

Counseling Psychology 506

Life Span Development

Professor Tod Sloan

Fall 2011 – Lewis & Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling

Office hours: Tues 4-5:30, Wed 11-12:30, and by appointment

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Course Description (catalog)

Exploration of life span development through the lenses of social, cultural, cognitive, biological, and learning theories and research. Emphasis is on gaining better conceptual understanding of healthy development and better practical understanding of how to help children, adolescents, and adults address the developmental challenges they face across the life span. Particular focus placed on understanding our own developmental processes as well as the role of cultural difference and commonality in the developmental process.

Course Objectives

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the following subject areas, as well as the awareness of how to apply this knowledge in relevant settings (i.e., schools, communities, families, workplace). These objectives align with those required by NASP, CACREP, and COAMFTE.

1. Human developmental processes, psychopathology, and associated biological, cultural and social influences on behavior (NASP 2.4)
2. Theories of learning, personality, and identity development (class, sexuality, ethnicity) (NASP 2.5)
3. Socialization and the influences of families, peers, teachers, and others on development (NASP 2.8)
4. Development of behavioral, affective, adaptive and social skills; developmental milestones (NASP 2.8)
5. Life cycle of families
6. Developmental crises, situational and environmental factors that affect both normal and abnormal behavior (NASP 2.7)
7. Strategies for facilitating optimal development over the life-span
8. Multicultural and pluralistic trends affecting development, including characteristics and concerns between and within diverse groups nationally and internationally
9. Ethical and legal considerations about working with clients/students and about research procedure and application

Additional objectives emphasized by the instructor are:

- Demonstrate ability to articulate and critique concepts of development and trace their implications for intervention, healing and well-being
- Practice dialogue facilitation and group process skills
- Solidify professional writing and oral presentation skills
- Understand the role of narrative in the construction of meaning

Readings

Book to purchase: Lareau, A. (2003). *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Berkeley: UC Press.

On course Moodle site (moodle.lclark.edu):

Ainsworth, M. (1989). Attachments beyond infancy. *American Psychologist*, *44*, 709-716.

Brodie, B. (2007). Selected chapters from *Adolescence and Delinquency*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Burman, E. (1997). Developmental psychology and its discontents. In Fox and Prilleltensky (eds.), *Critical Psychology: An Introduction*.

Cleary, R. (1999). Bowlby's theory of attachment and loss: A feminist reconsideration. *Feminism and Psychology*, *9*, 32-42.

Cole, M. and Wertsch, J. Beyond the Individual-Social Antimony in Discussions of Piaget and Vygotsky. Retrieved from <http://webpages.charter.net/schmolze1/vygotsky/>

Eriksen, K. (2006). The constructive developmental theory of Robert Kegan. *Family Journal*, *14*, 290-298.

Freud, S. (1911). Formulations regarding the two principles of mental functioning.

Jung, C. (1933). The stages of life.

Kegan, R. (1982). The unrecognized genius of Jean Piaget. In *The Evolving Self*.

Kernberg, O. (1985). Selected chapters from *Internal World and External Reality*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson.

Kulish, N. (2010). Clinical implications of contemporary gender theory. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, *58*: 231-259.

Parker, I. (2007). Selected chapter from *Revolution in Psychology: Alienation to Emancipation*. London: Pluto.

Plotkin, B. (2008). Selected chapters from *Nature and the Human Soul*. Novato, CA: New World Library.

Sloan, T. (1996). Selected chapters from *Life Choices: Understanding Dilemmas and Decisions*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Welwood, J. *Embodying Your Realization: Psychological Work in the Service of Spiritual Development*. Retrieved from <http://www.johnwelwood.com/articles/Embodying.pdf>

Other brief readings mentioned in the schedule below are hyperlinked on the course moodle page.

Course Requirements and Grading

Participation: This course is organized around the idea of a 'learning community', which means that each student's contributions to our collective learning are as important as his or her individual products. These contributions to the whole usually show up as 'participation', but they also depend on background research outside of class, careful preparation for class discussion, and willingness to foster dialogue during class. I evaluate this participation roughly in a range from low (just showing up), medium, and high (consistently appropriate and serious contributions). Approximately 20% of the final grade is based on this dimension.

Essays: Submit 5 essays (printed, double-spaced, 12 pt font, no cover page necessary). Each essay should be about 500 words. Four of these will be submitted during the ten weeks of the course, and one is due a week after the last class session. The main task of each essay is to link key concepts developed in readings or class discussion to your own observations of human behavior and experience.

The first four essays should be written about material we are scheduled to discuss in class on the day the essay is submitted. In other words, it should serve as a way to clarify questions, develop insights to share with others, and to stimulate discussion. With this in mind, it is legitimate to refer to previous readings as well. Ideally, essays should be written in a voice/style that any educated reader would understand and find interesting, i.e., address an imagined public and don't write as if you are having a private conversation with the professor.

The final essay should serve as a chance to synthesize your thoughts, comparing your initial understandings to those that emerge, and writing in a manner that helps readers see what you have learned.

