



North Carolina Central University  
“Communicating to Succeed”  
**School of Education**

*The School of Education’s Vision: To become an international community of scholars who are culturally responsive educators and practitioners*

**MISSION**

The mission of North Carolina Central University is to prepare students academically and professionally to become leaders to advance consciousness of social responsibility in a diverse, global society. In accordance with the larger institution, the mission of the North Carolina Central School of Education is “to prepare educational professionals to serve and inspire excellence in teaching, administration, counseling, communication, technology, community outreach, and other related services”. Central to this aim is “the development of leaders who promote social justice and dedicate themselves to the well-being of a global society”. The Counselor Education Program prepares counselors to work in mental health, school, and career counseling settings who promote social justice and responsibility, serve as leaders in a diverse and global community, and respond to the complexity of human needs across the lifespan. To this end, the program emphasizes increasing awareness, knowledge, and skills in interacting with economically, socially, and culturally diverse populations. Our partnerships with local agencies and schools foster an understanding of multicultural and diverse populations and counseling interventions that promote empowerment.

*Syllabus*  
**CON 5307 OL(1)**  
**Crisis, Trauma, and Grief Counseling**  
**Fall 2016**  
**Distance Education**

**Instructor:** Dr. Peggy P. Whiting, Ed.D., NC Licensed Professional Counselor Supervisor, K-12 Licensed School Counselor, Certified Thanatologist  
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**Office Hours:** This semester you may meet with me by Skype on these days: Monday 2-4pm; Tuesday 1-4pm; Wednesday 11-3pm; Thursday 10-noon. My Skype username is peggy.p.whiting. Please email me to schedule. Other times by appointment on campus. Please feel welcome to email & schedule.

### **Required Textbooks:**

James, R. K. & Gilliland, B. E. (2017). *Crisis intervention strategies (8<sup>th</sup> edition)*. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.

Worden, W. (2009). *Grief counseling and grief therapy (4<sup>th</sup> edition)*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing.

### **Recommended Readings:**

Meagher, D. K. & Balk, D. E. (Eds.). (2013). *Handbook of thanatology: The essential body of knowledge for the study of death, dying, and bereavement, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Neimeyer, R. A. (Ed.). (2012). *Techniques of grief therapy: Creative practices for counseling the bereaved*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Neimeyer, R.A., Harris, D.L., Winokeur, H.R., & Thornton, G.F. (Eds.). (2011). *Grief and bereavement in contemporary society: Bridging research and practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Stillion, J.M., & Attig, T. (Eds.). (2015). *Death, dying, and bereavement: Contemporary perspectives, institutions, and practices*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Co.

Webber, J., & Mascari, J. B. (2016). *Disaster mental health counseling: A guide to preparing and responding, fourth edition*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association Foundation.

### **Course Description:**

This course will provide specialized instruction for candidates in the Mental Health Counseling concentration of the Counselor Education Program. Candidates will learn advocacy, consultation, crisis intervention and clinical strategies for assisting clients facing life changes, transitions across the lifespan, and loss and traumatic events.

### **Expanded Course Information:**

This course is a requirement for mental health counselors and may be used as an elective for other counseling students and NCCU students in other clinical programs such as communications disorders and psychology. This course is designed to offer a broad conceptualization of personal loss/trauma and grief as a generic experience resulting from a variety of changes throughout the lifespan. Personal loss is therefore defined in this course as “any experience across the lifespan that demands the surrender of something personally significant and/or familiar”. This grounding loss definition teaches students to recognize multiple client issues as concerns of loss, including

but not limited to death events. Personal loss is an inevitable and universal human experience with the power to imprint its impact upon an individual's life and become an influencing factor in his/her development. The influence either promotes or retards development, functioning, and resilience depending upon how loss is accommodated and incorporated into the psychological structure of the affected individual.

The class educates students in the recognition of client issues of personal loss/trauma and equips them with knowledge necessary to promote healthy reconciliation of change. Areas of discussion include: theories of transitions across the lifespan; the impact of crisis, disaster, and trauma events upon affected persons; the major theoretical models of crisis intervention and mourning; the exploration of developmental differences in the way grief is experienced; the principles and skills of counselors dealing with those in trauma and crisis; the impact of diversity upon the individual's experience of grief; *compassion fatigue* for caregivers; and the best practice diagnostic and clinical interventions for situations of uncomplicated and complicated grief. This course assumes a familial and environmental context of grieving. The course is founded upon the premise of an individual's evolving personal narrative, a social story of identity and meaning within one's life. Loss reconciliation unfolds when an individual can successfully expand the narrative to add greater depth of meaning of life experiences, including those of grief and trauma.

