For Your Reflection

"Grief is not a disorder, a disease or a sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity, the price you pay for love. The only cure for grief is to grieve."  

Rabbi Earl Grollman

“Only people who are capable of loving strongly can also suffer great sorrow, but this same necessity of loving serves to counteract their grief and heals them.”  

Leo Tolstoy

"Those who don't know how to weep with their whole heart don't know how to laugh either."  

Golda Meir

You will lose someone you can’t live without, and your heart will be badly broken, and the bad news is that you never completely get over the loss of your beloved. But this is also the good news. They live forever in your broken heart that doesn’t seal back up. And you come through. It’s like having a broken leg that never heals perfectly – that still hurts when the weather gets cold, but you learn to dance with the limp.”  

Annie Lamott

"A child can live with anything as long as he or she is told the truth and is allowed to share with loved ones the natural feelings people have when they are suffering."  

Eda LeShan

Course Description

This course will explore in depth the ministry of pastoral care and counseling in times of grief and loss, with an emphasis on the theological dimensions in both Judaism and Christianity which assist persons to find hope and meaning in the aftermath of loss. We will explore together historical and contemporary grief theory, the various forms of loss and types of grieving, the role of attachment styles on grief and our relationship to God. We will examine how death is experienced differently through human development, the role of healthy and unhealthy religious coping in times of stress and focus on the reconstruction of meaning as essential to finding hope and a new future. Personal, theological, and cultural understandings of death, grief, and loss will be studied to appreciate both the universal and unique elements to grieving. Students will learn the tasks of grieving and how to facilitate healthy grieving within the context of congregational life and the role that pastoral empathy, counseling skills, rituals and funerals can play in this. While the primary focus of the course will be on normal grieving, we will also deal with complicated grieving that may result from traumatic loss. Students will learn to distinguish complicated grieving from normal grieving and
learn when referral to therapy is indicated. We will also help students to prepare advance directives and explore how to help families prepare for the end of life by taking responsibility for making critical decisions before death comes.

Format of the Class

The course will consist of lectures, guest lecturers, talks by people well acquainted with grief, films, class presentations and various in-class exercises including role plays. There will be time for small group discussions. We will foster respectful and deep dialogue as we engage across religious differences in places of deep meaning.

Objectives of the Class

1) To see how the faith community as well as the rabbi and pastor can serve a critical role during the seasons of loss in people's lives and to develop appropriate pastoral care skills to do so.

2) Through engaging reading and deep and respectful dialogue with professors and students from the Jewish and Christian traditions, learn with and from each other theological and ritual resources for making meaning and finding hope during times of loss.

3) Learn contemporary grief theory and its implications for caring for people in our faith communities and in chaplaincy.

4) Be able to recognize the different kinds of loss and grief and respond in appropriate ways to the needs of those experiencing the loss.

5) Be able to identify how one's attachment style impacts a person's grief work and image of God in order to provide more sensitive pastoral care.

6) To be able to recognize complicated mourning including multiple losses, traumatized loss, disenfranchised or stigmatized loss and to find appropriate pastoral responses to these very difficult issues, including the need for referral.

7) To explore how gender, class, race and religion impact how one grieves.

8) To prepare students to be proactive in their congregations dealing with end of life issues.

Each student will complete 2 assignments (all guidelines and instructions are at end of syllabus):

1) A group class presentation.

2) A Narrative of Personal Loss: Reconstructing Meaning (4-part assignment, 3 due dates, 15-20 pages total).
Required Books:


4) **Choose one** of the following books on theodicy:
   - *Jeffry R. Zurheide (1997). *When Faith is Tested: Pastoral Responses to Suffering and Tragic Death. Minneapolis: Fortress Press (for Christian students; UU’s may choose this or Kushner)

5) **Choose one** of the following books:

Highly Recommended:


**Additional Recommended Reading:**


• Stephen Levine. *Unattended Sorrow: Recovering from Loss and Reviving the Heart.* Rodale