The essential question for each essay is something like: *"What concept(s) are you finding most intriguing, useful, or problematic as you work to deepen your understanding of change and development? Elaborate, explore. What are the implications of your insights/questions for living well and for helping?"* Essays will be evaluated on these dimensions: importance/centrality of issues addressed; connection to course issues and materials; care in developing an 'argument', idea, or insight; and clarity of written expression. If low quality writing interferes with reader comprehension, essays will be returned for editing and resubmission for a grade. (Support is available for writing issues.) The first four essays are worth 15% of the final grade, and the final one is worth 20%.

Department attendance policy:

Class attendance is expected and required. Any missed class time will be made up by completing extra assignments designed by the instructor. Missing more than ten percent of class time may result in failure to complete the class. This would be 4.5 hours of a 45 hour class (3 credits), 3.0 hours for a 30 hour class (2 credits) or 1.5 hours for a 15 hour class (1 credit.) In case of extreme hardship and also at the discretion of the instructor, a grade of incomplete may be given for an assignment or the entire course. In such cases, the work to be submitted in order to remove the incomplete must be documented appropriately and stated deadlines met. Students are expected to be on time to class and tardiness may be seen as an absence that requires make-up work.

Course Process and Schedule

Each class session after the introductory session will follow the same pattern:

- 1) **CORE:** Coverage of basic concepts, findings, issues in mainstream developmental psychology; discussion of supplemental readings; insights from essays; critical perspectives. Goals: wisdom, know the basics for general knowledge, licensing exams, and further study.
- 2) **STORIES:** We will break up into groups of 2 or 3 and tell stories about particular aspects of life, then reflect together on what we learn from them. Examining the role of stories as a means of understanding life experiences. Working on how to help someone improve a story, and how to listen better.
- 3) **CONTEXT:** Discussion of a context in relation to which development or change may occur. Goals: develop our own sense of what happens in contexts, determine what features pull for change, what resists, what helps. Practice applying concepts to experience, critically. Usually, this will be done in a dialogue format, 4-6 persons, with facilitator.

CONTEXT and STORIES EXPLORATION

Guidelines for Inquiry

The aim of our dialogues is to examine, collect and critique our experiential knowledge of how each domain offers challenges and opportunities for development. In order to do this, the following sorts of questions may be helpful after hearing each other's stories:

- Describe some of the main ways in which the context can push a person to examine understandings, values, priorities, choices, commitments. What do these have in common?

- What do we know, from experience, about how people become more capable of effective and meaningful functioning in this context as they move through childhood, adolescence, and adulthood? What kinds of experiences seem to enhance the development of these capabilities?
- What signs do we see when people are not developing well in this context? What do we do about these failures of development, either informally, institutionally, or professionally?
- Are there different dimensions or sources of development in this context?
- What are some of the wonderful things that can happen in this domain? What are some of the horrible things that can happen? What do we learn from the contrast between the good and the bad?
- Are there factors in this context that tend to go unnoticed, that we take for granted, or that operate unconsciously? How might things be different if we were more able to attend to those hidden factors?

Weekly Schedule

Sept 7

Initial thoughts on change and development (writing and dialogue); “Life Span Development Psychology” as a subdiscipline

Overview of course objectives, requirements, schedule.

Context and Stories: Nation / History

Sept 14

Core: **Cognitive Development and the Self**

Readings: Kegan on Piaget; Eriksen on Kegan (moodle)

Reading: Wikipedia on Kohlberg’s stages of moral development (google)

Reading: Cole & Wertsch on Piaget vs. Vygotsky (moodle)

Context and Stories: “Learning about the Self”

Sept 21

Core: **Attachment, Trauma, and Loss**

Reading: Barker on attachment and trauma (moodle)

Readings: Ainsworth (moodle); Cleary on Bowlby (moodle)

Reading: http://assets1.mytrainsite.com/500051/responses_to_separation.pdf

Reading: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attachment_theory

Context and Stories: “Transitional Objects”

Sept 28

Core: **Socialization** (Family)

Reading: Lareau (first half of book);

Reading: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parenting_styles

Context and Stories: Family

Oct 5

Core: **Socialization** (School))

Reading: Lareau (second half of book)

Context and Stories: Peers

Oct 12

Core: **Life Choices and Life Structures**

Reading: Freud, "Two Principles ..." (moodle)

Reading: Sloan, chapters 1-5 (6 is optional) (moodle)

Context and Stories: Work, Career, Vocation

Oct 19

Core: **Identity, Intimacy, Gender**

Reading: Erikson (review on your own for an hour in primary or secondary texts)

Reading: Kulish on gender theory and development (moodle)

Reading: bring a summary of your favorite wisdom on love to share (poem, article, book, etc)

Context and Stories: "Love"

Oct 26

Core: **Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood**

Reading: Brodie on Adolescence and Delinquency (moodle)

Reading: 20somethings: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/22/magazine/22Adulthood-t.html?pagewanted=all>

Context and Stories: "Becoming an Adult"

Nov 2

Core: **Midlife, Aging, and Death**

Reading: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midlife_crisis

Reading: Jung on the stages of life (moodle)

Reading: Kernberg (moodle)

Reading: Welwood on spiritual bypassing: <http://www.johnwelwood.com/articles/Embodying.pdf>

Context and Stories: "Spirit"

Nov 9 – Last class meeting

Core: **Critique**

Readings: Berman (moodle), Parker (moodle), Plotkin (moodle)

Context: "Nature" / Technology / Political Economy

Nov 16 – Final essay due by noon (email as attachment to sloan@lclark.edu)