Course Description
What do humans experience when a loved one dies? What do animals experience? This one-credit course takes a multi-faceted interdisciplinary approach to understanding how sentient beings, both human and animal, experience death and the processes of grief and mourning. The course draws on research from multiple fields, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, veterinary medicine, nursing, education, and anthrozoology (the study of the human-animal bond). The course investigates how humans experience of the death of other humans and companion animals, and how animals experience the death of human companions, and other animals.

Course Readings

Additional readings are listed in the syllabus. All will be available on the course Blackboard Learn site, with some also distributed hard copy in class.

Learning Objectives
1. To develop awareness and knowledge of contemporary theories of grief and loss for both humans and animal.
2. To develop awareness and knowledge of the role of ritual in both human and animal grief and loss.
3. To develop knowledge of the changing context of human/animal relationships and animal grief and loss.
4. To develop skills of critical thinking and reflection and to be able to apply them to understanding human and animal grief and loss.
Syllabus

October 16
In class: Introductions, Overview of syllabus, policies and procedures

SECTION I: HUMAN EXPERIENCES OF GRIEF AND LOSS (Lead Instructor, Servaty-Seib)

October 18: Grief and Loss: Basic Concepts and Myths
Read: Lewis Chapter 1 (available on class BB Learn site).
Due: Journal # 1 (see assignment descriptions), emailed to Dr. S-S by class time
In class: Discuss journal activity experiences and general application of the concept of loss

October 23: Past and Present Conceptualizations/Theories of Grief and Mourning I
Read: Lewis Chapters 2 & 3 (class BB Learn site)
Due: Journal # 2 (see assignment descriptions), emailed to Dr. S-S by class time
In class: Discuss journal material and apply course concepts to experience

October 25: Past and Present Conceptualizations/Theories of Grief and Mourning II
Read: Lewis Chapter 4 (class BB Learn site)
Due: Journal # 3 (see assignment descriptions), emailed to Dr. S-S by class time
In class: Discuss journal material and apply course concepts to experience

October 30: Factors (e.g., diversity broadly defined, concurrent stressors) Associated with Grief Expression and Acts of Mourning
Read: Rosenblatt (2017) (class BB Learn site)
Due: Journal #4 (see assignment descriptions), emailed to Dr. S-S by class time
In class: Discuss journal material and apply course concepts to experience

November 1: Death-Related Rituals
Read: Norton & Gino (2014) (class BB Learn site)
Due: NA
In class: Discussion of application of course concepts to experience

November 6th: Guest Speakers from Hippensteel Funeral Home
Read: NA
Due: Journal #5 (see assignment descriptions), emailed to Dr. S-S by class time
SECTION 2: ANIMAL EXPERIENCES OF GRIEF AND LOSS (Lead Instructor, Dolby)

November 8: Animals Grieve Too: The Evidence for Animal Emotion and the "Upside of Anthropomorphism"
Read: DeWaal (What I Learned from Tickling Apes) and Reiderer (Inky the Octopus)
Due: Journal 6 (see guidelines) hard copy, in class
In class: Discuss anthropomorphism and anthropodenial

November 13: Animals Grieve Too #2 (Barbara King)
Read: Questions for Barbara King
Due: Journal 7 (see guidelines) hard copy, in class
In class: Watch and discuss Barbara King’s TED talk on animal grief; excerpt from Hachi: A Dog’s Tale

November 15: The Human/Animal Bond, Grief, and Loss
Read: Start reading The Last Walk
Due: Journal 8 (see guidelines), hard copy in class
In class: Rainbow Bridge assignment: Please BRING laptop or computer if possible: we will work in small groups to explore the Rainbow Bridge together

November 20: The Human/Animal Bond, The Last Walk
Read: Finish The Last Walk
Due: Journal 9 on The Last Walk (see guidelines) hard copy, in class

November 22: Guest speaker: Jennifer Dehn, Veterinary Social Worker, College of Veterinary Medicine
Read: ‘Pet Cemeteries Let Best Friends Stay Together after Death’, and read about veterinary social work (link on class BB Learn site, pay particular attention to the section on grief/loss)
Due: Journal 10: See guidelines. In class. Hard copy

December 4: Expanding the Bond?: Thinking about Animals We Don’t Grieve For
Read: John Burnside, The Beauty of Roadkill
Optional reading: excerpt from Barry Lopez, Apologia
Due: Journal 11: See guidelines. In class. Hard copy
In class: discussion of grief for road kill and farm animals (video excerpts)

December 6: Final Class Sharing Session
Due: see assignment details
In class: Sharing session
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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points (100 total possible)</th>
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<td>Final Sharing Session</td>
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Your final grade is determined the distribution chart shown below:

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Description of Assignments

**Journal 1: October 18. 5 pts.**
Discuss the fact that you are taking a course on the topic of grief and loss with at least three (3) people in your life and note their reactions. Do not share that you are having this discussion with them as part of a class assignment. Summarize your findings.
What are your reactions to this experience? (Consider this question for each journal entry)

**Journal 2: October 23. 5 pts.**
What was your first experience with death? What memories do you have of that experience? What aspect of the experience was most meaningful? What part (if any) would you change?