# – on schoology
* – Books on reserve in ANTS library
Class Sessions

Session #1 – January 31st

To Live is to Mourn: Losses through the Life Cycle
What is Grief, Bereavement, Mourning?
Identifying Types of Loss and Pastoral Implications
Jewish and Christian Reflections on Finding Meaning and Hope in the Seasons of Loss

Required Reading:
* Melissa Kelly. Grief. Intro, pp. 1-10
# Kenneth R. Mitchell and Herbert Anderson. All Our Losses, All our Griefs: Resources for Pastoral Care Ch. 3, pp. 37-52
# Jack Riemer, Jewish Insights on Death and Mourning Intro, pp. 3-19

Recommended Reading:
# Neimeyer, Robert A. Lessons of Loss Ch. 1
# Attig, Thomas. "Relearning the World: Making and Finding Meanings" Ch. 2 in R. Neimeyer Meaning Reconstruction and the Experience of Loss

Session #2 – February 7th

The Grieving Heart: The Dynamics of Grief
Types of Grief and Trajectories of Loss
An Overview of Grief Theory - Historical to Contemporary
The Basics of Pastoral Presence
Role Play: Chronic Illness

Required Reading:
* Melissa Kelly. Grief. Chs. 1, 2
** Herbert Anderson and Kenneth Mitchell. All Our Losses All Our Griefs Ch. 4
# Robert Kidd. Professional Spiritual and Pastoral Care Ch. 7, "Foundational Listening and Responding Skills"
# Donald Capps Giving Counsel Ch. 1
# Simcha Raphael, Jewish Pastoral Care: A Practical Handbook “Grief and Bereavement”
# Rabbi Zahara Davidowitz-Farkas, Professional Spiritual and Pastoral Care “Chronic Illness”

Recommended Reading:
# Neimeyer, Robert A. Lessons of Loss Ch. 4
Session #3 – February 14th

Attachment Theory, Attachment to God and How they Influence Grieving
Distinguishing Grief from Depression / Uncomplicated and Complicated Grief
Deepening the Practice of Pastoral Presence
Role Play: Job Loss

Assignment #2 Part I due

Required Reading:

* Melissa Kelly. *Grief.* Ch. 3
# Donald Capps. *Giving Counsel* Ch. 2
# Timothy Serban. *Professional Spiritual and Pastoral Care* Ch. 25, “Complicated Grief”

Recommended Reading:

* William Worden. *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy* Chs. 4 – 6
* Herbert Anderson. *Leaving Home*
# Robert Neimeyer. *Meaning Reconstruction and the Experience of Loss*

Session #4 – February 21st

The Tasks of Mourning??
Mediators of Grief
The Reconstruction of Meaning after Loss
Religious and Spiritual Coping in Loss
Role Play #1 Loss of Spouse

Required Reading:

* Melissa Kelly. *Grief.* Chs. 4-5
* Joan Didion. *A Year of Magical Thinking*
  OR
  C.S. Lewis. *A Grief Observed*
** Robert Niemeyer. *Lessons of Loss* Ch. 7
# *The Psychology of Religion and Coping: Theory, Research and Practice* Ch. 10 – Kenneth Pargament
  “Does it Work? Religion and the Outcomes of Coping”
# Peggy Whiting and Elizabeth James. "Bearing Witness to the Story: Narrative Reconstruction in Grief Counseling"
http://counselingoutfitters.com/James.htm
# Maruice Lamm. *Consolation: The Spiritual Journey Beyond Grief* Ch. 4 “Shiva: The Habit of Healing”
Recommended Reading:
* William Worden. *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy* Chs. 2 and 3
Thomas Attig. *How We Grieve*
# Robert Neimeyer. *The Experience of Loss and the Reconstruction of Meaning*

Session #5 – February 28th

**Ambiguous Loss**
**Divorce**
#2 Role Play on Divorce with Children Involved

Required Reading:
* Pauline Boss. *Ambiguous Loss* Chs. 1-5
** Robert Niemeyer. *Lessons of Loss* Ch. 2 “To Love and To Lose”
# Maria Trozzi. *Talking with Children About Loss* Ch. 14 “Mourning a Divorce”
# Sandy Seltzer. *When There is No Other Alternative: A Spiritual Guide for Jewish Couples Contemplating Divorce*

