



# Nazarene Theological Seminary

1700 E Meyer Blvd • Kansas City, MO 64131 • 816/268-5400

## CED515 Understanding Persons Along the Life Course Fall 2009 Mondays 1:30-4:30 pm

### ***Essential Information***

Please refer to the following documents for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. All of these documents are available at <http://bbwiki.nts.edu>

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS bookstore procedures
- Online technical requirements and helpdesk information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- *A Handbook for Inclusive Language*

### ***Instructor Information***

Professor: Dean Blevins, Ph.D.  
Office: (816) 248-5481  
Office Hours: by appointment

Email: [dgblevins@nts.edu](mailto:dgblevins@nts.edu)  
Home/Cell: (913) 523-3857 Please do not call  
between 9:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.

### ***Catalog Description***

An exploration into the nature of persons from historical, developmental and cultural perspectives, particular attention given to age level descriptions for the sake of discipleship

### ***Course Narrative & Rationale***

Christian Education includes a process of discernment, particularly discerning the nature of our students as they engage in discipleship. Faithful teaching requires a deep understanding of the nature of people and the forces that influence their ability to think (head), feel (heart) and behave (hands) depending on where they are in their life. Traditionally theorists in the discipline of developmental psychology provided the key frameworks for knowing how people are wired (their nature) and how they are influenced by various social forces (nurture) across a fairly uniform view of the life “cycle.” Over time, other social sciences (including history, sociology, anthropology, as well as culture & ritual studies) influenced the overall view of persons as they grew and negotiated their somewhat irregular life “course.” Ultimately we must ask also who people are in the eyes of God and recognize we cannot describe people apart from the personal and social relations provided. This class takes seriously this growing body of literature as it informs the way we discern the nature of people and then seek to disciple faithfully. This class also takes seriously that, while we attend & minister to people based on age-related issues, we cannot separate people from other age-levels. The hope of this class remains that we will gain a better understanding of persons as they negotiate various periods of the life course, childhood, youth and adulthood. However, we will also understand each age-level in conversation with others.

## **Educational Assumptions:**

1. The work of the Holy Spirit is essential to the processes of Christian education at any level. I will consistently request the Spirit's presence within and among us.
2. Christian teaching and learning is best done in the context of community. Christian community remains the gift of the Spirit, enhanced or hindered by human effort.
3. Students are valued not only as persons who have potential to learn, but also as persons who already have significant knowledge and experiences to contribute to the purposes of the course. Consequently, some of the course assignments will require cooperative efforts among students. Such cooperation is inherent in a Christian community of learning.
4. The course focuses on the community of faith expressed in a local congregation or parish. In order for the purposes of the course to be fulfilled, each student should have a local church or parish in which he/she regularly participates or is able to "call to mind" a recent congregation that provides a living context for ministry discussion..
5. This is a graduate course. The quality of thinking, writing, speech, and class participation should reflect a graduate level quality. Higher levels of thought (e.g., analysis, synthesis, and evaluation), writing style, spelling, grammar, as well as faithful attendance, consideration of fellow students and their ideas, and timely submission of assignments is expected.

## ***Special Students***

Students not currently enrolled at Nazarene Theological Seminary but desiring to take this class for audit, continuing education, or graduate credit must contact the Admissions Office at 800-831-3011 ext. 234 or online at [enroll@nts.edu](mailto:enroll@nts.edu) (see seminary website for more information [www.nts.edu](http://www.nts.edu)). Special students will complete a short application with evidence of an undergraduate degree (transcript).

## **Students with Disabilities:**

It is my commitment to make a reasonable effort to facilitate learning for students capable of graduate level seminary work. Any student who has a condition that may prevent full demonstration of his/her abilities as the course is presently designed should contact me at the beginning of the semester to discuss alternative educational practices that have served the student well in the past, and appropriate, mutually acceptable strategies for the present to insure the student's maximum participation and appropriate evaluation in the course. Student learning limitations need to be based on sound clinical diagnosis and include referential material to help with assessment.

## ***Course Outcomes***

Upon completion of the course students should demonstrate:

- 1) Understand human growth, development, age-level needs, and the cultural contexts that inform each aspect of the life course
- 2) Discern and appreciate the complexities and creative potential inherent within social contexts as they inform the growth of people's lives and the context of leadership, including multiple-staff ministry.
- 3) Exhibit a capacity and desire for research and growth both spiritually and professionally in the context of ministry.
- 4) Demonstrate a spirit of integrity, openness, cooperativeness, and caring in ministry.

