



THANAT 2231F (670)
Bereavement and Grief: Overview and Interventions
Fall/Winter 2026 - 2027

Instructor: S. Smith
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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.

Antirequisite(s): None.

Prerequisite(s): None.

Extra Information: 3 lecture hours.

Course Weight: 0.5

Breadth: CATEGORY A

Subject Code: THANAT

Mode of Instruction: Online, asynchronous

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 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.

Bereavement and Grief: Overview and Interventions - THANAT 2231F 670

COURSE FORMAT 670 (online)

This is a fully online course that will use King's learning platform, OWL (Brightspace), and other educational resources based on the needs of the course. This class is designed to be **asynchronous**, meaning we will not have a regular, mandatory time when the entire class must be online. However, there will/may be some synchronous activities that you will sign up for based on your own schedule, including office hours or optional group Zoom discussions.

This course begins on **September 9** and continues until **December 9**, honouring all important dates derived from university approved guidelines and academic policies.

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

Throughout the course you are expected to interact regularly with other students, 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 through online discussions. 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.

Our commitment to each other:

We will each be responsible for our own learning progress and 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.

Welcome to our class!

ADDITIONAL CLASS POLICIES FOR ONLINE BEHAVIOR AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- All students are expected to engage online in a professional and respectful manner. This includes all interactions with peers, as well as communication with 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.

Bereavement and Grief: Overview and Interventions

Thanatology 2231F 670

Fall Distance 2026

Instructor: Sherry Smith, Ph.D., FT

Email: ssmit534@uwo.ca

Zoom Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00-2:00 PM by appointment

Course Location: Online

HOW TO CONTACT ME

Contact me by email ssmit534@uwo.ca and please include the class course number in the subject line. I will try to return a response within 24 business hours, Monday – Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

COURSE OVERVIEW

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

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

- Relate current bereavement theories to losses of various types.
- Situate everyday loss experiences and grief responses to loss within broader societal and political contexts.
- Define concepts of chronic sorrow, non-finite loss, ambiguous loss, tangible and intangible losses, and non-death loss.
- Develop an understanding of how loss is part of everyday life.
- Relate concepts of coping, adaptation, growth, meaning making, post traumatic growth and resilience to the grief process after losses occur throughout life.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIAL

- 1) McCoyd, J. L. M., Koller, J. M., & Walter, C. A. (2021). *Grief and loss across the lifespan: A biopsychosocial perspective* (3rd ed.). Springer Publishing. [\$129.99 Print]. [Library link for e-book with limited viewing \(three copies available\)](#)
- 2) Williams, M. L. (2025). *Grief in the margins*. Canadian Scholars. [\$39.95 Print]. [Library link for e-book with limited viewing \(one copy available\)](#)
- 3) Assigned online readings available on OWL.

RECOMMENDED TEXT (used in all Thanatology courses)

- 1) American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). [\$47.90 Print]. American Psychological Association.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION OF GRADES

Participation	20%
Petals & Stones Assignment	25%
Book Review	25%
Final Exam	30%

PARTICIPATION (20%)

Participation in the discussion forum 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. The instructor will facilitate discussions; however, the instructor or teaching assistant will not address every single post. In general, we might share a related idea, intervene if the discussion digresses, or connect student comments together to enhance student learning. Post as early as possible in the week so that others will have time to respond to your contributions. Be respectful of other people's ideas, opinions, and beliefs. It is fine to disagree but please respect others' rights to think differently. Discussions will be checked daily during the week and occasionally on weekends. Not participating in the discussion forums is the same as not showing up for class. Further details can be found on OWL Brightspace under "Course Introduction" – "Participation Rubric."

PETALS & STONES ASSIGNMENT (25%)

This assignment will be 7-10 pages PLUS a title page and reference page. As a means to encourage creativity, students will also include a Powerpoint, video or other visual and/or audio (photo, drawing, painting, collage, poem, song, etc.) to represent their own "Petals & Stones." This assignment is due October 21, 10:00 AM. Further guidelines are available on OWL under Assignments.

BOOK REVIEW (25%)

The book review will be 6-7 written pages PLUS a title page and reference page. Students will select one book to review from a predetermined list. It is due Wednesday November 18, 10:00 AM. Further guidelines and book selections are available on OWL under Assignments.

FINAL EXAM (30%)

The final exam will test the knowledge of the course materials. It will be comprised of short answer and essay style questions. The final exam is cumulative. Students are responsible for material covered in the lectures, all supplementary readings on OWL Brightspace as well as the assigned chapters in our textbook. The final exam will be scheduled during the regular examination period (December 11 – 22, 2026).

