"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	**GRIEF, DEATH AND DYING IN THE FAMILY SYSTEM**
Course Code	COUN 0655 / PAST TH55 1S
Date **Time** **Delivery Format**	From January 11, 2027 to April 12, 2027 **Every Tuesday** From 8:15AM to 11:05AM SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
Class information	The classes will be LIVESTREAMED on Tuesday from 8:15AM to 11:05AM.
Instructor	**LYNDSAY THOMPSON, DMin, RP** Email: lthompson@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 involves a study of the dynamics of grief, death and dying in the context of family systems and their significance in human development throughout the life cycle. The course includes discussion of children and youth experiences of death, dying and grief. There is a special emphasis upon personal, familial, communal, spiritual and religious aspects of grief, death and dying and of resources available.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

1. examine a variety of theories of the grief process and assess, strategize, intervene, and evaluate therapeutic interactions relevant to their therapy or church context.
2. identify their own grief, death and dying experiences so that they can evaluate countertransference when encountering others' grief crises in their therapeutic ministry or counselling work contexts.

3. develop concrete and relevant clinical and pastoral interventions for grief in a family systems context.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Arnold, Carrie, (Ed.). (2018). *Understanding child and adolescent grief: Supporting loss and facilitating growth.* New York, NY: Routledge. ISBN: 978-1-138-74088-4 (pbk)

Doka, K. J. (2016). *Grief is a journey: Finding your path through loss.* New York: Atria Paperback. ISBN: 978-1-4767-7151-9 (pbk)

Worden, J.W. (2009). *Grief counseling and grief therapy: A handbook for the mental health practitioner.* 4th edition. New York: Springer Publishing Company. ISBN: 978-0-8261-0120-4 [Tyndale Library has unlimited user access for e-version of this book.]

Articles / Chapters (will be posted on the course resource page)

Dowling, T. (2018). "Compassion does not fatigue." *Canadian Veterinary Journal*, 59 (7).

Maxwell, P. and Perrine, J. (2016). "The Problem of God in the Presence of Grief: Exchanging "Stages" of Healing for "Trajectories" of Recovery." *Journal of Spiritual Formation & Soul Care*. 9(2).

Walsh, F. (2016). "Applying a Family Resilience Framework in Training, Practice, and Research: Mastering the Art of the Possible." *Family Process*. 55(4).

Walsh, F. and McGoldrick M. (2013). "Bereavement: A family life cycle perspective." *Family Science*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 20–27, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19424620.2013.819228

Walter, C. A., & McCoyd, J. L. M. (2016). Grief and loss across the lifespan: a biopsychosocial perspective (Second). Springer Publishing Company. (Chapters will be assigned in class)

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

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 attendance, class participation and readings of required text and journal articles as assigned in course schedule. (5% of final grade)

Regular attendance and participation in class (5%): Each student will read the assigned readings from the required texts and be ready to engage in class discussion. Since this course is being taught as a seminar course, students' attendance and participation in class discussions is expected. To be able to fully participate in the discussions and interactive exercises, students are required to have read the assigned reading each week before class.

See course schedule for the reading that is expected to be completed before each class day. Note that for a couple of classes, there is a journal article or a chapter from an additional book to be read in addition to the assigned reading from the required text. The journal articles may be posted on the course page.

2. In Class Peer-Reviewed Group Work (15% of final grade)

At the beginning of the course, students will be put into groups which will remain the same throughout the semester. In each class, groups will be given assignments to work through that puts into practice the theories being discussed that day. While groups will be given time to work through assignments during class, some individual preparation may be required throughout the week. At the end of the semester, each group member will grade and review the work of each other. Grades will be decided according to attendance, participation, preparation and contribution. Attendance and participation in peer reviewed group work is critical for the learning of all group members. Students are required to be present and on screen during all group time. A rubric and marking sheet will be handed out by the instructor at the beginning of the course.

3. Grief and the Family System Case Study (25% of Final Grade) Due: February 9, 2027

Students will write an 8-9 page (Double space, Times New Roman 12pt. APA or Chicago format SUBMIT IN WORD .DOCX) case study and treatment conceptualization for a family system moving through grief and loss.

Part 1: (1-2 pages) Clearly and concisely describe a case study of a family experiencing grief. This case may come from a movie, TV show, book or personal experience. A list of movie ideas will be provided at the beginning of class. If you are using a personal experience, please remove all identifying information to ensure confidentiality and include in the description that this is a real case or person and that you have changed the names and identifying details to protect confidentiality.

Part 2: In addition to a written description of the case, included your best attempt at a genogram. Included this as **Appendix A**.

