



**Course Syllabus**  
**WYP2511H – Go In Peace: Care for the Dying in Christian**  
**Community**  
**Wycliffe College**  
**Toronto Schol of Theology**  
**Winter 2025**

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### ***Instructor Information***

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Instructor: Catherine McNally, MD, Adjunct Lecturer  
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### ***Course Identification***

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Course Number: WYP2511H  
Course Format: *Dual Delivery*  
Course Name: Go In Peace: Care for the Dying in Christian Community  
Course Location: TBA  
Class Times: Fridays 10:00-12:00  
Prerequisites: none

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### ***Course Description***

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This course is an introduction to the physical, emotional, practical and spiritual needs of the dying, and effective community and pastoral responses to those needs. Students will acquire a theological understanding of living well and dying well from a Christian perspective. They will become familiar with some of the ethical, legal, medical, and practical issues surrounding end-of-life care and explore spiritual support within a collaborative team approach. They will also explore how to mobilize a Christian community of care. They will learn how to respond in compassionate and creative ways to those who are dying, their caregivers, and those who grieve (including funeral and bereavement ministry). The course will be presented through lectures, discussions, and readings, for students participating in-person or virtually. Evaluation will include a weekly journal with class participation, a personal reflection paper, a research essay, and a pastoral response paper.

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### ***Course Resources***

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#### **Required Course Texts/Bibliography**

- Bates, Jane. *Inspiring Hope: Helping Churches Care for the Sick: A Palliative Care Handbook From Africa*. Edinburgh: EMMS International, 2013. (full PDF freely available online: [5d999e\\_65a3d541c7e14c56abc198c5bf0051fd.pdf \(emms.org\)](https://www.emms.org/5d999e_65a3d541c7e14c56abc198c5bf0051fd.pdf))

- Moll, Rob. *The Art of Dying: Living Fully into the Life to come*. Expanded edition. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021.
- Naughton, Margaret. *Walk With Me Into The Light: Some Comfort on the Journey Through Grief*. Dublin: Messenger, 2015. (booklet)
- Swinton, John, and Richard Payne, eds. *Living Well and Dying Faithfully: Christian Practices for End-of-Life Care*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2009.
- **Choose one** of the following grief narratives as a required reading:
  - Friesen, Leanne. *Grieving Room: Making Space for all the Hard Things after Death and Loss*. Minneapolis, MN: Broadleaf Books, 2023.
  - Lewis, C. S. *A Grief Observed*. London: Faber & Faber, 1966.
  - Moll, Clarissa. *Beyond the Darkness*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2022.
  - Ramsey, Shelley. *Grief: A Mama's Unwanted Journey*. Bloomington, IL: Westbow Press, 2013.
  - Sittser, Gerald Lawson. *A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows through Loss*. Revised and Expanded ed. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2021.
  - Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Lament for a Son*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1987.
- Selections from the following (will be provided on the course portal):
  - Brooks, James L and Duke Institute on Care at the End of Life. *The Unbroken Circle: A Toolkit for Congregations around Illness, End of Life and Grief*. Durham, N.C.: Duke Institute on Care at the End of Life, 2009.
  - Cherry, Constance M. *The Special Service Worship Architect: Blueprints for Weddings, Funerals, Baptisms, Holy Communion, and Other Occasions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013.
  - Gibson, Scott M. *Preaching for Special Services*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001.
- Articles and web sites (see individual weeks below)

### Course Website(s)

- Quercus: <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at <https://q.utoronto.ca/> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701> . Students who have trouble accessing Quercus should contact the registrar's office for further help.

### Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes

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#### Wycliffe College

#### BD Level

Students successfully completing this course will be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes. (Not all categories will be required for all courses.)

(A) IN RESPECT OF GENERAL ACADEMIC SKILLS

- Demonstrate competence with variety of written formats: journal, personal reflection, scholarly research, pastoral reflection.

