TYNDALE UNIVERSITY

TYNDALE SEMINARY
COURSE SYLLABUS

"The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel."

Semester, Year	WINTER, 2027
Course Title	**COMPLICATED GRIEF: THEORY AND THERAPY**
Course Code	**PAST TH59 1S**
Date **Time** **Delivery Format**	**FIVE FRIDAYS (Jan 15, Jan 29; Feb 12; Mar 5, Mar 19)** From 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
Class information	The classes will be LIVESTREAMED on FIVE Fridays from 9 am to 4 pm.
Instructor	**L. KEITH TAYLOR, DMin** Email: ketaylor@tyndale.ca
Office Hours	By appointment only.
Course Materials	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One. Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores and analyzes the nature of complicated grief as compared with normal grief, mourning and why some people fail to grieve. Using *The Psalms as Christian Lament* by Bruce Waltke, persons who deeply grieved with hope will be used as examples of both normal and complicated grief. Different models of therapeutic strategies are explored along with the on-going debate of diagnosing bereavement as a disorder and the implications of such.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe and differentiate between grief and mourning coupled with the origins of complicated grief.
2. Understand and interpret the language of complicated grief.
3. Analyze the inter-relationships between normal grief and complicated, differentiating a variety of grief therapeutic models.

4. Evaluate persons who deeply grieved with hope, giving witness to a deep inner joy along with explanation and contrast as well as manifestations of their grief journey, using (Wolfelt) grief symptoms.
5. Articulate, comprehend and interpret the on-going debate regarding the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5-TR*.
6. Diagnose and differentiate between normal and complicated grief, strategizing as well as making suggestions as to how to move forward on the grief journey using the storyline throughout the movie, A Man Called Otto.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Forster, Marc, dir. *A Man Called Otto*. *2023*. Culver City, CA: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2023. [A streaming link will be provided on your class page at classes.tyndale.ca. Only registered students will be able to view it with Tyndale authentication. DVD can be purchased or streamed by Amazon Prime, Google Play, You Tube for $4.99]

Frances, Allen. *Saving Normal*. Harper Collins: New York. 2013. (ISBN: 978-0-06-222926-7)

Wolfelt, Alan D. *When Grief Is Complicated: A Model for Therapists to Understand, Identify, and Companion Grievers Lost in the Wilderness of Complicated Grief*. Fort Collins, CO: Companion Press, 2018. (ISBN: 978-1-61722-258-0)

Worden, J. William. *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner*. 5th ed. New York: Springer Publishing. 2018. (ISBN: 978-0-8261-3474-5)

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Barber, Cyril J. *Through The Valley of Tears.* New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell, 1987.

Crowder, Bill. *Singing the Songs of the Brokenhearted*. Grand Rapid, MI: Discovery House. 2009.

Kaiser, Walter C. *A Biblical Approach to Personal Suffering*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub., 1980.

Sittser, Jerry. *A Grace Disguised*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.

Waltke, Bruce K. *The Psalms as Christian Lament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Pub., 2014.

Zonnebelt-Smeerge, Susan J. *Traveling Through Grief*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. 2006.

Tyndale recommends STEPBible – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other online resources for Biblical Studies.

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Class Participation – throughout the course. (10% of final grade)

Due to the nature of the course material coupled with recognizing the magnitude and importance of walking with fragile, broken-hearted mourners, preparation and participation be assigned a high percentage of the final grade.
This assignment is related to each of the learning outcomes.

Participation includes the following components:

a) ***Attendance:*** You are expected to attend each class and actively participate. Any anticipated late arrivals, necessary absences or early departures are to be cleared with the instructor in advance. In the case of unanticipated absence, the instructor is to be notified in a reasonable, timely fashion. It is the responsibility of the student to download the lecture notes from the class site.
b) ***Preparation:*** You must come to class having the assigned reading completed. Questions arising from the reading will be a part of class discussion.
c) ***Participation:*** It is expected every student will participate through dialogue, engaging with the material in hand, asking questions and offering answers, insights and observations. Each student will participate in a manner that respects each class member, their views and opinions as well as establishing a safe environment in which to speak and share.