This is not a sociology course on death and dying. The spirit of the class is to teach clinical persons the best intervention practices in client issues of personal trauma, crisis, and grief.

The power of the material of this course often prompts recollection of very personal loss situations. As *reflective practitioners*, I encourage each of us to come to know our own grief sources and processes. We will experiment with some means for encouraging grief expression in ourselves and in our clients. While it is healthy, appropriate, and unavoidable to reflect upon the learning from our own lives, it is critical to understand the educational intention of this context. Personal experiences can be rich illustrations of the content of the class. Confronting our own grief allows us to *presence* with others in an uncontaminated way. This is, however, an educational learning environment that is separate from a more therapeutic method of assisting with a personal grief journey. As the instructor, I assume the responsibility of protecting the educational goal of the course. Should you find yourself in need of greater support regarding your own losses, please consult with the university counseling center or the instructor for outside referral options.

### **Methods of Teaching:**

Students will learn through video lectures, reading, active interaction in the discussion boards, and through the use of a variety of technological instruction methodologies. The course will utilize online instruction through the Blackboard platform. Students will be expected to assume responsibility for independent learning. Students will be active learners as they demonstrate knowledge, competencies, and skills. It is my belief that learner success is linked to learner engagement. I strive to offer research-based knowledge, evidence-based practice interventions,

higher order rigorous and reflective learning and to do so within the safety of an online community of learners.

### **CACREP Standards Addressed in Course:**

This class responds to the counseling national standards listed in Section II. These include curricular experiences and demonstrated knowledge in the areas of roles and responsibilities as members of crisis management response teams (G.1.c); theories of transitions across the lifespan (G.3.a); effects of crises, disaster, & trauma events (G.3.c); understanding of developmental crises, disability, addictive behavior, psychopathology, and environmental factors as they affect both normal and abnormal behavior (G.3.f); and crisis intervention and suicide prevention models, including the use of psychological first aid strategies (G.5.g). Additionally, this course responds to the specialty standards for clinical mental health counseling including understanding of the impact of crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events (A.9); understanding of the operation of an emergency management system (A.10); understanding of the principles of crisis intervention (C.6); understanding the appropriate use of diagnosis during crises (K.5); and differentiation between diagnosis and developmentally appropriate reactions to crises (L.3).

### **Specific Student Learning Outcomes and Assessments:**

The content and experiences of this course are sequenced such that students will be able to:

- **Discover and evaluate the effects of loss, crisis, and trauma events throughout the lifespan.** This will be assessed through the narrative interview and the case examples within the in-class exercises throughout the course. (CACREP G.3.c; CMHC A.9)
- **Identify the particular losses precipitated by chronological, situational, and developmental transitions and events of trauma & crisis throughout the lifespan.** This will be assessed through examinations and case examples throughout the course. (CACREP G.3.a & f)
- **Research & apply the major theoretical models of grief/trauma and crisis.** This will be assessed through the written examinations, the trauma assessment, and the required narrative interview. (CACREP G.5.g; CMHC C.6)
- **Delineate the operation of an emergency management system within the community.** This will be assessed through the class assignment that reviews the emergency agencies – their roles, responsibilities, and training. (CACREP G.1.c; CMHC A.10)
- **Observe and assess individual variations to grief reactions including the cultural, ethnic, gender, and familial contexts of mourning and the mediating factor of social support.** This will be assessed through the written examinations, the narrative interview, the stress and social support assessments, and the case illustrations included in the class exercises. (CACREP G.3.f)

- **Articulate the journey of reconciliation as understood in the professional research and clinical practice.** This will be assessed through the written examinations, the trauma assessment, and the stress and social support assessments. (CACREP G.5.g; CMHC K.5 & L.3)
- **Utilize an intervention modality that is developmentally appropriate and includes psychological first aid for crisis/trauma intervention and grief counseling with individuals and groups.** This will be assessed through case examples, application demonstrations, all clinical assessments, the narrative interview, and through the examinations. (CACREP G.5.g; CMHC K.5 & L.3)
- **Apply diagnostic criteria and skills for distinguishing between issues of uncomplicated vs. complicated grief and grief counseling vs. grief therapy.** This will be assessed through the trauma assessment, the stress and social support assessments, the case examples, and the narrative interview. (CMHC K.5 & L.3)
- **Access professional organizations, journals, crisis management resources, and clinical methodologies.** This will be assessed through the examinations and the class exercises that require students to access grief resources and writings. (CACREP G.1.c; CMHC A.10, C.6)