Part 3: (3-5 pages with 5-6 references) Using the required readings, course material and other research, analyze this case using concepts like attachment, family systems, family life cycles, etc. Use the following questions as a guide:

- What is happening in this case?
- What type of loss is being experienced?
- What are some important family systems tenets that must be kept in mind when working with this particular family?
- What family life cycle stage(s) is being impacted by this loss?
- How might a particular family life cycle stage(s) impact the loss?
- What meaning does the family make of this?
- What might be needed for this particular family to move to the next stage of the family life cycle successfully?

Part 4: (1-2 pages with 2-3 references) Using the information presented in class, texts and other research, please indicate 2-3 strategies/treatments/resources/ methods of support you could present to this family. Use the following questions as a guide:

- Why did you choose the methods of support that you did?
- How might you journey with this family from a theological and spiritual perspective?
- Reflect critically on how you might feel journeying with this family and what you might need to be aware of in yourself.

Part 5: List the 2-3 resources you think might be helpful for this family (Ex. Websites, Support Groups, Books, etc.). Include a brief explanation of why you think these resources would be helpful. Please include proper citation. Include this as **Appendix B.**

4. **Major Research Project and Class Presentation on Child/Adolescent Grief: 35% of final grade (30% for paper; 5% for presentation/handout) Presentation and handout: Due in-class March 30, 2027. Paper Due: April 6, 2027**

Students will write a 10-page research paper on a special topic encountered in child or adolescent grief (topics will be given in class).

2 Pages: Description and prevalence of the issue being presented. Cite required readings as well as sources and research that provide depth to the topic. Please include your own critical analysis of why this particular issue is significant.

Examples of questions to guide your description:

- What is the issue

- Where is it most seen
- In whom is it most seen
- What symptoms may be present?
- Nuances of the loss (boys v. girls, siblings, birth 0rder)
- Nuances of the loss in selected age group

3-5 Pages: Apply the course material on the family system and child and adolescent development (Attachment Theory, Ericson, Piaget, etc.) and how this knowledge must be integrated when understanding the issue.
Examples of questions that you can use to answer:

- What are some important developmental issues that must be kept in mind when working with this particular issue at particular developmental stages?
- How might a particular developmental stage impact this issue differently than if the child/teen was in a different developmental stage?
- What might need to happen in order for this child or adolescent to be able to move past through this loss (on to next developmental stage/ family life stage)
- Consider this loss from a bio-psycho-social and theological perspective
- How might this loss and experience affect the child or adolescent's view of God? Why?
- What might you think the child or adolescent would benefit from to make sense of this type of loss from a spiritual perspective?
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2-3 Pages: Provide one or two evidence-based interventions that have been shown to be effective as ways to support the child and/or adolescent as well as caregivers through the process. If you are not in a clinical setting, consider what you think might help a child or adolescent in a context that is familiar to you; research and present this (Ie. programs for support in Sunday School, spiritual formation activities for children, etc.). Please feel free to include an appendix at the end of the paper with any resources that may be helpful.
For Presentation:
In class, the student will present their findings to their small group. The presentation itself will be casual conversation with one another. A format for this will be provided.

1 Page Double Sided Handout: Students will provide a summary of the major findings in a creative and accessible way. The goal is to provide classmates with information and resources that will be helpful for them and their ministry/ work context. Consider the handout to be something that could be picked up and understood in a doctor's office or clinic.
Front Page:

- Description and prevalence of the presenting issue
- Statistics
- Information on the developmental stage and family life cycle as it pertains specifically to this particular issue
- Symptoms

Back Page: A list of helpful resources under the following headings:

- Education: (This section should include 5 scholarly resources that explain the issue)
- Resources and Supports: (This section should include 5 well-proven resources that could support parents who are navigating this issue with their child)
- Resources for Faith Integration: (This section should have 5 helpful resources for how to incorporate spiritual care)
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PLEASE NOTE: the purpose of this presentation is to help other students in the class gain working knowledge of the presenting issue as well as practical ways to companion through grief. Students will be marked on the creativity, clarity, and content of the presentation. A marking sheet will be distributed on the days of presentation. The presentation will be 15-20 minutes in length with 5-10 minutes for questions and discussion.

5. Personal Reflection Paper (15% of total grade) Due: Friday April 13, 2027 at 11:59pm

Students will write a 4-5 page personal reflection paper combining all the information they have learned over the course of the semester (Family systems, Attachment Theory, Developmental Stages, etc.).

The paper should answer the following questions:

- What is one of the most important "take aways" from this semester?
- Reflecting on my personality (bring in enneagram, MBTI, etc, if you wish), when companioning with someone through grief, what might I need to be aware of in myself (think about SEUS, self-awareness, transference and counter-transference, personal loss history).
- What might be something I will need to implement to take care of myself as I companion the bereaved (ex. Spiritual disciplines, exercise, personal counselling, etc.)
- What would I like to challenge myself to continue to learn (Further research, training, theological reflection, etc.)