2. Reading Assignments and Interactions (15% X 4 = 60% of final grade)

All assignments may be written from the first-person point of view where applicable; otherwise, writing style must be formal with clearly expressed ideas and not merely continually quoting the author of the reference. The papers (**excluding the final paper) must** be **5 to 6 pages** in length, double-spaced, using a standard 12 pt. font, with a proper title page and page numbers. **PLEASE NOTE:** In tabulating the number of pages per paper, do not count the title page nor the bibliography as part of the total. Any footnotes being used are to be formatted accordingly. The **final paper** will be 12-15 pages in length.

A. **Understanding the language of complicated grief.**

The purpose of this assignment is to become familiar with the language used in referring to normal grief in comparison to complicated grief. Personal family applications can be made where applicable to the material. With the goal of integrating the material, answer questions 3 to 7, found on pg. 33 (Wolfelt). This assignment contributes to learning outcomes 1 & 2.
DUE DATE: JAN. 22 (15%)

B. **Exploring the broader context of complicated grief.**
The purpose of this assignment is to understand the broader context of complicated grief and its historical roots in both research and the field of bereavement. Using Wolfelt. Pgs. 35-75, give a brief understanding in your own words what complicated grief is and answer the question, why some people move from a normal grief journey to a more complicated one.
Using the questions on pg. 75, (Wolfelt) answer questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9. This assignment contributes to learning outcomes 2.
DUE DATE: FEB. 5 (15%)

C. **Exploring and identifying the symptoms of complicated grief.**
The purpose of this assignment is to become familiar with the identification of symptoms attached to complicated grief. Using the questions on pg. 127, (Wolfelt) choose ten grief symptoms, explaining them in your own words. Make note of any personal application.
This assignment contributes to learning outcomes 3.
DUE DATE: FEBRUARY 26 (15%)

D. **Understanding DSM-5 with its far-reaching implication.**
The purpose of this assignment is to become familiar with the on-going discussion, actions, assessment and impact of DSM-5. (Diagnostic and Statistical Manuel of Mental Disorders) Using the Preface and Chapter One of Allen Francis. Saving Normal, summarize your understanding of the main issues concerning DSM-5 along with the broader issue of referring to bereavement as a "disorder."
This assignment contributes to learning outcomes 1, 2, 3 & 4.
DUE DATE: MAR. 12 (15%)

3. FINAL PAPER (30% of final grade)
Examining the grief journey of Mr. Otto, comparing both a normal grief journey with a complicated one.
This paper focuses on bringing together the material and insights from classes one to five.
DUE DATE: APR. 2
The purpose of this assignment is to integrate, amalgamate and apply the teaching and information of the course. Using diagnostic tools, determine if Mr. Otto has complicated grief and/or a normal grief journey. He is your client. The paper will reflect how you assisted him on his journey. Although the due date (Apr. 2) is after our final class, we will entertain class discussion about Mr. Otto.
The paper consists of 12-15 pages in length.
This assignment contributes to learning outcomes 1, 2, 3 & 4.

The grading guidelines follow Seminary's Grading System & Scale | Tyndale University.

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING
Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Assignment	Due	%
Class Participation		10 %
Reading Assignments and Interactions (Four papers @ 15% each)	Various due dates	60 %
Final Paper	April 2	30 %
Total Grade		**100 %**

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Pre-reading is expected prior to the start of class. Late registrants are responsible for the consequences of partial preparation.

