



McMaster Divinity College

MS P31080

**On Being a Healthy Human:
Understanding Human Development and Maturity
Specializations: CS/PS**

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Fall 2024
Mondays 9:00am to 10:50am

COURSE SYLLABUS

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will seek a broad understanding of healthy human development over the life span, as it relates to counselling and ministry, integrating theological perspectives on the nature of man, maturity, and our goals in the “curing of souls”. The course will survey psychological theories of healthy human development including psychodynamic, cognitive, behavioral, interpersonal, moral, and social systems paradigms, and how culture and context interacts with each age and stage of development. A major theme will be the importance of the relational context of growth and change. We will also explore how the normal issues of different stages over the life span influence the formation and development of faith. Student assignments will include applying the general theories to specific populations and circumstances, critiquing the theories presented, considering the implications of a developmental perspective for counselling and other areas of ministry, and reflecting on the significance of developmental theories in understanding our own psychological and theological formation and maturity. A final exam will ensure mastery of material in preparation for professional examination standards.

Core/Required Course for: MACSC, MDiv Specialization in Counseling and Spiritual Care & Pastoral Studies

Advanced Research and Doctoral Students: 5- or 6-unit students needing to enroll in the course must obtain a separate set of course requirements from the instructor.

2. COURSE FORMAT

This online course is offered as an in person, on campus class which is live-streamed for distance learners, scheduled once a week, to allow maximum time for direct interaction with the instructor, as well as interaction with other students. Course objectives will also be met through reading, written assignments, chapter quizzes, a major paper and a final exam, as well as asynchronous (on your own time) online activities, including watching videos/podcasts. Class sessions will include didactic instruction, case studies, and other experiential activities such as group breakout discussions and

analyses. Assignments are formulated to master the content of the developmental theories reviewed and to be able to apply this content to actual contexts in counselling and ministry.

3. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

These learning objectives are coordinated with the expected competencies for CASC/ACSS certified chaplains and pastoral counsellors and the College of Registered Psychotherapists of Ontario (CRPO).

Knowing

- To develop an integrated knowledge of human development across the lifespan, using a bio-psycho-social-spiritual lens, and recognize the important milestones, needs, and influencing factors in the different ages and stages of life (CRPO & CASC).
- To understand how these developmental issues are imbedded in the relational imperative of our human nature
- To understand how these developmental issues interact with the development of spirituality in general and faith specifically
- To understand the significance of spiritual, moral, social, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, sexual, gender, and biological development for the counselling process (CRPO & CASC).

Being

- To gain self-awareness as a ministering person through self-reflection and self-evaluation of one's personal developmental journey (CASC).
- To reflect on and identify the growing edges of our own Christian maturity, and identify processes and goals for our own personal development
- To increase empathy and acceptance in hearing others' experiences, and openness to the experience of one's own inner conflict and struggles
- To practice empathic listening skills, effective responses, and appropriate support in all of our interactions and relationships

Doing

- To better communicate in a manner appropriate to a client's developmental level and socio-cultural identity (CRPO & CASC).
- To assess and understand the client's spiritual, moral, social, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, sexual, gender, and biological development and to integrate this assessment within the counselling or treatment process (implied within CRPO competencies).
- To reflect on the use of developmental perspectives to understand and assess faith formation, process, structure and content, and formulate a holistic conceptualization of Christian maturity (CASC)
- To read and critically evaluate the implications of theoretical and research articles on human development that are pertinent to one's specific area of practice or ministry (CASC & CRPO).
- To apply course materials and independent research to assessing and discussing client case examples (CRPO)
- To apply developmental perspectives in designing ministry strategies in one's area of ministry practice

4. COURSE TEXTS

All required and recommended books for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Nathaniel H. Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. To purchase in advance, you may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at books@readon.ca. The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

Other book services may also carry the texts, and the eBook for Coker et al is available from <https://connect.springerpub.com/home?implicit-login=true>, which also has resources for the student for exam preparation.

A. Required Textbooks:

Cannon, Kristi B.; Coker, J. Kelly; Dixon-Saxon, Savitri V.; Roller, Karen M. *Lifespan Development: Cultural and Contextual Applications for the Helping Profession*. New York, NY: Springer, 2022 (393 pages).

Cloud, H., Townsend, J., Carder, D., and Henslin, E. *Unlocking your family patterns: Finding freedom from a hurtful past*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2011. (222 pages)

Balswick, Jack O., King, Pamela Ebstyne, & Reimer, Kevin S. *The Reciprocating Self: Human Development in Theological Perspective*, 2nd Edition. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016.(334 pages)

B. Required Articles:

To supplement the text, lectures and class projects, required articles or their links will be provided on the class website on A2L (See Class Schedule when due).