#### **Specific Course Assignments and Evaluation Criteria:**

- **Readings:** Each student will complete all assigned texts and other readings as given in class.
- **Dispositions:** Each student will demonstrate dispositions consistent with an inclusive, multicultural, and ethical professional role in promoting well-being, healthy relationships, academic success, and career mastery.
- **Attendance:** Each student is expected to complete all scheduled weekly activities and be prepared and willing to participate in discussion boards and class exercises. If you miss more than two weeks of assigned modules you will be dropped from the course. **The last day to withdraw from a class with a WC grade is October 7th.**
- **Weekly Quizzes:** Each student is expected to complete 10 point quizzes on the assigned readings and content for most weeks. These will be timed quizzes and no makeup quizzes will be offered. (10 quizzes @ 10 points each = 100 total points).
- **Examinations:** Each student is expected to successfully complete a mid-term examination and a final examination (worth 100 points each-200 total points).
- **Narrative Interviews:** Each student is expected to complete one narrative interview to gain experience with listening and responding to persons affected by past crisis and loss. Instructions and a grading rubric will be given as the course unfolds. (worth 50 points).

- **Class exercises:** Each student is expected to complete four class assignments that relate to the major modules of the class. These exercises will include an experiential journal, a trauma assessment of an individual client, completion of stress and social support assessments, and case examples of treatment methodologies with clients in grief. These will be assigned at strategic weeks during the semester. (worth 25 points each- 100 total points).
- **Discussion Boards:** Each student is expected to complete discussion board assignments. Individual assignment of topics will be given for a particular week. (10 points x 12 weeks). These topics include discussions of diverse expressions, emergency management systems, resources for various age groups, psychological first aid interventions, assessments & at-risk profiles, and special issues and populations such as military families, expressive arts interventions, suicide/homicide survivorship, and parents losing children. Additionally, each student will be expected to keep a reflective journal. This journal will be used as a means to augment the cognitive aspect of the course by using experiential prompts to deepen the student’s understanding of the material.

**Grading Scale:**

**Written assignments will be weighted as follows:**

Class exercises (4 @ 25 pts. each)	= 100 total Points
Weekly Quizzes (10 @ 10 pts. each)	= 100 total Points
Written examinations (2@100 pts. each)	= 200 total Points
Narrative Interview	= 50 total Points
Discussion Boards (10 points x 12 weeks)	= 120 total Points
 Total Points	 = 570 total Points

**Final Grading on Written Assignments:**

513 - 570 Total Points	=	A
456 - 512 Total Points	=	B
399 - 455 Total Points	=	C
Below 399 Total Points	=	F

**ACADEMIC HONESTY REMINDER:**

North Carolina Central University views academic honesty as a critical value protecting the transmission of knowledge. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation and includes providing/receiving unauthorized assistance with papers, projects, and exams; presenting, as one’s own, another’s words/ideas without acknowledgement; presenting the same papers/projects for credit in two classes without explicit professor permission; and using undocumented internet information. Academic dishonesty will result in a grade of “F” in the course.

### **Student Disability Services**

Students with disabilities (physical, learning, psychological, chronic medical, etc.) who would like to request accommodations and services are required to register with the Office of Student Disability Services (SDS) in Suite 120 in the Student Services Building. Please contact the SDS Staff at (919) 530-6325 or email [sds@nccu.edu](mailto:sds@nccu.edu). If you are NEW to SDS, please contact the office for an appointment. If you had accommodations previously, you can resubmit a request by visiting our website at [www.nccu.edu/sds](http://www.nccu.edu/sds) and clicking on the **Accommodate Link**. Students are expected to update their accommodations each semester, preferably during the first 2 weeks of each semester.

### **Student Support/Ombudsperson**

The Student Ombudsperson is available to assist students in navigating unexpected life events, (e.g. short-term illness/injury, loss of a loved one, personal crises) and guide them to the appropriate University or community resources. Students may also receive assistance with resolving some emergency financial concerns, understanding NCCU policies or general problem-solving strategies. Schedule an appointment by contacting the Student Ombudsperson in the Office of the Dean of Students, G-06 Student Services Building, at (919) 530-7492 or [bsimmons@nccu.edu](mailto:bsimmons@nccu.edu).

### **VETERANS SERVICES:**

*One of the goals of the faculty and the NCCU Veterans Affairs Office's (VAO) is to provide a welcoming and supportive learning experience for veterans. Specifically, the VAO's primary goal is to provide a smooth transition from military to college life for veterans, service members, and dependents. If you wish, please contact your professor and/or the Director of the VAO during the first weeks of class so that we may support and assist you. During your matriculation, the VAO is here to assist you with the VA Educational Benefits process and offer overall support to ensure academic progression towards graduation. For more information please contact the VAO at 919-530-5000 or [veteransaffairs@nccu.edu](mailto:veteransaffairs@nccu.edu).*

### **BLACKBOARD:**

This class will utilize the campus "Blackboard" system. You will be required to log on to the Blackboard system in order to fulfill all assignments during the semester (e.g., complete discussion boards, submit assignments, obtain handouts). If you have questions about your Blackboard (Bb) account, please call Bb or the IT department **first** at 919-530-7676. The instructor will use only your NCCU email address for contact.

