



Thanatology 2231G (670)
Winter 2026

Bereavement and Grief: Overview & Interventions

Course Information:

Calendar Description: A study of bereavement and grief, with a review of topics such as attachment theory, the normal course of grief, current research and trends in bereavement theory and interventions, factors influencing the grief response, and specific types of loss and specific populations and grief.

Prerequisite(s):

Anti-requisite(s):

Extra Information: 3 lecture hours.

Course Weight:0.50 **Breadth:** Category A

Subject Code: THANAT

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary pre-requisites.

Kings University College at Western University
Thanatology 2231F (570): Bereavement and Grief: Overview and Interventions
Winter 2026

Instructor: Dr. Adrienne Sauder
Email: asauder5@uwo.ca

Office Hours: Virtually by appointment

Course Description

This course will explore the adjustment to change, transition, and loss from the perspective of bereavement theory and research. Students will examine concepts relevant to a variety of losses which are not necessarily associated with a death event, but which are associated with grief and adjustment issues. Topics such as non-finite loss, chronic sorrow, ambiguous loss, and non-death loss will be explored for their unique aspects. Relevant issues such as infertility, aging, loss of functionality, chronic illness and degenerative conditions, divorce and separation, immigration, adoption, and loss of employment will be included in course discussions and materials.

Course Objectives

1. Identify and describe death and non-death losses across the lifespan.
2. Discuss traditional and contemporary theories related to grief and bereavement.
3. Define concepts such as chronic sorrow, complicated grief, non-finite loss, ambiguous loss, tangible and intangible losses, and non-death loss.
4. Situate everyday loss experiences and grief responses to loss within broader societal and political contexts.
5. Reflect upon and analyze their own losses using scholarly works.
6. Discuss common interventions in supporting the bereaved.

Class Format ONLINE ASYNCHRONOUS

Structure of the Course

This online course begins on Monday, January 5, 2026, and continues until Monday, April 6, 2026, honouring all important dates derived from University approved guidelines and academic policies (<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/academic-dates-and-events/>).

This course is delivered entirely online and asynchronous, allowing you to engage with the material on your own schedule within weekly deadlines. For the purposes of this course, each week runs from Monday through Sunday. Course learning occurs through lecture slides, readings, and occasional videos designed to promote critical and reflective thinking. To make the most of the course, it is essential to complete all required materials each week and participate actively in online learning activities.

Participation includes contributing thoughtfully to discussion forums, asking relevant questions, offering constructive critiques, and engaging with your peers' perspectives. While the course is self-paced week to week, meaningful learning depends on your consistent engagement with both the content and the class community. The responsibility for creating a successful learning experience is shared by all participants—students and instructor alike. I trust that you will take an active role in fostering a thoughtful, respectful, and engaging online environment for everyone.

Texts and Readings

Required:

McCoyd, J. L. M., Koller, J. M., & Walter, C. A. (2021). *Grief and loss across the lifespan: A biopsychosocial perspective* (3rd ed.). Springer Publishing. (Cost \$94. Used text is acceptable.)

AND

ONE of the following for the book review (your choice, though you are welcome to read all four).

- Bacon, A., & Miller, N. (2012). *Griefland: An intimate portrait of love, loss, and unlikely friendship*. Globe Pequot Press. (Cost \$20. Used text is acceptable.)
- Bialosky, J. (2011). *History of a suicide: My sister's unfinished life*. Washington Square Press. (Cost \$14-46 depending on format. Used text is acceptable.)
- Deraniyagala, S. (2013). *Wave*. Vintage Books. (Cost \$22. Used text is acceptable.)
- Gilbert, A., & Baker Kline, C. (2006). *Always too soon: Voices of support for those who have lost both parents*. Seal Press. (Cost \$29. Used text is acceptable.)

Strongly Recommended Text (*used in all Thanatology courses*)

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). (Cost: \$40-65 depending on format. Used text is acceptable.)

