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CD 663 Older Adult Ministry

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Asbury Theological Seminary – Wilmore, KY 40390
Course Syllabus, Spring 2007
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***Note: This syllabus is subject to change prior to the first day of class. However, it is not likely to change. Textbooks listed will NOT change.

Older Adult Ministry

CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

Explores the many facets of ministry with and to older adults. Consideration will be given to critical issues such as the myths and nature of aging, developmental needs and tasks, theological tasks and perspectives, the spiritual needs of older adults, and care giving. The practical dimensions and models of ministry design and implementation will also be identified.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

When you have completed this course, you should be able to:

1. Describe the population trends and related congregational needs regarding older adult ministry.
2. Understand and articulate the relationship between church ministry and theories of adult development and aging.
3. Identify the theological, psychological, spiritual, and physiological dimensions and issues integral to older adult ministry.
4. Implement a vision and strategy for congregational ministry **with** and **to** older adults.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

In order for something to be called education, it must be truly educative. Transmitting bodies of information and rules or values collected in the past does not equal education. Education involves movement beyond limitations, and frees people to live life

more fully as God intended. Education involves people in co-explorer relationships, problem solving, and personal ownership in the learning experience.

The learning experience in this class will be based on a philosophy of education that calls for participatory, interactive, reflective, bilateral, and dialogical learning activities. For example, you will be asked to reflect on, and openly discuss, your personal experiences and understandings related to various topics. You may also be required to participate in reflective learning games or simulation projects in order to promote co-explorer relationships, problem solving, and personal ownership. Your presence, openness to growth, and enthusiastic participation in all class activities will determine the value of your learning experience.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Active participation** in the class (10%):

Faithful attendance – your presence in every class is expected and excused absences should be cleared through your professor.

Reflecting on assigned texts – you must demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the assigned readings in preparation for class discussions

Contributing to class – your willingness to actively participate in class discussions and activities is a crucial part of the course learning experience.

Completing special assignments – at times you will be asked to reflect on specific questions or briefly interview others in preparation for the next class session. These mini-assignments are a required aspect of class participation.

2. **Empirical Research Projects**

Congregational Assessment Research Project (10%)

You will assess various aspects of older adult ministry in a congregation of your choice through an interview with church leadership. The findings of your assessment interview will provide a means for your written evaluation of the older adult ministry – strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations based on course materials (2 pages). The criteria for this assessment are located in the appendix (F & G) of Aging: God's Challenge to the Church and Synagogue (required text) by Richard Gentzler, 140-143.

DUE: March 15

Life Review Interview Project (10%)

You will be required to conduct a life-review interview with a churched older adult, age 65 plus. The specific criteria for this project will be provided by the instructor.

DUE: March 29

3. Reading Reflection Papers (30%)

Reading reflection papers will be assigned for each of the required texts. The reading reflection will include two to four specific questions provided by the professor and will involve some in-class group discussion and comparison. See class schedule for specific due-dates.

4. Major Paper (40%)

In this research paper (12-15 pages) you will explore an aspect of older adult ministry. The topic must connect with the focus of the class and be approved by the instructor. In this paper you will examine an issue, need, or any other aspect of older adult ministry through review of scholarly literature and empirical study (empirical research is not required, however papers based on empirical research must include some significant dialogue with scholarly sources). Along with a discussion of the issue, implications for church ministry must be identified and a description of a corresponding vision. This paper must also demonstrate significant integration of research sources (at least five) other than the required texts. The first draft of this paper is **DUE: (April 19)** The final draft is **DUE: (May 10)** (40%)

REQUIRED TEXTS

Aging: God's challenge to church and synagogue by Richard H. Gentzler, Jr., and Donald F. Clingan 121 pages

Senior Adult Ministry in the 21st century: Step-by-Step Strategies for Reaching People Over Fifty by David P. Gallagher 136 pages

Aging: The fulfillment of Life by Henri J. M. Nouwen and Walter Gaffney 157 pages

Growing Old in Christ edited by Stanley Hauerwas, Carole Bailey Stoneking, Keith G. Meador and David Cloutier. 301 pages

Aging, Spirituality, and Religion, A Handbook edited by Kimble, Melvin A., McFadden, Susan H., Ellor, James

Strongly Recommended: Cherish the Days: Inspiration & Insight for Long-Distance Caregivers by Martha E. Sparks.