### **FOLIOTEK:**

Foliotek is the electronic system for housing samples of your best work used by the School of Education and our Department. The Counseling Program students **ONLY** will be required to upload assignments from this class into their electronic Foliotek portfolio. This announcement is to provide clarification of how this will work.

**TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE & TOPICS** (*subject to change by instructor*).

The class weeks will run from the first Sunday night at 11:59 pm (August 14<sup>th</sup>) until the following Sunday night at 11:59 pm. Assignments, readings, handouts, journal explanations, & videos will be organized by weeks and may be found under *weekly modules and course content*. What is listed here is a topical outline with examination, quiz, and assignment due dates. Weekly readings will be posted for that particular week under course content.

- **Week 1**  
**Aug. 14th** Course expectations/introductions  
What is death education?
- **Week 2**  
**Aug. 21st** Grounding Definitions including loss, grief, crisis, trauma, reconciliation, narrative construction, healing of grief, outcomes of grief/trauma. ADEC Introduction and credentialing of grief counselors/educators. The intrinsic nature of the grief/trauma experience. Offering *presence* and *companionship* to grieving persons.  
**QUIZ #1.**
- **Week 3**  
**Aug. 28th** The historical evolution of grief theory and knowledge; Contemporary models of grief & trauma – research & practice  
**QUIZ #2.**
- **Week 4**  
**Sept. 4th** Reconciliation needs, diverse variations in grief, social support as a mediating factor.  
**QUIZ #3. Class Exercise 1**
- **Week 5**  
**Sept. 11th** Types of individual and group crisis events...acute, anticipated, catastrophic.  
**QUIZ #4.**
- **Week 6**  
**Sept. 18th** More on types of individual and group crisis events.  
**Class Exercise 2. NARRATIVE INTERVIEW DUE.**
- **Week 7**  
**Sept. 25th** Developmental perspectives on grieving – children, adolescents, adults of all ages. **EXAM 1**
- **Week 8**  
**Oct. 2nd** More on developmental perspectives  
**QUIZ #5.**
- **Week 9**  
**Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>** Crisis Intervention Principles; Crisis across the lifespan; Psychological First Aid; **QUIZ #6**



- **Week 10-11** **Fall Break – October 17-18th**  
**Oct. 16-29th** Military Culture & Trauma; School crisis response; Emergency Management – systems & principles  
**QUIZ #7.**
  
- **Week 12**  
**Oct. 30th** Complicated vs. uncomplicated clinical interventions.  
**QUIZ #8.**
  
- **Week 13**  
**Nov. 6th** DSM Indications/PTSD; Assessment and treatment planning.  
**QUIZ #9. Class Exercise 3**
  
- **Week 14**  
**Nov. 13th** Expressive arts interventions  
**QUIZ #10.**
  
- **Weeks 15**  
**Nov. 20th** Rituals of Closure. **Class Exercise 4**
  
- **Week 16**  
**Nov. 27<sup>th</sup>–**  
**Dec. 2nd** **FINAL EXAM – written exam and case example**

### **Selected References:**

- Balk, D.E. (2014). *Dealing with dying, death, and grief during adolescence*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Balk, D.E., & Corr, C.A. (2009). *Adolescent encounters with death, bereavement, and coping*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company.
- Becvar, D.S. (2001). *In the presence of grief: Helping family members resolve death, dying, and bereavement issues*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- Beder, J. (2004). *Voices of bereavement: A casebook for grief counselors*. New York, NY: Brunner-Routledge.
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- Bradley, L. J., Whiting, P. P., Hendricks, B., & Wheat, L. S. (2010). Ethical imperatives for intervention with elder families. *The Family Journal*, 18(2), 215-221.
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- D'Andrea, M., Daniels, J., Heck, R., & Whiting, P. (1992). The factor analytic structure of personal loss. *Journal of Measurement & Evaluation in Counseling & Development*, 25, 121-132.
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- Doka, K. J., & Martin, T. L. (2010). *Grieving beyond gender: Understanding the ways men and women mourn* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Routledge
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- Freeman, S. M., Moore, B. A., & Freeman, A. (Eds.). (2009). *Living and surviving in harm's way: A psychological treatment handbook for pre-and post-deployment*

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