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Assignment	**Due**	**%**
1. Required Reading and Class Participation	Weekly	5 %
2. In Class Peer-Reviewed Group Work	Weekly	15 %
3. Family Systems Case Study	Feb 9	30%
4. Child/Adolescent Research Paper and Presentation	Presentation: March 30 Paper: April 6	35 %
5. Personal Reflection Paper	April 13	15 %
Total Grade		**100 %**

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
January 12	Introduction, Attachment, Grief	• Doka (2016), Part 1 • Warden (2009), Intro-Ch.3 • Maxwell and Perrine (2016)	
January 19	Family Systems	• Walsh and McGoldrick (2013) • Doka (2016), Part 2 • Warden (2009), Ch. 8	
January 26	Family Systems		
February 2	Family Systems	• Doka (2016), Part 3 • Warden (2009), Ch. 7	
February 9	Bio-Psycho-Social Model	• Assigned readings by Walter and McCoyd (2016)	Case Study Due
February 16: Reading Days – NO CLASS			
February 23	Family Resilience, Family Resources and Lament	• Walsh (2016)	
March 2	Concluding Family Systems		
March 9	Introduction to Child/Adolescent Grief	• Arnold (2018), Ch. 5-7	
March 16	Child/Adolescent Grief	• Arnold (2018) Ch. 8-15	
March 23	Child/Adolescent Grief	• Warden (2009) Ch. 9	
March 30	Child/Adolescent Grief Presentations		
April 6	Wrapping Up and Care for the Caretaker		Research Paper Due
April 13			Reflection Paper Due

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Becvar, Dorothy S. (2001). *In the presence of grief: Helping family members resolve death, dying, and bereavement issues*. New York: The Guilford Press. ISBN: 978-1572309371

*Doka, K. J. and Martin, T. L. (2010). *Grieving beyond gender: Understanding the ways men and women mourn*. Revised edition. New York: Routledge—Taylor and Francis Group.

Kuebler-Ross, Elisabeth and Kessler, David. (2005). *On grief and grieving*. New York: Scribner.

Lewis, C.S. (1961). *A grief observed*. New York: Bantam Books.

Mitchell, Kenneth and Anderson, Herbert. (1983). *All our losses, all our griefs: Resources for pastoral care*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press.

*Niemeyer, Robert A. (Ed.) (2012). *Techniques of grief therapy: Creative practices for counseling the bereaved*. New York: Routledge—Taylor and Francis Group.

Niemeyer, R. A. (Ed.) (2016). *Techniques of grief therapy: Assessment and intervention*. New York: Routledge. ISBN: 978-1-138-90593-1 (pbk)

*Niemeyer, R. A., Harris, D. L., Winokuer, H. R., and Thornton, G. F. (Eds.) (2011). *Grief and bereavement in contemporary society: Building research and practice*. New York: Routledge—Taylor and Francis Group.

Rando, Therese A. (1991). *How to go on living when someone you love dies*. New York: Bantam Books.

Rupp, Joyce. (1988). *Praying our goodbyes*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press.

Schwiebert, P. and DeKlyen, C. (2012). *Tear soup: A recipe for healing after loss*. 10th edition. Portland, OR: Grief Watch. ISBN: 978-0961519766

Sittser, Jerry. (2004). *A grace disguised: How the soul grows through loss*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Vos, Mirth. (1999). *Letters to myself on dying: A journal of hope, pain and courage*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Walsh, Froma and McGoldrick, Monica (Eds). (2004). *Living beyond loss: Death in the family*. (2nd ed.) New York: W.W. Norton & Company. [Out of print]

Webster, B. (1996). *When someone you care about is grieving*. Mississauga, ON: The Centre for the Grief Journey, Inc.

Webster, B. (1996). *A not so jolly Christmas*. Mississauga, ON: The Centre for the Grief Journey, Inc.

Webster, B. (2006). *When someone you care about dies*. Mississauga, ON: The Centre for the Grief Journey, Inc.

Webster, B. (2011). *Understanding bereavement: A practical approach to understanding grief, loss and change in our modern world*. Mississauga, ON: The Centre for the Grief Journey, Inc.

Webster, B. and MacGregor, G. (2011). *When life changes (and what to do before and after it does)*. Mississauga, ON: The Centre for the Grief Journey, Inc.

*Wolfelt, Alan D. (2007). *Living in the shadow of the ghosts of grief: Step into the light*. Fort Collins, CO: Companion Press.

Wolterstorff, Nicholas. (1987). *Lament for a son*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Worden, J.W. (1996). *Children and grief: When a parent dies*. New York: The Guilford Press.
Zonnebelt-Smeenge, Susan J. and De Vries, Robert C. (1998). *Getting to the other side of grief: Overcoming the loss of a spouse*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

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. Students must review the policies and procedures regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI) outlined in Academic Calendar and consult guidance from their course instructors.

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.

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.

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 (seminaryoffice@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.