

End-of-life Doula Certificate Program

The University of Vermont

January 2020 Syllabus

Lead Instructor: Francesca Arnoldy

A graduate of the University of Vermont College of Education and Social Services Human Development and Family Studies Program, Francesca Arnoldy lives in Hinesburg with her husband and two children. She pursues a number of endeavors, including birth work as a certified labor doula and childbirth educator, advocacy and volunteer efforts, gardening, and writing. Through personal experiences with providing support at deaths and the completion of training programs in hospice and End-of-life care along with her strong belief in the essence of doula work and being “of service,” she is grateful to extend her focus beyond the childbearing years to the other bookend, death, by developing and facilitating UVM’s certificate program for End-of-life Doulas to promote peaceful, personalized, well-supported passages in and out of life.

Academic Coach (AC): TBA

Who Should I Contact For ...

Questions about logging in	AC
Questions about anything technical	AC
Questions about my grade	AC
Questions about how to complete any required tasks in the course	AC
Questions about the content of the course	Instructor
Suggestions for resources to add to/enhance the course	Instructor
Questions about the Facebook group that opens at the end of the course	Instructor
Questions about future offerings of this program	Instructor

Before you reach out to either of us, we do request that you review the Announcements page and the Getting Started page to see if we have possibly addressed your question there already. This may get you an answer more quickly than we can respond.

If at any time you need immediate help, please click the **Help** button at the top of your Blackboard page, and you’ll be taken to a page that lists numerous avenues for getting assistance.

Course Description

The University of Vermont Larner College of Medicine has partnered with The Farm Families of Cabot Creamery Cooperative to launch a fully online End-of-life Doula Professional Certificate that will prepare

you to meet the growing demand for end-of-life support as people live longer and the course of the average dying process continues to become increasingly gradual and anticipated.

End-of-Life Doulas complement the care provided by family members and friends, as well as palliative and hospice professionals, within the settings of hospitals, senior care facilities, hospices, and homes. EOL Doulas support clients with compassionate care in a number of ways, including emotional, spiritual, informational, and physical support to ease anxiety, aid in comfort, and promote personalized, even positive dying passages for clients and their loved ones.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to provide an in-depth overview of the emerging role of end-of-life (EOL) doulas, how they fit into existing healthcare models, and the issues, challenges, and rewards that surround this field of end-of-life care.

Throughout the course, learners will be exposed to a wide variety of published information, interviews with industry professionals, and chances to examine their own experiences, beliefs, hopes, and fears about death and dying. We intend to create a supportive learning experience with lots of opportunities to build collegiality, as the subject is intense, challenging, and affecting.

High-level goals of the program intend that students will learn how to:

- Become prepared to work in harmony with a client's chosen care team (potentially) including community members, family, friends, and medical practitioners to fill in support gaps as needed and heighten a client's feelings of empowerment and self-efficacy.
- Respect appropriate professional/personal boundaries while keeping the client's best interest in mind at all times.
- Understand common terminal conditions and diseases (and their associated symptoms and progressive courses of decline), pain management practices, the active dying process, and helpful interventions to ease patient suffering.
- Describe the role and scope of an EOL Doula and apply the core skills of providing unconditional positive regard and nonjudgmental support while comfortably holding space, companionship, and engaging in open, accepting dialog with clients.
- Garner a wide variety of details about special populations based on religious beliefs and cultural norms, as well as the unique challenges associated with pediatric death and end-stage dementia.
- Recognize and support the stages and facets of anticipatory grief, mourning, and bereavement.
- Effectively refer patients and families to other local professionals, organizations, support groups, and businesses that provide offerings to those at the end of life.
- Engage in meaningful conversations with clients and assist with legacy projects to encourage emotional acceptance and peaceful preparation.
- Develop seemingly endless, practical methods of decreasing anxiety/suffering by utilizing visualizations, guided imagery, and simple massage techniques, as well as creating a comforting energetic space for clients which feels calming and relaxing.
- Support clients in developing vigil wishes and values-based advance directives.
- Nurture a protective, calm presence and environment during vigil sitting.

- Offer acute bereavement support and appropriate referrals to a client's family and friends after death.

Required Reading: We have two required reading books for this course:

- *Final Gifts*, by Maggie Callanan and Patricia Kelley. Copies of this book are readily available for purchase online, including cheap used copies. Or feel free to borrow it from your local library/hospice lending library.
- *Cultivating the Doula Heart: Essentials of Compassionate Care*, by Francesca Lynn Arnoldy. Copies are available for purchase online.

Course Flow: Each module will open on Wednesday at 12:00 AM and end on Tuesday at 11:59 PM

Course Work: We estimate that the student will be engaged in 8-10 hours per week of course instruction.

Grading: This is a noncredit, certificate-based course. At the conclusion, you will not receive a letter grade, but instead will receive a certificate of completion. All students who earn a 70% or greater, based on the criteria below, will receive a certificate of completion.

Successful completion of this course will be determined by weekly participation in the online learning modules and discussions.

Makeup Policy: On occasion, we encourage and allow students to revise assignments and/or discussion items. If you receive a request to do so, you have no more than **one** week from the original deadline to complete the work, if you choose to do so.

