

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
COUNSELING AND DEVELOPMENT  
EDCD 797-001**

**Advanced Topics in Education - Grief Counseling**

**1 Credit: Fall 2013**

**Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> & Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 9:00am-4:30pm  
Krug Building 107**

**Professor: Stephanie McMahon, Ph.D.**

**Office Hours: By appointment**

**Office Location: Krug 202**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A. Prerequisites: Admission to CNDV program, EDCE 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**

Neimeyer, R.A. (Ed.) (2012). *Techniques of Grief Therapy: Creative Practices for Counseling the Bereaved*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Additional Recommended 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.

Recommended readings will be available on the Course Blackboard site.

## COURSE STRUCTURE

The class will include lecture, group discussion, experiential activities and case studies. The class will have two sessions, Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, October 5<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 and participation in group experiential activities and class discussions. [50 points].
- **Final Research and Application Paper.** (Performance Based Assessment.) Paper should be 7-10 pages and should cover theory and research as applicable to a specific area of grief and loss. The final research paper is due by **October 26<sup>th</sup>**, 6:00pm. The paper must be completed in APA style (6<sup>th</sup> edition). [50 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 797-001 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 | 50 Points         |
| Final Research Paper | 50 Points         |
| <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 |

### **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)

### **TASKSTREAM REQUIREMENTS**

Every student registered for any Counseling and Development course with a required performance-based assessment is required to submit this assessment, the Final Research and Application Paper, to TaskStream (regardless of whether a course is an elective, a onetime course or part of an undergraduate minor). Evaluation of the performance-based assessment by the course instructor will also be completed in TaskStream. Failure to submit the assessment to TaskStream will result in the course instructor reporting the course grade as Incomplete (IN). Unless the IN grade is changed upon completion of the required TaskStream submission, the IN will convert to an F nine weeks into the following semester.

<http://cehd.gmu.edu/api/taskstream>

### **GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS**

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>].
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- c. 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.
- d. 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 service (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].

- e. 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/>].
- f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- g. 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/>].

**PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

**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. <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>

**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)

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

| <b><u>Important Date</u></b>             | <b><u>Topics/Learning Experiences</u></b>   | <b><u>Readings and Assignment</u></b>   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>September 14<sup>th</sup> – Class</b> | Discussion of course outline & requirements;<br>Discussion/application of theories and readings | Neimeyer (2012)*:<br><i>Part I - all</i><br><i>Part II - 5, 7, 10</i><br><i>Part III – 16</i> |

|                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
|                                       |  | <i>Part IV – all</i><br><i>Part V – all</i><br><i>Part VII – all</i><br><i>Part VIII – 41-43</i><br>**See blackboard for additional recommended readings.   |
| <b>October 5<sup>th</sup> – Class</b> | Continued application of theory; discussion of final paper | <i>Part IX – all</i><br><i>Part X – 54,55</i><br><i>Part XI – 59,63,64</i><br><i>Part XII – all</i><br><i>Part XIII – 73,74,75</i><br><i>Part XIV – 77, 78,79</i><br><i>Part XV – 80</i><br><i>Part XVI – 87,90,91</i><br><i>Part XVII – 92,93,94</i><br>**See blackboard site for additional recommend readings. |
| <b>October 26<sup>th</sup></b>        |  | Final Paper Due***  |

\*These are the “chapters” that are required from the Neimeyer book.

\*\* 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 Taskstream.

**ASSESSMENT RUBRIC:**

**Grief and Loss  
Assignment Rubric**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

|   | <b>Does not meet standards<br/>1</b>  | <b>Approaches meeting standards<br/>2</b>   | <b>Meets Standards<br/>3</b>  | <b>Exceeds standards<br/>4</b>  | <b>SCORE</b> |
|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| <b>CRITERIA</b>                             |   |   |   |   |              |
| Use of Grief Theory                         | Unclear understanding of grief process <i>and</i> grief work in counseling.   | Unclear understanding and use of grief process <i>or</i> of grief work in counseling.   | General understanding of grief process and grief work in counseling   | Clear and informed understanding of grief process and grief work in counseling.   |              |
| Counseling Implications                     | The counseling strategies & implications are not clearly presented <i>or</i> supported.                             | The counseling strategies & implications are not clearly presented <i>or</i> supported.   | The counseling implications are presented and supported by a referenced article and a discussion of counseling strategies & implications.                       | -The counseling implications are presented and supported by at least three referenced article and a discussion of specific counseling strategies & implications.                                  |              |
| Multicultural and Social Justice Competency | -Does not identify or integrate culturally appropriate information<br>-Does not identify social justice issues      | - Identifies some culturally appropriate information<br>-Identifies any social justice issues   | -Identifies and integrates culturally appropriate information<br>-Identifies any social justice issues  | -Clearly identifies and integrates all culturally appropriate information<br>-Clearly identifies any social justice issues  |              |
| Writing                                     | -Many spelling and grammatical errors<br>-Lacks clarity<br>-Is not organized<br>-6 or more types of APA 6th errors. | -Many spelling and grammatical errors, and/or<br>-Lacks clarity and/or<br>-Is not organized<br>-Follows APA 6 <sup>th</sup> with 4-5 types of errors. | -A few spelling and grammatical errors<br>-Lacks clarity of expression<br>-Some organizational errors<br>-Follows APA 6 <sup>th</sup> with 2-3 types of errors. | -Minimal spelling and grammatical errors<br>-Clarity of expression<br>-Includes introduction, conclusion, and proper use of paragraphs.<br>-Follows APA 6 <sup>th</sup> with 0-1 types of errors. |              |