

AGING AND THE LIFE CYCLE
PC 310-3 and DM 310-3– J-Term
January 15 – January 19, 2018

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Georgine Buckwalter, MDiv, DMin

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Class meets from 8:30 am – 5:00 pm in Nelson Hall 119

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Meetings: By Appointment

Course Description:

This is an elective course in pastoral care and counseling suitable for pastoral counselors, marriage and family therapists, and parish pastors. During this seminar you will develop a basic knowledge of the bio-psycho-social-spiritual issues facing the aging population of this country in the 21st Century and increase your appreciation of the opportunities and challenges inherent in the aging process. The course assumes you have a working knowledge of pastoral care, pastoral theology, and experience in a ministry or clinical context. We will address the implications for ministry in society and in communities of faith. We will address issues that predictably arise in ministry with those who are older and elderly. We will explore individual, systemic, and congregational perspectives as those inform ministry and clinical practice.

Another assumption of this course is that by developing pastoral care/clinical skills in working with older adults you will become more aware of older adults' strengths and responsive to their needs. In the context of counseling and pastoral ministry, you will need to draw upon your experiences in the practice of ministry, as well as knowledge gained from family and other life experiences. This course will draw upon a variety of disciplines, including marriage and family therapy, pastoral theology, theological texts, and social science research.

COURSE GOALS

1. To raise self-awareness about manifestations of ageism in our multicultural society;
2. To explore your attitudes towards aging;
3. To understand the normal aging process (psychological, physiological, social, spiritual) and potential for a positive aging experience that can be supported in congregational life and in clinical work;
4. To explore the spirituality of older adults, including religious and spiritual resources for coping with difficult life events that are part of the aging experience;
5. To explore cultural differences between diverse groups of older adults that influence aging and expressions of spirituality and religious activities;
6. To know the signs of mental illness, polypharmacy and addiction, including depression in older adults and to identify intervention methods;
7. To be able to recognize cognitive decline and appropriate pastoral/clinical responses to persons with dementia and their caregivers, and explore programmatic response in congregations;
8. To recognize and respond pastorally to ethical issues in end of life care;
9. To critically examine theological and theoretical viewpoints from which to construct theological understandings of aging and possible programmatic and pastoral care congregational initiatives, and end of life care;

10. To help you develop a theology of aging that informs ministry with older adults and their families; and
11. To develop skills in addressing the needs of older adults in counseling and pastoral ministries in congregations. The church and allied professionals are key resources for older adults due to their central roles in family and community life.

The course will incorporate methods conducive to seminar work. You are expected to participate fully in the course through required readings, contributions in class, and preparation of written work.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Upon completing this course you will:

1. Be more self-reflective and skillful in identifying your own biases and fears about working with older adults, recognize and minimize the presence of ageism in your clinical work and pastoral ministry, and be familiar with current cultural systems, structures, and metaphors concerning aging.
2. Demonstrate beginning competency in recognizing and responding to religious/spiritual struggles, strengths, and opportunities for older adults, including older adults who come from different races/ethnicities and sexual orientations.
3. Comprehend the variety of health and mental health issues, including the dementias and depression, for aging persons and their caregivers;
4. Know how to apply ethical principles on medical, legal, and social justice issues related to aging, taking into account the need for cultural competency.
5. Have knowledge about community resources for enhancing your pastoral and clinical responses to experiences of aging.

Use of Inclusive Language:

Learning is fundamentally concerned with communication, self-expression, and personal and social transformation. Learning respects individuals, their feelings, their value and worth, and their particular potential for contribution to common knowledge and community virtue. Learning is fundamentally and intentionally inclusive. Learning extends us beyond the boundaries of what we have known, compelling us to work for a more inclusive and just world.

Since all learning is inherently ethical and political, and theological discourse traditionally has been patriarchal and gender exclusive, the Seminary has established a policy, in the interest of constructing an inclusive and egalitarian community, that the language (symbols, metaphors) used in our class discussions and written work shall be gender inclusive and respectful of all persons and groups as valued human creatures of God.

