



Thanatology 3607A/B
Winter 2026
Therapeutic Modalities in Loss and Grief

Course Information:

Calendar Description: Students will have an opportunity to become familiar with current research and clinical practices that relate to various loss and grief experiences.

Prerequisite(s):

Anti-requisite(s):

Extra Information: 3 hours, 8 weeks online with a required weekend workshop (9AM to 4 PM both days), plus one exam day TBA.

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.

King's University College
Western University

THANATOLOGY 3607B 270
Therapeutic Modalities in Loss & Grief ~ COURSE OUTLINE
Winter 2026

Instructor: Adam Koenig, M.A., R.P., C.C.C., CT
e-mail: akoenig@uwo.ca, office: TBD
Office hours: Online (In person or Zoom)

HOW TO CONTACT ME

Contact me by email akoenig@uwo.ca **and please include the class course number in the subject line**. I will try and return a response within at least 48 business hours Monday – Friday 9am-5pm

OFFICE HOURS

To be determined but virtual or in-person options available. Email akoenig@uwo.ca to determine time and meeting location.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

NOTE: This is a blended online/classroom course. The course will meet online for 8 weeks, followed by a MANDATORY weekend workshop from 9 AM to 4 PM on Saturday, March 7th and Sunday, March 8th, 2026. Failure to attend the entire weekend workshop will result in failure of the course. If you have registered for this course and are not available to attend this workshop, you need to drop this class in order to prevent failure of the course. Additionally, it is recommended that a student who is recently bereaved or has a terminally ill loved one consider not taking Thanatology 3607.

Students who are unable to attend the weekend workshop due to exceptionally extenuating circumstances, must then seek formal academic consideration from the academic advising office. If accommodation is recommended by the AAO, an incomplete mark will be assigned for the course with the requirement that the student complete the weekend workshop during the next time the course is offered in the subsequent academic year.

Students will have an opportunity to become familiar with current research and clinical practices that relate to various loss and grief experiences.

Unless you have either the requisite for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol 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 prerequisites.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify recent trends in the clinical support of individuals who have faced different types of loss experiences.

2. Delineate various theoretical orientations to situations of loss and grief.
3. Cite current research and literature related to therapeutic support of grieving individuals and groups.
4. Describe different therapeutic approaches in the field, including the origin, empirical background, and indications for each approach.
5. Define and describe the unique issues inherent in therapeutic support related to loss and grief.
6. Engage in experiential practice with various therapeutic modalities that may be useful with grieving individuals.
7. Identify aspects of growth and healing that may be possible after significant loss experiences.

Required There may be opportunities to present personal experiences and feelings to the class. We must respect each person's contribution of what may often be painful experiences (at the same time appropriate limits to self-disclosure or to the time allotted to individuals will be upheld when personal narratives are shared) and agree to hold each other's contributions **strictly confidential**. This is an academic course and all participants are required to complete the course requirements to a high standard in order to receive credit. One's strong feelings or experiences will not substitute for effort and academic achievement.

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Blended (i.e., Online via OWL and in-person for weekend workshop **MARCH 7th and 8th**). This course begins on January 5th and continues until March 9th, 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/>

COURSE MATERIALS

- Steffen, E., Milman, E., & Neimeyer, R.(Eds.). (2023). *The handbook of grief therapies*. Sage. (from \$59.24 and up)
- Any additional readings will be posted on the OWL site or web links will be provided to the readings from the UWO online library system.
- Subscription to **Netflix** video streaming services in order to watch episodes of *This is Us* (starts at \$7.99/month - \$23.99/month) or purchase DVDs season 1 (around \$18.20) and season 2 (around \$23.88)
 - o Access to **stable high-speed Internet** connection

Recommended

- *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 7th ed.*

Classes may include lectures, tv shows, videos, case study discussion, etc. and will include material not contained in the course readings. Supplementary reading material will also be assigned and will be placed on reserve in the library or posted on OWL. *No attempt will be made to cover all the assigned readings in class time. Students are responsible for reading and understanding the assigned portions of the textbook and supplementary reading list, even if this material is not covered in the class lectures.*

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Weekly Question Submissions

10%

Forum Participation	20%
<i>This Is Us</i> Reflective Journal	20%
Weekend Workshop	20%
Final Exam	30%

Weekly Questions Submission (10%)

By the end of each “lecture week” each student will submit a) **one** Multiple Choice quiz question with distractors based on lecture or reading content from that lecture week b) **one** short answer question with correct response based on lecture or reading content from that lecture week and c) a brief statement providing a rationale for why the answer noted is the correct response for each submitted question. Additional details will be provided on OWL. These questions will form part of the exam test bank that will be partially drawn from in creation of the final exam. Questions are to be created based on the lecture or reading content from the given lecture week. Grades will be assessed based on the 7 best submissions of 8 possible weeks. Because the submission deadlines for this assessment already include flexibility, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for missed submissions.