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
January 15 Class 1	Time will be spent with introductions of Prof and classmates along with an overview of the course as well as a detailed review of the assignments. Topics under discussion: the difference between grief and mourning, the origins of complicated grief and the language of normal and complicated grief. Attention will be given to modern psychology's understanding.		
			Understanding the language of complicated grief. Due Jan 22
January 29 Class 2	We will explore the history of complicated grief in its early context as well as an overview of the path of research to the present. Attention will be given to modern psychology's understanding of		

	complicated grief. Major influences and influencers will be discussed in conjunction with risk factors in diagnosis.		
			Exploring the broader context of complicated grief. Due Feb 5
February 12 Class 3	We will explore in detail the similarities and differences between normal grief and complicated. Attention will be given to why some people fail to move forward in their grief journey.		
			Exploring and identifying the symptoms of complicated grief. Due Feb 26
Reading Week – No Class			
March 5 Class 4	Detailed analysis of DSM-5 and the placing and coding of Prolonged Grief Disorder along with the practical implications for both clinicians and mourners. Guest speaker, Donna Beek, will share both personal and professional insights.		
			Understanding DSM-5 with its far reaching implication. Due Mar 12
March 19	Course wrap up. Detailed attention given to Alan Wolfelt's Companioning Model coupled with a		

	clearer understanding of normal grief vs. complicated grief with a move from theory to therapy. Time will be spent discussing the content of the movie Mr. Otto.		
			Examining the grief journey of Mr. Otto, comparing both a normal grief journey with a complicated one. This paper focuses on bringing together the material and insights from classes one to five. Due Apr 2

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM 5-TR* (Fifth edition, text revision). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association Publishing, 2022.

Doka, Kenneth J. *Grief as a Journey*. New York: Atria Books, 2016.

Marlow, Tanya. *Those Who Wait: Finding God in Disappointment, Doubt and Delay*. U.K.: Malcolm Down Publishing, 2017.

Neimeyer, Robert A. *Techniques of Grief Therapy*. New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2016.

_____. *Grief and Bereavement in Contemporary Society: Bridging Research and Practise*. New York: Routledge, 2017.

Pearlman, Laurie Anne. *Treating Traumatic Bereavement*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2014.

Ross, Elizabeth-Kubler and David Kessler. *Life Lessons: Two Experts on Death and Dying Teach us about the Mysteries of Life and Living*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014.

Servaty-Seib, Heather L. *Handbook of Thanatology*. 3rd. ed. The Association for Death Education and Counseling Inc., 2021.

Smith, C. Bidwell. *Anxiety: The Missing Stage of Grief*. New York: Hachette Books. 2018.

VI. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COURSES

A. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must contact the Accessibility Services at the Centre for Academic Excellence to register and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVESTREAM INTERACTION (*SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE COURSE ONLY*)

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
- Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
- A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*

**exceptions with permission from professor*

C. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to "Guidelines for Interactions" on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Grading Rubric

Please consult the rubric provided for each assignment on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism

(including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Academic Integrity website for further details.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Tyndale Seminary's Academic Calendar provides a definition and broad descriptions of types of Academic Dishonesty using AI.

Academic dishonesty includes the submission of work for which previous credit was given, the submission of work under one's own name that is largely the result of another person's efforts, aiding another's dishonesty, cheating on exams and giving false information for the purpose of gaining admission, credits, etc. … Academic dishonesty also includes submitting academic work which has been written, rewritten, or substantially edited by an artificial intelligence program. (Seminary Academic Calendar, 2026/7, p. 173.)

AI programs are not adequate information sources for academic writing. Students should not use AI in academic writing without explicit permission from their course instructor. Given the tendency of AI programs to give inaccurate information and even falsify citations, students are cautioned against using AI prompts to begin researching or summarizing a topic. Instructors may deduct points from [or give a failing grade to] assignments for the improper use of AI sources. (Seminary Academic Calendar, 2026/7, p. 174.)

Students may use AI as an enhanced search engine, provided they are extremely careful about checking its sources. That means personally verifying texts and claims *every time* by clicking through to the source link or independently searching. This also means public information sources like Wikipedia are not satisfactory sources. We recommend using sites like Google Scholar or the variety of journal and research databases available with a Tyndale student ID.

Students may use AI to transcribe interviews, videos, or dictations of their own ideas when preparing for assignments. But they must read through the transcripts themselves and *manually* verify accuracy, make selections to quote, or edit for concision and clarity. This use of AI is reserved only for ideas that students have created themselves. Students may not submit course lectures, videos, or other course material to AI or any other software to transcribe, synthesize, annotate, or otherwise summarize course content.