**Journal 3: October 25. 5 pts.**
Historically, how did your family of origin view death? How was the topic of death addressed or not addressed in your home? What was the image of death that seemed to be portrayed?

**Journal 4: October 30. 15 pts.**
Interview two (2) people of different ages, religious, cultural, and/or ethnic backgrounds (at least one must be from a cultural background different from your own). Try to learn the following:
1. How has this person experienced death in his/her family; who, when, where, what circumstances?
2. Was there one death that was particularly significant?
3. What were the initial and prolonged reactions of the individual and the family?
4. What are the individual’s beliefs about life after death?
5. Obtain a description of the rituals or activities associated with death in the individual’s heritage.

**Journal 5: November 6. 10 pts.**
Plan your own ritual/funeral/memorial service in detail. Topics could include the following:
- Type of body disposition
- Type of casket, vault, and/or container (if applicable)
- Type of service (e.g., funeral, memorial service)
- Type of visitation (if applicable)
- Music selections
- Readings and who will read them
- Main points for eulogy/message offered and who would give it
- Place of service/ritual
- How can others memorize (e.g., flowers, contribute to organization/fund)

**Journal 6: November 8. 5 pts.**
These readings are foundational to the rest of the semester: in order to talk and think seriously about animal grief and loss, we need to first discuss and understand how we as humans (animals too, of course) make sense of animal emotion. These readings address the concepts of “anthropomorphism” and “anthropodenial.” **In this journal, you should write 3 statements and one question.** The statements (you can write them as bullet points for this journal, though write complete sentences) should summarize what you learned about animals and emotion, and what you now know about anthropomorphism and anthropodenial. Then write ONE question that you have that you would like to discuss in class.

**Journal 7. November 13. 5 pts.**
In “Questions for Barbara King” she reflects,

> Animals teach us that grief is a natural, if at times profoundly difficult, result of feeling love and joy with another being. If you don’t mind though, I’d like to conclude by tackling a different question: What can animal grief teach us about our relationship with other creatures? To me, that’s the heart of why animal emotion is incredibly important to study and understand.

In this journal, respond to her reflection. What do you think we can learn from studying animal grief? How it is connected (or not) to love? What can we learn about our (human) relationship with other creatures through understanding animal grief? (250-300 words)

**Journal 8. November 15. 5 pts.**
Write a reflection on the experience of a death/loss of an animal (companion or otherwise) in your life. You have multiple options for this journal entry.
- **IF** you wrote about an animal at the beginning of this class (Journal 2), then you can, if you like, go back to that journal entry and rewrite/rethink in the context of what you now know about anthropomorphism and anthropodenial. You might also want to consider/rethink how much (or how little) you thought about the animal’s experience in Journal 2.
- **IF** you did not write about the death/loss of an animal in Journal 2, and have experienced this type of death or loss (and I write loss, because some of you will have experiences where...
parents/guardians do not tell young children directly that a companion animal has died, leaving you to wonder), then this is the opportunity to do so.

○ If you have not had the personal experience of a death or loss of an animal in your life, you are welcome to interview a classmate/roommate/peer about their experience of death/loss of an animal, and write about that.

○ Your final option is to go to the Rainbow Bridge site (linked off of the BB Learn page, or easily found by searching). Go to the “Visit Pet Memorial” link, and read and reflect on one memorial to a companion animal. Please make sure to include the name of the companion animal you are writing about/reflecting on, so I can go back to the site and read the memorial myself. (250-300 words)

This is the longest journal you will write for this section of the class—approximately 500 words (two pages). Now that you have finished The Last Walk, write a letter to Jessica Pierce, the author (if you are curious about her, and want to learn more, her webpage is linked under “resources” on the class BB Learn site). Let her know what you learned and thought about the book—open a conversation with her about her journey with Ody, your own journey learning about (and perhaps experiencing) animal life and death, pet euthanasia and hospice, and what you think our society can and should do to help companion animals (and their human guardians) in their final stages of life. Let me know at the end of the letter if I have your permission to share it with Jessica (with your name removed, at your request). Absolutely your decision, and your grade will not be affected—I would like to share some excerpts from the letters with her.