**(B) IN RESPECT OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONTENT OF ONE OR MORE THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES**

- Describe the Christian theological understanding of living well and dying well
- Identify and assess physical, emotional, practical and spiritual needs and formulate healthy, Christian responses to those needs
- Recognize and begin to understand the physical changes that occur when death is near
- Choose wise pastoral care after-death including funerals and bereavement care
- Appraise the themes presented both with a view to deeper comprehension and practical application

**(C) IN RESPECT OF PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

- Examine and learn from their own life losses, including how they experienced God in their grief

**(D) IN RESPECT OF MINISTERIAL AND PUBLIC LEADERSHIP**

- Respond in an effective, compassionate, pastoral manner to those who are dying, their caregivers and those who are grieving their losses
- Employ spiritual care, including (but not limited to) lament, prayer, Scripture, and sacraments within a collaborative team approach to end-of-life care
- Organize and nurture a Christian community of care in response to death and dying
- Apply a Christian pastoral approach to some of the ethical and legal challenges that may arise when someone is dying
- Use a companioning approach to the dying and bereaved

***Evaluation***

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**Requirements**

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in four areas:

(1) Journal and Discussion	Weekly preparation and small group discussion participation. Submission of 2 journal entries on or before April 11, 2025	20% (10% discussion participation, 10% submitted journal entries)
(2) Personal Loss Inventory and Reflection	Due Jan 23, 2025	20%
(3) Research Paper	Due March 20, 2025	30%
(4) Pastoral Response to Grief Narrative	Due April 11, 2025	30%

**Further instructions for all assignments will be circulated with opportunity for clarification questions.**

(1) **Journal and Discussion** (20%) – The journal and discussion process is as follows:

1. Students will complete the required readings ahead of class. Most weeks, students will have the choice of responding to one of several questions at the end of that week's chapter from *The Art of Dying*. They will choose their question and will begin to formulate a draft journal entry evidencing familiarity with the required readings and lectures. Excellent answers reveal reflective integration of assigned readings, lectures, biblical foundations, and personal experience.
2. Students will discuss their draft journal entry in the small group discussion time during class (keeping in mind sensitivity and confidentiality). Preparation for, and participation in these small group discussions will be worth 10% of the student's grade.
3. Students will expand and polish any **two** of their journal entries for submission. These two will be approximately 500 words in length each and will be submitted any time on or before April 11, 2025. Each of these submissions will be worth 5% of the student's grade.

(2) **Personal Loss Inventory and Reflection** (20%) – Complete a personal loss inventory timeline and reflect on your personal losses:

Loss Timeline: Draw a line representing your life up to the current time. On the line, identify significant deaths and non-death losses that impacted you and your age at the time. Losses may include loss of a loved one, home, ability, community, job, friends, financial situation, health, dreams, etc.

Reflection on Experiences with Loss: Write a 1250-1500 word reflection on your losses. **Please focus your reflections on significant deaths that have impacted you.** The following questions can guide your reflections: How did these experiences affect you spiritually, emotionally, spiritually and/or cognitively? How did you respond to these losses? In what ways do you think your responses were healthy?... unhealthy? What helped or hindered you in your response to these losses? How did others help or hinder your grief journey? How did you experience God through your grief journey? How have your past losses and griefs shaped you? How have they impacted your attitude toward loss, death and grief? How might your history of loss and grief impact your ministry of care for those facing loss, death and grief (both positively and negatively)?

Due January 23, 2025

(3) **Research paper** (30%) – Submit a 2000-2500 word research paper on a topic related to one of the themes of the course, demonstrating integration of and interaction with course modules, course texts and other academic sources (books, peer-reviewed journal articles, etc.). All topics must be approved at the start of the research process to ensure the paper is appropriately focused.

Due March 20, 2025

(4) **Pastoral Response to Grief Narrative** (30%) – Choose **one** of the following grief narratives for this assignment:

- Friesen, Leanne. *Grieving Room: Making Space for all the Hard Things after Death and Loss*. Minneapolis, MN: Broadleaf Books, 2023.
- Lewis, C. S. *A Grief Observed*. London: Faber & Faber, 1966.
- Moll, Clarissa. *Beyond the Darkness*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2022.

- Ramsey, Shelley. *Grief: A Mama's Unwanted Journey*. Bloomington, IL: Westbow Press, 2013.
- Sittser, Gerald Lawson. *A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows through Loss*. Revised and Expanded ed. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2021.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Lament for a Son*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1987.

