

Nature and Development of Persons

CFM 515 Spring, 2010 BGC 253

Class meets: Tuesdays 1:15-3:05 PM

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Office Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays



Course Description

Human nature and development will be considered from the perspectives of the social sciences and the Christian faith. Of particular relevance are concepts that relate to Christian formation and ministry. Attention will be given to the implications of this study for Christian educators and ministers in understanding themselves, the persons with whom they work, and the structures that best promote spiritual formation. Issues of diversity and related implications will be considered.

Catalog Description: An introduction to biblical, historical, and theological understandings of the nature of persons and the integration of relevant psychological and sociological understandings of human development. In addition, students will be encouraged to consider the application of these foundations to the contemporary work of Christian formation and ministry.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will—as evaluated by the instructor—potentially be able to:

1. articulate a biblical perspective of the nature of humanity (contributes to achieving program objective A1 through successful completion of assignment 1)
2. assess one's own spiritual development making use of a schematic supplied in class (contributes to achieving program objective B3 through successful completion of assignment 1)
3. interview a person who is a member of an ethnic minority or comes from an impoverished background (contributes to achieving program objective A3 through the successful completion of assignment 2)
4. analyze and apply developmental theories and understandings to present or future ministry (contributes to achieving program objectives A4 through the completion of assignment 3)
5. offer a distinctively compassionate approach to ministry (contributes to achieving program objective C2 through the completion of assignment 4)

Texts [the first two are required of everyone, the second two are required for certain contracted grades]

Ratcliff, Donald and Brenda (2010). *ChildFaith: Experiencing God and Spiritual Growth with Your Children*. Eugene, OR: Cascade.

Ratcliff, Donald (Spring 2010). Course manual [see bookstore]

Loder, James (1998). *The Logic of the Spirit*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Wilhoit, James and John Dettoni (1995). *Nurture that is Christian*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

Course Requirements

1. **Beliefs and Spiritual Development Paper.** Write a three to five page paper outlining your personal affirmations about the nature of humanity, faith as it relates to social science, and an analysis of your own spiritual development, drawing from readings and classroom discussion related to the nature of divinity, humanity, science and faith, and the characteristics of spirituality. Logical and biblical analysis will be used, and writing should be free of typographical, grammatical, and spelling errors.

2. **Diversity Paper.** Interview a person who is a member of an ethnic minority or is from an impoverished background. The goal of the interview, which should be at least ten minutes in length, is to better understand the important shaping experiences in the person's life. Write a two to three page paper describing ways their experiences influenced their development. At the beginning of the paper briefly describe the person, as well as provide the date, location, and length of the interview. Creativity, accuracy, neatness, spelling, grammar, logical thought, and appropriate style of writing and format (Turabian, 7th ed) are important elements.

3. **Online Response and Application Dialogue.** Every week you are expected to enter into dialogue with other students in the class using the Blackboard system. Write substantive comments about the readings for class each week (more than offering your opinion, and more than just restating what the text, teacher, or other students have said). These comments should be completed by class time each week, including the week of the symposium [due by midnight Saturday the first week]. Comments often will be a paragraph in length, but occasionally may be shorter or longer. In addition to comments on the textbooks, consider how concepts related to human and social development might be used for current ministry or your future vocational life. The minimum number of comments to be made depends upon the contracted grade.

4. **Ministry Strategy Paper.** Using ideas from assignments two and three, and additional creative thinking, develop a strategy that reflects a compassionate approach to ministry (see program objective C3). You may want to make use of Henry Nouwen's "wounded healer" concept in doing this assignment. The product will be a three to five page paper outlining this strategy in a logical manner, argued persuasively. Also see criteria listed under assignments 1 and 2 above.

Grading

Grades are determined through a contract approach. A contract involves a designation of how much you will be reading and the degree to which you engage in Blackboard dialogue for class. While the grade is influenced by the amount of work done, there is also the expectation that the quality of work will be of the same level. The college catalog stipulates these quality criteria for graduate work: A = outstanding, A- = superior, B+ = very good, B = satisfactory, B- to C = acceptable but below average. Readings and online work are due Saturday the first week, by class time thereafter.

1. Maximum course grade of B: Read the course manual and *ChildFaith*, following the course schedule. Make two substantive comments each week. One of these may be in response to another person's comment. At least one comment should be made for each reading.

2. Maximum course grade of B+: add to #1 seven chapters of the Wilhoit text (see the class schedule). Make an additional comment each week from the chapter of Wilhoit. (3 comments each week)

3. Maximum course grade of A-: add to #1 & 2 four chapters of the Loder text (see the class schedule). Make one additional comment each week related to the Loder chapter. (4 comments each week)

4. Maximum course grade of A: add to #1, 2 & 3 four additional chapters of the Loder text (see the class schedule). Make a second comment each week related to the Loder chapter. One of these can be in response to another person's comment. (5 comments each week)

Requirements 1, 2 and 4 are each worth 20% of the final grade, while assignment 3 is worth 40% of the grade. However, the upper limit for a grade is determined by the contracted grade and fulfillment of the contract. Class participation can also affect the course grade. You are permitted to critique one another's work, but not plagiarize ideas. Contracted grade is due January 19.