Racism also permeates our society and is detrimental to any learning environment. We need to use language, symbols, and metaphors that honor our commitment to racial inclusiveness, and to take the risk of challenging each other when we have slipped into destructive discourse.

Grading Criteria

Class discussion and attendance **are required** in this course. Assigned readings should be completed before class, and you should be prepared to discuss and apply readings during class. A final paper/project is also required.

Special Needs: If you have a learning disability, sensory, or physical disability or other impairment, or if English is your second language and you may need special assistance in lecture, reading assignments, and/or testing, please talk directly with Dr. Buckwalter.

You are expected to maintain personal and professional boundaries at all times in discussions and role-plays. Respect for diverse viewpoints is important in interactions during this class. Confidentiality is part of our covenant to enable you to share personal reflections when appropriate.

Evaluation of Written Assignments

Graduate level writing is expected in this course. LPTS has adopted the Chicago/Turabian style for all written work. Please edit all work carefully before turning it in. Points will be deducted for poor grammar and sentence structure.

Please note the LPTS Academic Honor Code. All papers must have appropriate footnotes or endnotes. Each paper must represent original work done for this class. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to consult the professor. Papers not properly referenced will receive an F. Be careful to fully document any information included in your writings that is not original. Also be aware that when you summarize information, even when you give the complete documentation information, your summaries should be in *your words* and not retain too much of the original author's style. A paper that presents the ideas or writing of someone else as if they were your own is considered plagiarism, and seminary policy on academic honesty will be followed.

The Academic Support Center has handouts, and/or the Library can be of assistance.

Requirements and Evaluation:

1. Class Participation – Punctual attendance and quality of participation

Students will participate in each class by contributing to discussions in a critically informed and collaborative manner.

2. Final Course Paper.

Possible final paper topics for “Aging and the Life Cycle” January 2018

TEXT BOOKS:

Required:

Ellor, J. and S. McFadden, Eds. (1999). *Aging and spirituality: The first decade*. San Francisco, CA: American Society on Aging. ISBN: 978-0964038721

Jacobs, Martha R. *A clergy guide to end-of-life issues*. (2010). Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press. ISBN: 978-0829818598

MacKinley, E., J.W. Ellor, and S. Pickard. (2002). *Aging, spirituality and pastoral care: A multi-national perspective*. London: Routledge. ISBN: 978-0789016690

Morgan, R.L. (2002). *Remembering your story, Revised Edition*. Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books. ISBN: 978-0835809634

Schreiber, K.D. (2004). *Challenging invisibility: Practices of care with older women*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press. ISBN: 978-0827204942

Swinton, J. (2012). *Dementia: Living in the memories of God*. Grand Rapids, MN: Eerdmans. ISBN: 978-0802867162

Recommended:

Wimberly, A. *Honoring African American Elders: A Ministry in the Soul Community*. Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 978-0787903510

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

PRE-CLASS READINGS:

1. *Spirituality and pastoral care*. (MacKinlay, Ellor, and Pickard)
2. *Challenging Invisibility: Practices of Care with Older Women* (Karen D. Scheib)
3. *Chapters 1-6 in Dementia: Living in the Memories of God* (John Swinton)

MONDAY

Morning Session: 8:30-11:45

Introductions and Expectations
Pre-Test on Aging
Video Presentation
Discussion: Societal Attitudes and Behaviors
 Personal Hopes and Fears
Sharing of Congregational Contexts
Presentation (Facts and Figures): Dr. Buckwalter

Lunch Break

Afternoon Session: 1-5

Aging Test Results/Optimal Aging Expectations (Personal and Congregational)
Presentation (1:30-2:30)

Dr. Anna Faull, Director of Institute of Optimal Aging, University of Louisville
Discussion on pre-course readings in “Aging and Spirituality: Pastoral Care” and
Theological Reflection: Well/Frail Experiences of Aging (response to day’s
presentations)

