

**MS 2XA3 Pastoral Care Through the Life Cycle
SYLLABUS FALL 2009**

McMaster Divinity College
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Fall 2009 (Term 1)
Saturday: Sept. 12, Oct. 3 & 24, Nov.14
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Location: Compass Point Bible Church
Burlington
3 units

Course Description:

Caring for others is a rewarding and complex art. Our ability to care relies on our capacity to listen to and truly *see and receive* those for whom we care in all the fullness and richness of who they are. In this course we will draw upon the insights of human development theory (from pastoral theological and psychological sources) to inform and enrich our capacity to *see and receive* others more fully, and to enrich our ministry of care with people of all ages. The assumption that pastoral care is a ministry of the community of faith, and not only a ministry of the pastor, will undergird our deliberations. Throughout the course the relationship between psychology and theology will be examined, and students will be invited to explore their own understanding of the relationship between these complementary yet distinct fields of study. Finally, because our capacity to see and receive others in their complexity depends upon our capacity to see and receive ourselves in our own complexity, students will be given opportunity to consider their own developmental tasks and needs and the impact one's own stage of development can have upon the ministry of care.

Course Objectives:

KNOWING

1. To gain an increased understanding of people and their needs for care as revealed through the lens of human development theory.
2. To consider the relationship between theology and psychology as it applies to the ministry of care.
3. To explore ways in which church communities can be involved in caring for people throughout the life-cycle.

BEING

1. To gain insight into one's own self and ministry in light of human development theory.
2. To expand one's capacity to *see and receive*, and care for others even when their needs differ from one's own.

DOING

1. To practice seeing and caring for another by utilizing insights from human development theory
2. To develop a contextual strategy for incorporating the community of faith in the ministry of caring for people of all ages.

Required Course Textbooks:

Anderson, Herbert, and Edward Foley. *Mighty Stories, Dangerous Rituals: Weaving Together the Human and the Divine*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

Capps, Donald. *Deadly Sins and Saving Virtues*. Eugene OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000.

Stevenson-Moessner, Jeanne, ed. *In Her Own Time: Women and Developmental Issues in Pastoral Care*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2000.

Whitehead, Evelyn Eaton, and James D. Whitehead. *Christian Life Patterns: The Psychological Challenges and Religious Invitations of Adult Life*. Crossroad Publishing Company, 1992.

Recommended Texts:

Capps, Donald. *The Decades of Life: A Guide to Human Development*. Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008.

Schweitzer, Friedrich L. *The Postmodern Life Cycle: Challenges for Church and Theology*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004.

Course Outline:

- September 12** Course Introduction
The Human, and Human Development Theories
Psychological and Spiritual Development: Mutually-
Enriching Perspectives
Pastoral Care and the Life Cycle: Scope, Limits and Possibilities
- October 3** Infancy, Trust, and the Welcoming of New Life
Childhood: Autonomy, Initiative, Industry and Socialized Belief
Early and Late Adolescence: Identity and the Individualization of Faith
The Transition to Early Adulthood: Intimacy and Occupation
- October 24** Midlife, and the Search for Meaning and Generativity
Late Adulthood and the Development of the Wise Self
Aging and Death: The Transition from *life* to *Life*.
The Ministering Community: The Role of Ritual and Community Care
- November 14** Life Cycle Reconsidered: Gender, Culture/Race, and Postmodernity
When the Life Cycle is Disrupted
Class Presentations on Community Possibilities for Care
Pastoral Care and the Life Cycle Revisited: Concluding Considerations

Course Requirements Summary:

1. Reflective Book Review	7-10 pages	20 marks	Due: Oct 3
2. Developmental Interview	7-10 pages	25 marks	Due: Oct 24
3. Possibilities for Community Caring	5-7 pages	20 marks	Due: Nov 14
4. Research Essay	15 pages	35 marks	Due: Dec 4

Course Requirements Explanation:

1. Reflective Book Review 7-10 pages 20 Marks Due: Oct 3

Read both *Christian Life Patterns* and *In Her Own Time*, and engage in a process of self and ministry reflection in light of your reading.

Questions for Self-Reflection

- i) In what ways do you see yourself described? In what ways do you not see yourself described? What have you learned about yourself and your current developmental tasks and needs?
- ii) Think back to your experience of living through a prior stage. How were you cared for as you lived through that stage (supported and challenged)? How would you have liked to have been cared for in light of what you now understand to be the tasks for that stage?