Write a 1500-2000 word pastoral response to the narrative you chose. Use the following questions to help focus your paper. From this narrative:

1. What did you learn about normal grief? [How was the pain and unpredictability of grief experienced and expressed by the author? How did grief affect the author emotionally, socially, physically, spiritually? What helped the author? How did others respond to the grief of the author in helpful, unhelpful or even harmful ways? How did the author experience God through his or her journey? How did the author find hope and strength? How did the author grow through the loss? What surprised you most about the grief journey of the author? There are many popular, but misleading, theories of grief (such as neatly ordered "stages of grief," the advice to keep strong, the pressure to "get on with life"). How did the author's grief journey expose some of these myths?]
2. How were the "Needs of the Mourner" met or not met well (see Week 10)
3. If you were the author's pastor, priest, or spiritual caregiver, how would you companion the author on their grief journey?

Due April 11, 2025

### Grading System - Basic Degree Students

1000, 2000 and 3000 level courses use the following numerical grading scale (see section 11.2 of the BD Handbook):

90-100 (A+)	Exceptional
85-89 (A)	Outstanding
80-84 (A-)	Excellent
77-79 (B+)	Very Good
73-76 (B)	Good
70-72 (B-)	Acceptable
0-69 (FZ)	Failure

**Late work (BD).** Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. Under exceptional circumstances a student may request a short extension to be negotiated with the instructor. Instructors are not obliged to accept assignments that are late. If the instructor chooses to accept an assignment, where an extension has not been requested and approved before the due date, then **one percentage point per day will be deducted**. The absolute deadline for the submission of assignments is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of exam week for the semester in which the course is taught, whichever is sooner.

Students with documented medical or compassionate difficulties or exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness) who are unable to submit their work by the end of the term are requested to consult with their instructor and request an SDF. The form is available on our website at this link <https://www.wycliffecollege.ca/sites/default/files/Basic%20Degree%20Request%20For%20Extension.pdf> or can be collected from the registrar's office. An SDF request must be submitted, with instructor

approval and with an agreed deadline, to the registrar's office no later than the last day of the exam week or the last day of class in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond one year. If a student has not completed work and has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be calculated that reckons a grade of zero for that component of work that was not submitted.

**Course grades.** Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted to ACORN. Grades are not official until they are posted to ACORN. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy found at <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/grading-practices-policy-university-assessment-and-january-26-2012>, policies found in the TST conjoint program handbooks, or college grading policy.

## **Policies**

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**Accessibility.** Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

**Plagiarism.** Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>. A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges: <https://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/library/research/theology/avoiding-plagiarism-in-theological-writing/>

**Use of AI.** Students are not to submit work generated by AI chatbots such as ChatGPT. If students are found to have done so, they will receive a mark of 'zero' for the assignment concerned.

**Recording Policy.** Students may not create audio or video recordings of classes with the exception of those students requiring an accommodation for a disability (as identified by the Accessibility Services). These students should speak to the instructor in advance of the class.

If a course is to be recorded (either by a student or the instructor), the following guidelines apply:

- Students must be given notice that lectures or a lecture will be recorded, preferably well before the recorded class. Consent forms are available from the Registrar's office.
- Students must be given the option to opt out of recorded classes without penalty. Students who wish to remain anonymous in a recorded lecture will not be penalized for this choice – if, for

example, participation is a required component of the course, students will be given another option to earn participation credit that will not be recorded.

Students creating unauthorized audio and/or video recording of lectures violate an instructor's intellectual property rights and the Canadian Copyright Act. Students violating this agreement will be subject to disciplinary actions under the Code of Student Conduct.

**Other academic offences.** TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019> .

**Back-up copies.** Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

**Obligation to check email.** At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at [www.utorid.utoronto.ca](http://www.utorid.utoronto.ca). The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. Students should check utoronto email regularly for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

**Email communication with the course instructor.** The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students in conjoint programs must be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

## **Course Schedule**

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- Unless otherwise specified, all readings below are required reading, and the expectation is that students will have read that week's readings prior to class
- *Living Well and Dying Faithfully* is abbreviated to *LWDF*; *The Art of Dying* is abbreviated to *TAOD*; all other readings are indicated by title or website.

