

OLDER ADULT MINISTRIES

TPM & CED 638-01

Fall Semester 2012, Virginia Theological Seminary
Wednesdays, 3:35-5:15 pm and *Some* Fridays* 3:00-4:15 pm

Addison 109

3.0 credits (1.5 each for TPM and CED)

Faculty:

Ms. Dorothy Linthicum

dlinthicum@vts.edu

703-461-1888

Office: Bohlen 20

Dr. Joyce Ann Mercer

jmercerc@vts.edu

703-461-1720

Office: 203 Meade

Course Description: More than one in three Episcopalians is over the age of 65. This experiential course will combine a pastoral mentorship with a deeper understanding of the aging process and how it affects spirituality. Students will be paired with older adult mentors from the larger community to learn firsthand about the experience of aging and how relationships with God can be strengthened and deepened as people transition to the last season of their lives. In the classroom, students will explore spiritual, psychological, social, emotional and physical changes that come with aging. Increasing numbers of the elderly in congregations make this topic especially important in church ministry today.

***Students will NOT be in class MOST Fridays. Instead students will meet with mentors at another place and time.**

Course Objectives:

- Define and practice skills needed in working with elderly people in congregations
- Describe changes (physical, psychological, emotional) that impact a person's spirituality and use this knowledge toward deeper capacities of ministry with older adults.
- Engage in practical theological reflection on aging in its multiple dimensions, through journaling in relation to one's mentor relationship with an older person
- Design one element (a program, a sermon, etc.) in a larger ministry for the elderly that encompasses learning from the classroom and a mentor relationship, particularly focused on lifelong learning and pastoral care with older adults.

Texts:

Richard Gentzler, *Aging and Ministry in the 21st Century: An Inquiry Approach*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2008.

Saussy, Carol. *The Art of Growing Old: A Guide to Faithful Aging*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1998.

Scheib, Karen. *Challenging Invisibility: Practices of Care with Older Women*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004.

Shamy, Eileen. *A Guide to the Spiritual Dimension of Care for People with Alzheimer's Disease and Other Dementia: More Than Body, Brain, and Breath*. London: Jessica Kingsley, 2003.

Schedule of Work:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>Readings</u>	<u>Action Assignments</u>
Wed., 9/5	Why Study Ministry with Older Adults? Intro to Course and One Another		Pre-assignment (see below)
Friday, 9/7:	Who are Old People?	Gentzler, Chapter 1 Saussy, Introduction and Chapter 1 Pew Research Center, “The Rising Age Gap in Economic Well-Being”-Highlights & link to full report: http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/11/07/the-rising-age-gap-in-economic-well-being/ Read overview, pp. 1-7. Stanford Center on Longevity, “New Realities of an Older America” http://longevity.stanford.edu/files2/New%20Realities%20of%20an%20Older%20America_0.pdf Read Intro & Executive Summary, pp. 3-8.	Assignment I due (see below): Talk to an older person
Wed., 9/12:	Theology of Aging	Scheib, Chapters 1-3 Stephen Sapp, “Mortality and Respect: Aging in the Abrahamic Traditions” (MyVTS) Richard and Judith Hayes, “The Christian Practice of Growing Old: The Witness of Scripture”--Ch. 1 in <i>Growing Old in Christ</i> (on MyVTS)	
Friday, 9/14	Aging and Bodies	“The Normal Aging Process” http://wahsa.org/agingprocess.pdf “I’m Old,” Milton Crum http://www.vts.edu/ftpimages/95/download/Milton%20Crum%20I%20AM%20OLD%202011%5B4%5D_resources.pdf	
Wed. 9/19	Aging and Bodies, continued– Sexuality	Gentzler, Chapter 2 “Health and Aging” Shamy, Chapters 1-2	Simulation Assignment: “Think 65+”