Session #6 – March 7th

**Ambiguous Loss**
**Caring for People with Alzheimer’s and their Families**
Guest Speakers: Rabbi Sara Paasche-Orlow
Role Play #3 Diagnosis and Living with Alzheimers

Required Reading:
* Pauline Boss. *Ambiguous Loss* Chs. 6-9
Joanne Koenig Coste. *Learning to Speak Alzheimer’s* Chs. 4-5
# *Jewish Pastoral Care: A Practical Handbook* Dayle Freedman, “Making Sense of Dementia”

Recommended Reading:
# Stephen Post. *The Moral Challenge of Alzheimers* Ch. 3 Fairhill Guidelines on Ethics and the Care of People with Alzheimers. pp. 44-65

Jade Angelica. *When Two Worlds Meet*
Joanne Koenig Coste. *Learning to Speak Alzheimer’s*
Session #7 – March 14th

Disenfranchised Grief and Special Types of Losses
SIDS, Miscarriages, Stillbirths, Abortion When Faith is Tested
#4 Role Play on Pregnancy Loss

Required Reading:
- Kenneth Doka. *Disenfranchised Grief*  Chs. 1, 2, 3 and 11
- Thomas Moe. *Pastoral Care in Pregnancy Loss*  Chs. 7 and 8

Recommended Reading:
- Cardin, Rabbi Nina Beth. *Tears of Sorrow: Seeds of Hope: A Jewish Spiritual Companion for Infertility and Pregnancy Loss*  especially ch. 4

Session #8 – March 21st

Anticipatory Grieving
The Physical and Emotional Processes of Dying
Theological Dimensions of Dying
Accompanying the Dying as Contemplative Practice
Guest Speaker: Claire B. Willis

Assignment #2 Part II due, please include Part I

Required Reading:
- Amy Eilberg, “Walking in the Valley of the Shadow: Caring for the Dying and Their Loved Ones, in *Jewish Pastoral Care: A Practical Handbook*  Chs. 7 and 8

Recommended Reading:
- Professional Spiritual and Pastoral Care  Ch. 10. Glenn Robitaille. “Inspiring Hope: Confronting Fear, Guilt, and Shame in Spiritual/Pastoral Care”

Steven Levine. *Unattended Sorrow*

Joan Halifax. *Being with Dying*
ANTS SPRING BREAK MARCH 24th to 28th
No class March 28th

Session #9 – April 4th

How Rituals From Religious Traditions Facilitate Grief Work
What our Traditions Teach about Hope and Meaning in Loss
Role Play #5 Loss of a Parent by Adult
(Bring a sympathy card to class)

Required Reading:

# Herbert Anderson. Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals
# Jack Riemer. Jewish Insights on Death and Mourning,
# Maurice Lamm. The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning

Recommended Reading:

# Mary Lovegren "Widow and Widowers: Life Satisfaction and Social Support Networks." The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling Fall 1996, Vol 50, #3
# Thomas Long. Come with Singing: The Christian Funeral
# Professional Spiritual and Pastoral Care

Session #10 – April 11th

Traumatic Loss - When Faith is Tested
Supporting Parents of Children with Life-limiting Illness
Role Play #6 The Loss of a Child by a Parent
Guest Speaker: Blyth Lord

Required Reading:


Please choose one of the following books on theodicy:
* Jeffry R. Zurheide. When Faith is Tested: Pastoral Responses to Suffering and Tragic Death
* Harold Kushner. When Bad Things Happen to Good People
* Victor Frankl. Man’s Search for Meaning
* David Blumenthal. Facing the Abusing God: A Theology of Protest
Recommended Reading:

# Dorothy Becvar *In the Presence of Grief*  
Ch. 6 "When a Child Dies"

# Logan Jones "The Psalms of Lament and the Transformation of Sorrow" *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling*  


Nicholas Wolterstorff. *Lament for a Son*

* Dennis Klass "The Inner Representation of the Dead Child in the Psychic and Social Narratives of Bereaved Parents" in *Meaning Reconstruction and the Experience of Loss*

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Hebrew College Passover / ANTS Easter Break  
NO CLASS APRIL 18TH

Session #11 – April 25th

**Facing our Own Death**  
Advance Directives/ Three Wishes  
A Discernment Process  
Congregational Leadership in Helping Others Face End-of-Life Issues  
Guest Speaker: The Rev. Martha Jacobs

Required Reading:

* Martha Jacobs. *A Clergy Guide To End-of-Life Issues*  
Chs. 5-9, appendix 3,4,5

* Five Wishes by Aging with Dignity (handout in class)

Recommended Reading:

# Jack Reimer, ed. *So That Your Values Live-On: Ethical Wills and How to Prepare Them*  
Introduction, Ch. 6, “Preparing Your Own Ethical Will,” and selections

Session #12 – May 2nd

Traumatic Loss for Children
Grieving the Loss of a Parent by a Child
Role Play #7 of Loss of Parent by a Child under 10

Required Reading:

#* Maria Trozzi. *Understanding Children’s Grief* Chs. 1-3
# *Introducing Narrative Therapy*, ed. David Denoborough
  Michael White, “Saying Hullo Again”

Recommended Reading:


  Leo Buscaglia. *The Fall of Freddie the Leaf*

  * *Meaning Reconstruction and the Experience of Loss*
  "The Language of Loss: Grief Therapy as a Process of Meaning Reconstruction”

May 16th - Assignment #2 Part III and IV due,
please include Part I and II with paper
Description of Assignments

Guidelines for Written Assignments

All assignments will use either Chicago Manual of Style Online or the format of the American Psychological Association which may be found by googling APA format, general rules for format. All papers must be free of plagiarism (see ANTS catalogue p.58 for policy). It is expected that every student will use gender-inclusive language.

Assignment #1 – A group oral presentation of a role play

1) Each group must present a case study related specifically to the topic of the day that is a total of no more than 50 minutes. (5-minute introduction, 20 to 25 minutes role play, at least 20 minutes of analysis of role play and class discussion). The professors will cut group off at 35 minutes for class discussion. Careful timing is essential!!! Please consider bringing a role play that draws upon the diversity seen in faith communities, ethnicity, gender orientation, etc.

2) The case study presentation should include the following:
   A) An introduction should be given to the class about the case study and why it was chosen for this day. In the introduction you should state the issues you will be addressing pertaining to grief and the focus of your pastoral response. You must write a case study utilizing the themes and issues raised by the reading of the day and distribute it a week before to the class. You may draw upon a real life event, but must change all names, places of identification and any details that might identify the persons involved. The case study should highlight issues being addressed in the reading.

   B) A role play of a pastoral/spiritual intervention that might be with the rabbi/pastor or with members of the faith community. This should include a role play with at least two sessions or meetings of some type. The time, place and duration of the meetings should be clear. Do not always begin with the first meeting. (Not all role plays need be one to one with clergy, think also outside the box.)

   C) An analysis following each segment of the role play that lifts up from the readings and theories studied what you find most critical and what you were trying to demonstrate in the role play. Your analysis should also include theological and cultural issues and concerns.

   D) A class discussion facilitated by group and professor. Please begin with fielding some questions from the class.

3) Each group shall develop and provide a stapled handout a week before the presentation to the class with the following:
   A) A copy of the actual case study being used.
   B) A list of three to five annotated internet resources that might be most helpful for persons in this situation of loss.
   C) An annotated list of at least three books or articles that you would find most helpful for “biblotherapy” for a person undergoing such a loss.
   D) A list of referral resources that you would consider mandatory to have on hand for someone going through this kind of crisis.
**Guidelines for Developing a Case Study**

1) Read all assigned reading before constructing case study for your session.

2) Develop a list of priorities in deciding what issues you want to address in the case study based on the reading.

3) Take time together as a group to “imagine the real” for those facing these issues.