Evaluation

1. Discussion Forum Posts (8 of 10) and Responses	20%
2. Personal Loss Assignment	30%
3. Book Review/Theory Integration Assignment	30%
4. Final Exam	20%

Discussion Forum Posts and Responses

As part of the course, students are expected to contribute regularly to the online discussion forums. These posts are an opportunity to reflect on course content, engage with peers, and apply critical thinking. While weekly participation is encouraged, students are required to complete a minimum of **8 posts** over the term. At least **3 of these posts must be submitted in video format** (2–4 minutes), allowing you to practice communicating your ideas verbally as well as in writing. Posts should be thoughtful, clearly connected to course material, and demonstrate engagement with the week's topic or readings. You are welcome to respond to classmates in addition to posting your own reflections—**meaningful, thoughtful peer responses may earn additional points**, particularly if they extend the conversation or offer new perspectives.

Each weekly discussion forum will open **one week prior to the due date**, giving you ample time to read, reflect, and prepare your post. Posts must be submitted by **11:59pm on Monday** of the assigned week to receive full credit. Forums will remain open for viewing and peer responses until **Friday at 11:59pm**, at which point they will lock and no further contributions will be accepted. Be sure to plan ahead, as late posts cannot be accommodated once the forum has closed.

In this online course, there will be opportunities to share personal experiences and reflections through discussion forums and other assignments. When doing so, it is essential to respect the vulnerability and

integrity of others' contributions, which may involve sensitive or painful experiences. While personal narratives are welcome, please be mindful of the boundaries of self-disclosure and the relevance of shared content to course material. As this is an academic course, all students are expected to meet the course requirements to a high standard. Personal experiences, while valuable, do not replace the need for consistent effort, critical engagement, and scholarly work. Please also note that while this is an online setting, you are expected to treat your peers' contributions with confidentiality and respect.

Personal Loss Assignment (due February 23, 2026 by 5:00pm)

This assignment will be 8-10 written pages PLUS a title page and reference page. As a means to encourage creativity, students will also include a PowerPoint, video, or other visual format (photo, drawing, painting, collage, concept map, etc.) to represent their own loss timeline. Further guidelines are available on OWL under Assignments.

Book Review/Theory Integration Assignment (due April 6, 2026 by 5:00pm)

This assignment will be 9-10 written pages PLUS a title page and reference page. Students will select one book to review from a predetermined list (see Texts and Readings above). Further guidelines are available on OWL under Assignments.

Final Exam (date TBD; online; 2 hours in length)

This exam will be scheduled and written during the April exam period. This exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions and will cover material from the entire term. Students are responsible for material covered in the lecture slides, all supplementary readings on OWL, and the assigned chapters in our textbook.

****Tokens****

All students have one (1) "token" which can be used to have a 2-day extension on any written assignment (not including discussion posts) as long as Dr. Sauder is notified by email no later than the day the assignment is due (no explanation or documentation required).

***Instructions regarding assignments** - Evaluation for all assignments will include professionalism, academic integrity, and adherence to APA formatting (7th ed.). Regular assignments are due by 5:00pm on the date indicated unless an extension is granted **prior** to the deadline. All written assignments turned into OWL via the assignment tab **must be in Word format (not pdf or any other format)**. If submitted in any other format, it will be marked as late and the student will be asked to resubmit.

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

A+	90–100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80–89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70–79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60–69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50–59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

Late Penalties

Normally, the only acceptable reasons for late or missed assignments are illness (for which a doctor's note may be required) or extreme compassionate circumstances. Unexcused late assignments will be penalized as

follows: Assignments handed in after 5:00pm but no later than 11:55pm on the due date will lose 2%. Assignments handed in a day late will lose an additional 3%. After that, an additional 5% per day penalty will apply and assignments will not be accepted more than 7 days after the due date unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.

Policy Re: Make-Up Exams and Extensions of Deadlines

If, on medical or compassionate grounds, you are unable to write a midterm test or final examination or complete course work by the due date, you should follow the instructions below. In addition, you must demonstrate that there are compelling medical or compassionate grounds that can be documented **before** academic accommodation will be considered.