Forum Participation (20%)

Forum discussions are held through OWL. Participation in the discussion forums is critical for maximizing learning experiences in any distance education course. In this course students are required to be part of an online community of learners who collectively interact through discussion. Students will be expected to lead a week of forum discussion in smaller groups as well as actively engage with their group in the other designated forum discussion weeks. Your final mark will reflect your consistent participation, as well as the quality of each contribution. Details will be posted on OWL to review. Forum weeks are noted below. Because the submission deadlines for this assessment already include flexibility, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for missed participation.

Throughout the course you are expected to interact regularly with other students, course activities, and with me, as your instructor. The course is designed to structure and guide some self-paced elements as well as offer interactive opportunities for community learning. Each student brings their own knowledge, experience, and interests to our learning community, we will build on that and use our course material (readings, discussions, lessons, etc.) to amplify learning for everyone. We will each be responsible for our own learning progress and also for contributing to the growth of our learning community through our participation in all course activities and assessments. We will be ready to engage and connect meaningfully. We will be present, professional, respectful and ready to contribute to our group.

All students are expected to engage online in a professional and respectful manner. This includes all interactions with peers, as well as communication between TAs or your Professor. Failure to do so will result in academic discipline.

- Course content created by a faculty member is considered the faculty member’s intellectual property; it should not be distributed, shared in any public domain, or sold by a student or other third party without prior written consent of the faculty member

All assessment or examinations done online are expected to be done by the student registered in this course, following the instructions outlined by the Assignment

This is Us Reflective Journal (20%)

Weekly reflection questions will be posed to students and it is expected that students will complete them each week. Staying on top of journal entries will enable students to engage with the content and episodes more deeply enhancing content understanding as well as self-awareness development. Entries are to be submitted twice during the term. Weeks 1-5 reflections are due between February 10th 11:59pm and February 13th 11:59pm. Weeks 6-8 + After Weekend Workshop reflections are due between March 10th 11:59pm and March 13th 11:59pm. Because the submission deadlines for this assessment already include flexibility, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for this assignment.

Weekend Workshop (20%)

Students will attend a MANDATORY weekend workshop (Saturday March 7 and Sunday March 8, 2025 from 9am to 4pm) that is designed to integrated experiential components to enhance concepts learned throughout the course. The weekend workshops will be interactive and require students to work independently as well as in groups. Further details will be provided as the weekend approaches via OWL.

Final Exam (30%) (Date: TBD during Final Exam Period)

The in-person final Exam will assess knowledge from across the course including from lectures, text, videos, workshop content, and assigned readings. The final exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. *The final exam is cumulative.*

DROP DATE

The final date to drop a first-term half course without academic penalty is **Mar 30, 2026.**

ACADEMIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR ABSENCES, MISSED ASSESSMENTS

A student seeking academic considerations for any work worth less than 10% must contact the instructor. *Any absence for legitimate reasons will be dealt with by re-weighting the term work grade accordingly or setting a timeframe to submit work at a later date.* If documentation is required for either medical or non-medical academic accommodation, then such documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the appropriate Faculty Dean's Office and **not to the instructor**. Once the petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic consideration shall be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor. Whenever possible, students who require academic considerations should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. These documents will be retained in the student's file, and will be held in confidence in accordance with the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy. Once the petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic accommodation shall be determined by the Academic Counselling/Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s)

Attendance Policy

Any student, who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class will be reported to the Dean (after due warning has been given).

Debarment of Students from Writing the Final Examination

1. A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the academic year.
2. 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 the Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination (meaning they will be ineligible to write the final exam) Students who miss more than 3 classes will be recommended to be debarred from the final exam.

In addition, we must all contribute to the integrity of our learning environment and therefore it is important to arrive on time. Although it is understandable that during inclement weather, or having to commute among the various campuses can result in a few minutes delay, it is unacceptable to habitually arrive late for class.

Late assignments/Make-Up Exam

All assignments are to be submitted on the due date and time; The penalty is 5 marks/day late and papers that are more than 4 days late from the initial due date will receive 0%

Additionally:

A make-up exam will be offered to students if a student misses an exam and attains support from the [academic advising office](#) (when required)

1. Advise the instructor if you are having problems completing the assignment on time, prior to the due date of the assignment. When possible, illness and personal crises must be announced **prior to the deadline**.
2. **If seeking extensions for missed work or current circumstances, please consider the application for academic accommodation on [Medical/Compassionate](#) grounds from the academic advising office**
3. Be prepared to provide documentation.
4. AAO approved missed exam will have a make-up exam
5. If students are granted Academic Consideration, work will be due 2 days after the end of the period for which the student received Academic Consideration

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, at the following Web site:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Within this course, use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as ChatGPT, translation tools, and grammar-checking tools) is not permitted for written work submitted for evaluation. Unauthorized use of AI will be subject to academic discipline.