Carter, John D. "Maturity: Psychological and Biblical." *Journal of Psychology & Theology* 2 (1974) 89-96.

Hill, Cathryn I. "A Developmental Perspective on Adolescent "Rebellion" in the Church." *Journal of Psychology & Theology*, Vol. 14 No. 4 (1986), 306-318.

Larzelere, Robert E. "Combining Love and Limits in Authoritative Parenting: A Conditional Sequence Model of Disciplinary Responses", Web article (1998). <https://parenthood.library.wisc.edu/Larzelere/Larzelere.html> and relevant news articles (Posted as one document in A2L Module, "To Spank or Not To Spank?").

Trokan, J. "Stages of the Marital and Family Life Cycle: Marital Miracles." *Pastoral Psychology*, Vol. 46 No. 4 (1998), 281-295

Henning, Doug. "Psychological Development and Meaningful Faith: When Faith Works", *In Pursuit of Truth: Journal of Christian Scholarship*, published online April 27, 2011.
<https://www.cslewis.org/journal/psychological-development-meaningful-faith-when-faith-works/view-all/>

Worthington, Everett L. "Religious Faith Across the Life Span: Implications for Counseling and Research", *The Counselling Psychologist* Vol. 17 No.4 (1989), 555-612.

C. Additional Reading and Resources:

Selected bibliographies are provided on A2L as well as copies or links to some supplementary texts, articles and videos, providing a beginning resource for research papers and further reading. These bibliographies and resources are **not** meant to be exhaustive or to be the only sources of information for student papers. Additional podcasts and resources are given in the Coker text.

5. INSTRUCTOR

Biography: Cathryn Harris, Ph.D. C.Psych. is an Assistant Professor at McMaster Divinity College. She is a Registered Psychologist (CPO) with competencies in both Clinical and Counselling Psychology, a Registered Marriage and Family Therapist, and Approved Supervisor in Marriage and Family Therapy with AAMFT and CAMFT, and a Certified EMDR Therapist. For 35 years, and currently fulltime, she has provided psychotherapy and psychological assessments to individuals, couples, families, children and adolescents in outpatient private practice. She has also worked in inpatient and day treatment programs, and provided consultation to pastors, teachers, and business professionals on individual and organizational issues. She has been continuously involved in the training and supervision of Christian mental health professionals for over 30 years, beginning as Adjunct Professor at Rosemead School of Psychology and at Fuller Graduate Seminary for a short while, and for the longest time as Clinical Supervisor for a Christian counselling ministry that placed counselling interns in churches throughout Southern California. It has also been involved in providing counselling skills training specifically to Pastors through much of her career, and enjoys being able to do more of this at MDC. Dr. Harris has been married for over 30 years to another psychologist, and has one adult daughter who has managed to survive that experience.

Contact and Availability: Dr. Harris is available for one-on-one consultation briefly after class and during breaks on the day class is scheduled. Otherwise, students may contact her at drathryn@mcdivty.edu. **Please make sure you put "Human Development course" in the subject line of any email to rapidly identify your communication.**

6. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- i. **Class Participation and Self-Reflection Paper - 20% of grade**
Attendance, and participation in class lectures and **online asynchronous activities** as assigned are expected. Asynchronous activities, such as watching videos/podcasts online, are crucial to the course content, and are crucial to supplement the livestreaming lectures and class time. You will be given a checklist on A2L to keep track of these activities.
- ii. **Reflection Papers:**
 - 1) **Due the first day of class:** The purpose of this assignment is to set personal goals for learning. Write a brief reflection of approximately 2 pages double spaced on the following: After reviewing the syllabus and these beginning chapters, what are my personal goals for this course? How do I want my life and/or ministry to be different 13 weeks from now?
 - 2) **Due the last day of class:** A self-reflection paper, approximately 5 to 7 pages long, double spaced, due at the last class (day of the final exam).
 - The purpose of this assignment is to accomplish the “Being” goals by identifying and discussing how the content of the course has illuminated developmental factors in your life, both negative and positive, and how these may have shaped your personality, relationships, and/or faith journey later in life.
 - **Assignment Description:**
 - A. It is strongly encouraged that you *take notes/ maintain a journal* each week of class on the personal significance for you of the class material that informs your life journey, so that you have a fund of observations to draw on in the last few weeks of class for this paper. There are many self-reflection questions in the Coker et al text, and also in Cloud et al to help you think about and explore this intersection.
 - B. At the level of disclosure that feels comfortable to you, discuss in your reflection paper *what you have discovered about your own development and how the factors you have identified have affected you positively and/or negatively later in life.*
 - C. Conclude by discussing *how these observations might now affect your work in counselling and ministry.* For example, in Cloud Appendix A “Helping the Helpers” (pp.215-221), the authors identify some “traps” that helpers can get into. Which are potential traps for you? How can you work on avoiding them? What is your plan for working on the development factors In your life that might be hindrances in your work?