### **Week 1**

*Jan 10, 2025*

#### **Go in Peace: An Introduction**

Readings:

*LWDF* (xii-xxiv, 107-127) "Forward," "Introduction: Christian Practices and the Art of Dying Faithfully," and Ch 6 (107-127 only): "Why Me Lord": Practicing Lament at the Foot of the Cross

*TAOD* "Forward" and Ch 1: "When Death Arrives"

## **Week 2**

Jan 17, 2025

### **Abundant Life / Abundant Death: The Theology of Life in Death**

Readings:

*LWDF* (3-58) Section 1 (Ch 1-3): "Practices of Living to Die Well"

*TAOD* Ch 2: "Gradual Dying and End-Of-Life Care"

## **Week 3**

Jan 24, 2025

### **Hope & Quality of Life: A Palliative Approach to Whole Person End-of-Life Care**

Readings:

*LWDF* (165-187, 205-225) Ch 8: "Healing in the Midst of Dying," and Ch 10 "Hope in the Face of Terminal Illness"

*TAOD* Ch 3: "Losing the Christian Death"

## **Week 4**

Jan 31, 2025

### **Emotional Care & Dignity: Christian Compassion, Mercy, and Mental Health**

Readings:

*LWDF* (188-204, 226-245) Ch 9 "Compassion," and Ch 11 "More than Sparrows, Less than the Angels: The Christian Meaning of Death with Dignity"

*TAOD* Ch 4: "The Individual, The Church and *Ars Moriendi*"

## **Week 5**

Feb 7, 2025

### **Spiritual Care: Scripture, Sacraments, Symbols, Prayer, and Lament**

Readings:

*LWDF* (86-162) Ch 4: "Suffering in Communion With Christ: Sacraments, Dying Faithfully, and End-Of-Life Care," Ch 5: "The Practice of Prayer and Care for the Dying," Ch 6 (127-138 only): "Why Me, Lord?: Practicing Lament at the Foot of the Cross"

*TAOD* Ch 5: "The Spirituality of Dying"

## **Week 6**

Feb 14, 2025

### **Communal Care: Christian Communities and Ongoing Care**

Readings:

*Inspiring Hope: Helping Churches Care for the Sick: A Palliative Care Handbook From Africa* (entire publication)

*TAOD* Ch 6: "The Hardest Conversation You'll Ever Have"

### **READING WEEK: February 17-21, 2025**

## **Week 7**

Feb 28, 2025

### **Medical Care: Symptom Control and "The Last Hours"**

Readings:

*The Unbroken Circle* (62-69, 76-88) Section 4 "Support During the End of Life" (will be provided)

*TAOD* Ch 7: "Caring For The Dying"

Begin grief narrative. Choose **one** of the following for your final assignment:

- Friesen, Leanne. *Grieving Room: Making Space for all the Hard Things after Death and Loss.*



- Lewis, C. S. *A Grief Observed*.
- Moll, Clarissa. *Beyond the Darkness*.
- Ramsey, Shelley. *Grief: A Mama's Unwanted Journey*.
- Sittser, Gerald. *A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows through Loss*.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Lament for a Son*.

## **Week 8**

Mar 7, 2025

### **Ethics & Decision-Making: Ethical End-of-Life Choices**

Readings:

*LDWF* (246-271) Ch 12 "Embracing and Resisting Death: A Theology of Justice and Hope for Care at the End of Life"

*TAOD* Ch 11: "Living in the Light of Death"

*The Unbroken Circle* (69-75): pages pertaining to preparing for the end-of-life (will be provided)

## **Week 9**

Mar 14, 2025

### **Medical Assistance in Dying: Biblical Reflections, Canadian Policy & Implications**

Readings:

*TAOD* Ch 10: A Culture of Resurrection

Denominational materials (choose at least **one** of the following):

Due to the contemporary nature of this topic, an up-to-date list of denomination-specific statements and policies will be provided prior to this week. Choose to at least read the statement most closely association with your denomination.

Optional, supplementary articles will also be suggested prior to this week.

## **Week 10**

Mar 21, 2025

### **Bereavement Support: Living with Loss**

Readings:

*TAOD* Ch 9: "Grief and Mourning"

*Walk With Me Into The Light* (entire booklet)

Short selections from Dr. Alan Wolfelt's writings (will be provided)

## **Week 11**

Mar 28, 2025

### **Funerals: Preparing Funerals and Caring for Grieving Families (Rev. Dr. John McNally, guest)**

Readings:

*TAOD* Ch 8: "The Christian Funeral"

*Preaching for Special Occasions* Ch 3 (will be provided)

*The Special Service Worship Architect* Ch 3 (will be provided)

## **Week 12**

Apr 4, 2025

### **Reflections: Learning from Loss**

Readings:

*LWDF* (272-276) "Conclusion: Attending to God in Suffering: Re-Imagining End of Life Care"

*TAOD* "Afterword" by Clarissa Moll

One of the grief narratives listed in course texts (see also Week 7)

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