I. COURSE RATIONALE

Issues pertaining to loss and grief are core in nearly every clinical situation that social workers address. Loss occurs throughout the life cycle. Loss and grief issues include, but are not limited to, dying and bereavement. Divorce, loss of a job, the effects of a disaster and an acute illness are all examples of losses other than death.

It is essential that social workers be trained in the understanding and assessment of loss and grief issues. Social workers need to develop interventions so they are able to provide practice-centered approaches to addressing these issues for individuals or within groups. It is also imperative that social workers are able to influence the service delivery segments of the population so that they are better able to administer to the loss and grief issues clients experience.

This course will be taught so the following are included and present:

1. The focus is on the strengths, assets and resiliency that an individual or group brings to his/her/their current situation;
2. There is a profound respect for the cultural diversity pertaining to the experience of grief and mourning so the student can develop culturally competent ways of working with grieving clients;
3. Social and economic justice is promoted, especially with vulnerable, underserved, and disenfranchised populations; and
4. There is a critical analysis of theories and intervention strategies and how they relate to the values and ethics of the profession.

This course will provide in-depth and specific knowledge of loss and grief issues. It will serve to expand upon the curriculum in the area of specialization already undertaken by the graduate student and prepare the student to intervene and advocate for individuals, groups and societies in the areas of loss, grief, and mourning.

The course will cover changes, transitions, circumstances and situations that result in loss, not limited to, but including dying and death issues. The course will examine clinical interventions strategies to help the bereaved live along side the losses they experience.

The rationale in individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.
II. EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

1. Students will increase their knowledge base in areas relevant to grief and loss in clinical social work practice. (Reflects Clinical Concentration objectives 1, 4, and 6).

2. Student will expand their ability to assess clinical situations and form effective intervention strategies in the area of grief and loss. (Reflects Clinical Concentration objectives 1, 2, and 3).

3. Students will gain an understanding of practical steps to advocate for cultural minorities or wherever social and economic injustices exist in the area of grief and loss. (Reflects Clinical Concentration objectives 3 and 5).

4. Students will develop an increased awareness of how their values, ethics, and perspective play a role in conceptualization of client situations and dilemmas. (Reflects Clinical Concentration objectives 5, 6, and 7).

5. Students will learn to view and practice with clients from a strengths perspective. (Reflects Clinical Concentration objectives 1 and 5).

6. Students will develop cultural competence in understanding how the diverse aspects of how loss, grief and mourning are experienced by various population groups. (Reflects Clinical Concentration objectives 1, 3, 5, and 6).

7. Students will build an understanding of the DSM IV diagnosis related to bereavement and complicated mourning and will be able to make such a diagnosis when appropriate. This discussion will also include aspects of psychotropic medications and their use in the area of loss and grief. (Reflects Clinical Concentration objectives 1 and 5).

8. Students will develop an understanding of their need for healthy self-care to avoid burnout, excessive stress, and loss of objectivity as they deal with the intensely emotional experiences of grief. (Reflects Clinical Concentration objective 7).

The educational outcomes in individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

III. CURRICULUM THEMES

The course directly and explicitly enhances the connection of theory and concepts in the clinical area of loss and grief to the needs of clients and the demands of everyday practice. This commitment is enriched by the following themes that are incorporated into the curriculum:

A. Strengths perspective – This perspective recognizes and mobilizes the inherent strengths and resiliency of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to discover and develop their own and communal resources and
assets in their challenge to improve their quality of functioning and manage the various losses they face.

B. Critical perspective – This allows the student to engage in a deliberate and continuing examination of the assumptions of underlying theories, methods and approaches developed by various authors in the field of loss and grief. Discussions will include how to take this information and apply a social work frame of reference to address human need.

C. Social and economic justice – This course will emphasize the experiences of disenfranchised populations, understanding that the effects of economic, political, and social structures on people’s life chances, particularly as they relate to economic inequality and the availability of necessary social resources, disproportionately affects members of certain ethnic, racial and socioeconomic groups.

D. Diversity - This allows the vast diversity of how grief and mourning are experienced among individuals and within populations to be honored, respected and protected, especially with vulnerable, exploited and disenfranchised populations.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

IV. THE LIBERAL ARTS PERSPECTIVE

The purpose of a liberal arts education is the liberation of the human spirit and action, the intellect and energy. In like manner, we would suggest that the original purpose of social work was to liberate. We have been, at times, committed to one extent or another to assist in the long and difficult process of helping those who are oppressed by others, by the political economy, and by the fear, loathing, and ignorance of individuals and institutions.