A. Chapter Quizzes - 10% of grade

These prepare you in part for the final exam, to make sure that you are mastering the objective content areas of the course (although they are not necessarily the same questions as on the final exam) (Knowing). They coincide with the assigned readings in Coker and are due at the BEGINNING of almost EVERY class (except the first one). See class schedule and A2L.

B. Final Exam – 35% of grade

This prepares you in part for the professional exams that you will need to write if you are registering with CRPO, and makes sure that you have mastered the objective content areas of the course (Knowing). This will be a proctored, closed book, multiple choice exam during the final class.

C. Written Assignment: *Literature Review Paper* - 35% of grade

DUE: Friday, November 22nd 8AM

- The **purpose** of this assignment is for the student to be able to:

- 1) Focus on an area of individual interest, and explore and describe in more detail either a developmental theory surveyed in this course as it applies to this developmental stage (topical focus) and/or research on a particular problem or issues within this developmental stage (problem focus) (Knowing), and
- 2) Learn how to and engage in the practice of psychological literature research, including finding appropriate sources of material, and refining their search appropriately for their subject (Doing), and
- 3) Critically examine and evaluate research found in the literature, (Knowing and Doing), and
- 3) Practice writing a literature review format article using professional language and structure (Doing).

- **Assignment Description:**

A literature review focused on a topic of interest as it applies to individuals or families within a specific developmental stage. This assignment addresses many of the knowing and doing goals of the course, and particularly the development of professional research, critical evaluation and writing skills. The paper must discuss normal human development and/or maturity in this developmental stage as related to the topic or issue. The emphasis is on reporting primary research on this theory and stage, and/or problem. It is expected that the student will critically analyze this body of research in terms of whether it is supportive of the relevant developmental theory (theories) involved, and/or whether it is consistent in its findings regarding the development stage or problem involved. You will need to integrate the relevant themes and conclusions drawn from the literature (don't just summarize articles or books). See reference materials under "How Write a Paper" in "Content" on A2L as to how to write a literature review, especially Dr. Mutter's paper and Dr. Harris' "Tips" guides.

- **References:** You may Include relevant chapters from the course texts, *must* include at least one academic monograph (i.e., book) related to this topic, and must include no fewer than 7 relevant academic (i.e., peer-reviewed) articles drawn from the psychology, social sciences, counselling, pastoral counselling or pastoral care literature.

- **Paper length:** 12-15 pages, double spaced, not including references.

- **Format:** Use the expected structure for a professional literature review (see guides and resources on A2L), including -

- 1) Introduction/Thesis Statement,
- 2) Integrated Review of Literature,
- 3) Conclusions of your Review
- 4) Implications/Application.
- 5) Bibliography

Use **MDC style format** in all respects. Use Headings and Sub-headings to clearly delineate your discussion. Consult the Grading Rubric for the assignment to make sure you have fulfilled the assignment's major objectives and standards for professional writing.

- **How to Choose Your Topic:**

Step 1. Choose a developmental period/Phase of Life -

Early Childhood (0-5 yrs), Middle Childhood (6 to 9yrs), Late Childhood/ Pre-Adolescence (10-12yrs), Adolescence (13-18yrs), Early Adulthood (19 to 30yo), Middle Adulthood (30 to 60), Later Adulthood (60+)

Step 2: Choose 1 of the following -

1. A specific theory you will research in more detail regarding this stage.

This will include a survey of research evidence that supports and/or challenges this theory, and your conclusions about its utility in understanding this stage. Be thorough in covering both supporting and challenging evidence. Discuss the limitations of the research considering populations studied and research context. How does cultural diversity in background and experiences of other countries impact the application of this theory?

OR

2. Summary and overview of the major milestones and developments of your chosen period. This is your opportunity to become the "expert" on this period.

