



## McMaster Divinity College

MS 3XK3/5XK5/6XK6

### On Being a Healthy Human: Understanding Human Development and Maturity

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Fall 2020  
Mondays 9:00am to 11:00am

### 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. In all phases of life, we will see the importance of the relational context of growth and change. After considering different approaches to integrating theological and secular views, we will 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.

**SPECIALIZATIONS:** Counseling and Spiritual Care, Church and Culture, Christian World View,

Doctor of Practical Theology students who wish to apply for this course as an Advanced Elective for their degree program must consult with the Program Director of the DPT and the course instructor in order to develop an Advanced Elective approach to the course that fulfills the specific elements required by the DPT program. Once the elements of the Advanced Elective have been agreed upon by the student, the Program Director, and the instructor, a formal application can be made for an Advanced Elective in connection with this course. Once the application is accepted, DPT students can proceed with the course as part of their degree program.

## 2. COURSE FORMAT

This online course is offered in live, online videoconference format, scheduled once a week, to allow maximum time for direct interaction with the instructor, as well as interaction with other students. The class on Monday October 26<sup>th</sup> will be face-to-face, in vivo, on campus, as conditions permit. Course objectives will also be met through personal reflection, reading and written assignments, and other asynchronous (on your own time) online activities, including watching pre-recorded material, other videos, and online discussions with classmates. 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 developmental theories, and then be able to apply this content to actual contexts in ministry.

## 3. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students should attend to the learning objectives for their specialization. Through required and optional reading, lectures, class discussion and exercises, and the completion of assignments, the student should fulfill the following course objectives:

### ***Church and Culture (CC) and Christian World View (CW) Specializations***

#### ***Knowing***

- To understand human development through a bio-psycho-social-spiritual lens, and recognize the important milestones, needs, and influencing factors in the different seasons of the life span
- 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,

#### ***Being***

- To gain self-awareness as a ministering person through self-reflection and self-evaluation of one's personal developmental journey
- 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

#### ***Doing***

- To develop a psychologically and theologically informed perspective on human development across the lifespan.
- To practice empathic listening skills, effective responses, and appropriate support in all of our interactions and relationships, in order to communicate with people in a manner that is appropriate to their developmental level and socio-cultural identity.
- To reflect on the use of developmental perspectives to understand faith formation, structure and content, and formulate a holistic conceptualization of Christian maturity

- To read research and evaluate the implications of articles on human development that are pertinent to one's area of ministry practice.
- To apply developmental perspectives in designing ministry strategies in one's area of ministry practice

### ***Counselling and Spiritual Care (CS) Specialization***

**Note:** *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 have an integrated knowledge of human development across the lifespan (CRPO & CASC).
- To understand the psychological significance of spiritual, moral, social, emotional, cognitive, behavioural, sexual, gender, and biological development (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

#### ***Being***

- To gain self-awareness as a ministering person through self-reflection on 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 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 faith formation, structure and content, and formulate a holistic conceptualization of Christian maturity
- To assess for faith process and development, faith structure and content (CASC)

- To be able to understand a client's source(s) of spiritual strength, hope, methods/ways of coping, needs, risks and wellness goals through personal encounter with the client (CASC).
- To read and evaluate the implications of 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

#### 4. COURSE TEXTS

All required textbooks are available from MDC's book service, READ On, located in the new Hurlburt Family Bookstore, located beside the Chapel entrance, opposite Cullen Hall at McMaster Divinity College. It will be opening September 8, 2020, **by appointment only**, due to COVID-19 safety measures. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3 by phone 416.620.2934, fax 416.622.2308, or email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

##### A. *Required Textbooks:*

Balswick, Jack O., King, Pamela Ebstyne, & Reimer, Kevin S. *The Reciprocating Self: Human Development in Theological Perspective*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016.

##### B. *Required and Additional Articles:*

To supplement the text, lectures and class projects, both required and additional articles will be provided on the class website on A2L (See Class Schedule).

