

Counseling Psychology 506

Life Span Development

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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.

- Human developmental processes, psychopathology, and associated biological, cultural and social influences on behavior
- Theories of learning, personality, and identity development (class, sexuality, ethnicity)
- Socialization and the influences of families, peers, teachers, and others on development
- Development of behavioral, affective, adaptive and social skills; developmental milestones
- Life cycle of families
- Developmental crises, situational and environmental factors that affect both normal and abnormal behavior
- Strategies for facilitating optimal development over the life-span
- Multicultural and pluralistic trends affecting development, including characteristics and concerns between and within diverse groups nationally and internationally

Additional objectives emphasized by the instructor are:

- Demonstrate ability to articulate and critique concepts of development and trace their implications for intervention
- Practice dialogue facilitation and group process skills
- Solidify professional writing and oral presentation skills

Readings

Books to purchase:

Baldwin, C. (2005). *Storycatcher: Making Sense of Our Lives through the Power and Practice of Story*. Novato, CA: New World Library.

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

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

Baltes, P. B. (1987). Theoretical propositions of life-span developmental psychology: On the dynamics between growth and decline. *Developmental Psychology*, 23, 611-626.

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

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

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.

Montessori, M. (1948). *To Educate the Human Potential*, excerpt from Chapter 2

Montessori, M. Four planes of human development. (summary)

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.

Other readings are available by hyperlink in the schedule below.

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 30% of the final grade is based on this dimension.

Essays: Submit at least six essays over the course of the semester. Each essay should be about 500 words (usually about two double-spaced pages). At least a few of these should be submitted during the first half of the semester, and the rest during the second half. The task of each essay should be to link key concepts developed in readings or class discussion to your own observations of human behavior and experience. 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." Essays will be evaluated on these dimensions: importance/centrality of issues addressed; 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. Each essay is worth 10% of the final grade, for 60% total.

Presentation: Each student will be responsible for preparing one 10-minute presentation on a key concept, approach, or chunk of knowledge, and provide questions to guide discussion for 10-15 minutes. Dates for presentations will be scheduled during the second class meeting. The presentation is worth 10% of the final

grade. Presentations will be evaluated for their accuracy, clarity, and usefulness. Constructive feedback will be supplied by classmates, but will not affect the grade.

Course 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. Goals: wisdom, know the basics for general knowledge, licensing exams, and further study.
- 2) CONTEXT: Discussion of a context in relation to which development or change may occur. Goals: develop our own sense of what happens in contexts, 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.
- 3) STORY: We will break up into groups of 2-4 and tell stories, then reflect together on what we learn from them. Examining the role of stories as a means of understanding life experiences. How to help someone improve a story, how to listen better.

Jan 12/13

Overview of course objectives, planning, assignments, grading, initial discussions

Jan 19/20

Core: Life span developmental psychology, Developmental theory, Psychoanalytic concepts of development

Reading: Baltes, Parker, Freud (moodle)

Context: Friendship

Story: Read Baldwin, Chapter 1: *Recount a very early memory of a meaningful time with another person.*

Jan 26/27

Core: Object Relations Theory

Reading: Klee on object relations theory (overview, concepts, development, conflict)

<http://www.objectrelations.org/theory.htm>

Reading: Sloan, Life Choices, Chs. 1-3 (moodle)

Context: Nation/State / Prison / Military / Police

Story: Read Baldwin, Chapter 2: *Tell a story about agency, speaking up, acting courageously.*

Feb 2/3

Core: Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Development, Decision making

Reading: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erikson%27s_stages_of_psychosocial_development

Reading : Sloan, Life Choices, Chapters 4-5 (moodle)

Context: Arts / Music / Literature

Story: Read Baldwin, Chapter 3: *What story are you tending for your family?*

Feb 9/10

Core: Piaget, Vygotsky and Cognitive Development

Context: The Body / Illness / Death / Birth

Story: Read Baldwin, Chapter 4: *Tell a story of a world event that affected you deeply.*

Feb 16/17

Core: Attachment, Parenting

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

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

Context: Work

Story: Read Baldwin, Chapter 5: *Tell your life story in a nutshell.*

Feb 23/24

Core: Kohlberg and Moral Development

Reading: Brodie on Adolescence and Delinquency (moodle)

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

Context: Peers

Story: *Describe a key turning point or decision in your life.*

Mar 2/3

Core: Montessori and Bandura

Reading: Montessori, "Four Planes" and "Educate the Human Potential" (moodle)

Context: Intimacy

Story: Read Baldwin, Chapter 6: *Tell a story that helps another understand how you came to understand your life's purpose.*

Mar 9/10

Core: Gender

Reading: Kulish on gender theory (moodle)

Context: School, Teacher-Student

Story: Baldwin, Chapter 7: *Tell a story about your family that conveys something you want to celebrate?*

Mar 16/17

Core: Jung, Generativity, Mid-life

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

Reading: Kernberg (moodle)

Context: Spirit

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

Story: Baldwin, Chapter 8: *Tell a story about an accomplishment of a group or organization that you were part of.*

Mar 23/24 (SPRING BREAK!)

Mar 30/31

Core: Family life cycle, Social class effects

Reading: <https://www.everettclinic.com/kbase/topic/special/ty6171/sec1.htm> (check various pages on family life cycle)

Reading: Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods*, pgs. 1-257.

Context: Parents / Children

Story: *(none this week due to lots of reading material to discuss)*

Apr 6/7

Core: Dying and Loss

Reading: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C3%BCbler-Ross_model

Context: Self

Story: Read Baldwin, Chapter 9: *Tell a story about how your religious beliefs or spiritual experiences have changed/developed.*

Apr 13/14

Core: To be collectively chosen

Context: Community / Culture / Language / Travel

Story: Read Baldwin, Chapter 10: *Describe a brief moment of experience in detail.*

Apr 20/21

Core: To be collectively chosen

Context: Nature / Technology

Reading: Plotkin (moodle)

Story: *Tell a story about your experience of this course, about some 'development' that occurred.*