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## CD 663 Older Adult Ministry

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**\*\*\* The content of this syllabus is subject to change prior to the first day of class. There will be a change in the required texts, and a field trip will possibly be added to the schedule.**

## **Older Adult Ministry**

### CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

Explores the many facets of ministry with and to older adults. Consideration will be given to critical issues such as the myths and nature of aging, developmental needs and tasks, theological perspectives, the spiritual needs of older adults, and care giving. The practical dimensions and models of ministry design and implementation will also be identified.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

When you have completed this course, you should be able to:

1. Describe the population trends and related congregational needs regarding older adult ministry.
2. Understand and articulate the relationship between church ministry and theories of adult development and aging.
3. Identify the theological, psychological, spiritual, and physiological dimensions and issues integral to older adult ministry.
4. Implement a vision and strategy for congregational ministry **with** and **to** older adults.

### PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

In order for something to be called education, it must be truly educative. Transmitting bodies of information and rules or values collected in the past does not equal education. Education involves movement beyond limitations, and frees people to live life more fully as God intended. Education involves people in co-

explorer relationships, problem solving, and personal ownership in the learning experience.

The learning experience in this class will be based on a philosophy of education that calls for participatory, interactive, reflective, bilateral, and dialogical learning activities. For example, you will be asked to reflect on, and openly discuss, your personal experiences and understandings related to various topics. You may also be required to participate in reflective learning games or simulation projects in order to promote co-explorer relationships, problem solving, and personal ownership. Your presence, openness to growth, and enthusiastic participation in all class activities will determine the value of your learning experience.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Active participation** in the class (10%):  
Faithful attendance – your presence in every class is expected and excused absences should be cleared through your professor.  
Reflecting on assigned texts – you must demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the assigned readings in preparation for class discussions  
Contributing to class – your willingness to actively participate in class discussions and activities is a crucial part of the course learning experience  
Completing special assignments – at times you will be asked to reflect on specific questions or briefly interview others in preparation for the next class session. These mini assignments are a required aspect of class participation.
2. **Empirical Research Projects** (20%)  
  
**Congregational Assessment Research Project**  
You will assess various aspects of older adult ministry in a congregation of your choice. The criteria for this assessment is located in the appendix of Older Adult Ministry by Richard Gentzler, a required text.  
  
**Life Review Interview Project**  
You will be required to conduct a life-review interview with a churched older adult, age 65 plus. The specific criteria for this project will be provided by the instructor.
3. **Reading Reflection Papers** Reading reflection papers will

be assigned for each of the required texts. The reading reflection will include two to four specific questions provided by the professor and will involve some in-class group discussion and comparison. See class schedule for specific due-dates (Total 30 %)

4. **Major Paper** (15 pages) in which you will explore an aspect of older adult ministry. The topic must connect with the focus of the class and be approved by the instructor. In this paper you will examine an issue, need, or any other aspect of older adult ministry through review of scholarly literature and empirical study (empirical research is not required, however papers based on empirical research must include some significant dialogue with scholarly sources. Along with a discussion of the issue, implications for church ministry must be identified and a description of a corresponding vision. This paper must also demonstrate significant integration of research sources (at least five) other than the required texts. The first draft of this paper is **DUE: (Week 6)** The final draft is **DUE: (Finals Week)** (40%)

#### REQUIRED TEXTS

The Force of Character and the Lasting Life by James Hillman (202 pages)

Aging: God's challenge to church and synagogue by Richard H. Gentzler, Jr., and Donald F. Clingan. (153 pages)

Designing Older Adult Ministry by Richard H. Gentzler (96 pages)

Senior Adult Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Step-by-Step Strategies for Reaching People Over Fifty by David P. Gallagher (147 pages)

Loses in Later Life: a new way of walking with God, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition by R. Scott Sullender ( 186 pages)

Aging: The fulfillment of Life by Henri J. M. Nouwen (160 pages)

Aging, Spirituality, and Religion, a handbook by editors Melvin A. Kimble and Susan H. McFadden On Reserve in Library (200 pages of reading required)

\*Several journal articles are also required reading on reserve in library. (70 plus pages)

## GRADING POLICY

### Papers

All papers must be typed, double-spaced, 1" margin all around, using a 12-point font, such as Times New Roman. Papers must adhere to MLS format according to Slade [available in the ATS bookstore and in the library].

