

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
PCP 626 Dying, Grief, and Crisis Counseling

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COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course assists pastors, chaplains, counselors and other helping professionals develop a practical theology of death related to biblical, cultural, and psychological insights. It encourages coming to grips with one's own mortality to enrich one's life. It helps the student offer care and counseling to the terminally ill, the bereaved, and their families.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this course are to equip pastors, chaplains, counselors and other helping professionals to deal effectively with the crises surrounding the experiences of death and dying. The course aims to present these concepts from an integrated psycho-social and spiritual framework and to help students to integrate the various theoretical perspectives into a personal strategy of intervention.

Upon completion of this course students should be able to:

1. Describe the psycho-social-spiritual dynamics of grief as a normal emotional reaction to personal loss.
2. Evaluate, from a Biblical worldview, the various therapeutic interventions to deal with grief.
3. Develop an effective, personal counseling intervention strategy to assist persons in their grieving process who have lost their children, spouses and/or other significant persons.
4. Summarize the psycho-social-spiritual dynamics of the dying patient.
5. Evaluate, from a Biblical worldview, the various therapeutic interventions available to assist the dying patient.
6. Develop an effective, personal counseling intervention strategy to assist dying patients and their families.
7. Recognize the signs of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and be able to provide an appropriate pastoral response.
8. Evaluate their own psycho-social-spiritual presuppositions about their own mortality and deal with any unresolved issues of grief.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Rando, Therese A. (1964). *Grief, Dying and Death: Clinical Interventions for Caregivers*.
Champaign, IL: Research Press.

Lawrenz, Mel. (1996). *Overcoming Grief and Trauma*. Grand Rapids: Baker.

METHODOLOGY

The course will consist of class lectures and discussions, student research presentations, presentations by guest speakers, and the use of various audio visual aids. During the semester students will be expected to augment classroom experiences with field trips to a funeral home, a hospital, and a cemetery.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Classroom attendance, punctuality and **spontaneous participation** in discussions will be a requirement.
2. A series of **classroom tests** will be presented as sections of work are completed.
3. Students will be expected to do a **research review** of at least 4 articles in the academic literature that illustrates aspects of the theory or practice covered in this course. The articles must relate to one another, or inform a specific theme presented in the course. The student will present the review in a paper that does not exceed 6 typed pages and wherein a summary of this research is presented. In addition to a review of this research, a conclusion must illustrate how this research is relevant and/or applicable to your proposed, future counseling practice.
4. Students will be expected to prepare a **written sermon** that could be used in a memorial service (or a funeral) **or a lecture** that could be used with a community or church group to inform them on any subject covered in this class. The presentation should not exceed 6 pages.
5. Students will be expected to present **two personal reflections** of 2 to 3 pages each on their experience of a visit or an interviews that they have arranged with two of the following:
 - a. A visit to a funeral parlor or an interview with personnel of a funeral parlor,
 - b. A visit to a terminal care hospice or an interview with personnel who work in such a hospice,
 - c. A visit to a person who is terminally ill in the hospital or an interview with a chaplain or critical care personnel working in such a unit in the hospital,
 - d. A person who has experienced the loss of a significant loved one in the past year.
6. Final **exam**.

GRADING PROCEDURE: The course grade will be determined as follows:

Class attendance and spontaneous participation in class activities	10%
Classroom tests	25%
Research review	20%

Sermon or lecture on death and dying	10%	
Two personal reflections on death and dying		10%
Final Exam		25%

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