Note **Author will be speaking in the class******

*Journal article/chapter excerpt (3) will be distributed in class.

GRADING POLICY

Papers

All papers must be typed, double-spaced, 1” margin all around, using a 12-point font, such as Times New Roman. Papers must adhere to MLS format according to Slade [available in the ATS bookstore and in the library].

Papers will be returned within one week of submission. Substantial feedback will be provided on all papers except reading reflections and mini assignments. Papers are expected to be submitted on their due date. Late papers must be approved by the professor and may **not** be returned within one week and/or may **not** include feedback from the professor. Late paper grade deductions will be made at the professor’s discretion. If you need to negotiate an alternate due date, please see your professor BEFORE the assignment is due.

Timely and Substantive Feedback

Responses to your written work will be provided according to the ATS faculty guidelines:

By “timely,” ATS means: For assessments of student work during the course of the academic term, the expectation of “timely” feedback is met when students have their work marked, graded, and returned within one week of its submission; in the case of classes enrolling more than 40 students, two weeks.

With regard to “substantive,” ATS means: For assessments of student work during the course of the academic term, the expectation of “substantive” feedback is met when students receive responses that alert them to what they have done well and how they might improve their performance in subsequent work.

Incomplete Policy

A grade of “I” denotes course work has not been completed due to an **unavoidable** emergency, which does not include failure to turn in course work or attending to church work or other employment. See the Asbury Seminary Catalog for further clarification.

GRADING CRITERIA

Professor's Assessment of Your Attendance & Participation 10%

Two Short Empirical Research Projects 10% each (total 20%)

Reading Reflection Papers (30 %)

The purpose of these reflections papers is to help focus your reading and encourage related critical reflection. Reflection papers will demonstrate meaningful comprehension and engagement of texts.

Major Paper 40 % total

Your grade will be determined according to the following criteria: organization, including appropriate form and style; thorough and insightful description of the ministry issue and context; analysis of scholarly resources; identification of implications for church ministry; clear articulation of vision (strategy, goals, philosophy, methods, and specific activities); and integration of course concepts, ideas, issues, and theories.

GRADING PROCEDURES

The grade descriptions written in italics have been determined by the faculty at Asbury Theological Seminary and provide the guidelines for grading. The explanations that follow clarify the meaning of each grade designation.

A (5) = Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives

Exceptional work is constituted by such things as: substantive reflection that reveals engagement of the "big ideas" of Scripture/theology or the "big ideas" represented in the existing body of knowledge from the social sciences in a particular area of study and represented via assigned texts and presentations; thorough and penetrating personal insight gained from consideration of one's experience through the lifespan thus far; creativity in translating assignments into useful pedagogical presentations; and excellence in grammatical, stylistic, and communicative aspects of writing.

B (4) = Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives

Good work is constituted by: solid reflection on the assigned readings and presentations in response to the given guidelines for a particular assignment; the capacity to utilize classroom discussions and readings to understand and critically engage one's own story; accurate ability to name specific ministry implications from one's processing of information; and carefulness in grammatical, stylistic, and communicative aspects of writing.

C (3) = Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives

Acceptable work is constituted by: obvious acquaintance with the assigned readings and classroom discussions at a level that allows for theological and pedagogical thought in response to the guidelines for a particular assignments; references to one's own story at a level that makes application of truth and would interest a congregational member in the insights being expounded; capacity to communicate grammatically and stylistically without detracting from the presentation.