Papers will be returned within one week of submission. Substantial feedback will be provided on all papers except reading reflections and mini assignments. Papers are expected to be submitted on their due date. Late papers must be approved by the instructor and may **not** be returned within one week and/or may **not** include feedback from the instructor. Late paper grade deductions will be made at the professor's discretion. If you need to negotiate an alternate due date, please see your professor **BEFORE** the assignment is due.

### Timely and Substantive Feedback

Responses to your written work will be provided according to the ATS faculty guidelines:

By "timely," ATS means: For assessments of student work during the course of the academic term, the expectation of "timely" feedback is met when students have their work marked, graded, and returned within one week of its submission; in the case of classes enrolling more than 40 students, two weeks.

With regard to "substantive," ATS means: For assessments of student work during the course of the academic term, the expectation of "substantive" feedback is met when students receive responses that alert them to what they have done well and how they might improve their performance in subsequent work.

### Incomplete Policy

A grade of "I" denotes course work has not been completed due to an **unavoidable** emergency, which does not include failure to turn in course work or attending to church work or other employment. See the Asbury Seminary Catalog for further clarification.

## GRADING CRITERIA

Professor's Assessment of Your Attendance & Participation 10%

Two Short Empirical Research Projects 10% each (total 20%)

### Reading Reflection Papers (30 %)

Reading Reflection papers will include a response to questions provided by the instructor. The purpose of these reflections papers is to help focus your reading and encourage related critical reflection. Reflection papers will demonstrate meaningful comprehension and engagement of texts. Due dates listed in Class Schedule

### Major Paper 40 % total

Your grade will be determined according to the following criteria: organization, including appropriate form and style; thorough and insightful description of the ministry issue and context; analysis of scholarly resources; identification of implications for church ministry; clear articulation of vision (strategy, goals, philosophy, methods, and specific activities); and integration of course concepts, ideas, issues, and theories.

## GRADING PROCEDURES

The grade descriptions written in italics have been determined by the faculty at Asbury Theological Seminary and provide the guidelines for grading. The explanations that follow clarify the meaning of each grade designation.

*A (5) = Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives*

Exceptional work is constituted by such things as: substantive reflection that reveals engagement of the “big ideas” of Scripture/theology or the “big ideas” represented in the existing body of knowledge from the social sciences in a particular area of study and represented via assigned texts and presentations; thorough and penetrating personal insight gained from consideration of one’s experience through the lifespan thus far; creativity in translating assignments into useful pedagogical presentations; and excellence in grammatical, stylistic, and communicative aspects of writing.

*B (4) = Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives*

Good work is constituted by: solid reflection on the assigned readings and presentations in response to the given guidelines for a particular assignment; the capacity to utilize classroom discussions and readings to understand and critically engage one's own story; accurate ability to name specific ministry implications from one's processing of information; and carefulness in grammatical, stylistic, and communicative aspects of writing.

*C (3) = Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives*

Acceptable work is constituted by: obvious acquaintance with the assigned readings and classroom discussions at a level that allows for theological and pedagogical thought in response to the guidelines for a particular assignments; references to one's own story at a level that makes application of truth and would interest a congregational member in the insights being expounded; capacity to communicate grammatically and stylistically without detracting from the presentation.

*D (2) = Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives*

Cursory reading of the texts that fail to represent the author's intent; a flat restatement of the author's work void of any personal appropriation of the material; grammatical or stylistic errors that frustrate the reader and detract from the thought of the paper; or other failures to fulfill reasonable expectations flowing from a seminary course of this nature.

