

Faculty profile - Dr. Darcy Harris

Dr. Darcy Harris has worked in the areas of cancer care, hospice, grief counselling, and caregiver support as clinician, administrative leader, researcher, and educator throughout her career. She has published numerous books and articles on topics related to coping with loss, change, and grief, and she is a frequent speaker and presenter on topics for professionals and supportive care organizations.



Dr. Harris' current research interests include issues in grief and loss, non-death losses and grief, professional issues for caregivers, and the role of compassion in care delivery organizations.

Dr. Harris is currently involved in a number of community and professional organizations. She has served on the board of directors for the Association for Death Education and Counselling. She is the past chair and a current member of the London Grief and Loss Resource Committee, and she is a member of the International Work Group on Death, Dying, and Bereavement. She is a faculty member of the Portland Institute for Loss and Transition, and she is also a recipient of the Death Educator award from the Association for Death Education and Counselling.

Dr. Harris is passionate about ensuring that education be informed by current research and trends in the field, while also being relevant and applicable to students as they explore future career possibilities and move forward in their everyday lives.



CONTACT US

King's University College at Western University
Phone: 519-433-3491
Toll Free: 1-800-265-4406
Website: www.kings.uwo.ca/thanatology

Join our Facebook group: Thanatology Club



KING'S

Thanatology



A Place to **Be**. A Place to **Become**.



Thanatology

The Thanatology program is unique to King's; it is the only university in North America to offer a BA in Thanatology. The program gives students several degree options such as a major, combining it with another discipline for an honours double major, or a minor in Thanatology while majoring in a complementary subject (i.e., CSI, SJP or Psychology). Many of our courses are available on-line, and our program incorporates various teaching modalities including in-class instruction, blended learning and experiential learning.

The department offers a wide variety of courses including an overview of bereavement and grief, ethical issues, palliative care, suicide, children and death, spiritual and philosophical issues, change and transition, popular culture, grief and trauma, and diversity and social justice. In addition, the program offers a practicum course, which includes a 45-hour field placement, and a grief counselling course, which involves experiential learning of basic counselling skills.

Interested students can also join the Thanatology club, whose goal is to provide educational opportunities and networking to students through interactive social settings. They have hosted a Death Cafe, provided interactive workshops for high schools, visited relevant sites, and sponsored invited speakers to come to club meetings.



Courses

The introductory Thanatology courses (Thanatology 1025A/B and Thanatology 2225A/B) are designed to introduce students to the various specialized courses and topics that are offered within the department. These survey courses include a wide range of topics dealing with death, grief, and loss, including:

- Understanding death awareness and attitudes
- Ethical issues at end of life care
- Palliative care
- Issues for professionals working in related fields
- How children cope with grief and loss
- The role of the media in tragic events
- Understanding suicide
- Portrayals of death and grief in popular culture/social media
- Current trends in the funeral industry
- Non-death losses and grief, including losses that occur in everyday life

Anyone interested in learning more about grief and loss is welcome to take the introductory courses.

Also, given the interdisciplinary nature of Thanatology, students in other programs of study find Thanatology to be a highly informative addition to their program, as learning to cope with loss and change are fundamental to many of the challenges that we face in life.

Career options

A degree in Thanatology prepares students to pursue graduate education or work in many fields. Students from our program have developed careers in health care, counselling, spiritual care, research and education. In addition, students from our program have gone on to pursue further education in various areas including:

- Social Work
- Nursing
- Child Life Specialist
- Counselling Psychology
- Pastoral Counselling
- Education (teacher's college)
- Hospice & Palliative Care

From our Alumni

Thanatology does not just prepare you for understanding the field, but it is a tool to understand yourself and the social issues. Choosing to study Thanatology gives you a different perspective on how loss and death are imperative to understand life. Not only is the program



full of successful academics prominent in the field, but the Thanatology faculty are ignited by their passions which makes students like me passionate about entering the field and finding their calling in dying, death, loss and bereavement.

--Elizabeth Hauspie '21