D (2) = Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives

Cursory reading of the texts that fail to represent the author's intent; a flat restatement of the author's work void of any personal appropriation of the material; grammatical or stylistic errors that frustrate the reader and detract from the thought of the paper; or other failures to fulfill reasonable expectations flowing from a seminary course of this nature.

F (1) = Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

Unacceptable work is usually willful, unexplained, or inexcusable lack of fulfillment of class assignments.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Feb 8 *Introduction*
Seniors: the re-emerging generation

Feb 15 *The Pathology of Aging: myth or monster?*
Read: "The Aging: Myths, Needs, Ministry" by Dorothy Gish and selected excerpts from the following Mindfulness by Ellen J. Langer, Aging, Spirituality and Religion Part VI (ch. 35, 36, 38).
DUE: Reading Reflection #1

- Feb 22 *Aging: A Theological Framework*
Read: Aging, Spirituality, and Religion (Part V)
DUE: Reading Reflection #2 – Growing Old in Christ
- Mar 1 *Spiritual Needs of Older Adults*
DUE: Reading Reflection #3 – Aging: The Fulfillment of Life
- Mar 8 *Aging, Spirituality, and Life Review*
DUE: Reading Reflection #4 – Aging, Spirituality and Religion Part I
- Mar 15 *Older Adult Ministry: congregational evaluation*
Read: Aging, Spirituality, and Religion (Part III)
DUE: Congregational Assessment Research Project
- Mar 22 *Designing Ministry **with** Older Adults*
DUE: Reading Reflection #5 – Aging: God’s challenge to the church and synagogue.
- Mar 29 *Designing Ministry **with** Older Adults*
Read: Senior Adult Ministry in the 21st Century
DUE: Older Adult Interview
- April 5 *Reading Week – No Class*
- April 12 *Designing Ministry **to** Older Adults*
DUE: Reading Reflection #6 – Aging, Spirituality, and Religion (Part IV)
- April 19 *Care Giving: health, finances, and community resources*
DUE: Reading Reflection #7 – Aging, Spirituality, and Religion (Part II)
DUE: First Draft – Major Research Paper (outline form).
Please Submit electronically.
- April 26 Care Giving: dying & death, wishes & wills
- May 3 *Ministry Connections: the congregation and community*

Read: “Reaping the Rewards of Senior Ministry” by Howard G. Hendricks

May 10

Designing Ministry: planning and evaluation

DUE: Final Paper

Older Adult Ministry
Asbury Theological Seminary, Spring 2007

COURSE GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

Name:

ATS mail box #:

E-mail address:

1. What is your previous ministry experience?
2. What do you think this course is about?
3. Why are you at ATS?
4. What would you like to learn from this course?
5. What kinds of strengths or abilities do you bring to this course?
6. What are your learning biases (ex: Lectures are unspiritual) and how do you think you learn best?
7. What do you hope doesn't happen in this course?
8. Please write any additional comments that would help the professor make the course most meaningful to you.

Covenant to Grow

Transformational teaching and learning will only take place in our class if you as a participant are willing to grow. Openness to growth and change is not a passive process of blind acceptance. Rather, openness to growth and change requires personal interest in the subject and a willingness to invest in the learning-experience through positive and personal critical reflection, thoughtful and enthusiastic dialogue, and timely fulfillment of assignments. Growth involves desire, vision, and intentional effort. Growth and change require risk, inconvenience, sacrifice, waiting, and hard work. Growth may even be painful at times. If everything in this class affirms what you already know and believe, then there is no room for growth. Growth will require openness to new ideas and insights, and willingness to actively and enthusiastically explore. As your instructor, I covenant to enthusiastically facilitate to the best of my ability a transformational learning experience. I will actively pursue opportunities for growth on your behalf, and will joyfully invest in your growth during this course. What about you? Are you ready and willing to grow? If so, please complete the following:

Covenant to Grow

I, _____, join my instructor and fellow classmates in this covenant to grow during this class experience, CD 663 Older Adult Ministry class, Spring 2007. I am committed to

Signed: _____
Date: _____