##### **Required:**

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

Ingram, John A. "Contemporary Issues and Christian Models of Integration: Into the Modern / Postmodern Age." *Journal of Psychology & Theology*, Vol. 23 No. 1 (1995), 3-14.

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

- ##### C. Other supplementary texts and articles may be recommended based on class discussions and individual student interests. An extensive bibliography will be provided

as a resource for further research and reading.

## 5. INSTRUCTOR

**Biography:** Cathryn Harris, Ph.D. C.Psych. is an Affiliate 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 her privilege on a few occasions to provide counselling skills training specifically to Pastors, 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 [drathrynharris@gmail.com](mailto:drathrynharris@gmail.com). **Please make sure you put "Human Development course" in the subject line of any email to rapidly identify your communication.**

## 6. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### A. Class Participation and Self-Reflection - 20% of grade

- A. Attendance, and participation in class lectures, activities, and discussions.  
(For those who may have a schedule conflict with hybrid courses that meet the weeks of Oct 19<sup>th</sup> and Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>, classes will be recorded, and should be viewed before the next class date.)
- B. Reflection Papers: For each reading assignment, submit approximately 2 pages, interacting with the material on a personal level, at the level of disclosure that feel comfortable to you. Unless a different prompt is given in the syllabus, identify and discuss how the material illuminates developmental factors in your life, or the life of someone close to you, both negative and positive, and how these may have shaped your personality, relationships, and/or faith journey.

## B. Major Assignments

### i. **Midterm Paper: Literature Review - 40% of grade: DUE NOVEMBER 2nd** **All Specializations**

12-15 pages, double spaced, not including references.

This literature review will form the basis for your final paper, which will be applying your research to your area of ministry and/or specialization. Choose one of the following options carefully as it relates to your final goal:

#### a. **A literature review focused on a topic of interest as it applies to individuals and/or families within a specific developmental stage as pertinent to your ministry.**

Topic: A specific aspect of human experience, e.g., death & bereavement; family violence; illness & disability; immigration; learning disorders; mental health; parent-child attachment; separation, divorce & remarriage.

Developmental influence: Consider its possible effects on an individual's or family's development e.g., behavioural, biological, cognitive, emotional, gender, moral, sexual, social, and spiritual.

Phase of Life: in infancy, childhood, adolescence, emerging adulthood, middle adulthood, or late adulthood.

Specific Population/Context of Ministry: e.g. cultural community, missions context, school setting, type of client.

e.g. "The effects of divorce on church participation and faith commitment in Asian-Canadian adolescents"

e.g. "The effects of child sexual abuse on attachment styles, dating, and socialization during young adulthood in North America".

It is expected that your review will be integrative and highlight relevant themes and conclusions drawn from the literature. Include relevant chapters from the course texts, one academic monograph (i.e., book) related to this topic, and at least 7 relevant academic (i.e., peer-reviewed) articles drawn from the counselling, pastoral counselling or pastoral care literature.

#### b. **A literature review that explores in depth a particular developmental theory and its implications across the life span.**

Identify and evaluate the philosophical assumptions, values, understanding of development, key themes, stages of development and supporting research

related to a specific psychological development theory (e.g., Attachment Theory, Erikson, Fowler, Kohlberg, Objects-Relations Theory, Piaget, etc.). It is expected that your literature review will include relevant chapters from the course texts, one academic monograph (i.e., book) related to this topic, and at least 5 relevant academic (i.e., peer-reviewed) articles.

ii. **Final Paper: Ministry Application of Literature Review** - 40% of grade:

**DUE DECEMBER 7th**

12-15 pages, double spaced, not including references.

It is expected that you will build on the knowledge gained from the course and demonstrate how you would apply the insights gained from your **Literature Review** assignment within a ministry context or in the work of counselling and spiritual care.

