty, courage, and congruence.
- **Self-awareness** – including humility, self-reflection, and understanding of place in history.

These dispositions represent the values of the Department of Counselor Education at Winebrenner Theological Seminary. All students should embody these dispositions inside and outside the classroom to the greatest extent possible.

DIGITAL DELIVERY GUIDELINES

(Since all of this course is digitally delivered, the following guidelines will be followed.)

Teams Online Meeting Etiquette

Students attending class via Microsoft Teams should do so in a distraction free environment and a learning posture. Taking class while driving or engaged in other activities that requires direct attention should be avoided. **For class sessions** you will need your computer with

camera and microphone and a stable Internet connection. Your instructor recommends using a desktop or laptop that is stationary to avoid making your classmates “seasick” with a moving image of you on the screen. It is optimal that you can look straight into the camera rather than down or to the side to give everyone in the class session a sense that we are all “present” and looking at each other. You can have the session on one side of your screen and take notes or view documents beside it in a split screen.

Except during breaks, all cameras should be turned on, and you must be present; no blank screens or avatars during class session. **Exercising, walking on a treadmill, driving your car, or rocking in a chair can also disrupt the classroom environment; please refrain from engaging in distracting activities during class sessions.** Unless otherwise specified by the instructor, please mute yourself until ready to speak to avoid having the class disrupted by background noise. You may use headphones if background noise is present. **Participation grades do include students’ attentiveness whether in-person or online.**

Secure Environment

An adequate and appropriate learning environment is necessary when working within digital delivery systems. Students enrolled in the MACC digital delivery program must adhere to the following guidelines:

- Students should attend class meetings in a distraction-free environment that is secure from inadvertent breaches of privacy and confidentiality.
- Students should attend class from a webcam equipped computer or tablet with keyboard and use headphones if background noise is present.

Video Submissions

For class assignments requiring submission of a video displaying your skills in working with another individual, guidelines have been created to uphold privacy. Creating secure videos and submitting them for grading involves several key steps to ensure both the integrity of the content and the privacy of the individuals involved. To create secure videos for grading, **follow these guidelines:**

- *Use Secure Recording Tools:* Utilize software that offers encryption to protect your video files from unauthorized access.
- *Ensure Privacy:* Make sure to record in a private, quiet environment to avoid capturing sensitive information or background noise.
- *File Protection:* Save your videos in a secure format and use strong passwords for any file-sharing services.
- *Submission Protocols:* Videos will be submitted through Populi (Winebrenner’s Learning Management System). Due to size limitations, links may be submitted. Again, ensure that links are secured with access limited to only the course instructor.
- *Data Backup & Deletion:* Keep a backup of your videos in a secure location to prevent data loss. Upon completion of the assignment and instructor grading, all data should be permanently deleted.

By adhering to these practices, you can ensure that your videos are both secure and ready for grading while protecting the privacy of individuals and confidentiality of the content.

THE SEMINARY POLICIES FOR PAPERS AND LATE WORK

All work is due to the instructor on or before the final day of class, according to the syllabus schedule.

Late Work During the Term

A student who submits assigned written work late during the trimester, when the lateness is not due to a serious illness or death of a family member or extreme life/ministry situations outside his/her control, and reported to the instructor at the time of the late submission, will have his or her grade on such late work reduced a total of 10% for the first week's lateness (from one to seven days). The reduction will be an additional 10% for the second week's lateness (from eight to fourteen days, for a cumulative total of 20% penalty); and another 10% for the third week's lateness, after which the grade on the late work becomes an F. This same policy will also apply to scheduled examinations or tests. Students may petition the instructor in writing for an exception to this policy. When such exceptions last longer than the initial one week, the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) shall be notified by the instructor.

The instructor may have a stricter policy provided they consult with the CAO to make a final determination. It must be clearly stated in the syllabus with corresponding reasons for the exception, such as multiple assignments building on each other.

Coursework extensions are negotiated with the course instructor during the term. Late work may not be submitted after the end of a term without filing a request for a course extension of the course through the CAO no later than one week prior to the end of the term.

DISABILITY INFORMATION

If you are a student with a diagnosed disability, it is your responsibility to notify your instructor and the Chief Academic Officer at least one week prior to beginning of the trimester so that reasonable accommodations can be made. Students with approved ISAPs are responsible for providing each of their instructors with a copy of their ISAP and having a careful conversation with each instructor regarding how the ISAP can best be followed within the specific parameters of the course. See the Graduate Catalog for the full policy.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is the personal responsibility of students to represent as their own work in reports, papers, or examinations only what they are entitled to honestly present. Violations of academic integrity include dishonesty and plagiarism. If a student violates the standard on academic integrity, he or she will be subject to disciplinary action determined by the instructor and CAO.

A growing concern in graduate work is the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to compose or contribute to some or all written work. Please be aware that this is considered plagiarism. Doing respected, scholarly work requires that the work submitted is the learner's own, original work. Something written by AI is not considered the original work of the learner, but the work of the AI. Academic integrity at Winebrenner requires that all learners submit work that is their own.

Using helpful tools or apps to check spelling and grammar are permissible. For example, tools like MS Word autocorrect, spell-check, grammar-check features, or the Grammarly app can scan for errors and may make suggestions for edits. A translation app may help improve the readability of a paper for those whose first language is not English. However, using a translation app to improve another translation app can appear to be plagiarism. These helpful, rule-based, non-generative AI programs are very different from an AI program that composes writing from a few suggestions.

There are some educational benefits of using generative AI, so Winebrenner does not unilaterally prohibit all use of AI. Generative AI may only be used in very specific courses and assignments with the express permission of the instructor of record.

GRADE DISPUTE

When a student wishes to dispute a grade assigned in a course, the student should contact the Chief Academic Officer. This appeal process must be started within three weeks of the grade in dispute being posted. A Committee of Arbitration will be convened, whose decision shall be final. (See the Graduate Catalog for full details.)

INFORMED CONSENT

The MACC faculty members are dedicated to the educational, personal, spiritual, and professional growth and development of Winebrenner students. Faculty are in a unique position as both instructors who assess students' academic skills and members of the counseling profession with an ethical obligation to the profession. All students are cautioned that the MACC courses are not meant to be a means of personal therapy. The focus in classes is on self-awareness and the enhancement and growth of necessary counselor knowledge and skills. Should a student disclose information indicating impairment or the potential for harm to themselves, future clients, and/or others (including animals), the faculty member may take

appropriate action in accordance with the state laws and the ACA Code of Ethics (2014). It is each student's responsibility to determine *an appropriate level of self-disclosure balanced with reactions* in experiential learning activities. A more detailed Informed Consent Statement is available from the CAO. It will also be made available to all students. Please contact Dr. Liames if you have any questions or concerns about the Informed Consent Statement.

All students are subject to policies outlined in the Winebrenner Graduate Catalog.

Syllabus revised: 01/01/2026