In all of our efforts, in the spirit of liberal arts education, we are committed to understanding the universal elements of the human conditions as well as the unique aspects of each individual, group, family and community’s experience. An understanding of the history of social work and its intellectual and moral roots is part of our commitment, as well as bringing to bear the most current and generative knowledge in the biological, psychological, and social sciences on the nature of social work practice.

Finally, the liberal arts perspective commits us to understanding the importance of values and moral purpose in the development, accumulation, and employment of knowledge. What we seek is bodies of knowledge, which allows us to understand the forces which restrain and restrict human energy, and which allow us to come to grips with moral and social problems, problems that demean or debase the human condition and human possibility.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.
V. PROFESSIONAL PURPOSES AND VALUES

This course challenges students to think critically about the use of interaction of ideas and values embedded in the literature on loss and grief as they allow us to achieve social work’s purpose of enhancing interactions between people and their environments. This course examines how social work values and ethics guide our practice from assessment through evaluation of outcomes, and considers the tensions inherent in operationalizing core values as they relate to work with vulnerable groups.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

VI. PREPARATION FOR PRACTICE WITH DIVERSE POPULATIONS

The course will address the following areas:

1. Variations in human development, perspective, and behavior related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age and disability. Particular emphasis will be placed on the grief and mourning reactions within these various population groups and development of culturally competent practice.

2. The benefits derived from cultural and social diversity as they pertain to the multitude of styles, traditions, norms in the area of grief and loss.

3. The patterns and consequences of discrimination and ways to achieve social justice especially with disenfranchised grievers.

4. The practice principals related to human variation and values and ethics in assessing and treating loss and grief.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

VII. TOPICS

This course must include but is not limited to the following topics:

- Tasks, phases, stages, and processes of grief
  Explanation of various experts in the field and their approaches regarding grief will be addressed (Example: Rando, Wolfelt, Worden, Doka, Irish, Kubler-Ross)
- Disenfranchised grievers
- Clinical assessments and tools to use in the process
- Triggers to grief reactions (STUG’s)
- Children and teen issues relating to grief
- Community resources, including related social and economic justice issues
- Sudden death: murder, accidents, suicides, disasters, acute illness
• Anticipated death: chronic illness, aging, dying processes
• End of life issues including legal documents such as advanced directives
• Widowhood and grief
• Hospice care
• Complicated grief and treatment considerations
• Grief styles – intuitive and instrumental grievers
• Funeral rites and passages
• Death of a child
• Use of rituals in the grief process
• Strengths based, resiliency, values, and ethics considerations in treatment
• Cultural diversity of population groups and grief styles (examples)
  o Asian perspectives and grief practices
  o Jewish perspectives and grief
  o African American perspectives and grief practices
  o Latino community and grief
  o Native American and grief
  o Muslim/Islamic perspectives and grief
  o Buddhism and grief
  o Hinduism and grief
• DSM-IV diagnosis pertaining to grief reactions (discussion on use of psychotropic medications)
• Specialized populations and grief and mourning (examples)
  o Natural disasters and grief
  o Deaf community and grief
  o Sexual orientation and grief
  o First responders and grief
  o Pet loss and grief
  o Motherless daughters and grief
  o Violent and traumatic loss and grief
• Healthy self-care for caregivers and professionals in the field

The following are recommended topics to include:

• Physical responses to grief
• The dying child
• Gun violence and the changing face of traumatic grief
• Spirituality and grief
• Specific interventions to use in clinical practice in addition to above
• Family system information as it pertains to grief and loss
• School counseling when death occurs in the school

Individual instructors’ syllabi should provide a topical outline for the course and provide adequate information to determine where and when the required topics are being covered.
VIII. RECOMMENDED READINGS


For individual syllabus, remove the word “RECOMMENDED.” In addition individual syllabi need to specify which readings are required and which are recommended. The entire list of “additional resources” does not need to be included in individual syllabi.

**IX. RECOMMENDED ASSIGNMENTS**

**Reaction papers.** Series of reflection papers that process how the information is being incorporated understood and integrated. Papers can be 1 – 5 pages. Suggestion is to have student reflect upon the information presented, stating their opinions, how they will use the information, how the information relates to the social work frame of reference including consistency with ethics, if they agree or disagree and why, what population groups might they use the information with, and how they see taking this information and incorporating clinical interventions. (Reflects Educational Outcome objectives 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8)

