

**The George Mason University**  
**Graduate School of Education**  
**EDCD 797-003: Advanced Topics in Education - Grief Counseling**  
**Krug Hall 107**  
**Saturday, October 13<sup>th</sup> & Saturday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 9:00am-4:30pm**  
**Fall 2012**

**Instructor: Stephanie McMahon, Ph.D.**  
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**Office Hours: By appointment**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

*Prerequisites: Admission to CNDV program, EDCC 603: Counseling Theories and Practice.*

This course provides a broad understanding of issues of grief within a counseling context. Topics include understanding the dynamics of grief, theory of the stages and process of grief, and the application of theory within a counseling relationship.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The objectives for this course are:

- Gain an understanding of classic and current theories of grief and their application in counseling.
- Understand psychological dynamics of grief and the impact on the counseling relationship.
- Learn to assess for grief, and practice application of grief theory in counseling.

**Relationship to Course and Program Goals and Professional Organizations**

EDCD 797 is a special topics course and meets the requirement that all masters students take 2-3 credits of special topics course work. This 1-credit course will contribute to counseling students' knowledge of a particular counseling issue.

EDCD 797 fulfills the requirements of the following professional organizations:

- Virginia Department of Education requirement for school counseling licensure that candidates understand the knowledge, skills and processes of individual counseling.
- Virginia Department of Health Professions requirement that Licensed Professional Counselor candidates complete graduate study in theories and techniques of counseling and psychotherapy.
- Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) core requirement described in Section II.K.e: Helping relationships: An understanding of counseling and consultation processes.
- American Counseling Association Code of Ethics requirement that counselors establish counselor education and training programs that integrate academic study and supervised practice.

**REQUIRED READINGS**

Chapters Selected from:

Kubler-Ross, Elisabeth (1969). *On death and dying*. New York, NY: Scribner.

Neimeyer, R.A. (Ed.) (2001). *Meaning Reconstruction & the Experience of Loss*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Yalom, Irvin D. (2002). *The gift of therapy: An open letter to a new generation of therapists and their patients*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc.

\*Readings will be available on the Course Blackboard site. Additional readings may be added at the professor's discretion.

## COURSE STRUCTURE

The class will include lecture, group discussion, experiential activities and case studies. The class will have two sessions, Saturday, October 13<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 9:00am-4:30pm. It is expected that students will have read the assigned material prior to the class meeting in which the readings are discussed.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Active Participation** is expected in all class activities. Students are expected to attend all classes and come to class prepared having completed all reading and written assignments. Active participation is based on your presence in the class—one or more unexcused absence may result in course failure. [20 points].
- **Response Papers.** Papers should be 2-4 pages in length, and should be a thoughtful, well-written discussion and response to a chosen reading by the professor. The readings will be available on blackboard. Response paper #1 is due by October 20<sup>th</sup>, 6:00pm; Response paper #2 is due by December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6:00pm. [15 points]
- **Midterm Exam.** The midterm exam will be completed at home and available immediately following the first class session (October 13<sup>th</sup>) and is due by October 27<sup>th</sup>, 6:00pm. The exam will cover knowledge and application of theory. [30 points].
- **Final Research Paper.** Paper should be 5-7 pages and should cover theory and research as applicable to a specific area of grief and loss. The final research paper is due by **December 8<sup>th</sup>**, 6:00pm. The paper must be completed in APA style (6<sup>th</sup> edition). [35 points].

## Summary of Grading System & Course Requirements

### Grading

EDCD 797 is a graded course. Included in the assignments is the requirement that the following must also be met to receive a passing grade:

- Assignments must be turned in by the date and time due. **Assignments not turned in by the date and time due will receive a failing grade.**
- Attendance at all classes. EDCD 797-003 is a one credit class, **there are NO unexcused absences permitted. Any unexcused absence will result in failure of the course. Late arrivals to class count towards an unexcused absence.**

Students will be evaluated on the course requirements as listed above. It is expected that all students will demonstrate skills through class participation, presentations, evaluations, and assigned projects and papers.

### GRADING:

Active Participation	20 Points
Response Papers	15 Points
Midterm Exam	30 Points
<u>Final Research Paper</u>	<u>35 Points</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 Points</b>

In accordance with the George Mason University Grading Policy, the following grades may be achieved:

A	97-100 points
A-	93-96 points
B+	88-92 points
B	84-87 points
C	75-83 points
F	74 points and below

## **COURSE EVALUATION**

### **Counseling & Development Program Professional Dispositions**

**Professional Performance Criteria** (Effective February 25, 2003).

The American Counseling Association (ACA) code of ethics requires counselors and counselor trainees to maintain standards of professional competence and possess good moral character. The Counseling and Development Program in the Graduate School of Education at George Mason University has adopted a set of professional performance criteria that is consistent with the ACA code of ethics. Please refer to the dispositions found on the C & D Homepage at:

[http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/counseling/professional\\_performance.htm](http://gse.gmu.edu/programs/counseling/professional_performance.htm)

## **COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

### *Student Expectations*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

### *Campus Resources*

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

### *Core Values Commitment*

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See <http://gse.gmu.edu/>].

### **Plagiarism Statement**

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; a simple listing of books and articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting. Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions for this include factual information which can be obtained from a variety of sources, the writers' own insights or findings from their own field research, and what has been termed common knowledge. What constitutes common knowledge can sometimes be precarious; what is common knowledge for one audience may not be so for another. In such situations, it is helpful, to keep the reader in mind and to think of citations as being "reader friendly." In other words, writers provide a citation for any piece of information that they think their readers might want to investigate further. Not only is this attitude considerate of readers, it will almost certainly ensure that writers will never be guilty of plagiarism. (Statement of English Department at George Mason University)

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### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

<b><u>Important Date</u></b>	<b><u>Topics/Learning Experiences</u></b>	<b><u>Assignment Due</u></b>
<b>October 13<sup>th</sup> – Class</b>	Discussion of course outline & requirements; Discussion/application of theories and readings	See blackboard site for required readings.*
<b>October 20<sup>th</sup></b>		Response Paper #1
<b>October 27<sup>th</sup></b>		Midterm Exam**
<b>November 17<sup>th</sup> – Class</b>	Continued application of theory; discussion of final paper	See blackboard site for required readings.*
<b>December 3<sup>rd</sup></b>		Response Paper #2
<b>December 8<sup>th</sup></b>		Final Paper**

\* It is highly recommended that you download and allow yourself time to process the reading material and come to class prepared.

\*\*Assignments should be submitted online through the course Blackboard site.