Students may not use AI in any aspect of the planning and writing process for class assignments, including but not limited to early planning, ideas, outlining, argumentation, grammar, syntax, or phrasing. Struggling with all this is fundamental part of human learning. This struggle is precisely what develops writing ability and is essential to developing critical thinking and communication skills. If further clarification is required, students should ask their professors, not an AI assistant.

Students may not use Grammarly or similar AI copyediting programs, including Copilot in Microsoft Word. Tyndale students are expected to write with sophistication in English. Use of a LLM to edit/re-write/re-phrase/alter student work will be viewed as a breach of the Tyndale AI policy. Students should also be aware that many of these programs can/will change student ideas without permission or notification and should be careful to turn off any generative AI features in any software they use for course assignments.

Special Note:
Students should carefully discern and justify any use of AI tools. Convenience, efficiency, academic pressure, lack of time or even health issues are not sufficient reasons to rely on AI. If personal or external difficulties affect your work, you should first speak with your instructor before using AI assistance. Your personal formation, theological reflection, and authentic engagement with the course remain the priority in completing assignments.

Some course professors may allow AI use for specific projects within specific limits. All Seminary syllabi (or course pages on Moodle) will contain guidelines for permitted uses of AI. When using AI for any professor-approved application in assignments, students should save all rough work and earlier versions of their assignments before editing. Students may be required to produce these versions on request. The name of the AI software used must be noted (Claude, ChatGPT, etc.) including the specific version number and model of that software, and the specific text of all prompts employed to get the results must be reported in the submitted assignment.

For proper citation style, consult Citation Guides for different styles. Students are encouraged to consult Writing Services.

Students should also consult the current Academic Calendar for polices and expectations on Attendance and Classroom Expectations, Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Turnitin Text-Matching Software
Tyndale has a subscription to Turnitin, a text-matching software that ensures the originality of academic writing and verifies the proper citation of all sources. The instructor for this course will use Turnitin for assignments submitted through your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca. Upon submission, you will receive a summary that includes your submitted files along with a similarity report generated by Turnitin. Please be aware that Turnitin can also detect AI-generated content from tools like Grammarly, so students should be mindful of when using such software. It's advisable to confirm with your instructor before using any AI tools into your assignments. Below are some useful resources:

- Student Guides for Turnitin via classes.tyndale.ca course resource page

- Interpreting Similarity (Guide, Video, Spectrum)

Research Ethics
All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the Tyndale Research Ethics Board (REB). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office (seminary@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

Late Papers and Extensions Policy
All papers and course assignments must be submitted by the due dates indicated in the course syllabus. Unless the instructor already has a policy on grading late papers in the course syllabus, grades for papers submitted late without an approved extension will be lowered at the rate of two-thirds of a grade per week or part thereof (e.g., from "A+" to "A-," from "B" to "C+"). Please note that some programs, such as cohort-based or intensive courses, may follow a different policy due to the nature of the program.

Faculty may not grant an extension beyond the last day of exams for the semester. Requests for extensions beyond this date must be addressed in writing to the Registrar by filling out the Extension Request Form. The application will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, medical emergency, hospitalization of oneself or immediate family member or prolonged illness requiring treatment by a physician. Factors such as assignments for other courses, holidays, and technology-related difficulties are insufficient grounds for requesting an extension.

A temporary grade of incomplete ("I") may be granted by the Registrar. Once an extension is granted, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and make satisfactory arrangements to complete the outstanding work. A grade of "F" will be recorded for students who do not complete the outstanding work by the deadline.

E. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential, and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

F. LIBRARY RESOURCES

Tyndale Library supports courses with e-journals, e-books, and the mail delivery of books and circulating materials. See the Library FAQ page.

G. GRADING SYSTEM & SCALE

For each course's grading rubric, please refer to your course syllabus or classes.tyndale.ca. For general grading guidelines, refer to Seminary Grading System & Scale.