



CCSW8305 Essential Grief Ministry Skills
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Counseling Division
Fall Semester 2026-2027

Course Meeting Dates: October 19 [1pm-9pm], 20 [8am-4pm], 21 [8am-4pm]

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Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

The focus of this seminar is on death, loss, and grief throughout the life span. Attention will be given to basic therapeutic interventions that can be useful in assisting individuals and groups through a wide variety of loss experiences such as illness, divorce, unemployment, relocation, infertility, death, purpose, and loss of dreams. The role of the counselor/minister in the helping relationship will be explored.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Share grief and loss experienced in his/her own life.
2. Assess his/her readiness to minister to persons in various grief experiences across the life span.
3. Become acquainted with resources related to death, loss, and grief
4. Gain understanding regarding the impact of loss upon a family.
5. Apply listening skills effectively to grievers.

Textbooks

Lewis, C. S. *A Grief Observed*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.

Roe, Gary. *The Grief Guidebook: Common Questions, Compassionate Answers, Practical Suggestions*. Healing Resources, 2021.

Wolfelt, Alan D. *Understanding Your Grief: Ten Essential Touchstones for Finding Hope Hope and Healing in Your Heart*. (2nd ed.). Fort Collins, CO: Companion Press, 2021.

Worden, J. William. *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner*, 5th ed. New York: Springer, 2018.

Wright, H. Norman. *What to Say When You Don't Know What to Say: In Times of Grief, Heartache, and Crisis*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2014.

Movie: *Shadowlands*

Course Teaching Methodology

The course will involve the following methodologies:

Student presentations, group discussions, lecture, and written assignments.

Course Requirements

1. Each student should read the 5 required textbooks in their entirety and be prepared to discuss the books in class.

2. For all textbooks except *A Grief Observed*, students should prepare a 2-page reaction paper for each book that includes the following:

- a. Overall impression of the book – strengths and weaknesses (at least two of each)
- b. New insights or perspectives gained (at least two)
- c. Specific points of application to student's ministry context (at least three)

3. Personal Grief Experience Paper and Presentation. Each student will analyze and present a personal grief experience integrating grief theory and readings with their personal experience. The paper should be typed according to Turabian style. The recommended length of the paper is 8-10 pages, double spaced with a minimum of 10 sources. The paper will be presented during the seminar. The paper and presentation should include adequate exploration of the grief experience with references to relevant material in textbooks and additional resources. Students will have 45 minutes for their presentations. (Time may be adjusted according to enrollment in class)

Rubric for Personal Grief Experience Paper	
Grief Theory Integrated	25 points
Readings from Texts Reflected	25 points
Adequate Explanation of Experience	10 points
Feelings and Thinking Integrated	10 points
Appropriate Resources	10 points
Adequate Number of Resources (15)	5 points
Resources Appropriate for Experience	5 points
Conclusion	5 points
Personal Reflections	5 points

4. Reaction Paper – *A Grief Observed* and *Shadowlands*. Each student should read *A Grief Observed* and watch the movie *Shadowlands*. The reaction paper should be 3-5 pages and should include the following:

- a. Overall reaction to the book and movie. What were your feelings? 20 points
- b. What were your thoughts? 20 points
- c. Reaction to the grief Lewis experienced. How comfortable would you be helping Lewis with his grief? How would you help Lewis? Would you consider Lewis' grief complicated? Why or why not? 20 points
- d. Discuss the grief experiences of others in the book and movie, besides Lewis. 20 points
- e. How might you utilize the book and movie to help others? 20 points

Post-Seminar Assignment Due: Nov 11, 2026, 11:59 p.m.

