

## **Counseling Psychology 506**

### **Life Span Development**

Professor Tod Sloan

Fall 2013 – Lewis & Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling

Office hours: Tues 3:30-5:00, Wed 11-12:30, and by appointment; Rogers 433

email: sloan@lclark.edu

### **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 (story) in the construction of meaning and in living life

## Readings

### ***Books to purchase:***

Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal childhoods*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Pinker, S. (2002). *The blank slate*. New York: Penguin.

***Articles in Watzek library (full text on-line in moodle) or webpages to access:*** See course schedule in syllabus for readings for each class period.

## Course Requirements and Grading

***Preparation and 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 engage in 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 25% of the final grade is based on this dimension. Occasional unannounced quizzes will be given to check for preparation and will contribute extra credit points.

***Essays:*** Submit 5 essays on the scheduled dates (printed, double-spaced, 12 pt font, no cover page necessary). Each essay should be about 500 words. Essay topics will be developed collectively during class the week before they are due. Usually there will be at least a couple of different options.

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 or assume that your reader has also read or discussed what you have. One format to keep in mind as a possibility is an op-ed (a brief position paper that educates and argues for a point of view).

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 five essays are each worth 15% of the final grade.

### **CPSY 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

Each class session (after the introductory class session) will include the following components:

- 1) **CORE:** Coverage of basic concepts, findings, issues in mainstream developmental psychology; discussion of assigned readings; insights from essays; critical perspectives. Goals: wisdom, know the basics for general knowledge, licensing exams, and further study.
- 2) **CONTEXTS AND STORIES:** Discussion of a context in relation to which development or change may occur. We will break up into groups of 3 or 4 and tell stories about particular aspects of life, with these guidelines in mind:

The aim of our dialogues is to examine, collect and critique our experiential knowledge of how each context 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 Course Schedule**

### **Sept 4**

Initial thoughts on change and development (writing and dialogue); “Life Span Developmental Psychology” as a subdiscipline; Overview of course objectives, requirements, schedule. Plato on enlightenment.

**Context and Stories:** Stories of Learning and Change

### **Sept 11 - ESSAY DUE**

**Core:** Life histories and life structures

**Readings:** Sloan, *Life Choices*, chapters 1-3

**Contexts and stories:** *Impact of historical events*

### **Sept 18**

**Core:** Life stages

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

Erikson, K. (2006). The constructive developmental theory of Robert Kegan. *Family Journal*, 14, 290-298. DOI: 10.1177/1066480706287799

Memorize Erik Erikson’s psychosocial crises (trust vs mistrust, etc)

**Context and Stories:** Friendship

### **Sept 25 - ESSAY DUE**

**Core:** Ego development, Attachment, Separation-Individuation

**Reading:** Sloan, *Damaged Life*, chapter 4 (Formation of the Psyche)

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

**Context and Stories:** Family

### **Oct 2**

**Core:** Cognitive Development and the Self (Piaget, Vygotsky, Kohlberg, Gilligan)

**Reading:** Start reading Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods* (specific chapters tbd)

**Context and Stories:** Peers

**Oct 9 - ESSAY DUE**

**Core: Socialization and social class**

**Reading:** Continue reading Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods* (specific chapters tbd)

**Context and Stories:** Work and Vocation

**Oct 16**

**Core: Adult Development in Relationship**

**Readings:** Miller, J. Baker (2008). Connections, disconnections, and violations. *Feminism and Psychology*, 18(3): 368–380. <http://fap.sagepub.com/content/18/3/368> (Watzek library, full text pdf)

**Context:** Love and intimacy - bring a favorite poem, saying, song, etc to share with class with brief explanation, critique or comment to help us connect it with developmental theory

**Oct 23 - ESSAY DUE**

**Core: Nature and Nurture**

**Readings:** Pinker, *The Blank Slate* (specific chapters tbd)

**Context and Stories:** Art

**Oct 30**

**Core: Aging; Critical Gerontology; Spirit**

**Reading:** Review Kubler-Ross's model of the stages of death and dying, here, for example:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C3%BCbler-Ross\\_model](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C3%BCbler-Ross_model)

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

**Context and stories:** Spirit

**Nov 6 -ESSAY DUE**

**Core: Nature, Inner Transition, Care**

**Readings:** Plotkin on nature and adult development: <http://www.natureandthehumansoul.com/Shift%20-%20summer%2008.pdf>

Optional: Sloan, *Damaged Life*, chapters 3 and 8

**Context and stories:** Community/Nation