Outline and Readings

C=course manual, R=Ratcliff text, W=Wilhoit text, L=Loder [Readings are due by class time*]

| Date | Topics | Readings (additive) | | | |
|---------|--|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| | | B | B+ | A- | A |
| Jan 12 | Divinity, Humanity, & Science | C1&2 | W1 | | |
| 19 | Spirituality & Spiritual Development | C3, R1 | | L3 | |
| 26 | Development/Prenatal | C16, R2 | W13 | | |
| Feb 2 | Infancy Beliefs Paper | C4, R3 | | | L4 |
| 9 | Infancy & Early Childhood | C5&6 | W14 | | |
| 16 | Early Childhood | C7, R4 | | L8 | |
| 23 | Childhood | C8, R5 | W8 | | |
| Mar 2 | Childhood | R6&7 | | | L10 |
| 9 | [spring break] | | | | |
| 16 | Adolescence Diversity Paper | C9 | W9 | L9 | |
| 23 | Adolescence | C10, R8 | | | L11 |
| 30 | Emerging Adults | C11, R9 | W15 | | |
| April 6 | Adulthood | C12&13 | | | L12 |
| 13 | Older Adults | C14&15 | W10 | | |
| 20 | Older Adults | R10 | | L13 | |
| 27 | Death and Dying Ministry Strategy | R11&12 | | | |
| Finals | Course Debriefing | | | | |

*except the first week, when they are due by Saturday at midnight

Plagiarism, Cheating, and Dishonesty

Plagiarism is the act of representing the work of others as one's own. This and other forms of academic dishonesty are subject to strict disciplinary action, according to the following policy and procedure.

1. Students must avoid unauthorized collaboration, fabrication of data, unauthorized use of computer data, and excessive revision by someone other than the student.
2. Students are responsible to report to their instructor any dishonest behavior of which they are aware, or any circumstances that tend to encourage dishonesty.
3. If there are mitigating circumstances, lesser sanctions than those listed below may be applied with the concurrence of the instructor's superior (i.e. chair or dean).

Suspicion of Dishonesty

1. Students suspected of dishonesty will be confronted discretely and a response solicited.
2. If the student admits to dishonesty, appropriate disciplinary action (as described below) will be applied and a report made to the Student Development Office. The student will also be informed of his or her right of appeal.
3. If the student denies dishonesty, but not to the satisfaction of the instructor, the matter will be referred to the petitions subcommittee of the Educational Policies and Curriculum Committee, who with the Dean of Students will hear both parties and submit their recommendations to the Vice President for Student Development, who shall make a determination.
4. Any further appeals will follow the College process of appeals.

Conformation of Dishonesty

1. A grade of zero will be assigned to any individual assignment or test on which a student has been dishonest.
2. In the case of inadvertent plagiarism, the instructor may at his discretion require that the assignment or examination be rewritten, and may assign a grade one letter grade lower than it otherwise would have been.
3. In the case of a second instance of dishonesty in a course, a student will be dropped from that course with a grade of F and placed on disciplinary probation.
4. Successive acts of dishonesty may result in expulsion from the College, subject to standard procedures of the Student Development Office.
5. A Student who knowingly assists another student in dishonest behavior is equally guilty and subject to the same degrees of sanctions.

--Adapted by CFM faculty from the Wheaton College faculty handbook (section 3.1.16)

This course syllabus may be modified, as announced in regularly scheduled classes.

M.A. in Christian Formation and Ministry

The Christian Formation and Ministry department seeks to develop academically grounded, spiritually whole, and practically skilled ministers of the Gospel who are prepared to build up the Church in a changing world.

M.A. objectives highlighted in CFM 515 Nature and Development of Persons are bold faced. CFM 515 objectives are bold faced and bulleted.

Therefore we diligently seek to develop wise and compassionate servants of Christ who are

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| <p><i>Academically grounded</i> in that they..</p> <p>A 1. Possess a strong biblical/theological basis for formation and ministry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • articulate a biblical perspective of the nature of humanity <p>A 2. Understand and appreciate the historical and philosophical antecedents of Christian formation and ministry.</p> <p>A 3. Can recognize, evaluate, and attend to the diverse cultural, social, psychological, and spiritual contexts of formation and ministry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss issues related to human diversity making use of an interview with a person from an ethnic minority or impoverished background <p>A 4. Develop a critical understanding of the educational and spiritual processes by which people grow in personal and corporate settings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze and apply developmental theories and understandings to present or future ministry <p><i>A Strong Philosophy of Ministry</i></p> | <p><i>Spiritually whole</i> in that they are...</p> <p>B 1. Committed to an ongoing life of discipleship and spiritual growth as the foundation of effective ministry.</p> <p>B 2. Committed both personally and corporately to work for God's global Kingdom purposes though the universal and local Church.</p> <p>B 3. Developing an awareness of their gifts, passions, and calling in ministry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess one's own spiritual development making use of a schematic supplied in class <p><i>A Deep Love for God and others</i></p> | <p><i>Practically skilled</i> in that they...</p> <p>C 1. Teach effectively and handle Scripture wisely with an eye to integrate theory into creative practice.</p> <p>C 2. Propose compassionate ministry approaches that promote a thoughtful concern for the interior life and help bear burdens with the wounded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer a distinctively compassionate approach to ministry <p>C 3. Communicate well orally and in writing in culturally diverse settings.</p> <p>C 4. Promote strong interpersonal relationships in ministry teams.</p> <p>C 5. Research humbly and consistently.</p> <p><i>A Growing Capacity to Facilitate Spiritual Transformation</i></p> |
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Recognizing that every student has been uniquely gifted by God and brings past experience which informs his or her worldview, we as a department seek to further equip them for service in God's Kingdom.