Journal 10. November 22. 5 pts.
This journal entry will help you to prepare for our guest speaker. Based on the readings and what you have learned about veterinary social work, write THREE questions that you would like to ask Jennifer Dehn.

For this final journal, you are reading about how we as a society treat animals that are killed by cars/traffic, typically referred to as “road kill.” Think about how you have been socialized to see (or not see) these animals, and how Burnside (and Lopez, if you have done the optional reading) help you to see these animals differently (or not). Feel free to include personal experiences, as you wish. (250-300 words)

Final Class Sharing Session. December 6. 5 points
For our final class, we will have a sharing session, which is a simpler version of a poster fair. The objective of this session is to share with the rest of the class a meaningful assignment, moment, or reflection from the class. You have significant latitude in what you contribute to our sharing session. Below are some guidelines and suggestions:

○ You may choose to work alone, or with a small group of other students from the class (maximum group size is three total).

○ You may choose to present one of the assignments (whole or part) from this class that was particularly memorable for you.

○ You may also choose to create an entirely new piece of work for this assignment, a piece that sums up and reflects your interaction and experience with the class. This might be: a painting or drawing, photography, a poem or other piece of writing, a song or musical performance (please let us know if you choose this option, so that we can work on scheduling), another type of
performance (reading poetry, a stand-up comedy act—again, just let us know in advance so we can schedule—no more than about 2-3 minutes). You can also create a video, podcast, Prezi, Powerpoint, or other multi-media presentation. **Please make sure to bring a laptop along if your presentation is electronic.**

- You can also take this opportunity to do a mini-research project into some aspect of this class that was particularly interesting for you. Contact us for suggestions if you need help, and also explore the “resources” section of the BB learn site.
- Whatever you choose to do—you need to create some type of presentation that can be shared with the rest of the class during the final class session. Because of limited time, with the exception of performances, the presentations will happen simultaneously. So think about what you need, and consider using the poster printing services at WALK (low-cost available at WALK) to print out your poem, writing, painting, drawing, or research so that is easily viewed. If you choose to use an assignment from class—add some visual interest, and perhaps just excerpt part of the assignment, not the entire assignment. We will have poster stands available for your use: **Please make sure that you print 30 x 40, no larger. This is smaller than the standard size, but it is the size you need to fit on the poster stands at the HC.**

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**Guidelines for Submitting Written Work in 39900**

- Typed, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman, double spaced.
- ¾ inch to 1 inch margins (nothing bigger or smaller).
- APA format must be used for citations (both in-text citations and on the reference page).
- Pages numbered.
- Stapled in upper left-hand corner. Printed back-to-back if possible.
- No excessive information on the first page, or excessive spacing around the title. All that is needed is your name, EDCI 39900, and the title of the assignment from the syllabus. **Do not submit a cover page.**
- Done completely. Checked for spelling and grammatical errors. Do not submit a paper without doing this.
- Bibliographies do not count towards the word total.
- OWL (Online Writing Lab) is a good resource for writing guidance: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/)
- Use scholarly, respectful language (e.g., use “students” instead of kids”); do not use slang.
- Use precise language (write what you mean to say; write in a clear manner).
**Participation Rubric**

Full participation means that you address questions and raise queries in whole class and small group sessions in meaningful and substantial ways.

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<th>18-20</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rarely contributes to conversations in class. Student is more passively involved.</td>
<td>Expresses ideas on occasion but does not make an attempt to remain actively involved in advancing peers’ thinking and learning. Volunteers to make connections on rare occasions.</td>
<td>Makes a conscious effort to be involved in conversations and discussions in each class session where there is opportunity to do so. Talk includes frequent expression of ideas and connections. Active involvement encourages other students’ thinking and new learning.</td>
<td>Engages others in class conversations and learning talk. Makes connections that are clear and notable on many occasions. Contributions are meaningful and connect other students’ ideas, text connections, and related learning. Uses opportunities for thinking and begins to generate questions for active knowledge construction.</td>
<td>Student always contributes to class discussions and attempts to enhance conversations by contributing to important new and deep level learning, to text connections and to understanding related field experiences. At this level, the student is articulate and fully engaged. Uses multiple opportunities for thinking aloud and along with others and generating questions for further learning.</td>
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**Course Policies**

**Attendance**

Attendance is a critical part of the class. As this class meets twice a week for eight weeks, students are allowed one absence—and one absence only—without question or excuse. Plan accordingly. Your first absence—no matter what the reason—will be counted as your “automatically allowed” absence. A second excused absence may or may not be granted in extenuating circumstances. Students who anticipate a second absence because of an extenuating circumstance should contact the instructor immediately. Official documentation will be required in the case of a second absence.

