Course Description
How do our ministries foster growth for people of all ages to develop holistically and to mature as people of faith? This course examines this question as it explores a religious education perspective to the topic of human growth and development. Students will analyze their own ministry contexts with particular attention to the interface of human development thought and religious education models. The impact of contemporary cultural trends on human development will be explored as they relate to ministerial questions and situations.

Course Resources

Required:


Recommended:


**Course Goals**

1) to articulate a religious educational perspective as an essential component of educational and pastoral praxis
2) to articulate an understanding of the dynamics of human growth and development from a religious educational perspective
3) to address educational and pastoral issues in ways that foster movement toward greater personal and religious maturity

**Overview of Curriculum**

**Module One: Seeking a Religious Education Perspective**

In this first week, students will familiarize themselves with the notion of a religious educational perspective. They will explore how their own ministries, as diverse as they may be, engage participants in religious education, inviting mature growth and development in religious living and understanding of the faith. Key resources include:

- Thomas Groome, “Total Catechesis/Religious Education: A Vision for Now and Always,” Ch. 1, *Horizons and Hopes*
- Maria Harris, *Fashion Me a People*, Part I
- Jane Regan, “The Aim of Catechesis: Educating for An Adult Church,” Ch. 2, *Horizons and Hopes*

**Module Two: Introducing Development**

The second week introduces the notion of development, its various connotations as expressed by religious educators and in ecclesial writings, and the strengths/limitations of this notion in expressing a comprehensive understanding of the maturing of faith. What is the heritage of the notion of development? How is its use in economics and psychology related to the meanings conveyed in religious education? How do these usages of development diverge? Primary resources include:

- James Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, Part 1
- Guest Interview: Jane Regan, PhD
- *General Directory of Catechesis*, selected paragraphs
- *Populorum Progressio*, selected paragraphs
Module Three: Diverse Development Perspectives
This module provides an overall introduction to some primary theorists of development. Students identify individual(s) in their ministry contexts whose own experiences of development may serve as a lens for understanding diverse development perspectives. Faith and moral development are explored by examining major figures in these areas, such as:

- Carol Lakey Hess, *Caretakers of our Common House*, Introduction and chapter one
- Robert Kegan, *The Evolving Self*, chapters one and two
- Guest Interview: Jane Regan, PhD
- Moran, RED, Sections 3, 4, 5

Module Four: Development and Curriculum in the Church
Maria Harris’s exploration of the ecclesial curriculum (koinonia, leiturgia, didache, kerygma, diakonia) is studied to present distinct contexts for development from the lens of a religious educator. Effort is made in this module to place Harris’ ecclesial curriculum in dialogue with key theorists. Student will analyze their own ministries with respect to one or more of Harris’ curricula. Readings will include:

- Harris, FMP, Part II
- Hess, COCH, chapters 2 & 3
- Moran, RED, section 6

Module Five: Development and Postmodernity
How do the characteristics of the postmodern/millennial area – moral relativism, indifference to religion, consumerism, achievement/result orientation – shape the conversation around development? How are these characteristics most evident in our ministry settings? How do ministers promote healthy and holistic development utilizing the positive elements of postmodernity in the face of the formidable obstacles?

Resources include:

- Christian Smith, *Lost in Transition*, Introduction and chapter one
- Harold Horell, “Cultural Postmodernity and Christian Faith Formation”
- John Caputo, *What would Jesus deconstruct?* Selected passages

Module Six: Religious Education, Development, and Neuroscience
How might the advances in neuroscience, especially contemporary research on the development of the brain, shape our approaches to the topic of religious education and development. David Hogue provides enlightening insights on emotion, imagination, storytelling. In crafting reflection and educational exercises, these important findings can be utilized to minister to a broad spectrum of learners and seekers.

Resources include:

- Hogue, chapters 1-3
- Videos of Dean Blevins and David Hogue presentations, REA 2011
Module Seven: 2 Case Studies, Development and Environment/Holocaust Education

How might religious educators teach about care for the earth in strategic, intentional ways which respect the full spectrum of development throughout the life cycle? How do religious educators teach children and adults about the “dangerous memory” of the Holocaust and the implications on religious faith? This module addresses these issues through utilizing resources and experts such as the GreenFaith initiative; the Iona College Thomas Berry Forum; the Archdiocese of New York Office of Catechesis; Museum of Jewish Heritage; Driscoll Professorship in Jewish-Catholic Studies of Iona College. Resources will include:

- Selections from Benedict XVI’s Caritas in Veritate
- Selections from Thomas Berry’s The Great Work
- Selections from Russell Butkus, Mary Boys, and Thomas Groome
- Interviews include: Dr. Kathleen P. Deignan, CND, PhD; Dr. Kevin Cawley, CFC, PhD; Dr. Elena Procario-Foley, PhD; Ms. Elizabeth Edelstein

Module Eight: Development and Faith Community & Wrap Up

In this final week, the class considers how the faith community can embrace notions of development in holistic ways through: liturgy, sacramental celebration, catechesis, justice/peace, and leadership. Diverse examples will be highlighted. Students will share and discuss an initial section of their final projects. Resources include:

- Charles Foster, Educating Congregations
- Harris, FMP, Part III
- Moran, RED, Part III, Sections 8, 9

Assignments:

I. Discussion Board, 40% of grade: Two discussion board inputs will be required each week. Evaluation criteria include: demonstrated integration of reading materials with ministerial reflection; clear, lucid writing; attention to directions; respectful and thoughtful responsiveness to other inputs; communication in the course of the semester with all students, not selected ones. In the second post, students are asked to remark on seminal notion introduced by the article summary for the week First post: 250-300 words. Second post: 150-200 words

II. Short Paper, 25% of grade: In Module 3 students will identify individual(s) in their ministry settings whose processes of development can be understood more comprehensively through study of one or more theorist. Choose a theorist (Erikson, Piaget, Kohlberg, Hess, Gilligan) and discuss how he/she helps to shape this ministerial perspective. Assignment due by the end of Module 4. 5-7 pages

III. Article Summary, 10% of grade: Following a graduate student seminar style, each week one or two students will present a two page summary of a journal article chosen for the week. The summaries should include: a brief abstract, an outline, and several provocative questions that were raised by the reading. During Week Zero, the professor will provide a listing of journal readings for the course and students will rate their preferences.
III. Final Project, 25% of grade: Choose a theorist that you would want to explore further as foundational to a pastoral program you might plan. In this paper analyze the theorist and discuss how this theorist helps to frame the pastoral program. 5-7 pages

**Expectations:**

1. Students participate fully in the readings, reflections, and posting assignments.
2. Posts are well-prepared, written professionally, and reflect both academic content and participants’ ministerial/life experiences.
3. Students complete assignments in a timely manner.
4. Students must understand that weekly posts do not communicate body language and tone of voice. Review carefully each post in an effort to prevent the written word from being misinterpreted.
5. When advancing a differing point of view, please do not hesitate but be sure to do so in a respectful manner.

Selected Additional Bibliography


Language:


