



“We are a community that commits itself to diversity and sustainability as dimensions of a just society” --*Lewis and Clark Mission Statement*

**LEWIS & CLARK GRADUATE SCHOOL OF  
EDUCATION AND COUNSELING  
ECOT-598-11 Ecotopics: Death & Loss  
MCFT-563-11 Tx Issues MCFT: Death & Loss**

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**Time & Day:** 9:30 am -5:30 pm Saturday & Sunday

**Place:** Virtual – Zoom

**Instructor:** Jessica Thomas, PhD, LMFT

**Office Hours:** Fridays by arrangement (please schedule appointments in advance by email)

**E-Mail:** [jessicathomas@lclark.edu](mailto:jessicathomas@lclark.edu)

**Phone:** 503-683-1644 (cell)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course explores the experience of death and loss and addresses the clinical applications of family systems approach to treatment of traumatic loss, anticipatory grief, complicated grief, bereavement, end-of-life choices, and psycho-spiritual crises. A portion of this course emphasizes clinical case conceptualization and treatment planning. A focus is on the meaning-making process through creative and contemplative interventions that help mediate the experience of loss and grief.

**Prerequisite:** None

**Credit:** 1 semester hour

### **MCFT STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course promotes the following student learning outcomes:

SLO 1.3: Students will apply systems/relational theories to clinical case conceptualization.

SLO 2.1: Students will self-reflect on the implications of own and others' social location in clinical practice.

SLO 2.2: Students' clinical practice demonstrates attention to social justice and cultural democracy.

SLO 4.3: Students demonstrate integration of family therapy theory, equity, and social location issues in clinical practice.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The following MCFT 563 course objectives are in keeping with the AAMFT Core Competencies. At the end of this course, students are expected to:

1. Explore ones own thoughts, feelings and beliefs on death, dying and loss as it relates to the self-of-the-therapist and end-of-life choices.
2. Develop knowledge or skills that expand ability to apply a systems approach to treatment of a particular clinical issue.
3. Apply course content to case conceptualization, treatment planning, and intervention. In this section, these include:
  - Develop strategies for guiding clinical conversations that help clients create meaning through the experience of a loss and mediate associated distress.

## **TEXT/READINGS**

### **Required Text**

Walsh, F., & McGoldrick, M. (2004). *Living beyond loss: Death in the family*. WW Norton & Company.

Valle, R., & Mohs, M. (2006). *Opening to dying and grieving: A sacred journey*. St. Paul, MN: YES International.

### **Recommended Texts**

Fukuyama, M. A., & Sevig, T. D. (1999). *Integrating spirituality into multicultural counseling* (Vol. 13). Sage Publications.

Irish, D. P., Lundquist, K. F., & Nelsen, V. J. (2014). *Ethnic variations in dying, death and grief: Diversity in universality*. Taylor & Francis.

Kübler-Ross, E. (2009). *On death and dying: What the dying have to teach doctors, nurses, clergy and their own families*. Taylor & Francis.

Levine, S., & Levine, O. (2012). *Who dies?: An investigation of conscious living and conscious dying*. Anchor.

### **Recommended Articles & Manual**

Most readings may be accessed through Watzek library. They can also be emailed by the instructor.

Bellet, B. W., Neimeyer, R. A. & Berman, J. S. (2017). Event centrality and bereavement symptomatology: The moderating role of meaning made. *Omega: Journal of Death and Dying*, in press.

- Burke, L. A. & Neimeyer, R. A. (2016). Inventory of Complicated Spiritual Grief: Assessing spiritual crisis following loss. *Religions*, 7, 67; doi:10.3390/rel7060067.
- Fujisawa, D., Miyashita, M., Nakajima, S., Ito, M., Kato, M., & Kim, Y. (2010). Prevalence and determinants of complicated grief in general population. *Journal of affective disorders*, 127(1), 352-358.
- Heijboer, L., Van der Klink, J., Hofhuis, J., Hovingh, A., Rommes, J., Westerman, M., & Spronk, P. (2010). Survey into bereavement of family members of patients who died in the intensive care unit. *Critical Care*, 14, 1-1.
- MANUAL, A. F. (2004). Grief Counseling Resource Guide.
- Nakashima, M., & Canda, E. R. (2005). Positive dying and resiliency in later life: a qualitative study. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 19(1), 109-125.
- Neimeyer, R. A. & Burke, L. A. (2017). Spiritual distress and depression in bereavement: A meaning-oriented contribution. *Journal of Rational-Emotive and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*, DOI 10.1007/s10942-017-0262-6.
- Rozalski, V., Holland, J. M. & Neimeyer, R. A. (2016). Circumstances of death and complicated grief: Indirect associations through meaning made of loss. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, DOI: 10.1080/15325024.2016.1161426.
- Thomas, J. (2016). *Mindful Photography and its Implications in End-of-life Caregiving: An Art-based Phenomenology*. (Doctoral dissertation). Sofia University, Palo Alto, California.
- Torges, C. M., Stewart, A. J., & Nolen-Hoeksema, S. (2008). Regret resolution, aging, and adapting to loss. *Psychology and aging*, 23(1), 169.
- Wright, A. A., Keating, N. L., Balboni, T. A., Matulonis, U. A., Block, S. D., & Prigerson, H. G. (2010). Place of death: correlations with quality of life of patients with cancer and predictors of bereaved caregivers' mental health. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, JCO-2009.

## CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

### 1. **Participation** (40 points)

This course emphasizes shared engagement with the assigned readings and clinical competencies. Toward this end, you are expected to:

- Attend and participate in **all** class meetings. In the event of illness or other emergency, please email the instructor in advance of class. Missed classes will be made up by expanded written reflections on the required readings for the day.
- Come to class prepared (having read the assignments for the day).
- Give attention to the instructor and/or other students when they are speaking or making a presentation. No electronic devices may be used, except to access readings or make notes.
- Engage in group discussions and role-plays.

- Interact with other students and/or the instructor in a respectful fashion.

Your participation in class activities will be evaluated according to the following rubric

CLASS PARTICIPATION COMPETENCIES	Possible points	Points demonstrated
Prompt and dependable presence in the class.	10	
Prepares for class by immersing self in course readings and reflecting on their application to practice.	10	
Engages in course activities with a spirit of openness and curiosity.	10	
Helps to create an atmosphere of safety and mutual respect among all class members.	10	
TOTAL	40	

## 2) Reflective Journal (60 points).

Throughout the course students are to create a journal that focuses on your personal responses to the following:

1. Specific themes in the readings, lectures and group discussions that are especially meaningful or inspiring to you and reflections on how they might be applied to your practice.
2. Reflections on your own thoughts, beliefs, and experiences on death and loss and relevance to your practice and the self-of-the-therapist.

**The paper should include assigned readings in the reflections but should focus on those aspects of particular interest to you. Integration across readings (rather than just taking them one at a time) is encouraged. Reflections can include creative expression, however please reference the creative expression in writing and describe it's relevance. Texts to be referenced in APA, typed (double-spaced) and include approximately 1 page for each class (3- pages total at the end not including images).**

Your journal will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

REFLECTIONS ON DEATH AND LOSS	Possible points	Points demonstrated
Identifies specific practice strategies and imagines how they might be applied.	12	
Reflects upon own thoughts, beliefs and experiences on death and loss.	12	
Draws conclusions about how you will apply course concepts to your practice.	12	
Reflections integrate material across readings and represent your thinking as you engage with course concepts.	12	
Writing style is clear.	12	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY/SPECIAL ASSISTANCE**

Lewis & Clark College adheres to a nondiscriminatory policy with respect to employment, enrollment, and program. The College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap or disability, sexual orientation, or marital status and has a firm commitment to promote the letter and spirit of all equal opportunity and civil rights laws.

## **PARTICIPATION IN THE LEARNING COMMUNITY**

Students are required to attend and actively participate in all scheduled class meetings. This includes being on time, being prepared, following through on group projects, and otherwise engaging with colleagues as fellow professionals. Becoming a therapist involves looking closely at ourselves, our values, beliefs, and biases. This can be a very personal, and sometimes emotional, process. Treating colleagues with respect, listening deeply to their experiences, and being open to diverse world views encourages a collaborative milieu of care in which we can all challenge ourselves and each other to critically examine and develop our skills and perspectives. In order to prepare for each class, students should carefully read and study all assigned materials to be ready to discuss, debate, and apply the content of readings. Class discussion and interaction with colleagues are fundamental to the process of learning to be a therapist and all sessions include necessary information. Therefore, if you must miss a class, fellow students and the instructor may ask you to contribute to learning community in another way. According to the Lewis & Clark Counseling Psychology attendance policy, missing 3 or more hours of a 1 credit course may result in a failing grade. For this course, any absence of more than one hour requires a makeup assignment. If you must be absent or late, please email the instructor at least several hours prior to class.

## **SPECIAL ASSISTANCE**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability and/or you have emergency medical information to share please make an appointment with the instructors as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of the student to make his or her disability and needs known in a timely fashion and to provide appropriate documentation and evaluations to support the accommodations the student requests. Requests for accommodations should be routed through the Student Support Services office in Albany 206. Please review the L&C policy at:

[http://www.lclark.edu/offices/student\\_support\\_services/rights/disability\\_policy/](http://www.lclark.edu/offices/student_support_services/rights/disability_policy/)

## **CPSY DEPARTMENTAL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Class attendance is expected and required. Any missed class time will be made up by completing extra assignments designed by the instructor. Missing more than ten percent of class time may result in failure to complete the class. This would be 4.5 hours of a 45 hour class (3 credits), 3.0 hours for a 30 hour class (2 credits) or 1.5 hours for a 15 hour class (1 credit.) In case of extreme hardship and also at the discretion of the instructor, a grade of incomplete may

be given for an assignment or the entire course. In such cases, the work to be submitted in order to remove the incomplete must be documented appropriately and stated deadlines met. Students are expected to be on time to class and tardiness maybe seen as an absence that requires make-up work.

## EVALUATION & GRADING

Participation	40 pts
Journal	60 pts
Total	100 pts

94-100 = A    90-93.5 = A-    88-89.5 = B+  
 83-87.5 = B    80-82.5 = B-    78-79 = C+  
 73-77.5 = C    70-72 = C-

## COURSE SCHEDULE

	Topics	Readings and Assignments
Pre-reading		Valle & Mohs, chap 1, 2, 3, 4
Recommended Reading:		Walsh & McGoldrick, chap 1, 2, 3, 10, 11
Class 1:	Living, Dying and Grieving: A process  End-of-life Choices  Death and Loss in the Family: The shockwave  Complicated Loss	<b>Guest Speaker on Collective Grief and Social Justice</b>
Class 2:	Transforming Grief  Creative Expression & Grief	<b>Guest Speaker on Hospice</b>  <b>Reading:</b> Case study (presented in class) Recommended:  Valle & Mohs, chap 5, 6

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