You should understand that **academic accommodation will not be granted automatically on request**. Instructors are under no obligation to offer more than one opportunity to write a make-up exam. Please note that any requests for discretion by the instructor will be decided on the basis of the issue that is brought to the instructor's attention and the instructor's obligation to ensure fairness to all students in the classroom. The instructor will not agree to any concessions or accommodations that would be unfair to the other students in the class.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

AI and Chat GPT. King's is committed to fostering a culture of professionalism, honesty, and academic integrity, and all members of our community—faculty, staff, and students—have a role to play in promoting an ethical learning environment. Furthermore, through the work they submit for academic evaluation, students develop important habits of critical thinking, independent inquiry, and creativity. Thus, it is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor.

Within this course, use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools [such as Chat GPT] is not permitted for written work submitted for evaluation.

Western's scholastic discipline policy can be found [here](#).

Email Etiquette. Email is for short answers or setting up appointments. If you have content- or course-based problems, please email me to set up a Zoom appointment. In the **email subject line**, please include the course that you are emailing about (THAN 2231G).

Please consider how you address me in your salutation. This is an academic class and I am your professor. Also, consider the tone of your email. I will respond to your email **within 2 business days**. If you have not heard from me **after** 2 business days, then please feel free to contact me again. I will not respond to emails over the weekend.

To ensure you have thoroughly reviewed the course syllabus and are familiar with its contents, please complete the following task: By the start of our second week (5:00pm on Jan 12, 2026), please send an email to Dr. Sauder (asauder5@uwo.ca) that includes the title and artist of your favourite song from the 1990s and explains why it is your fav song. Ensure your name and the course code is in the email subject line. This brief task serves both as confirmation of your engagement with the syllabus and as an introduction to me

about you and your musical preferences and will earn you a 2% bonus to your final grade. Failure to complete this task by the stated deadline will not result in any penalty.

Note on Changing Marks. Marks will not be changed.

If a student seeks to change their grade without legitimate ground for such changes they will be directed to the Academic Dean's Office.

I know students are in the habit of sharing and comparing marks. I don't encourage this because it just causes problems and competition between one another. Do not worry about what grades other students receive. Your work is not being graded against the quality of work that is presented by other students. Please do not tell the instructor how to grade other students. I will only discuss your marks with you, not another student's marks.

Drop Date

The final date to drop a half course without academic penalty is **March 30, 2026**.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 – January 5, 2026: Course Introduction/Grief and Loss – Theories and Context

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-28)

Week 2 - January 12, 2026: Perinatal Attachment and Loss

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 2 (pp. 29-57)

Week 3 - January 19, 2026: Infancy, Toddlerhood, and Preschool

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 3 (pp. 59-78)

Week 4 – January 26, 2026: Elementary School-Age Children

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 4 (pp. 79-106)

Week 5 – February 2, 2026: Tweens and Teens

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 5 (pp. 107-129)

Week 6 - February 9, 2026: Emerging Adults

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 6 (pp. 131-156)

Reading Week – February 16 -20, 2026 – NO CLASS

Week 7 – February 23, 2026: Young Adulthood

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 7 (pp. 157-176)

****Personal Loss Assignment due****

Week 8 – March 2, 2026: Middle Adulthood

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 8 (pp. 177-203)

Week 9 - March 9, 2026: Retirement and Reinvention

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 9 (pp. 205-226)

Week 10 - March 16, 2026: Young-Old Adulthood: The Third Age

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 10 (pp. 227-246)

Week 11 - March 23, 2026: Older Adulthood: The Fourth Age

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Chapter 11 (pp. 247-267)

Week 12 – March 30, 2026: Assessments and Interventions

McCoyd, Koller, & Walter, Conclusions (pp. 269-278)

Week 13 – April 6, 2026: Exam Review

****Book Review/Theory Integration Assignment due****

April Final Exam

Date: To Be Scheduled

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf.

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a "Multiple Exam Situation" (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College:

<http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

GBSV Support:

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with you instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.