Include the cognitive, emotional, physical, gender/ sexual and social/relational development layers of development (think of it as a "quick reference manual" for this period). Include consideration of relevant issues for this period: for example, what are the questions or issues currently being researched or debated in this period of development? Are these developmental milestones and/or tasks universal, or is their normative variation in their trajectory or expression? How does the achievement of these tasks/milestones potentially influence those of the

next period of development? Are these tasks/milestones universal across cultural and geographic contexts, or are these seen differently or impacted differently in other contexts?

OR

3. Narrow your topic by choosing one or a combination of the following

parameters: Based on current literature, **you** will discuss how these parameters affect an individual's or family's development (behavioural, biological, cognitive, emotional, gender, moral, sexual, social, and/or spiritual). Make sure that you *demonstrate how the issue relates to a particular perspective on human development and/or maturity* (egs. what typical or "normative" needs or milestones does this issue interrupt or distort? Or how does development look different in this population or context? How is a *developmental theory* relevant to these contexts or events in development?)

- Crisis issue: Explore a specific aspect of human experience (e.g., bereavement, family violence, illness & disability, immigration, learning disorders, separation, divorce & remarriage)
- Specific Population: cultural or ethnic community,
- Specific Setting or situation: school, foster care, adoptive family, military family/deployment, missions

Step 3: Include in Implications/ Application the following considerations, depending on your specialization -

For MACSC and MDiv Specialization in CSC:

Building on your literature review, how you would apply those concepts therapeutically in counselling? For example, as our text does, you can use a BRIEF individual, family, or group case example, either hypothetical and/or drawing from personal or ministry experience (taking care to disguise all potentially identifying elements) (this can be single spaced and a smaller font to save space for discussion). Use your chosen developmental lens to assess the individual, family, or group in your example, and outline the counseling or other intervention strategies you would use based on your research to help them towards greater spiritual and/or psychological maturity.

For Pastoral Studies (PS) Specializations:

What are the specific implications of the literature review for your ministry? That is, how does your research inform your ministry strategies? Discuss how you would apply the conclusions and themes of your literature review in the context of your ministry, particularly what you would do based on your research to encourage greater psychological and/or spiritual maturity and health in your community. Include consideration of the demographics, culture, history, goals, and challenges of your ministry context and how these factors interact with your developmental perspective.

7. COURSE ADMINISTRATION

College Style for Submission of Written Work: All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses <http://mcmasterdivinity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/mdcstyleguide.pdf>. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one's own (regardless of the means of its production, including AI) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.

A special note about AI: You are expected to do your own thinking and to write your own papers, etc., and not to have AI do this work for you. There may be value in using an AI tool to help you locate and collate resources or to help you "tidy up" your English grammar, usage, and mechanics, especially if English is not your native language. However, using AI to create content for you and then submitting that content as if you created it is considered plagiarism (i.e., submitting work that is not one's own as if it is one's own) and is a violation of the academic honesty policy.

AODA: In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

Gender Inclusive Language: McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as, for example, the following: NRSVue (2022),

TEV/GNB/GNT (1976), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

Submission of Written Work: A digital copy of all written materials in **MICROSOFT WORD** format must be submitted online through Avenue to Learn by their due dates (do NOT send by email). ***Late submission of assignments may be deducted points for every late day (each 24 hours or portion thereof after due date).***

Length: Students are expected to adhere to the page range for written assignments. See Grading Rubric for penalties for papers that are under/over the expected length.

Cell Phone/Computer Policy: Students are to refrain from texting or conducting cell phone conversations while class is in session. Should you need to maintain contact with family members and/or your church or ministry, please turn off the ringer so as to avoid disturbing others; upon receipt of an urgent call, you may discretely excuse yourself from the classroom or video conference. The same policy applies to all computer-generated sound schemes or other electronic annunciation systems. If joining on livestream, it is expected that your camera is on at all times, just as if you were in the classroom. As a result, please make sure you are in a private, quiet place, free from distractions. Please mute your microphone when others are speaking unless directly differently by your instructor.

Copyright: ***This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.***

8. COURSE OUTLINE: LECTURES, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS SCHEDULE

(Due on class date indicated)

Throughout the semester, in person/live-synchronous class sessions will involve lectures with supplementary content from the instructor, small and large group discussions, and other interactive activities. Reading, reflection papers, and other asynchronous online assignments which may be assigned for each week are designed to prepare for that class and are due at the time of the class. It is recommended that you read Coker chapters before Balwick chapters.