- **Please note that Friday Make-Up exams may only be written with instructor's consent.**
- **As of September 1, 2026, students will incur a fee of \$45.00 per make-up assessment booked with the Exam Office.**
- **As of September 1, 2026, for any Special Exams booked outside of the designated special exam days, students will incur a fee of \$75.00. The designated Special Exam Days for 2026-27 are January 8 and 9, 2027, and May 7 and May 12, 2027.**

ASSIGNMENT STYLE GUIDE

All graded assignments must be written using APA 7th Edition. Students should make use of these guidelines provided by King's University College with regards to style: [Thanatology: Writing & Citing](#) and [APA 7th Ed. Quick Guide](#)

LATE SUBMISSIONS

No late penalty will be imposed on the Petal & Stones Assignment and/or Book Review for the first 72 hours after deadlines, in case of extenuating circumstances. Students should plan to submit by the deadlines. Because the submission deadlines for this assessment already includes flexibility, the instructor reserves the right to deny academic consideration for assignments submitted past the 72-hour period. Students who cannot meet an assignment deadline are required to consult with the course instructor. This consultation must occur at least 48 hours *before* the assignment is due. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day and will not be accepted more than 5 days after the due date unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.

MODULES AND READINGS

Modules may include lectures, films, case study discussions, interactive exercises, etc. and will include material not contained in readings. Supplementary reading material may be assigned and posted on OWL. No attempt

will be made to cover all the assigned readings. Students are responsible for reading and understanding the assigned portions of the textbook and additional readings, even if this material is not covered in the lectures.

BOUNDARIES AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Bereavement and Grief: Overview and Interventions is an academic, university-level course. Students should note that the themes and personal sharing required for integration of the subject matter in this course may reawaken their personal grief process and feelings of vulnerability. While this course will be made richer by the sharing of personal narratives, it is not the purpose of this class to resolve emotions related to student life losses. If you have experienced recent bereavement or another significant loss, you might consider not taking THANAT 2231 at this time. Please see the instructor privately if you have any questions or concerns about the topics covered in this course. When required, students should seek professional support. Your instructor can provide more information about support available through King's.

While the course may contribute to the student's personal growth, grades will be assigned on the basis of academic achievement and mastery over the material covered. All participants are expected to complete the course requirements to a high standard in order to receive credit. While there may be opportunities to present personal experiences and feelings to the class, appropriate limits to self-disclosure or to the time allotted to individuals will be upheld when personal narratives are shared. All participants must agree to treat one another with respect and hold each other's contributions as *strictly confidential*.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY STATEMENT

Course content created by a faculty member is considered the faculty member's intellectual property; distribution of this material outside of the course (shared online or in any public domain, sold by a student or other third party without prior written consent of the faculty member) is explicitly forbidden and is grounds for academic discipline.

TURNITIN

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>).

AI AND CHATGPT USE

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, Claude, Gemini, co-pilot, 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.**

The final day to drop the course without academic penalty is November 30, 2026.

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

COURSE SCHEDULE, TEXTBOOK READINGS AND DUE DATES

September 9

Reading:

Course Introduction & Grief and Loss – Theories and Context

- (1) Hilliker, L. E., & Baugher, B. (2026). Naming the Pain: Grief-Ism, Grief-Ist, and the Linguistics of Loss. *Illness, Crisis, and Loss*, 34(3), 414-427.
- (2) Breen, L. J., Kawashima, D., Joy, K., Cadell, S., Roth, D., Chow, A., & Macdonald, M. E. (2022). Grief literacy: A call to action for compassionate communities. *Death Studies*, 46(2), 425-433.
- (3) McCoyd, Koller & Walter, Chapter 1 pp. 1-28.

September 16

Theories and Context Continued & Perinatal Attachment and Loss

- (1) Williams, Introduction and Chapter 1 pp. ix-xxii, 1-18
- (2) McCoyd, Koller & Walter, Chapter 2 pp. 29-57.

September 23

Reading:

Film:

Infancy, Toddler and Preschool & Elementary School-Age Children

- (1) McCoyd, Koller & Walter, Chapters 3-4, pp. 59-106.