Possible Programmatic Responses in Congregational Contexts

Evening Reading: Chapters 7-10 Swinton

TUESDAY

Morning Session: 8:30-11:45

Presentation: “Gender Differences in Experiences of Aging” (Facts and Figures)
Buckwalter

Class Discussion on “Challenging Invisibility” text

Presentation (10:30-11:45) “Cultural Differences in Experiences of Aging”
Retired Professor Gail Henson (Gerontology, Bellarmine University)

Lunch Break

Afternoon Session: 1-5

Class Discussion on “Cultural Differences” presentation
Theological Reflection/Possible Programmatic and Pastoral Care Responses in
Congregations

Presentation (3:00 – 4:00) Elder Abuse: Becky Smith, Bellarmine University

Theological Reflection/Possible Programmatic and Pastoral Responses in
Congregations

Evening Reading: “Aging and the Elderly in Hebrew and Christian Scriptures” Sapp (F.D.)
“Let Your Heart Take Courage” Kozberg (F. D.); “Praying for a Caring Spirit”
Howard (F. D.)

WEDNESDAY

Morning Session: 8:30-11:45

Pre-test on psycho-medical issues in Aging

Presentation (10:30-11:45) “Depression, Polypharmacy and Addiction in Elders
Dr. Adrian Pellegrini, Geriatric Psychiatry

Lunch Break

Pre-test results

Afternoon Session: 1-5

Class Response to Pellegrini Presentation

Class Discussion on Spirituality Issues in Depressed Elderly (to include: “Beyond the
Biomedical Paradigm: Generating a Spiritual Vision of Aging” Kimble, “Outward Decay
and Inward Renewal” A Biblical Perspective on Aging”, Painter; both from Aging
Spirituality and Pastoral Care

Presentation: “Sexuality and Aging in Institutional Aging” Buckwalter

Facts and Figures Handout

Class Discussion: response to presentation

(to include: “Pastoral Support for Late Life Sexuality” Seeber;

from Aging and Spirituality and Pastoral Care)

Theological Reflection/Possible Programmatic and Pastoral Care in Congregation

Evening Reading: “The Spiritual Crisis of Caregiving” Deane (F. D.); “The Confused Worshiper with Dementia, Clergy and Caring Congregation” Hellen (F. D.); Caring for Families of Elders on the Journey Home” Wimberly (F. D.)

THURSDAY

Morning Session: 8:30-11:45

Presentation: “Spiritual Tasks of Aging: Life Review/Wisdom Harvest and Reconciliation Issues” Buckwalter

In class exploration of Richard Morgan’s : Writing your own Spiritual Autobiography

Class Discussion of Facts and Figures Handout /Response to presentation
And “Ethical Wills” Chafee in First Decade

Theological Reflection/Possible Programmatic/Pastoral Care Responses in Congregation

Lunch Break

Afternoon Session: 1-5 pm

Video

Presentation: “Alzheimer’s and Spirituality and Speaking Alzheimer’s” Buckwalter

Class Discussion

Theological Reflection

Evening Reading: “Afterword: Inspiration and Models for Action” Moberg (F. D.) *A Clergy Guide to End of Life Issues*, Jacobs; Chapters 1, 4, 5, 9

FRIDAY

Morning Session: 8:30-11:45

Class Discussion of Evening Readings

Exploration of Personal/Biblical/Theological dimensions of death and dying

Translation of Chaplaincy Readings into Congregational Pastoral Care

In-Class Review of: Chapters 2-6: Ministries of Presence: Accompanying, Comforting, Hopeful

From *Spiritual Care at the End of Life*, Nolan

Handouts on End of Life Issues; sample documents

In Class Review of Chapters 2, 8 from *A Clergy Guide to End of Life Issues*, Jacobs

Lunch Break

Presentation: 1:30-2:30 “End of Life: Tube Be or Not Tube Be and other Matters”

Dr. Jane Cornett, Palliative Care Doctor

Class Response to Presentation

Theological Reflection/Possible Programmatic and Pastoral Care in Congregation

Summary Discussion and Term Paper assignments