***For Church and Culture (CC) and Christian World View (CW) Specializations***

*Choose one of the following, based on your choice for the midterm:*

- a. **Ministry Application:** 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. Describe the context, goals, and challenges of your ministry context as it applies to your topic. Then discuss, what are the specific implications of the literature review for your work? How would these developmental factors influence faith development and spiritual maturity? How does this research inform ministry strategies? What specific ministry strategies would you employ for this population in this context? Give the rationale and goals for these strategies and activities from this developmental perspective.  
**References Note:** While it is expected that you will draw on the sources used in the first assignment, you are encouraged to employ additional source materials to support your view and your plan, for example, sources on ministry applications and strategies.
  
- b. **Integrative Theological Analysis:** Use the article by Ingram, and other theological and integrative and theological articles, to reflect on the assumptions, insights, and values of the specific developmental theory you chose to explore in depth for your midterm, and discuss how it applies to Christian ministry and/or worldview. Consider one or more of the following questions, and discuss your rationale: Can this developmental theory be complimentary to or integrated with Christian thought and ministry? Can this developmental theory lend insight into a theme or character in Scripture? Can this developmental theory contribute to our conceptualization of Christian maturity? Then discuss: If so, what integration approach would you take? Or if not, why not?  
**References Note:** **You must support your view**, citing other sources, and not just

give your own opinion. Consider Scriptural and other pastoral and theological sources to support your discussion. These should be additional to your original literature research paper, including at least 5 relevant academic (i.e., peer-reviewed) articles.

***For Counselling and Spiritual Care (CS) Specialization***

- c. **Therapeutic Application:** Building on your literature review, whether you chose Option A or Option B for your midterm, this paper will outline specifically how you would apply those conclusions therapeutically in counseling or caring for persons in your ministry context. Develop and describe an individual or family 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 and research to assess the individual or family 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.
- References Note:** While it is expected that you will draw on the sources used in the first assignment, you are encouraged to employ additional source materials which focus on therapeutic strategies.

## 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.

**Statement On Academic Honesty:** Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~ <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/rules-regulations/>

**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 the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991),

TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

### **Submission of Written Work:**

A digital copy of all written materials must be submitted online through Avenue to Learn by their due dates. 50% loss in points for late submission (do NOT send by email). ***Late submission of assignments will be deducted 2% for every late day beginning 5 pm the day the assignment was originally due.***

**Length:** Students are expected to adhere to the page count. If a paper exceeds the page count, grace will be accorded for the first 10 over. However, the grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade for each additional 10% a paper exceeds the stipulated page count.

**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.

**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, online and face-to-face class sessions will involve lectures with supplementary content from the instructor, case study and analysis, small and large group discussions, and other interactive activities. Reading, reflection papers, and other online assignments which may be assigned for each week prepare for and are due at the time of the class.*

#### **WEEK 1: Monday Sept. 14<sup>th</sup> *Introductions and Introduction***

**Reading Assignment:** (required by first class): Balswick Ch. 1, Ingram article, review Syllabus

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

Introduction to Systems of Integration

**In-class Reflection and Small Group Discussion:** After reviewing the syllabus - what are my personal goals for this course? How do I want my life and/or ministry to be different 12 weeks from now?

**WEEK 2: Monday, Sept 28<sup>th</sup>: *On the Nature of Human Nature***

**Reading Due:** Balswick, Chs. 2 & 3

**Reflection Paper Due:** We all have an implicit or explicit theory of human nature. How does the text fit with and/ or challenge the view you have arrived with at the outset of this course?

**Lecture Topic: An Introduction to Theological Anthropology**

**In-class activity: TBD**

**WEEK 3: Monday, Oct 5<sup>th</sup>: *Overview of Psychological Theories of Development***

**Reading Due:** Balswick, Ch. 4

**Reflection Paper Due:** Which psychological perspective are you drawn to in understanding development and why?

**Lecture Topics:**

The "Problems" of Psychology

Some details on the Psychological Theories Surveyed

**Group Activity:** Form 3-4 groups (depending on class size), and develop arguments in favor of one psychological perspective that you think is the best fit with spiritual development and why. Pick a theory you are NOT particularly drawn to! Present your arguments to the class.