Choose one of the following:

- (a) Clements, M. (Director). (2022). *Bones of crows*. [Video recording]. Elevation Pictures.
- (b) Campanelli, S. S. (Director). (2017). *Indian horse* [Video Recording]. Elevation Pictures.
- (c) Daniels, E., James, P., Sandy, A., & Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. (2022). *Bimibattoo-win: Where I ran* [Video recording]. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.
- (c) Wolochatiuk, T. (Director). (2012). *We were children* [Video recording]. National Film Board of Canada.

October 1

Reading:

Tweens and Teens & Grief, Health and Racial Trauma

- (1) McCoyd, Koller & Walter, Chapter 5, pp. 107-129.
- (2) Williams, Chapter 2, pp. 21-43.

October 7

Reading:

Emerging Adults & Grief and Oppression

- (1) McCoyd, Koller & Walter, Chapter 6, pp. 131-156.
- (2) Williams, Chapter 3, pp. 45-67.

No Classes – Fall Reading Week October 10-18

October 21

Reading:

Young Adulthood & Collective Grief

- (1) McCoyd, Koller & Walter, Chapter 7, pp. 157-176.
- (2) Williams, Chapter 4, pp. 69-91

Petals & Stones Assignment is due Wednesday October 21, 10:00 AM

October 28

Reading:

Middle Adulthood & Disenfranchised Grief

- (1) McCoyd, Koller & Walter, Chapter 8, pp. 177-203.
- (2) Williams, Chapter 5, pp. 93-117.

November 4

Reading:

Retirement and Reinvention & Grief and White Supremacy

- (1) McCoyd, Koller & Walter, Chapter 9, pp. 205-226.
- (2) Williams, Chapter 6, pp. 119-138.

November 11

Reading:

Young-Old Adulthood & Grief, Loss and Social Justice Movements

- (1) McCoyd, Koller & Walter, Chapter 10, pp. 227-246.
- (2) Williams, Chapter 7, pp. 139-159.

November 18

Reading:

Older Adulthood & Grief, Mourning and Cultural Appropriation

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

(2) Williams Chapter 8, pp. 161-179.

Book Review is due on Wednesday November 18, 10:00 AM

November 25

Reading:

Assessments and Interventions & Supporting the Invisible Majority in Grief through Decolonization, Social Justice & Cultural Responsiveness

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

(2) Williams, Conclusion, pp. 181-196.

December 2

Film:

Course Conclusion and Online Film Viewing

(1) Forster, M. (Director). (2022). *A can called Otto*. [Video recording]. Sony Pictures.

Classes end Friday December 9, 11:59 PM

1. Academic Accommodations (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](#).

2. Academic Consideration for Student Absences

Students must be approved to write a makeup exam or for an extension of the assignment deadline. If you need to miss an exam or the deadline for the assignment, please follow these instructions.

There are two ways to seek academic consideration:

(i) Academic consideration based on medical or compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate grounds), they should contact the Academic Advising Office. As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration.

For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is the appropriate documentation. The SMC is available at <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf>

- King's students: The Academic Advising Office website is located in DLH 104. The Academic Advising website is <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>.
- If your home faculty is Huron or at Western, please submit your documentation to your faculty's academic counselling office.
- Requests must be made as soon as possible, and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

You may submit requests for academic consideration through the **Student Absence Portal**, linked on this website:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>

(ii) Academic consideration through an undocumented absence

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per half-course (0.5) weight.

- Note that instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline to confirm this which assessment has been designated as requiring documentation for consideration (that is, exempt from undocumented absences).
- Undocumented absences can not be used as the basis for academic consideration for December or April exams.

If an instructor has built flexibility into their assessments (e.g., “complete 8 of 10 quizzes”), this flexibility will already address consideration needs and thus academic consideration may be denied.

For further information on the academic consideration policy, please see https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

c) Absences from Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, **contact your Academic Advising Office** 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 (i.e., you are scheduled to write 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](#)).

d) Religious Accommodations

Students should consult the University’s list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and their 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.

3. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:
<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#!/student-supports-and-services/accessibility-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

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

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options on how to obtain help: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College:
<https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-supports/>

4. Statement on Gender-Based Sexual Violence

King's and Western are committed to reducing incidents of gender-based sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [Mental Health and Wellness at King's](#).

You can reach supports at King's 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 (health@uwo.ca) or by calling 519-661-3568. Additional support services can be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/support/index.html>

5. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cellphone, 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://kings.uwo.ca/sites/2025/assets/files/campus/Kings_Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf

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.

6. 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

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.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 to check which tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in each course.** Note that although some courses may permit the use of such tools, it does not mean use of such tools 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.