

**Course Syllabus**  
**WYP2511HS – Go In Peace: Care for the Dying in Christian Community**  
**Wycliffe College**  
**Toronto School of Theology**  
**Winter 2023**

***Instructor Information***

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***Course Identification***

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Course Number: WYP2511HS  
Course Format: *Online*  
Course Name: Go In Peace: Care for the Dying in Christian Community  
Course Location: N/A  
Class Times: N/A  
Prerequisites: none

***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).

***Course Resources***

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**Required Course Texts/Bibliography**

- 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.
- 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.
- **Choose one** of the following grief narratives as a fourth required reading:
  - Lewis, C. S. *A Grief Observed*. London: Faber & Faber, 1966.

- Ramsey, Shelley. *Grief: A Mama's Unwanted Journey*. Bloomington, IL: Westbow Press, 2013.
- Shaw, Luci. *God in the Dark*. Vancouver, B.C.: Regent College Pub., 1998.
- 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 ask [insert college contact] for further help.]

- Personal Website <http://individual.utoronto.ca/name>

### Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes

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COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAM OUTCOMES
By the end of this course, students are expected to demonstrate the following:	This outcome will be demonstrated through these course elements	This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (M.Div., MTS)

Describe the Christian theological understanding of living well and dying well	Readings, modules 1-2, research paper	M.Div. 1.6, 2.1 MTS 1.6
Respond in an effective, compassionate, pastoral manner to those who are dying, their caregivers and those who are grieving their losses	Readings and modules 3-7, 10, 11, Response to grief narrative paper	M.Div. 2.3 MTS 3.3
Identify physical, emotional, practical and spiritual needs and formulate healthy, Christian responses to those needs	Readings and modules 3-7	M.Div. 2.3 MTS 3.2, 3.3
Employ spiritual care, including (but not limited to) lament, prayer, and sacraments within a collaborative team approach to end-of-life care	Readings and module 3 (as well as course as a whole)	M.Div. 1.6, 2.3, 3.3 MTS 1.6, 3.3
Recognize and explain the physical changes that occur when death is near	Readings and module 7	M.Div. 2.3
Organize and nurture a Christian community of care in response to death and dying	Readings and module 6	M.Div. 2.4, 3.3 MTS 3.3
Apply a Christian pastoral approach to some of the ethical and legal challenges that may arise when someone is dying	Readings, web pages and modules 8-9	M.Div. 2.1 MTS 2.1, 2.3
Justify pastoral after-death care including funerals and bereavement care	Readings, self-reflection. modules 10-12 and Response to grief narrative paper	M.Div. 2.3, 3.3 MTS 3.3
Use a companioning approach to the dying and bereaved	Readings, modules 10-11, Response to grief narrative paper	M.Div. 2.3 MTS 3.3
Examine their own life losses and learn from them	Readings, module 12, Personal Loss Inventory and Reflection	M.Div. 3.2 MTS 3.1, 3.2
Appraise the themes presented both with a view to deeper comprehension and practical application	Discussion forum, Research Essay,	M.Div. 2.2 MTS 2.1, 2.2, 2.3

	Response to grief narrative paper	
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## ***Evaluation***

### **Requirements**

This is an online course which will be administered through the University of Toronto's Portal system. Students are expected to log into the course website regularly (<http://portal.utoronto.ca>), where one can access class modules throughout the course (further instructions for online contribution will be provided).

Each week the instructor will post a videos and written material. Participation in the course is very important and is encouraged through online discussion of assigned readings.

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in four areas. An outline is given below, with more information available on Quercus:

(1) Discussion Forum	Weekly	20%
(2) Personal Loss Inventory and Reflection	Due Jan 22, 2023	20%
(3) Research Paper	Due March 27, 2023	40%
(4) Response to Grief Narrative	Due April 10, 2023	20%

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

(1) **Discussion Forum** (20%) – In addition to reading the required texts, students are expected to participate regularly in the discussion forum evidencing familiarity with the required readings and thoughtful responses to the materials. Specific discussion forum questions will be posted each week. Discussion forum responses will typically be around 200 words. Students are expected to read the discussion forum posts from other group members and respond to, or interact with, at least one of these posts weekly.

(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)?

(3) **Research paper** (40%) – 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.

(4) **Response to Grief Narrative** (20%) – Choose **one** of the following grief narratives for this assignment:

- Lewis, C. S. *A Grief Observed*. London: Faber & Faber, 1966.
- Ramsey, Shelley. *Grief: A Mama's Unwanted Journey*. Westbow Press, 2013.
- Shaw, Luci. *God in the Dark*. Vancouver, B.C.: Regent College Pub., 1998.
- Sittser, Gerald Lawson. *A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows through Loss*. Expanded ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Lament for a Son*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987.

Write a 1500-2000 word reflection in response to the narrative you chose. Use the following questions to help focus your reflections. From this narrative, 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? 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? If you were the author’s pastor, priest or spiritual caregiver, how would you companion the author on their grief journey?

### 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

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

**Late work (BD).** Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. The penalty for late work is 2% per day. The absolute deadline for the course 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.

This penalty is not applied to students with documented medical or compassionate difficulties or exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness); students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor and request an SDF. The absolute deadline for obtaining an SDF for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of examination week, whichever is sooner. An SDF must be requested from the registrar's office in the student's college of registration no later than the last day of exam week in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work 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/>

**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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- Course modules will be posted the Friday prior to the upcoming week.
- Unless otherwise specified, all readings below are required reading.
- *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 9, 2023*

#### **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 16, 2023*

#### **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 23, 2023*

#### **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 30, 2023*

#### **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 6, 2023*

### **Spiritual Care: 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 13, 2023*

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

Readings:

*The Unbroken Circle* (33-60) Section 3 “Support During Serious Illness” (will be provided)

*TAOD* Ch 6: “The Hardest Conversation You’ll Ever Have”

## **Week 7**

*Feb 27, 2023*

### **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:

- Nicholas Wolterstorff - *Lament For A Son*
- Luci Shaw – *God In The Dark*
- Shelley Ramsey - *Grief: A Mama’s Unwanted Journey*
- Jerry Sittser - *A Grace Disguised*
- C.S. Lewis - *A Grief Observed*

## **Week 8**

*Mar 6, 2023*

### **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 13, 2023*

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

Readings:



TAOD Ch 10: A Culture of Resurrection

Health Canada. 2022. "Medical Assistance in Dying." Government of Canada. May 24, 2022. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/medical-assistance-dying.html>.

Paddey, Patricia. 2022. "Navigating Medical Assistance in Dying." Faith Today. April 29, 2022. <https://www.faithtoday.ca/Magazines/2022-May-Jun/Navigating-Medical-Assistance-in-Dying>. (will be provided)

Paddey, Patricia. 2022. "How MAiD is Transforming Canadian End-of-life Care." Faith Today July/August 2022.

<https://digital.faithtoday.ca/faithtoday/library/item/07082022/4021712/> (will be provided)

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 at the start of the course. Choose to read the statement most closely association with your denomination.

## **Week 10**

*Mar 20, 2023*

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

Readings:

TAOD Ch 9: "Grief and Mourning"

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

## **Week 11**

*Mar 27, 2023*

### **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 3, 2023*

### **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)

## **A Typical Week in the Course**

(1) Wednesday night by midnight (EST): Students will post their answer to the weekly discussion board.

(2) Friday night by midnight (EST): Students must have read the discussion forum posts from other group members and have responded to, or interacted with, at least one of these posts.

(3) There will be regular *optional* synchronous discussion times (times to be determined during the first week of class depending on availability of interested students)