





Master of Arts Interdisciplinary Studies (MAIS) 662

Mourning and Trauma: Theoretical and Historical Debates (Revision 3)

Status:

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

Delivery mode:

Grouped study 

Credits:

3

Area of study:

Arts

Prerequisites:

None

Precluded:

None

Faculty:

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences 

Notes:

Students in Group Study courses are advised that this syllabus may vary in key details in each instance of the course. Always refer to the Moodle site for the most up-to-date details on texts, assignment structure, and grading.

Overview

Loss is an integral element of life itself. All of us have loved and lost, and have been required, in some fashion, to mourn those lost loves. Thus students will come to this course with an existing existential background upon which to draw. In this course, both death and non-death losses are regarded as potential sources of bereavement and identity change processes. As well, the readings and conversations will look at the historical, psychological, and sociological debates and theories regarding mourning and trauma, and do so from a variety of cultural perspectives.

The course invites students to explore a focused but broad number of topics, including but not limited to meaning-making (i.e., a developmental perspective on loss), continuing bonds, taboos and unfinished business in grief, identity maintenance and identity change, prolonged/complicated grief, Superhero grief (i.e., archetypal learnings about grief through fictional characters), disenfranchised grief, political and sociological dimensions of grief, gender and mourning, and the relevance of the body in experiencing and responding to loss and trauma.

An exploration of the developmental possibilities of loss or trauma are also highlighted; without minimizing difficulty, loss can be an impetus for meaning-oriented learning and transformation.

Outline

The topics and activities covered in MAIS 662 are divided across 15 weeks:

Weeks 1 & 2: Introductions and an Examination of the History of Grief Research and Theory

Week 3: Cultural Perspectives

Week 4: Trauma and Adversity in Mourning—Routes and Barriers to Meaning-Making

Week 5: Writing the Self in Bereavement and the Autoethnographic Voice

Week 6: Unfinished Business, Taboos, and Identity Maintenance in Grief and Mourning

Week 7: Book Review Assignment

Week 8: Formative Feedback and Break

Weeks 9–12: Group Work on Grief, Mourning, and/or Trauma


Weeks 13–15: Workshopping with Peers and Final Assignment

Learning outcomes

This course provides students with the opportunity to:

- develop a clear understanding of the historical, theoretical, and practical debates in mourning, grief, and trauma studies,
- demonstrate knowledge of a broad scope of topics from contemporary research and practice, including but not limited to constructivist approaches, and
- recognize and articulate psychological and sociological dimensions of loss and trauma as historically and contextually located.

Evaluation

To receive credit for this course, students must participate in the online activities, successfully complete the assignments, and achieve a final mark of at least 60 per cent. Students should be familiar with the Master of Arts—Interdisciplinary Studies [grading system](#) . Please note that it is students' responsibility to maintain their program status. Any student who receives a grade of "F" in one course, or a grade of "C" in more than one course, may be required to withdraw from the program.


The following table summarizes the evaluation activities and the credit weights associated with them.

Activity	Weight
Participation in weekly online discussion	20%
Assignments in Weeks 1–6	20%
Book Review, Week 7	10%

Activity	Weight
Group Study, Weeks 9–12	10%
Final Paper, Week 15	40%
Total	100%





Materials

Lengelle, R. (2021). *Writing the self in bereavement: A story of love, spousal loss, and resilience*. Routledge.  (eBook)

Stillion, J. M., & Attig, T. (Eds.). (2014). *Death, dying, and bereavement: Contemporary perspectives, institutions, and practices*. Springer Publishing Company.  (eBook)

All additional course materials for MAIS 662 are available online through the course site, including a Course Information manual, a Study Guide, and online readings and audiovisual materials.

Important links

- > [Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies](#) 
- > [Focus Areas](#) 
- > [Courses](#) 
- > [Fees and Funding](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

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