Friday 9/21— Start with mentor			
Wed. 9/26	Processing the mentor visits Spirituality & Aging	Mary Moscella, “Spiritual Autobiography and Older Adults” (MyVTS) C. Bruce Davis, “Spirituality and Aging” in Thorson. (on MyVTS) Scheib, Chapter 4	
Friday 9/28— mentor			
October (No class Wed., 10/3) Fri. 10/5— class	Processing mentor visits Spirituality of Aging, continued	Tornstam, “Gero-transcendence: A Reformulation of the Disengagement Theory” (In MyVTS) Gentzler, Chapter 4, Saussy, Chapters 2-3	
Wed. 10/10	Grief, Loss, and Change	Gentzler, Chapters 5 & 6: Scheib, Chapters 5 & 6	
Fri. 10/12-- mentor			

Last class of quarter Wed., 10/17	Processing Mentor Visits Grief, Loss, and Change, continued Retirement	Gentzler, Chapter 3; Saussy, Chapters 4-5 Elledge-Volker, "Forever Young: Pastoral Care and the Experience of 'Aging,' Reconsidered"(MyVTS)	
No class Oct. 19, 24, 26, 29			
Wed., 10/31	Memory, Dementia, Alzheimer's	Shamy, Chapters 3, 5, 6 Saussy, Chapter 6	Turn in journals
Friday, 11/02 Mentors			
Wed., 11/07	Process Mentor meeting Caregiving Drug dependence	Revisit Gentzler, Chapter 5 Revisit Shieb, Chapter 6 Patterson, Thomas L. "The Potential Impact of the Baby-boom Generation on Substance Abuse Among Elderly Persons," <i>Psychiatric Services</i> , September 1999, vol. 50, No. 9. http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/data/Journals/PSS/3523/1184.pdf (Also at MyVTS) Rathbone-McCuan, Eloise, Dyer, Larry and Wartman, Judith. "Double Jeopardy: Chemical Dependence and Codependence in Older Women," in Van Den Bergh, Nan, ed. <i>Feminist Perspectives on Addictions</i> , 1991, pp. 101-113. MyVTS Robert H. Albers, "Pastoral Care of the Aged Afflicted with Addiction," in Kimble and McFadden (MyVTS)	
Friday 11/09 mentors			
Wed., 11/14	Processing Mentor Visits Economics of Aging Gender	Stanford and Usita, "Retirement: Who Is at Risk?" (MyVTS) Grimes, "Women of Color and Aging: Not the Golden Years" (MyVTS) Feder & Friedland, "Value of Social Security and Medicare to Families" (MyVTS) Reimers, "Women & Aging: Insights for Care from a Clinical Perspective" (MyVTS)	

Fri. 11/16-- mentor			
11/21 11/23 no class			
Wed. 11/28 Visit mentors at the Hermitage	Processing Mentor Visits Faith Formation Pastoral Care	Richard Johnson, "Shaping a New Vision of Faith Formation for Maturing Adults: Sixteen Fundamental Tasks" http://www.nyfaithformation.org/media/files%20-%20adult%20catechesis/john-roberto-handouts/workshop-1/Faith Formation Older Adult Johnson.pdf "Best Practices in Adult Faith Formation" http://www.faithformationlearningexchange.net/uploads/5/2/4/6/5246709/best practices in adult faith formation.pdf Scheib, Chapter 7 Lois D. Knutson, "Pastoral Care of Elders and Their Families" in Kimble McFadden (MyVTS)	
Friday, 11/30-- mentor			
Wed., 12/5	Processing Mentor Visits Congregation- al Contexts for Ministry with Older Adults	Schaller, "Don't Give Up on Them: Older Adults with Physical Limitations" (MyVTS) Koppel & Schaller, "Graceful Eldercare" (MyVTS) Is Your Church Older Adult Friendly? (MyVTS) Gentzler, Chapter 7	
Friday 12/7-- class	Worship and Preaching with Older Adults	Shamy, Chapter 4 William Carl chapter from Graying Gracefully: preaching to older adults	
Wed. 12/12 last class		Saussy, Chapter 7	From Saussy, "Waking up to new possibilities" (class activity)

Course Assignments:

