Course Description

The purpose of this course will be to help students expand their awareness and their experience of advanced life-span development in the context of pastoral and spiritual care. We will be using Erik Erikson’s psychosocial theory of human development as our starting point, specifically the developmental tasks he assigns to the stages of the life cycle from adolescence to the end of life: identity, intimacy, generativity, and integrity. The tasks in his view correspond, respectively, to adolescence, early adulthood, middle adulthood, and later adulthood. From there we will explore the many possibilities in contemporary life for identity formation, intimacy and love, career and work, and for aging gracefully. Students will be expected to assess their own adult development in the light of personal and professional identities, relationships, career path options, and how they view the issues of later life. Moreover, we will situate the issues of identity formation, marriage and family, work and career, and older adulthood in the context of the present age of postmodernity, which is first and foremost a time of great change and transition.

Objectives

- Acquire an understanding of the specific developmental tasks of adult life: identity formation, intimacy, generativity, and integrity.
- Develop an awareness of the specific needs and issues of adults at various stages of the human life cycle.
- Acquire an understanding of the role of pastoral counselors, spiritual caregivers, and mental health practitioners as we care for adult clients and congregants.

Required Texts

Assignments

- **Self-motivation** and **self-discipline** will be very important components of this online distance learning course, manifested in timely engagement with all assignments: audio presentations, PowerPoint slides, required readings, discussion forums, film clips, case studies, and written assignments. If you have questions and/or concerns at anytime during the semester, please do not hesitate to contact me by email and/or cell phone.

- Each week in the **Discussion Board** of the Blackboard web site, students will be posting **weekly reflections** on selected topics. Your reflections may take the form of a
  (a) **Question**: As you reflect on the topic, does a question come to mind? Something that is provocative and/or confusing? Something that needs clarification?
  (b) **Comment on the Content**: Apply a portion of the course material to the topic in order to assess its relevance. What makes the material persuasive/not persuasive?
  (c) **Subjective Reaction**: What was your emotional, spiritual, and/or visceral experience of the course material? Did it evoke a positive/negative experience? Note: 150-250 words.

- Each week students will submit online **responses** to the postings of other students. Each response will be 75-100 words, and will consist of thoughtful and constructive feedback, pro and con. **PLEASE NOTE**: Timely responses **each week** are expected in the discussion forums. Tardiness in posting responses will substantially lower one’s grade for the course, so please plan accordingly.

- **Two papers** (3-4 double-spaced pages) that apply the course material to a contemporary situation from your pastoral, clinical, and/or spiritual care work. You will be assigned to two modules of the course and will therefore be assessing your case in terms of the developmental tasks or issues of those modules. Please be specific with your theoretical assessment and how you would approach the case as a practitioner of pastoral/spiritual care and/or pastoral counseling.

- **A final exam** (6-8 double-spaced pages) required of all students. The exam will focus on case studies having to do with specific developmental tasks of the four modules: (1) postmodern identity formation, (2) intimacy, marriage, and relationships, (3) generativity, work, and career, and (4) integrity, aging, and end-of-life. You will be assigned to the two case studies from the other modules that you did not focus on previously in the earlier papers.
Modules (Note: topics and readings are for the upcoming week following the particular Friday that is listed)

Module One: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life

The Self Under Siege and Truth in Trouble
Gergen: Chapters 1-5

The Impact of Postmodern Culture
Gergen: Chapters 6-9

Module Two: Dilemmas of Intimacy in Contemporary Life

Happy and Unhappy Marriages and Coping with Conflict
Gottman: Chapters 1-6
Papers (Identity)

Solvable and Unsolvable Problems and Shared Meaning
Gottman: Chapters 7-11

Module Three: Dilemmas of Career/Work in Contemporary Life

The Nature and the Tools of Career Counseling
Figler/Bolles: Pages 1-179
Papers (Intimacy)

Problems, Values, and the Place of God in Career Counseling
Figler/Bolles: Pages 180-301

Module Four: Dilemmas of Aging in Contemporary Life

The Meaning of Our One and Only Life
Chittister: Pages 1-128
Papers (Generativity)

For Everything There is a Time and a Season
Chittister: Pages 129-222

Final Exam
Papers (Integrity)
Evaluation

Students will be evaluated by the Graduate School of Religion & Religious Education system of grading based on evidence of mastery of the course material. Students will be evaluated based on evidence of mastery at three levels of performance: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced. The three levels of mastery will correspond, respectively, to letter grades of B-/B, B+/A-, and A.

Academic Integrity

It is assumed that all students are familiar with the Graduate School of Religion & Religious Education’s policy on academic integrity. Any instances of academic dishonesty cannot be tolerated and will be brought to the attention of the dean. Plagiarism of any kind, including quotations from the Internet without supplying proper bibliographic data, is unacceptable, as is working collaboratively on written assignments (papers, final exam, etc.).

TECHNOLOGY HELP:

For technical support with the Blackboard course management system, you must email blackboard@fordham.edu or call 718.817.2289. For questions about your username and password, you must email helpdesk@fordham.edu or call 718.817.3999 (on campus) or 877.366.HELP (off campus).