4) Develop a scenario that involves two role plays with no less than 4 participants total. Get an outline together of a scenario that you can imagine which will need pastoral care. Begin to brainstorm together the following questions to get a rich description of your case:

   - What are they up against? What symptoms do you imagine them to be manifesting? Who is most impacted by loss? Where are different styles of coping with loss expressed? Is there any cultural variation here that could be important to point out? How are family dynamics being impacted? What other losses might impinge on the working through of this loss? What issues from the reading would you likely confront? What pastoral skills in terms of forms of listening will be most important? How would you characterize where they are in their grief right now? What task of grieving according to William Worden do you think is most important at this time? What special circumstances, personality factors, age, family status etc. might impact the specific and unique texture of their grief? What role could the faith community or the person’s faith play in responding to their particular needs? What resources does the faith community have to offer?

One or two people write a draft of your case study. Have group read it and critique it and then rewrite it. If possible have one of the professors look at it before it is distributed to class.

In presenting case study decide clearly on the following:

a) Which issues in grief will you be addressing? Be as specific and particular as possible.

b) What do you identify as the most important foci for your pastoral care given where they are in the grief process?

c) What factors determine most powerfully the approach you will take and what does this mean in terms of pastoral skills you will need to be aware of? Which author(s) most inform your approach to this case study?

d) You are to role play two meetings with the bereaved so that we sense some progression in working with a case. They do not need to be consecutive meetings. If you see a way for the faith community to be meaningfully involved that is not focused on the role of rabbi or minister please use this as one of the role plays.
Assignment # 2- A Narrative of Loss- Reconstructing Meaning (an assignment in four parts 15-24 pages total, 3 due dates) (assignment adapted from Robert Neimeyer Lessons of Loss: A Guide to Coping p. 166-169, revised and expanded upon by Brita Gill-Austern)

You are welcome to include as part of your paper in any four parts, a creative component – a poem, a piece of art or some other medium. If you include a creative piece, please have some language which outlines your intention and process that went into its creation. You need to submit Part I with Part II, and Part I and Part II with Part III and IV.

#2 PART I  Narrative Description of a Personal Loss - DUE FEBRUARY 14TH

Begin your narrative with naming the experience of loss or losses you want to explore. (If you are exploring more than one loss, show their critical relationship to one another.) Respond with as much specificity as you can to how you responded to the loss at the time. What do you remember about changes in your feelings over time? How did others respond to your loss at the time? How did this impact your own sense of grieving? What do you remember about who you were at the time, developmentally, basic personality and disposition, your view of the world, God and the central concerns of your life. As you look back what was the most painful part of the experience for you? (5-7 pages)

#2 PART II  Interpreting and Making Meaning of My Loss - DUE MARCH 21st

How did you make sense of the loss at the time? How do you understand and interpret the loss now? What religious or spiritual beliefs contributed to your adjustment to the loss at the time? How were your spiritual beliefs or practices impacted by this loss? What changed for you in your sense of values or priorities after this loss? How was your view of your self and the world changed? What have you learned about love from your loss? How do you think your life might have been different if this person has lived or this loss had not happened? Is there anything that might contribute to further healing at this time? (5 pages)

#2 PART III  Understanding My Loss through the Lens of Reading, Theory and Class Lectures and Discussions - DUE MAY 16th

As you think about your loss which reading(s), lecture (s) or class discussion helped you see your loss through a different lens? What was it about what you learned that contributed to a deeper understanding of your loss? Take one to three ideas, theories, or areas and explore in depth the implication of this learning (s) for your self-understanding as it relates to your loss. Does your learning raise any new questions you would like to explore? (7-8 pages)

#2 PART IV  A Personal Pastoral Theological Reflection on Caring for the Grieving – DUE MAY 16th

How does your narrative of loss, your own meaning making and understanding of this loss deepened by your exposure to grief theory and understanding of grief inform your own pastoral sense of caring for those in grief? Write a pastoral theological reflection on caring for the grieving incorporating psychological, theological, spiritual and communal resources that will inform your caring. (3-4 pages)