## **Required Texts & Course Materials**

Balswick, Jack O., Pamela Ebstyn King and Kevin S. Reimer. *The Reciprocating Self: Human Development in Theological Perspective*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005. ISBN 0-8308-2793-5

Guest, Andrew M. (Ed.) *Taking Sides: Clashing Views in Lifespan Development*. Dubuque, IA: McGraw Hill Companies 2007. ISBN 10-007351494-2

Schweitzer, Friedrich L. *The Postmodern Life Cycle: Challenges for Church and Theology*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004. ISBN 0-8272-2998-4

MBTI Schedule M Self Score, available in Bookstore, \$10.00 (note that booklet must be returned the day used in class so **DO NOT lose the self score booklet!**)

**Additional Reading may be required via supplemental documents.**

**Recommended** (Students will select one book based on age-level interest)

- (Children) Mintz, Steven. *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*. Yale: Belknap Press, Reprint edition, 2006. ISBN 0674019989
- (Youth) Hine, Thomas. *The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager: A New History of the American Adolescent Experience*. New York: Perennial, a division of HaperCollins publishers, 1999. ISBN 0-380-72853-2
- (Adult) Sheehy, Gail. *New Passages: Mapping Your Life Across Time*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1996. ISBN 0345404459

## **Course Outline**

**Unit 1:** Defining Development: Theological and Social Science Consideration

**Unit 2:** Discerning Life Course

**Unit 3:** Historical Considerations

**Unit 4:** Postmodern Concerns

**Unit 5:** Profiles Along the Life Course

## **Course Assignments & Requirements**

Course requirements include

1. **Class participation:** (200 points) students are expected to read and discuss assigned reading in a timely fashion. This remains a crucial task for a reading course and must include substantive, analytical skills that are demonstrated in course discussion.
2. **Research topic:** (350 points) Each student will select one key issue in understanding persons and explore it to a greater depth through academic research. The research paper will be 10-15 pages in length and reflect sound research method including establishing a key thesis for the paper, establishing backing and warrants for the thesis as well as providing qualifications as necessary. Preliminary approval of the topic and a working Bibliography must be submitted prior to mid-semester break. The paper should cite a reasonable range of academic resources supporting the research. The student should include a final section (1-2 pages) discussing the implications of this research for a theology of ministry. In addition to the written version the student will give an early oral presentation of key aspects of the research in class.
3. **Critical Issues Essays** (100 points each/200 points total): Twice during semester students will review two debates at their preferred age-level as presented in *Taking Sides: Clashing Views in Lifespan Development*. Students will attempt to resolve the issues by offering 2-3 page paper giving their perspective based on a theological understanding of the nature of persons. This resolution may be the adoption of one perspective over the other, a synthesis of the two perspectives, or a

proposed “third” approach. The solution must be grounded in theological as well as social science convictions covered early in the class.

4. **Comprehensive essay** (150 points). At the end of the semester the student will write a summative essay (5-7 pages) giving their own interpretation of at least one age-level that will guide future ministry. This summative paper may draw from sources within the class but should reflect the student’s synthesis of the material presented in class.

5. **Oral Final** (100 points): Students will be asked to participate in an oral final examination discussing aspects of the class. The professor will initiate the conversation but students will be asked to sustain the conversation. In addition students will be asked to provide assessment of the course (oral and written).

### **Method for Submitting Assignments**

Please use the assignments section of Moodle/CMS unless otherwise directed.

### **Policy Regarding Late Work**

Late posts receive a 15% daily reduction the week of the assignment. Posting after the assigned week will not be graded. All research/project work is due midnight of the date assigned. Late work without a valid reason (illness or death in family) is reduced by 15% the first week and an additional 10% each week following. No coursework may be submitted after July 31<sup>st</sup> 2009.

### **Course Grading**

1000-901: A    900-801: B    800-701: C    700-600:D    599 or Below: F

### **Grade Descriptions**

“A”-EXCEPTIONAL WORK (surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives)

“B”-GOOD WORK (strong, significant achievement of course objectives)

“C”-ACCEPTABLE WORK (basic, essential achievement of course objectives)

“D”-MARGINAL WORK (inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives)

“F”-UNACCEPTABLE WORK (failure to achieve course objectives)

*See rubrics for major assignments and posting for further information on assessment.*