Students who miss a second class (if not excused because of extenuating circumstances) will lose fifty points off of their final grade. Students who miss three or more classes will automatically fail the course. To repeat: you cannot receive a passing grade for this class if you have missed more than two classes. Exceptions to this policy will only be made ONLY in the case of a death in your family (per university Grief Absence Policy), religious observance or a medical situation that requires you to be in the hospital. Documentation will be required.

All assignments are due regardless of whether or not you are in class.
It is expected that you will be in class on time. Coming late to class is disruptive and distracting. Because of lateness' effect on the class, points will be deducted from your attendance and participation grade when you are late to class. “Late” means after class has started, according to the clock on the classroom wall. If you anticipate being late for class more than ONCE this semester, you should speak with the instructor. Class will always last the full fifty minutes, and your complete attention and participation is expected until class officially ends. Please do not pack up your things and ‘check out’ before that time.

Students are free to leave to use the restroom as necessary—it is, however, requested, that you do so with sensitivity to what is happening in the class at that moment. Please wait for a natural break in the class to leave, and please leave and enter the classroom quietly and with as little disruption as possible.

Late Submission of Assignments Policy
All assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the day that they are due. Assignments that are turned in late will be given a lower grade than papers turned in on time (and late means after class starts, as defined above). Regardless of how late your paper is, it is ALWAYS better to turn it in. You will receive a “0” for a paper that is not turned in. If the paper is turned in, REGARDLESS OF HOW LATE, I will do my best to ensure that you receive at least a few points for it. That few points may make a critical difference in your grade.

Academic Dishonesty
Purdue prohibits “dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty” [Part 5, Section III-B-2-a, University Regulations]. Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated that “the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest” [University Senate Document 72-18, December 15, 1972].

In the context of this class, academic misconduct also includes misrepresenting the work that you did. Some of the assignments for this class require active learning. If you plagiarize from a website or other electronic source, this is also academic dishonesty, as is having someone else do your written work for you, or paying for it to be done for you. One instance of such behavior will result in immediately failing the class. The Purdue Honors Pledge: “As a boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together - we are Purdue.”

Additional Course Policies
- Cell phones and all other electronic devices must be turned off before entering the class, and stored OUT OF SIGHT (in a backpack, bag, etc.). If you are a parent or have other personal family responsibilities, you may leave the phone on vibrate and take the call in a true emergency, as long as you inform the instructor of this course IN ADVANCE and s/he同意. Everyone else must switch the phone OFF before entering class. Work responsibilities are not a valid reason for leaving the phone on vibrate. While you are in this class, your first responsibility is here. There will be no tolerance of texting during class, no matter how discrete. This is your only warning. Your
participation grade will suffer if you are texting or paying attention to your phone and not class. We may or may not provide a gentle reminder in the future. If cell phone activity becomes a problem, you will be asked to leave and lose your participation points for that class.

- Visitors to class are only allowed with the prior approval of the instructor. Visitors must have a legitimate academic reason for coming to class, and may only visit once per semester.
- Side conversations, disruptive eating of your breakfast/lunch, texting, sleeping, or other distracting and disrespectful activities will not be tolerated. Students will first be requested to stop these behaviors, and then, if the behavior persists, will be asked to leave.
- Though every attempt will be made to follow the syllabus, the instructors of this course reserve the right to make changes, additions, and deletions as necessary, and to correct mistakes. As much as possible, this will be done in consultation with members of the class. PLEASE NOTE THAT STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL CHANGES TO THE SYLLABUS, INCLUDING THOSE ANNOUNCED ORALLY IN CLASS.

- **Students must keep copies of all papers that are submitted.**
- Students must allow adequate time for the writing and revision of assignments before they are submitted. Ensure that you are backing up your work frequently, and that you keep a copy. Never have a copy in only one place.
- You are responsible for all material covered in any classes that you miss, including any and all changes to assignments and the syllabus.
- Spelling, grammar, organization, and clarity are critical elements of written expression, and will count towards your grade on papers. For assistance with writing and study skills, contact the Online Writing Lab (OWL), the Purdue Writing Lab (Heavilon) and the Student Success Center (KRCH)
- The instructors will not write letters of recommendation for students until final grades are submitted.
- It is expected that you will use your Purdue e-mail account for all communication with the instructor. The instructor will only e-mail to this account and expects you to check it regularly. If e-mail to your Purdue e-mail account is forwarded to another e-mail account it is your responsibility to ensure that the forwarding is correctly set up and functioning.