**Attend a support group** that focuses on a topic related to grief and loss. Ask if the group would allow a student to observe for the purpose of gaining information about the group and passing it along to colleagues. Report to the class about the observation experience, when and where the group meets, the appropriate clientele for the group, and any considerations to use in refereeing a client to the group. (Reflects Educational Outcome objectives 1, 2, 3, and 5)
Present on a topic pertaining to a cultural or ethnic variation of grief. This would require some research into the topic, how this particular group experiences grief and loss, and how to connect to their resources. Show consideration of social and economic justice issues with this group. An example of this is Jewish perspectives and grief. A student might attend a support group that is sponsored by the Jewish community and report to the class about the ethnic variations of Jewish grief, where a support group is available, and what segment of the Jewish population would the group be suggested for, and how a client might access the group. (Reflects Educational Outcome objectives 1, 3, 5, and 6)

Clinical example paper and reflection. Assignment might include a 6-8 page paper about a clinical example of where the student took knowledge from the class and applied it to a clinical situation from their field placement. The assessment, intervention and evaluation phase of the treatment process would be explored and reported upon. Particular emphasis would be on diverse populations or disenfranchised grievers. (Reflects Educational Outcome objectives 1 through 7)

For individual syllabus, remove the word “RECOMMENDED.” Assignments on individual syllabus should be selected to cover the course outcome objectives

X. GRADING
A. What Grades Mean (plus and minuses are assigned at instructors’ discretion)

A = Exceptional work: outstanding; this grade will be assigned to work that shows extensive use of the literature as well as wide use of concrete examples from practice.

B = Fully meets graduate standards: this grade will be assigned to work in which all aspects of assignments are completed satisfactorily, showing a combination of accurate use of theory and principles, and precise descriptions of practice.

C = Overall performance is unsatisfactory, below graduate standards, although all aspects of assignments were completed.

F = Failure: overall quality of work is unsatisfactory, or some aspect of assignments not done.

Incomplete grades. A temporary grade of Incomplete may be assigned to a student who, for a reason beyond the student’s control, has been unable to complete the required work in a course on time. It is the student’s responsibility to request an Incomplete from the instructor. A request signed by the student and the faculty member must be on file when grades are submitted. A student may not enroll in a course sequential to one in which he or she has an I or F letter grade. An incomplete not removed by the end of the next semester will be changed to an F.

ATTENDANCE POLICY
In order to pass the course, students cannot miss more than three classes during the semester. If a student misses three classes they will be referred to the Academic Planning Committee. Any additional policies regarding class attendance will be determined by individual instructors.
Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should specify the following:

A. The weighting of each assignment in the course and the dates by which they are done.
B. For every assignment, explain the standards used for grading.
C. If class participation is part of the grade indicate what this means. For example, if 10 points are awarded for class participation, one point will be deducted for every class missed.
D. Indicate the policy on late assignments, e.g., they are not accepted and treated as an “F” grade or the grade is reduced by ___ for each day, week, etc.
E. Indicate how final grades will be determined

XI. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Students who have special educational needs of any kind, including those related to learning disabilities, other disabilities, English as a second language should discuss necessary accommodations with the instructor within the first two sessions of the course. The university and School of Social Welfare are committed to provide supportive programs and accommodations to assist students who have special learning needs to successfully meet course expectations. In particular, students who feel that they have a disability that may require accommodation should advise the instructor of such disability and desired accommodation as soon as one obtains written documentation of the disability. The instructor will work with the student and the office of Services for Students with Disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations.

Please notify the instructor if your religious observances conflict with class or due dates for class assignments so we can make appropriate arrangements.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

XII. RECORDING AND SHARING RECORDINGS OF LECTURES

Course materials prepared by the instructor, together with the content of all lectures and review sessions presented by the instructor are the property of the instructor. Video and audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the instructor is prohibited. On request, the instructor will usually grant permission for students to audio tape lectures, on the condition that these audio tapes are only used as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, recordings of lectures and review sessions may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.
XIII. HIPAA REGULATIONS

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires that any personal information that may identify a person must be removed to protect confidentiality. Confidentiality applies to both classroom discussions and to written work. Please follow these simple, yet essential guidelines:

- Always disguise the name and other personal identifying information when you speak and write about a person, following the guidelines established by HIPAA.
- If writing in great detail about a client, ask permission from the client.
- Share nothing about specific clients, agencies or other students outside of the classroom.

Any information shared with the class/instructor will be confidential, within the limits defined by the Code of Ethics and state guidelines.

Individual instructors’ syllabi should be exactly the same as in the master syllabus.

XIV. INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY

Provide students with information on how to see and/or reach you.

XV. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

In the event of inclement weather students should call

Lawrence: the University (785) 864-SNOW, or if hearing impaired and have TTY/TDD equipment, (800) 766-3777
Edwards Campus:  (913) 897-8499
KCKCC Campus:  (913) 334-1100

to determine if classes have been cancelled. If classes are being held, students should contact the instructor if weather or driving conditions make it impossible for them to get to attend.