

Counseling Psychology 506 - Life Span Development

Spring 2015 – Lewis & Clark Graduate School of Education and Counseling

Professor Tod Sloan

Office hours: Tuesday 3-4, Wed 11-12:30 and 4-5, and by appointment; Rogers 433

email: sloan@lclark.edu

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. Theories of individual and family development and transitions across the life span
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. Theories and models of individual, cultural, couple, family, and community resilience

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
- Examine the ideological functions of various mainstream concepts in developmental psychology
- Recognize the effects of social class and power on developmental possibilities
- Practice dialogue facilitation and group process skills
- Solidify professional writing and oral presentation skills

Readings

Required Texts:

Karen, R. (1994). *Becoming attached*. New York: Oxford.

Ruti, M. (2014). *The Call of Character*. New York: Columbia University.

Siegel, D. (2011). *Mindsight*. New York: Bantam.

Sloan, T. (2015). *Life Choices: A Critical Psychology*. [free pdf]

Articles in Watzek library or web pages (access full text on-line or use hyperlinks in Moodle): See course schedule for readings assigned for each class period, with citation.

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

“What Is It About 20-Somethings?”

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

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

Plotkin, B. The Wild Human. <http://www.natureandthehumansoul.com/Shift%20-%20summer%2008.pdf>

Course Requirements and Grading

Preparation and Participation (20%): 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 written 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 by asking productive questions, sharing insights, and so on. I evaluate this participation roughly in a range from low (just showing up), medium, to high (consistently appropriate and serious contributions, and engaging with others respectfully). But quantity is less important than quality of participation: asking big questions and sharing complicated insights is generally more productive than telling stories about people you know who exemplify concepts in the readings, for example. Approximately 20% of the final grade (20 points) is based on this dimension. Occasional unannounced quizzes may be given to check for preparation and will contribute extra credit points to the total.

Essays (60%): Submit 6 ‘reading responses’ by email to sloan@lclark.edu. There will be 9 opportunities to submit, so you may skip three. Submit responses at least one hour before the beginning of the class period in which the readings will be discussed. One purpose of this assignment is for you to collect your thoughts about the readings before we discuss them in class. Each week’s response should contain the following:

1. A subject line that says: Reading Response – Your Name – Date submitted
2. For **each** reading: An explanation of an understanding or insight from the reading that feels ‘new’ or ‘deeper’ for you. This should be at least a few sentences long, and as long as you like. Explain how this is new for you, or how it differs from what you previously thought about the topic or issue, and/or

explain briefly why this is important, or what implications for life or professional practice this might have, if not obvious.

3. For **each** reading: Description of a significant puzzle or question that arises from the reading. This can be expressed in a couple of sentences.

Each week's reading response is worth 10 points. Receipt will be recorded but not be acknowledged, although you may receive an occasional comment or question in response.

Team Presentations (20%)

Pairs or trios of students will prepare 30/45-minute presentation/discussion on major issues/problems associated with each of the primary life stages: childhood, youth/adolescence, early adulthood, middle adulthood, and later adulthood.

1. Each class will generate stage/issue combinations worth investigating.
2. Pairs of students (or trios, if necessary) consisting ideally of students from different programs, will sign up for a stage/issue to become experts on.
3. Pairs will review research and applications related to the stage/issue and prepare a professional training session addressing the following:
 - What is the nature and extent of the issue/problem?
 - What are some of the multiple contextual determinants of the issue?
 - How do life stage and life history combine to create this complex experience?
 - Show how a particular theoretical model illuminates the dynamics of the issue, especially the developmental challenges associated with it.
 - What practices or techniques are used to address this issue at the individual level? How and why are these effective? What concerns need to be raised about these practices?
 - What community/societal interventions are utilized? Are any new ones being proposed at the system level (prevention, education, etc)?

The training session will last 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of facilitated discussion. It should consist mostly of answers to the above questions, with minimal video or powerpoint reading. The presentation will be evaluated on the following dimensions: background research, conceptual depth and complexity, impact/importance, clarity of presentation, discussion facilitation, and teamwork.

Final Grades will be based on total points accumulated, with 90-100 = A; 80-89 = B, etc.

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.

Description of Contexts and Stories exercises (each week near end of class)

The aim of these 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?

Course Schedule

Basic Plan

First 5 weeks:

- **Essential theories and models**
- **Discussion of Karen, *Becoming Attached***
- **Discussion of Sloan, *Life Choices***
- **Contexts and Stories exercises**

Second 5 weeks

- **Presentations on issues in various life stages**
- **Discussion of Siegel, *Mindsight***
- **Discussion of Ruti, *The Call of Character***
- **Context and Stories exercises**

Calendar

Feb 4

Introduction: Initial thoughts on change and development (writing and dialogue); “Life Span Developmental Psychology” as a subdiscipline; critical scholarship; study of lives; overview of course objectives, requirements, schedule.

Context and Stories: “Learning, Change, Development”

Feb 11

Theories and Models: Psychosexual and Psychosocial: Freud, Klein, Winnicott, Erikson, Benjamin

Selection of Stage/Issues for Presentations

Readings: Karen, 1-124

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

Feb 18

Theories and Models: Cognitive-Constructivist: Piaget, Kohlberg, Kegan

Readings: Karen, 129-266... TS to summarize Part IV

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

Context and Stories: “Siblings”

Feb 25 (no class – Planning session for presentations)

Readings: Karen, 361-441 (send reading response despite no class, on Feb 25)

Mar 3

Theories and Models: Critical and Poststructuralist Theory: Vygotsky, Fanon, Lacan, Marcuse, Foucault

Readings: Sloan, Chs 1, 2, 3, 6 (and more if you like it)

Context and Stories: “Friendship”

Mar 10

Reading: Siegel, 3-101

Presentations: Childhood

Context and Stories: “Travel”

Mar 17

Readings: Siegel, 102-261

Presentations: Youth and Adolescence

Context and Stories: “Work and Vocation”

March 21-29 – Spring Break

Apr 1

Reading: Ruti, chapters 1-3

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

Presentations: Emerging Adulthood

Context and Stories: “Community/Nation”

Apr 8

Reading: Ruti, chapters 4-6

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

Presentations: Middle Adulthood

Context and Stories: “Spirit” and “Art”

Apr 15

Readings: Ruti chapters 7-9

Plotkin, B. The Wild Human. <http://www.natureandthehumansoul.com/Shift%20-%20summer%2008.pdf>

Presentations: Later Adulthood

Context and Stories: “Nature/Technology”