

“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.”

Course	COMPLICATED GRIEF: THEORY AND THERAPY PAST TH59 1S
Date, Time, and Delivery Format	JANUARY 17, 31; FEB. 14; MAR. 7, 21, 2025 5 FRIDAYS, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
Instructor	L. KEITH TAYLOR, DMin Email: ketaylor@tyndale.ca
Class Information	The classes will be livestreamed on Fridays from 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM. Students may make personal appointments with the instructor for additional assistance.
Course Material	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, 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, using examples from The Psalms, 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, Mr. Otto.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Forster, Marc, dir. *A Man Called Otto*. 2023. Culver City, CA: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2023. [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) [Tyndale Library has e-version of this book.]

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) [Tyndale Library has e-version of this book.]

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 www.stepbible.org – 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. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR BLENDED COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 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

D. 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.

E. 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 opinion 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. Any footnotes being used are to be formatted accordingly. The **final paper** will be between 12-15 pages in length.

- A.** 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. 31 (15%)

- B.** 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. 14 (15%)

- C.** 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: MARCH 7 (15%)

- D.** The purpose of this assignment is to become familiar with the on-going discussion, actions, assessment and impact of DSM-5. (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) Using **both** 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. 21 (15%)

3. FINAL PAPER (30% of final grade)

DUE DATE: APR. 4

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. 5) is after our final class, we will entertain class discussion about Mr. Otto as well as a review of our guest speakers in class 4.

The paper consists of **12-15 pages in length**.

This assignment contributes to learning outcomes 1, 2, 3 & 4.

F. 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.

G. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Class Participation	10 %
Reading Assignments and Interactions (Four papers @ 15% each)	60 %
Final Paper	30 %
Total Grade	100 %

H. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Your work should demonstrate the following characteristics:

For proper citation style, consult the [tip sheet, “Documenting Chicago Style”](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially ch. 14. For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.44 to 10.48 and 14.238 to 14.241 from the Chicago Manual of Style or reference the [tip sheet, “Citing Sources in Theology”](#).

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 are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#). Citation and other [tip sheets](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic polices on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

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 (aa@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

I. 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.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

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

WEEK ONE...Jan. 17

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.

WEEK TWO...Jan. 31

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. **Reading assignment 2A due.**

WEEK THREE...Feb. 14

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. **Reading assignment 2B due.**

WEEK FOUR...March 7

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, Psychiatrist will share both personal and professional insights. **Reading Assignment 2C due.**

WEEK FIVE...March 21

Course wrap up. Detailed attention given to Alan Wolfelts 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. **Reading Assignment 2D Due.**

Final Paper Due, April 4

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

([Tyndale Library](#) supports this course with [e-journals](#), [e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).)

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.

Neimer, 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.