**WEEK 4: Monday, Oct 12<sup>th</sup>: Thanksgiving Holiday, No Class**

**WEEK 5: Monday Oct 19<sup>th</sup>: *The Social Context of Development and Infancy***

**Reading Due:** Chs. 5, 6

**Reflection Paper:** In what specific ways do you notice that your relationships and social context while growing up has affected you personally and spiritually? What is your earliest memory (memories) in regards to relationship? Give at least one example.

**Lecture: The Relational *Imperative* of Development**

We are "wired" for relationship: Neurobiology and attachment

Mirroring as foundational to relationship

Attachment vs. Separation-Individuation throughout life

**Other class activities: TBA**

**WEEK 6: Monday Oct 26<sup>th</sup> \*FACE TO FACE CLASS ON CAMPUS! Topic: *Childhood***

**Reading:** Ch. 7

**Reflection Paper:** How do you see the central issues, needs and conflicts of childhood playing out in your experience? Give at least one specific example.

**Lecture: Key Details in Understanding Childhood**

The importance of availability and stability

**Group Discussions:** Case Study and Analysis

**Other class activities:** TBA

\* Professor is available after class to discuss questions about your individualized project.

\* Consider staying to meet with your study group, and to join us for Chapel at 2:00pm

**WEEK 7: Monday Nov 2nd: *Adolescence***

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: MID TERM RESEARCH PAPER**

**Reading Due:** Balswick, Ch. 8

**Reflection Paper Due:** How do you see the central issues, needs and conflicts of adolescence playing out in your experience? Give at least one specific example.

**Lecture: Key Details in Understanding Adolescence**

Revisiting Separation-Individuation

The effect of social media on the capacity for healthy relationships

**Group Discussions:** Case Study and Analysis

**WEEK 8: Monday Nov 9<sup>th</sup>: *Moral and Spiritual Development***

**Reading:** Balswick, Ch. 12 & 13, Hill article

**Reflection Paper:** What are my growing edges in spiritual maturity? What are my next steps?

**Lecture: An integrative View of Christian Maturity**

**Group Discussion:** Same as reflection paper.

**WEEK 9: Monday Nov 16<sup>th</sup>: *Emerging Adulthood***

**Reading Due:** Balswick, Ch. 9

**Reflection Paper Due:** How do you see the central issues, needs and conflicts of emerging adulthood playing out in your early adulthood? Give at least one specific example.

**Lecture Topics: Key Details in Understanding Emerging Adulthood**

“Failure to Launch” and other challenges

**Group Discussion:** Case Study and Analysis

**WEEK 10: Monday Nov 23rd: *Marital and Family Development***

**Reading Due:** Trokan Article

**Reflection Paper Due:** How do you see the central issues, needs and conflicts of late adulthood playing out in your personal or professional life? Give at least one specific example.

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

**Group Discussion:** Case Study and Analysis

**WEEK 11: Monday Nov 30<sup>th</sup>: *Middle Adulthood***

**Reading Due:** Balswick, Chs. 10, 11

**Reflection Paper Due:** How do you see the central issues, needs and conflicts of late adulthood playing out in your personal or professional life? Give at least one specific example.

**Lecture Topics: Key Details in Understanding Middle Adulthood**

The varied faces of "Mid Life Crisis"

**Group Discussion:** Case study and analysis

**WEEK 12: Monday Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>: *Late Adulthood & Wrapping Up (excuse the pun!)***

**ASSIGNMENT DUE: FINAL APPLICATION PAPER**

**Reading Due:** Balswick, Ch. 9

**Lecture Topics: Key Details in Understanding Late Adulthood**

Making the ending count!

**Discussion:** What was the most valuable thing about this course? What was the least valuable or most frustrating? What will you take with you? What will you leave behind?

**Course Evaluations**