Notice of Turnitin Use: 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. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

LECTURE SCHEDULE & COURSE READINGS

Week 1: January 6th—Core Competencies and Foundational Concepts

Readings:

Text: Chapters 1, 2, and 3

Watch: *This Is Us - Sc 1 Ep 1 and 2*

Welcome Forum

Week 2: January 13th— Attachment Informed Grief Therapy and Continuing Bonds

Readings:

Text: Chapters 8 and 16

Watch: *This Is Us - Sc 1 Ep 3 and 4*

Forum #1

Week 3: January 20th: January 23rd—Brain, Body, and Psychoeducation

Readings:

O'Connor, M. F., Wellisch, D. K., Stanton, A. L., Eisenberger, N. I., Irwin, M. R., & Lieberman, M. D. (2008). Craving love? Enduring grief activates brain's reward center. *Neuroimage*, 42(2), 969-972.

Keller, E. R. (2023). Our bodies: Holders of upspoken grief. In R. B. Tuner & S. D. Stauffer (Eds.), *Disenfranchised grief: Examining social, cultural, and relational impacts* (pp. 42-58). Taylor & Francis Group. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/books/edit/10.4324/9781003292890/disenfranchised-grief-renee-blocker-turner-sarah-stauffer>

Watch: *This Is Us - Sc 1 Ep 5 and 6*

Forum #2

Week 4: January 27th -- Compassion Focused Grief Therapy and Emotion Regulation

Readings:

Text: Chapters 12 & 13

Gilbert, P. (2010). The three circles model: The interactions between different types of emotion. In Training our minds in, with and for compassion: An introduction to concepts and compassion-focused exercises (pp. 16-21). <https://www.getselfhelp.co.uk/docs/gilbert-compassion-handout.pdf>

Watch: *This Is Us - Sc 1 Ep 8 and 9*

Forum #3

Week 5: February 3rd— CBT and ACT

Readings:

Text: Chapter 10

Speedlin, S., Milligan, K., Haberstroh, S., & Duffey, T. (2016). Using Acceptance and Commitment Therapy to negotiate losses and life transitions. *Ideas and Research You Can Use: VISTAS 2016*; American Counseling Association. Link to article:

<https://manifold.counseling.org/read/using-acceptance-and-commitment-therapy-to-negotiate-losses-and-life-transitions/section/10042645-7fa4-4751-b317-bb3045e7dd5c>

Watch: *This Is Us - Sc 1 Ep 10 and 11*

Forum #4

Week 6: February 10th—Dignity Therapy and Narrative Oriented Approaches

Readings:

Text: Chapters 4 & 5

Chapter 2 - Grief, Health, and Racial Trauma: The Intersection of Personal and Collective Loss (pp. 21-39) +

Conclusion - Supporting the Invisible Majority in Grief through Decolonization, Social Justice, and Cultural Responsiveness (pp. 180-196)

in Williams, M. L. (2025). *Grief in the margins: Grief, loss, and resistance for the invisible majority*.

Watch: *This Is Us - Sc 1 Ep 12 and 16*

Week 7: Feb 14-22: READING WEEK

Optional but strongly encouraged to Watch: *This Is Us - Sc 2 Ep 2 and 8*

Week 8: February 24th—Working with Trauma

Readings:

Text: Chapters 11, 15, & 20

Watch: *This Is Us - Sc 2 Ep 13 and 14*

Forum #5

Week 9—March 3rd-- The Purpose and Value of Rituals, Symbols, and Linking Objects.

Readings:

Lewis, L., & Hoy, W. (2022). Bereavement rituals and the creation of legacy. In R. Neimeyer, D. Harris, H. Winokuer, & G. Thornton (Eds.), *Grief and bereavement in contemporary society: Bridging research and practice* (pp. 315-323). Routledge. <https://www-taylorfrancis->

com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003199762-29/bereavement-rituals-creation-legacy-laura-lewis-william-hoy?context=ubx&refId=2d4f64e6-7eab-4726-a399-34c8e9c8ae1

Doka, K. (2012). Therapeutic ritual. In R. A. Neimeyer (Ed.), *Techniques of grief therapy: Creative practices for counseling the bereaved* (pp. 481-485). Routledge.
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/west/detail.action?docID=981679&pq-origsite=primo>

Chew, J. (2021). Symbolic reframing. In R.A. Neimeyer (Ed.), *Techniques of grief therapy: Bereavement and beyond* (pp. 239-241). Routledge. <https://www-taylorfrancis-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781351069120-47/symbolic-reframing-judy-chew?context=ubx&refId=918c2905-9997-4478-bc1f-e6ae4bf20824>

Watch: *This Is Us* - Sc 2 Ep 15 and 18

Weekend Workshop March 7th and 8th 2026 from 9 AM to 4 PM

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/S_MC-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.

Please note that Friday Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent.

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 your 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](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.