WEEK 1: Monday Sept. 9th: Introductions and Introduction

Reading Due: (required by first class):** Coker Ch. 1, Balwick Chs. 1 & 2,

Reflection Paper Due: After reviewing the syllabus and these beginning chapters, what are my personal goals for this course? How do I want my life and/or ministry to be different 13 weeks from now?

Lecture Topics: *Goals, Expectations, and Challenges of the Course*

Introduction to the Texts and to the Field:

The relationship of Psychology to Theology

The "Problems" of Developmental Psychology

On the Nature of Human Nature:

A Brief Introduction to Theological Anthropology

WEEK 2: Monday, Sept 16th : Overview of Psychological Theories of Development

Reading Due: Coker Ch. 2, Balswick Ch. 3 & 4

Lecture Topics: *Psychological Theories and the “Reciprocal Self”*

WEEK 3: Monday Sept 23rd: The Social Context: A Relational/Systems Perspective on Development

Reading Due: Coker Ch. 3, Balswick Ch. 5

Asynchronous Assignment Due: Watch videos on “Mirroring and Nonverbal Communication in Attachment” (see Module A2L) (10 mins)

Lecture: *The Relational Imperative of Development*

We are “wired” for relationship!: Neurobiology and attachment
Attachment vs. Separation-Individuation throughout life

WEEK 4: Monday Sept 30th: Early Childhood (0-5yrs):

Reading Due: Coker Ch. 4 & 5, Balswick Ch. 6, “To Spank or Not to Spank” – Larzelere (on A2L)

Asynchronous Assignment Due: Videos on “Strange Situation/Attachment” and “Normal Toddler Behavior” (18 mins) - see A2L Module.

Lecture: *The drama of attachment vs. autonomy begins in Early Childhood!*

WEEK 5: Monday, Oct 7th: Middle Childhood (6-12yrs)

Reading Due: Coker Ch. 6 & 7, Balswick Ch. 7

Lecture: *Key Details in Understanding Middle Childhood*

WEEK 6: Monday October 14th: No Class, Thanksgiving, Reading Week

WEEK 7: Monday Oct 21st: Adolescence (13-18yrs)

Asynchronous Assignments Due:

1. *Effects of Nurturance and Attachment on Later Development:*

- Various videos (25mins) , a personal quiz, and a short article – see A2L

2. *Adolescent development:* 2 videos (9 mins) – see A2L

Reading Due: Balswick Ch. 8

Lecture: *Key Details in Understanding Adolescence*

Identity Formation in Adolescence: Revisiting Separation-Individuation
The effect of social media on the capacity for healthy relationships

WEEK 8: Monday October 28th: Emerging and Young Adulthood (19-30yrs)

Reading Due: Coker Ch. 8 & 9, Balswick Ch. 9

Lecture: *Key Details in Understanding Emerging Adulthood*

“Failure to Launch” and other challenges

WEEK 9: Monday Nov 4th: *Middle Adulthood*

Reading Due: Coker, Ch. 10 & 11, Balswick Chs. 10 & 11

Lecture: *Key Details in Understanding Middle Adulthood*
The varied faces of “Mid Life Crisis”

WEEK 10: Monday Nov 11th: *Late Adulthood*

Reading Due: Coker Ch. 12 & 13, Balswick Ch. 9,

Lecture: *Key Details in Understanding Late Adulthood*
Making the ending count!

WEEK 11: Monday Nov 18th: *Marital and Family Development*

Reading Due: Article: Trokan

Lecture: *Key Details in Understanding Marriage and Family Development*

Class Discussion: What are characteristics of and some biblical examples of a healthy vs an unhealthy family?

Friday November 22nd, 8 AM: MAJOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE

WEEK 12: Monday Nov 25th: *Moral and Spiritual Development*

Reading Due: Balswick Ch. 12 & 13, Articles: Carter, Hill, Henning, Worthington, Cloud et al should be finished by now!

Asynchronous Assignment Due: Video – *Kohlberg’s Stages of Moral Development* (6 mins)

Reflection Paper: What would you say are the psychological factors that have contributed to your spiritual maturity in your experience?

Lecture: *An Integrative View of Christian Maturity*

WEEK 13: Monday Dec 2nd: *Catching Up and Wrapping Up*

Lecture: *Anything that’s left that we didn’t get to!*

Case Analysis and Discussion – Small Groups

Q & A/ Review for Final

WEEK 14: Monday Dec 9th: *FINAL EXAM*

Final Personal Reflection Paper Due

Class Evaluations Due

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