5. Each student will develop a plan for a seminar, conference, or group (6-8 weeks) to address grief awareness or a grief group in his or her place of ministry appropriate for adults or adolescents. The content (outline format is acceptable) of the seminar, conference or group. The paper should include the following: introduction--background information with a description of ministry context/church; Outline of subjects to be covered; Goals and desired outcomes; need within the ministry context for grief ministry, Methodology: specific plan for the ministry, including leadership, training, and resources; Detailed plans (outline format) for presentations, discussion questions, and other teaching plans during the sessions should be included in this paper. A conclusion including a personal assessment of the value of this project to the church and an evaluation procedure to be utilized at the end of the seminar, conference or group experience should be included. The paper should be 12-15 pages in length with 10 resources.

Item	Points Earned
Introduction: Background Information (15 points) • Clear presentation of background: 10 • Well organized: 5	0-15
Outline of subjects to be covered: 10	0-10
Goals and desired outcomes (10 points) Goals clearly stated (at least 3)	0-10
Need for grief ministry within ministry context (5)	0-5
Methodology (20 points) Specific plans for: • Leadership • Training • Resources:	0-10
Detailed Plans (40 points) • Presentations (outline) • Discussions and Activities (Outlines)	0-30
Writing and Organization of Paper • Report begins, flows, and ends effectively: 5 • Report is virtually free of error in grammar, punctuation, word choice, spelling, format, and Turabian style issues. Paragraphs or outlines well structured: 5	0-10
Clear Conclusions (10 points)	0-10

• Concise conclusion including personal assessment of value of the project to the church: 5 • An Evaluation Procedure: 5	
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Evaluation of Grade

The student's grade will be computed as follows:

Textbook Reaction Papers	20%
Personal Grief Experience Paper	20%
Personal Grief Experience Presentation	20%
Reaction Paper – <i>A Grief Observed</i> and <i>Shadowlands</i>	10%
Grief Ministry Plan	30%

Assignment Guidelines

Turabian style should be used for all seminar assignments. All assignments are expected to be submitted on time. Late assignments may incur a late penalty up to 15 points.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend and participate in the class sessions according to the formats offered. Attendance policies of ProDoc will be followed.

Technical Assistance

Here is the contact information for the ITC support team, who are to help you with your NOBTS/LC technical questions/issues/support requests:

1. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email general technical questions/support requests. If you are not sure who to contact, use this email address!
2. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu or My.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
3. Canvas@nobts.edu - Email technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Canvas Learning Management System, Canvas.nobts.edu site. / nobts.instructure.com.
4. VCHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email technical questions/support requests with NOBTS Microsoft Teams (Flex & Live classes)
5. [504.816.8180](tel:504.816.8180) - Call for any technical questions/support requests. (Currently available Mon, Tues & Thurs 7:30am-7:00pm, Wed 7:30am-6:00pm & Fri 7:30-12:00pm Central Time)
6. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Disability Accommodations

Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by the Assistant Dean of Students for Student Affairs. If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval please contact Conner Hinton immediately at chinton@nobts.edu or 504-816-8246. Students must complete the Accommodation

Request Form and provide documentation of their disability. The Assistant Dean of Students notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations. The seminary reserves the right to consider each request for special accommodations on a case-by-case basis pursuant to the criteria enumerated above.

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no-tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Course Schedule

The seminar is scheduled to meet from 1:00 to 9:00 p.m. Central Time on October 19, and 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. on October 20 and 21. Breaks and meal times will be scheduled as needed. The schedule is subject to change depending on the number of students in the seminar.

October 19

1:00 – 9:00 Introductions, Devotion, and Seminar Overview
 Discussion of Textbooks (Including Reaction Papers)
 Discussion of *A Grief Observed* and *Shadowlands* Paper

October 20

8:00 – 4:00 Devotion
 Personal Grief Experiences

September 15

8:00 – 4:00 Devotion
 Personal Grief Experiences
 Conclusion and Post-Seminar Assignment Overview

Selected Bibliography

Abrams, Rebecca. *When Parents Die: Learning to Live with the Loss of a Parent*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2013.

Berns, Nancy. *Closure: The Rush to End Grief and What it Costs Us*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2011.