## Working class outline

Date	Topical Discussion	Topical Discussion	Readings	Assignments
9/14	General Introduction	Social Science and Theology	Reciprocating Self (RS) pp. 9-16, Taking Sides (TS) xvi-xxvi	
9/21	Theological Views	Critical Issue Social Science & Theology	RS 27-68, Blevins articles, Postmodern Life Cycle (PLC), 4-22	
9/28	Developmental Theories	Critical Issue	RS 69-115, TS 2-66	
10/5	Personality Profiles w/ Judi Schwanz (return booklets!)	Critical Issue discussion	Complete MBTI, return booklet,	Critical Issue Paper Due Monday
10/12	Infants	Critical Issue	RS 119-42, PLC 23-39, TS 67-132	Research Topic and Bibliography due in class
10/19 R & R week				Assigned History Book Review due Monday following R&R
10/26	Children	Critical Issue	RS 143-65, TS 133-228	
11/2	Youth	Critical Issue	RS 166-84, PLC 40-63, TS 229-66	Critical Issue Paper Due Monday
11/9	Emerging Adults	Critical Issue	RS 185-99, PLC 64-80, TS 267-302	
11/16	Adults	Critical Issue	RS 200-24, PLC 81-96, TS 303-70	
11/23	Sr. Adults	Critical Issue	RS 225-41, PLC, 97-113, TS 371-408	
11/30	Research Presentations	Research Presentations		Research Paper Due Wednesday
12/6	Faith & Values and Church	Postmodern View??	RS 245-97, PLC 114-39	Comprehensive Essay due Wednesday
12/13	<b>Final Exam 9:00-11:00 am Monday</b>			Final Exam Week

## Grading Rubrics

### Posting Rubric

	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Below Average</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Great</b>
Participation and Initiative Shown	Rarely participates in discussion; does not make an effort to participate; seems indifferent	Limited initiative, does not post minimum requirement; occasionally makes meaningful reflection on group's efforts; marginal effort to become involved with group	Posts minimum requirement; attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group	Demonstrates good self-initiative; posts frequently; attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely
Relevance of Posts	Posts responses which do not relate to the discussion content; makes short or irrelevant remarks	Occasionally posts off topic; most responses are short in length and offer no further insight into the topic	Frequently posts responses that are related to discussion content; prompts further discussion of topic	Consistently posts responses related to discussion topic; cites additional references related to topic to further discussion
Clarity of opinions/ideas; connection to topic	Does not express opinions or ideas clearly; evidences grammatical/spelling mistakes	Unclear connection to topic evidenced in minimal expression of opinions or ideas; occasional spelling/grammatical errors	Opinions and ideas are stated clearly; occasional lack of connection to topic; well-written and presented	Expresses opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to topic; well-planned
<b>Totals</b>				

**Grading Rubric for Reading and Research Papers**

**Student** \_\_\_\_\_

Preliminary Considerations	Cognitive Levels (Reasoning)	Recognition & Recall	Comprehension	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation	Comments
Target Level		1	2	3	4	5	
	<b>Reading/ Research Indicators</b>						
Point/ percentage of writing	<b>Overview of writing or introduction to paper</b>	Able to identify/ state key claim(s) of reading/ paper	Able to explain claims in clear & concise manner	Able to indicate how key claim develops through reading/writing	Relates Key Claim to Class focus	Indicates importance of material to Class focus	
Point/ percentage of writing	<b>Primary review/ development of writing</b>	Identifies primary support claims and backing	Able to define clearly & concisely support claims, backing, and qualifications	Able to identify warrants & assumptions support claims & backing	Relates support claims to each other and to class focus	Able to show relative strengths and weaknesses of support claims	
Point/ percentage of writing	<b>Personal Interaction</b>	Connects specific claims to personal interaction	Demonstrates why claim elicits response	Reflection nuances range of writings support claims	Reflection indicates sources that endorse/dispute writing	Reflection references constructive alternatives or application	
	<b>Argumentation Level</b>	<b>Attention</b>	<b>Structure</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Detail</b>	<b>Demand</b>	
Target Level		1	2	3	4	5	
Point/ percentage of writing	<b>Form &amp; Style Level</b>	Demonstrates standard form (pagination) and clear writing style	Consistent outline with headings and subheadings detailing development of argument	Forceful writing with consistent documentation at key claims and clear transitions and anticipates qualifications	Documentation addresses supporting claims & backing internally with detailed transitions and intersects with issues in class	Wide range of academic sources with strong rhetorical skills at each level. Clearly identified audience to elicit response	
	<b>Surprise Factor</b>						
<b>Total point/ percentage</b>							