

Counseling Psychology 506

Life Span Development

Professor Tod Sloan

Spring 2014 – 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 – phone: 503-768-6066

Course Description (official 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:

Kagan, J. (2013). *The Human Spark: The Science of Human Development*. New York: Basic Books.

Lareau, A. (2011). *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race and Family Life*. Second edition. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Articles in Watzek library (access full text on-line or using moodle file or link) or webpages: See course schedule for readings for each class.

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 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, and engaging with others respectfully). Approximately 20% of the final grade is based on this dimension. Occasional unannounced quizzes will be given to check for preparation and will contribute points.

Essays: Submit 4 essays (printed, double-spaced, 12 pt font, no cover page necessary). Each essay should be about 500 words. All of these will be submitted during the ten weeks of the course, ideally every other week or so. Two of the essays must be turned by the fifth class. 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 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 or assume that your reader has also read what you did. 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).

The essential question for each essay is: *"What major concept(s) or assumption(s) in these readings 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; and improvement over the course of the semester. If low quality writing interferes with reader comprehension, essays will be returned for editing and resubmission for a grade. The four essays are each worth 20% of the final grade.

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, and commitments. What do these ways 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, informally, institutionally, or professionally? What could we do differently?

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 about the nature of development 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

Feb 5

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

Discussion: Plato’s Cave. Meaning of development.

Context and Stories: “Stories of Learning and Change”

Feb 12

Core: Infancy

Readings: Kagan, chapter 1-2;

Context and Stories: “Love and intimacy” - bring a favorite poem, saying, song, etc to share with class with brief explanation, critique or comment.

Feb 19

Core: The Emerging Psyche

Readings: Kagan, chapter 3; Sloan, *Damaged Life*, chapter 4 (“Formation of the Psyche”) (moodle)

Context and Stories: “Siblings”

Feb 26

Core: Family Effects and Cognitive Development (Piaget, Vygotsky)

Readings: Kagan, chapter 4

Context and Stories: “Travel”

March 5

Core: Attachment and Later Ego Development

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

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

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

Context and Stories: “Friendship”

Mar 12

Core: Moral and Emotional Development (Kohlberg, Gilligan)

Reading: Kagan, chapter 6 and 7

Context and Stories: “Peers”

Mar 19

Core: Emerging Adulthood

Reading: Sloan, Life Choices, chapters 1-3

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

Context and Stories: "Work and Vocation"

Mar 22-30 SPRING BREAK - Yay!

Apr 2

Core: Parenting and Socialization

Reading: Lareau, chapters 1-5

Context and Stories: "Community/Nation"

Apr 9

Core: Aging and Death; Critical Gerontology; Spirituality

Readings:

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 .

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" and "Art"

April 16

Core: Human Development and the Rest of Nature; Review and Critique

Readings:

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

Video on "inner transition": <http://www.transitiontowntotnes.org/groups/inner-transition/>

Context and Stories: "Nature/Technology"