Clinton, Timothy E., and Archibald D. Hart. *Caring for People God's Way: Personal and Emotional Issues, Addictions, Grief, and Trauma*. Nashville: Nelson Reference and Electronic, 2005.

Corr, Charles A., Donna M. Corr, and Kenneth J. Doka. *Death and Dying, Life and Living*. 8th ed. Cengage Learning, 2019.

DeSpelder, Lynne A., and Albert Lee Strickland. *The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying*. 11th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 2019.

- Doka, Kenneth J. and Terry L. Martin. *Grieving Beyond Gender: Understanding the Ways Men and Women Mourn*. New York, NY: Taylor and Francis Group, 2010.
- Feinberg, John S. *When There Are No Easy Answers: Thinking Differently about God, Suffering, and Evil*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2016.
- Guthrie, Nancy. *What Grieving People Wish You Knew About What Really Helps (And What Really Hurts)*. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2016.
- Hodges, Samuel J. IV and Kathy Leonard. *Grieving with Hope: Finding Comfort as You Journey through Loss*. Grand Rapids, MI: Bake Books, 2011.
- Jayne, Tabitha. *Thriving loss: Move beyond grief to a place of peace, passion and purpose*. Bloomington, IN: Balboa Press, 2011.
- Jeffreys, J. Shep. *Helping Grieving People – When tears are not enough: A Handbook for Care Providers*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011.
- Jong, Jonathan, and Jamin Halberstadt. *Death Anxiety and Religious Belief: An Existential Psychology of Religion*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2016.
- Jordan, John R. and John L. McIntosh. *Grief after Suicide: Understanding the Consequences and Caring for the Survivors*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011.
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- Leming, Michael R., and George E. Dickson. *Understanding Dying, Death, and Bereavement*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2011.
- Lindemann, Erich. "Symptomatology and Management of Acute Grief." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 101 (1944): 141-48.
- Long, Thomas G. and Thomas Lynch. *The Good Funeral: Death, Grief, and the Community of Care*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013.
- Neimeyer, Robert A. *Grief and Bereavement in Contemporary Society: Bridging Research and Practice*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2011.
- Rando, Therese A. *Loss and Anticipatory Grief*. Lexington: D.C. Health & Co., 1986.
- Roe, Gary. *Grief Walk: Experiencing God after the Loss of a Loved One*. Healing Resources, 2020.
- Schwiebert, Pat. *When Hello Means Goodbye: A Guide for Parents Whose Child Dies Before Birth, at Birth or Shortly After Birth*. Portland, OR: Perinatal Loss, 2012.
- Smith, William A. *Reflections on Death, Dying and Bereavement: A Manual for Clergy, Counselors, and Speakers*. Amityville, NY: Baywood, 2003.

Talbot, Kay. *What Forever Means After the Death of a Child*. New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2002.

Van Duivendy, Tim P. *The Unwanted Gift of Grief: A Ministry Approach*. New York: Haworth Pastoral Press, 2006.

White, P. Gill. *Sibling Grief: Healing After the Death of a Sister or Brother*. New York: iUniverse, Inc., 2006.

Wolfelt, Alan D. *Companioning the Bereaved Child: A Soulful Guide for Caregivers*. Fort Collins, CO: Companion Press, 2012.

———. *Death and Grief: A Guide for Clergy*. Brestal, PA: Accelerated Development, 1998.

———. *Healing a Parent's Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas After Your Child Dies*. Fort Collins, CO: Companion Press, 2002.

———. *Healing the Grieving Child's Heart: 100 Practical Ideas for Families, Friends, and Caregivers*. Fort Collins, CO: Companion Press, 2000.

———. *Healing a Teen's Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas*. Fort Collins, CO: Companion Press, 2001.

———. *Healing the Adult Child's Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas After Your Parent Dies*. Fort Collins, CO: Companion Press, 2002.

Wright, H. Norman. *Experiencing Grief*. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2004.