*F (1) = Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives*

Unacceptable work is usually willful, unexplained, or inexcusable lack of fulfillment of class assignments.

\*\*\*\* Think about the possibility of teaching this class via case study method. Have students write case studies from interviews, and use case studies in Aging, Spirituality, and Religion by Kimbel.\*\*\*\*\*

## CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1      *Introduction*  
*Seniors: the re-emerging generation*

Week 2      *The Pathology of Aging: myth or monster*  
**Read:** "The Aging: Myths, Needs, Ministry" by Dorothy Gish in The Asbury Seminarian on reserve in the Library.

**Begin Reading:** The Force of Character and the Lasting Life

Week 3

*Aging and the Stages of Adulthood*

**DUE:** Reading Reflection #1 – The Force of Character

Week 4

*Spiritual Needs of Older Adults*

**DUE:** Reading Reflection #2 – Aging: God's challenge to church and synagogue.

**Read:** "Spirituality and Aging: Challenges on the Frontier of Gerontology" by David O. Moberg in Southwestern Journal of Theology on reserve in the Library and "In Wait for My Life: Aging and Desert Spirituality" by W. Paul Jones in Quarterly Review on reserve in the Library.

**DUE:** Spiritual Life Review – Interview Project

Week 5

*Aging, Spirituality, and Life Review*

**DUE:** Reading Reflection #3 – Chapters 1,12,15,20,21, &25 in Aging, Spirituality, and Religion, on reserve in library.

**Read:** "Finishing the Story: Aging, Spirituality, and the Work of Culture" by Donald Heinz in Journal of Religious Gerontology on reserve in the Library, and "Spirituality and the Later Years" by Ben C. Johnson in Gerontology in Theological Education on reserve in the Library.

Week 6

*Older Adult Ministry: congregational evaluation*

**DUE:** Congregational Assessment Research Project

Week 7

*Reading Week – No Class*

Week 8

*Designing Ministry **with** Older Adults*

**DUE:** Reading Reflection #4 – Aging: God's challenge to the church and synagogue.

Week 9

*Designing Ministry **with** Older Adults*

**DUE:** Reading Reflection # 5 – Senior Adult Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Read:** "Ministry with the Elderly: Training Needs of Clergy" by James W. Ellor and Robert B. Coates in Journal of Religious Gerontology on reserve in the library.

Week 10

*Designing Ministry **to** Older Adults*

**DUE:** Reading Reflection #6 – Loses in Later Life

**Read:** “*Caring for Our Elders: A grieving daughter and a pastor offer advice*” by Katherine A. Miles and Al Miles in The Christian Ministry on reserve in the Library and “Elder Abuse: how to stop ignoring and start helping abused elderly.” By Andrew J. Weaver and Harold G. Koenig in The Christian Ministry on reserve in the Library.

Week 11 *Care Giving: dying & death, wishes & wills*

**DUE:** First Draft of Research Paper

Week 12 *Care Giving: health, finances, and community resources*

**DUE:** Reading Reflection #7 - Aging: the fulfillment of life

Week 13 *Designing Ministry: planning and evaluation*

**Read:** “Reaping the Rewards of Senior Ministry” by Howard G. Hendricks in Bibliotheca Sacra on reserve in the library and “The Church’s Ministry among the Aging” by Harold N. England in Reformed Review on reserve in the library.

Week 14 *Ministry Connections: the Congregation and Community*

**DUE:** Final Paper

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Asbury Theological Seminary, Spring 2005

**COURSE GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS**

**Name:**

ATS mail box #:

E-mail address:

1. What is your previous ministry experience?
2. What do you think this course is about?
3. Why are you at ATS?
4. What would you like to learn from this course?
5. What kinds of strengths or abilities do you bring to this course?
6. What are your learning biases (ex: Lectures are unspiritual) and how do you think you learn best?
7. What do you hope doesn't happen in this course?
8. Please write any additional comments that would help the instructor make the course most meaningful to you.