**Other Grading Policies**
Incompletes will be considered in extenuating, emergency situations that could not be anticipated. An example would be a car accident requiring your hospitalization during the last week of the semester. Incompletes will never be granted for situations that could be foreseen or that are not true emergencies. It is your responsibility to monitor your own attendance in this course, and to withdraw before the deadline if you will not be able to pass. If you do not do this on your own, you will fail the course, according to the attendance policy. This is not your instructor’s responsibility – it is yours.

**Nondiscrimination Statement Policy**
Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of new ideas, and enriches campus life. Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a disabled or Vietnam era veteran.
If you believe you have been the recipient of discrimination from students, faculty, or staff, you have several choices of action.

1. The most direct approach, if you feel comfortable doing so, is to speak directly to the person whose behavior seemed inappropriate.

2. Or, you may speak to a faculty member; the Honors College Associate Dean of Academic Affairs (Dr. Emily Allen), or the Dean of the Honors College (Dr. Rhonda Phillips) or the Affirmative Action Office (http://www.purdue.edu/ethics/affirmative-action.html)

It is important that you speak to someone you feel comfortable with so that the concerns can be handled promptly and fairly. Concerns brought forward are given a high level of confidentiality, but may be shared with individuals that have a legitimate reason to know.

**Amorous Relationships**
http://www.purdue.edu/policies/ethics/iia1.html [excerpted].

Purdue University is committed to maintaining an environment in which learning and discovery take place in a professional atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. Amorous relationships can develop within the University community between faculty, students and staff. The disparity of power between persons involved in amorous relationships between a student and a faculty member, a graduate teaching or research assistant, or any other Purdue employee who has educational responsibility over the student, supervisor and subordinate, or senior and junior colleagues in the same department or unit makes them susceptible to exploitation.

**Campus Emergency Policy**
In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances.

**Students with Disabilities**
Before the provision of classroom accommodations, students with disabilities must be registered with Adaptive Programs in the Office of the Dean of Students. Any student who is in need of special accommodations due to a disability should contact the Office of the Dean of Students, Adaptive Programs at (765) 494-1247.

**CAPS Information:** Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (765)494-6995 and http://www.purdue.edu/caps/ during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.
Emergency Notification Procedures

These are based on a simple concept – if you hear a fire alarm inside, proceed outside. If you hear a siren outside, proceed inside.

- **Indoor Fire Alarms** mean to stop class or research and immediately evacuate the building.
  - Proceed to your Emergency Assembly Area away from building doors. Remain outside until police, fire, or other emergency response personnel provide additional guidance or tell you it is safe to leave.

- **All Hazards Outdoor Emergency Warning Sirens** mean to immediately seek shelter (Shelter in Place) in a safe location within the closest building.
  - “Shelter in place” means seeking immediate shelter inside a building or University residence. This course of action may need to be taken during a tornado, a civil disturbance including a shooting or release of hazardous materials in the outside air. Once safely inside, find out more details about the emergency*. Remain in place until police, fire, or other emergency response personnel provide additional guidance or tell you it is safe to leave.

*In both cases, you should seek additional clarifying information by all means possible: Purdue homepage, email alert, TV, radio, etc. Review the Purdue Emergency Warning Notification System multi-communication layers at [http://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness/warning_system.htm](http://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness/warning_system.htm)

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES**


- Review the Building Emergency Plan (available from the building deputy) for:
  - Evacuation routes, exit points, and emergency assembly area
  - When and how to evacuate the building
  - Shelter in place procedures and locations
  - Additional building specific procedures and requirements

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AWARENESS VIDEOS**

“Shots Fired on Campus: When Lightning Strikes,” is a 20-minute active shooter awareness video that illustrates what to look for and how to prepare and react to this type of incident. See [http://www.purdue.edu/securePurdue/news/2010/emergency-preparedness-shots-fired-on-campus-video.cfm](http://www.purdue.edu/securePurdue/news/2010/emergency-preparedness-shots-fired-on-campus-video.cfm) (Link is also located on the EP website)

**MORE INFORMATION**

- Reference the Emergency Preparedness website for additional information: [http://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness](http://www.purdue.edu/emergency_preparedness)