Questions for Ministry Reflection

- i) Consider and imagine how the characteristics of your current stage of development might/will impact your approach to ministry.
- ii) Consider at least two other stages, one representing those younger than you and one representing those older than you. In what ways will you find caring for people in these stages easy? In what ways will you find caring for people in these stages difficult?
- iii) In light of the literature, consider the challenges/joys you may face ministering to those of the opposite gender.

2. Developmental Interview 7-10 pages 25 marks Due: Oct 24

Students will interview someone in a stage of development other than their own— preferably someone who is older than they are—and reflect on their interaction in light of developmental theories. The purpose of this assignment is to give students an opportunity to begin attending to developmental themes and issues in conversation and to begin thinking concretely about how to care for the developmental needs of others.

- i) Choose a person to interview. It may help to choose someone who is reflective in nature. Apprise them of the nature of the assignment (for the purposes of information gathering as opposed to evaluation), and the fact that their identity will be kept confidential. Conduct the interview. You may want to tape the interview, and be willing to follow themes that go beyond your prepared questions.

ii) Based on your reading of class texts, develop questions that will help you attend to developmental issues. Some of the questions you may want to ask are: What challenges is this person currently facing? What are the person's current joys? What seem to be the major life tasks? Is there a transition he/she is going through? What are the person's current goals?

iii) Interact with the material from your interview in terms of class texts.

-What developmental themes did you find revealed in your interaction?

-What developmental themes did you not find revealed in your interaction?

-How would you care, and how would you encourage the community of faith to care for this person?

-How would you, and how could the community of faith prepare and support those who will be or are transitioning into this phase of life?

-How effective were your questions at surfacing the developmental themes present in this person's life? In retrospect, would you amend your approach in any way?

iv) Write a summary of your analysis of the interview. Do not transcribe the entire interview, but use material from the interview to support your analysis.

3. Imagining Possibilities for Community Caring

5-7 pages

20 marks

Due: Nov 14

The purpose of this exercise is to begin to collaboratively imagine the possibilities for involving the community of faith in pastoral care through the life cycle, while taking into consideration the concrete realities of specific faith communities. This project will involve both individual and group work, and will culminate with a group class presentation.

i) Each member of the group will choose a community of faith known to them to serve as a focus for this assignment. Each student will analyze their chosen community in terms of its ministry of care. What care is already happening? What possibilities for further care exist? What limitations for care exist within this community?

ii) The group will choose one developmental stage to consider. Making use of class texts and helpful additional resources,* the group will collaboratively imagine possibilities for involving each of the chosen communities in caring for people in this stage of development, while taking into consideration the concrete realities of each community.

iii) Each member of the group will prepare a short written paper to hand in including: a brief description of the community; its caring possibilities and limitations; proposed possibilities for care and implementation suggestions; and an explanation of why these possibilities fit well with the concrete realities of the community.

iv) The group will prepare a presentation (including a handout to serve as a reference for the class) summarizing the characteristics of their chosen communities, and the community-specific possibilities for care, drawing attention to the thought process behind the proposed suggestions made for each community.

*This assignment is not meant to become a research project. Additional resources may prove helpful either to enhance your understanding of the chosen developmental stage or to spark your imagination as to the possibilities for community care, but the focus is to remain practical. The goal is for you to gain practice assessing and imagining the concrete possibilities for care in a particular faith community.

4. Research Paper

15 pages

35 marks

Due: Dec 4

Research and write a paper on a developmental and care issue of your choice. Interaction with each of the class texts and at least 5 other sources is expected.

Possible topics include: pastoral care and a particular developmental stage; pastoral care and a particular developmental transition; the care of those experiencing a disruption of the life cycle; the relationship between faith and psychological development with respect to pastoral care; differing developmental theories and the implications for pastoral care; the community and pastoral care through the life cycle; gender or race and pastoral care through the life cycle; life cycle theory in light of postmodernity and its implications for care.

Late Policy: Late papers will be docked 1% each day late. (Extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances such as extended illness, etc.)

Spacing: All assignments are to be double-spaced.

Contacting the Instructor:

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College Style for Submission of Written Work:

All written work—unless informed otherwise by the instructor—is to be submitted in accordance with the *McMaster Divinity College Style Guide for Essays and Theses*, available on the McMaster Divinity College web-site.

Statement on Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty at: www.madciv.ca/regs/honesty.php

Gender Inclusive Language:

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

READ ON Bookstore:

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 218, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstores, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1: phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308.

E-mail books@readon.ca.

Disclaimer: This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up until the first day of class.