If you have extenuating circumstances that make it difficult for you to complete assigned work by its deadline, you must communicate with the instructor and AC well prior to that deadline. The design of this course relies upon students moving through it together, so our ability to be flexible with deadlines is limited. If you do receive an extension, you have no more than **one** week from the original deadline to complete the work, unless otherwise notified. If you miss a deadline and have not been in touch with the instructor and AC, you will receive a '0' for any missed items.

Discussion Boards

The discussion forum will be an important part of our learning experience. Most students find that participating in discussions helps with understanding of the course content and deepening their learning and ability to think critically. The following instructions and grading rubrics are applied to all course discussion boards. If you are unable to meet this obligation, please let your course instructor know.

Please follow these guidelines when posting in the discussion area:

- Keep your post focused on the topic, relating any class readings and materials from the current module in your post (as applicable).
- Proofread and review your response before hitting the Submit button.
- Participate regularly. Improve your learning by being an active and engaged student. Successful students follow and participate in the assigned discussion throughout the module, logging on at least three times a week while reading and participating in forums as assigned in the module.

- Post your original thoughts by Sunday to help develop discussion before the end of the course week.

The following rubric is used to grade discussion posts:

Criteria	Levels of Achievement			
	Mastery	Adept	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Content of Original Post Weight 50.00%	100 % responds to the assignment in depth, provides insight and application of the week's materials	66.66667 % responds to the week's materials and provides examples of insight or application	33.33333 % responds to the assignment with little expansion, insight, or application	0 % No posts
Content of Responsive Posts Weight 30.00%	100 % includes questions, offers critiques, and fosters collaboration	66.66667 % offers constructive feedback but may not grow the conversation	33.33333 % are not substantive	0 % No posts
Quantity Weight 20.00%	100 % at least three posts within the timeframe (one original + two responsive)	66.66667 % at least two posts within the timeframe (one original + one responsive)	33.33333 % at least one post within the timeframe	0 % No posts

Course Schedule

Module	Topics
1	Introduction to End-of-life Work Dying Person's Bill of Rights Role & Scope of an End-of-Life Doula Introduction to Hospice and Palliative Care Personal Death Awareness; Introduction to End-of-life Options and Wishes
2	Introduction to the Grief Continuum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stages and Dimensions of Grief and Loss • Anticipatory Grief

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive Responses <p>Commonalities within EOL experiences</p>
3	<p>Understanding the Patient Experience</p> <p>Starting the Conversation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals of Care • Common Illnesses/Diseases: Progression, Symptoms, and Care • Pain Assessment and Management <p>Introduction to Dementia</p> <p>Music at the End of Life</p> <p>Universal Safety Precautions</p> <p>Introduction to Basic Hands-on Care</p>
4	<p>Appropriate Professional and Personal Boundaries</p> <p>Companioning versus Treating; Serving versus Helping</p> <p>Non-judgmental Support, Acceptance, and Unconditional Positive Regard</p> <p>Entering Sacred Space</p> <p>Holding Space</p>
5	<p>“Turning Toward” Suffering</p> <p>Dignity Therapy</p> <p>Active Dying Process: Signs and Supportive Interventions</p> <p>The Needs of Clients: Providing Comfort Care</p> <p>Caregiving Considerations</p> <p>Self-Care</p>
6	<p>Religious/Cultural Beliefs and Practices</p> <p>Spirituality</p> <p>After-Death Options - Home, Green, Traditional, Alternative</p> <p>Complementary Care</p> <p>Roles Among Providers/Systems</p> <p>Care Coordination</p>
7	<p>Preparing for Loss</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life Review • Completion Work • Legacy Projects <p>Bereavement/Grief Support</p> <p>Pediatric Death, Loss, and Grief</p>
8	<p>Setting Intention</p> <p>Comfort Measures</p> <p>Guided Imagery, Relaxation and Breathing Exercises</p> <p>Environment - Setting a Personalized Atmosphere of Calm</p> <p>Vigil Planning</p> <p>Vigil Sitting</p> <p>Self-Reflection, Re-evaluation of Personal End-of-Life Wishes</p> <p>What a Doula Does</p>
Bonus Module	<p>Doula Bag</p> <p>Visit Ideas/Activities</p> <p>The Emerging EOL Doula Career</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings • Contracts • Business Considerations <p>Role and Scope Revisited</p>

Student Learning Accommodations: In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing accommodations should contact ACCESS, the office of Disability Services on campus. ACCESS works with students and faculty in an interactive process to explore reasonable and appropriate accommodations via an accommodation letter to faculty with approved accommodations as early as possible each semester. All students are strongly encouraged to meet with their faculty to discuss the accommodations they plan to use in each course.

Contact ACCESS: A170 Living/Learning Center; 802-656-7753; access@uvm.edu; www.uvm.edu/access

UVM's policy on disability certification and student support:
www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/disability.pdf

Religious Holidays: Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. If you need to miss class to observe a religious holiday, please submit the dates of your absence to me in writing by the end of the second full week of classes. You will be permitted to make up work within a mutually agreed-upon time.

Academic Integrity: The policy addresses plagiarism, fabrication, collusion, and cheating.

<http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/acadintegrity.pdf>

Grade Appeals: If you would like to contest a grade, please follow the procedures outlined in this policy:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/gradeappeals.pdf>

Grading: For information on grading and GPA calculation, go to www.uvm.edu/academics/catalogue and click on Policies for an A-Z listing.

Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities: www.uvm.edu/~uvmppg/ppg/student/studentcode.pdf