- 1. Pre-assignment: [Due for first class meeting, 9/5]** Assess implicit attitudes—Harvard University’s Implicit Attitudes project measures implicit attitudes about a variety of things that people are either unwilling or unable to report. One of the measures is a “Young-Old” test. Please go online to <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/takeatest.html> and take the “young-old” test for some information about yourself.
- 2. Talk to an older adult [Due for 2nd class meeting, 9/7]:** In preparation for engaging both the course material and your older adult mentor, talk to an older adult, using the template provided in class. Take notes on your conversation and bring them to class with you.
- 3. Meet with & interview your older adult mentor 8 times as scheduled across the semester.**
- 4. Journal [Due Weekly, on the days we process visits with mentors]:** Keep a journal of your experience with your mentor. We expect you to write an entry in your journal in connection with each visit you have with your mentor. This journal entry should include the following:
 - a.** Describe the conversation you and your mentor shared, including your account of their responses to the “interview of the week”.
 - b.** Relate the conversation to course readings and class discussions: what helps you make sense of the theories and perspectives on aging that we have worked with in class and in conversation with texts? What in your mentor’s experience contradicts or modifies these ideas?
 - c.** Reflect/make sense of the meaning of your mentor’s life experience
- 5. Final Assignment:** Your choice of one of the following ministry activities:
 1. Design a program to address the needs of older parishioners at a church. Using the descriptions from the National Council on Aging, identify the subgroup the program will target. If you design a program that encompasses all three subgroups, provide a rationale for doing so. The program can be a one-day workshop; a Sunday morning offering; a limited series, such as a seasonal program; a weekend retreat; or another configuration that meets the needs of a church.
Include in your project, which should be 7 to 10 pages:
 - A description of the target audience
 - A brief discussion about the developmental issues this age group may be facing
 - Participant-based goals for the program
 - A descriptive outline of the program, including content, leadership, location, time of offering
 2. Write a sermon...
 3. Conduct a pastoral care visit...

Bibliography:

- Simmons, Henry C. and Peters, Mark A. (1996). *With God's Oldest Friends: Pastoral Visiting in the Nursing Home*. Mahway, NJ: Paulist Press. [A practical guide to nursing home visitation as pastoral care, with lots of helpful hints about what to do in specific situations, e.g., when you arrive and the person is asleep; bringing sacraments to a nursing home, visiting on Alzheimer's units, etc.]
- Carl, William J., Jr. (1997). *Graying Gracefully: Preaching to Older Adults*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press. [A collection of essays concerning different aspects of preaching to older adults, followed by a sermon from each essay writer.]
- Johnson, R. P., "Shaping a New Vision of Faith Formation for Maturing Adults: Sixteen Fundamental Tasks," *Lifelong Faith*, Spring 2007, Vol. 1.1, pp. 39-44.
http://www.nyfaithformation.org/media/files%20-%20adult%20catechesis/john-roberto-handouts/workshop-1/Faith_Formation_Older_Adult_Johnson.pdf
- Roberto, J. and Minkiewicz, C. "Best Practices in Adult Faith Formation," *Lifelong Faith*, Fall/Winter 2007, Vol. 1.3, 2007, 1-12.
http://www.faithformationlearningexchange.net/uploads/5/2/4/6/5246709/best_practices_in_adult_faith_formation.pdf
- Crum, Milton. *I'm Old*. Self-published monograph, 2011.
- Tornstam, Lars. "Gero-transcendence: A reformulation of the disengagement theory," *Aging Vol*, 1, No. 1, 55-63, 1989.
- Hays, R. and Hays, J. "The Christian Practice of Growing Old: The Witness of Scripture," in *Growing Old in Christ*, Hauerwas, S. Stoneking, C. B., et al, ed. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003, 3-18.
- Fry, R. Cohn, D, et al. "The Rising Age Gap in Economic Well-Being," Pew Research Center, Social and Demographic Trends, 2011, 1-24.
<http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2011/11/WealthReportFINAL.pdf>
- Davis, C. B. "Spirituality and Aging," in Thorson, J. A., ed. *Perspectives on Spiritual Well-Being and Aging*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, Ltd. 2000, 45-53.
- Hayutin, A. Dietz, M., and Mitchell, L. "New Realities of an Older America," Stanford Center on Longevity, 2010.
http://longevity.stanford.edu/files2/New%20Realities%20of%20an%20Older%20America_0.pdf