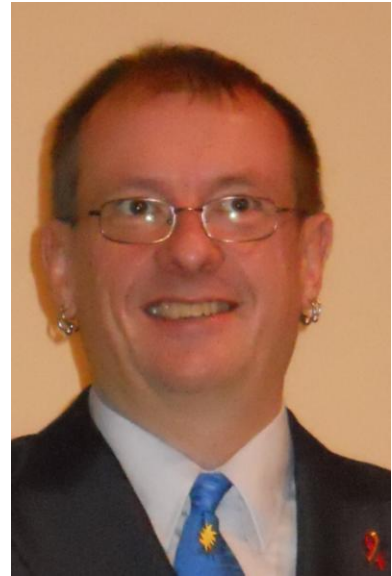


Adult Faith Development

Course Facilitator

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I am a Unitarian Universalist minister in preliminary fellowship and Professor of Humanities and Comparative Religion for Harry S Truman College (City Colleges of Chicago). I have lead adult spiritual exploration groups and taught adult faith development most of my adult life. I have also served in a UU congregation developing and implementing adult faith development programming, both as a volunteer and as staff: Parish Minister, Adult Faith Development Program Coordinator, Faith Development Council, and Minister of Religious Education. I also have about 30 graduate hours in spirituality coursework.

Availability: I normally check the course once a day Monday through Friday, usually in the evening (Central Time). Saturdays, I log in once, but times vary depending upon my schedule. On Sundays, I try to keep a Sabbath from course work.

Course description

The Adult Faith Development course explores the theory and practice of young adult and adult faith formation. It emphasizes Fowler’s stages of faith development, Gilligan’s stages of faith development, Gardner’s multiple intelligences, Krathwohl’s Taxonomy of the Affective Domain, Groome’s shared praxis, Moran’s adult religious education, and Unitarian Universalist Process Theology. It will distinguish between spiritual development and religious education. It will survey select, exemplary faith development programs to explore their best practices. Participants will experiment with the programs, and will reflect on their learning experiences. The program will tentatively conclude with participants developing unique adult faith development programming that they could implement in their congregations.

Student Learning Outcomes

Course participants will...

1. elect, transfer, and use data and principles of adult faith development in application to AFD programs;
2. distinguish, classify, and relate the assumptions, hypotheses, evidence, or structure of various adult faith development theories and their practical application;
3. originate, integrate, and combine their ideas from this course in creating a new young adult or adult faith development program;

4. appraise, assess, or critique the UUA *Spirit of Life* and *Spirit in Practice* curricula, based on normative standards and criteria for adult faith development;
5. create their own statement of adult faith development;
6. create their own statement on the intersection of Adult Faith Development with liberal theology and social justice

Readings

- Eckhart Tolle. *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose*. New York: Plume/Putnam, 2006. 978-0-452-28996-3 (yes, it was on the Opera book club in 2008: it shows the widespread spiritual struggles that adults face)
- Barbara Hamilton-Holway. *Spirit of Life: Exploring Spirituality for Unitarian Universalists* (<http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/spiritlife/index.shtml>)
- Reggie McNeal. *Practicing Greatness: 7 Disciplines of Extraordinary Spiritual Leaders*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2006. 0-7879-7753-5. (REs/MREs need to develop their own spiritual practice and leadership identity, if they are to be effective spiritual and religious leaders)
- Steven Glazer, ed. *The Heart of Learning: Spirituality in Education*. New York: Tharcher/Putnam, 1999. (covers faith formation from a variety of religious traditions for adults)
- Sharon Daloz Parks. *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000. (this best-seller addresses the neglected spiritual needs of young adults)
- Thomas Groome. "Shared Praxis in Praxis." *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980. 207-232. (PDF excerpt; provides the theory for effective faith development program that addresses Krathwohl's Affective Domain)
- Betty Joe Middleton. *First Steps: Planning for Adult Religious Education*. Washington, DC: Greater Washington Association Religious Education Council, 1994. UUA Bookstore. 978-0-9795056-0-7 [OUT OF PRINT?] (the groundwork for adult faith development programming, and is very short)
- Thomas P. Williamsen. *Attending Parishioners' Spiritual Growth*. [n.p.]: Alban, 1997. 1-56699-179-x. (Christian focus, with lots of implementation examples of different spiritual practices)

One of the following two:

- Erik Walker Wikstrom. *Spirit in Practice: Ten Workshops for Unitarian Universalist Adults* (<http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/spiritpractice/index.shtml>) (for UU students)
- Dorothy C. Bass. *Practicing our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997. 0-7879-3883-1. (ecumenical Christian focus, explaining how to adapt spiritual practices to a congregation)

Resource

Scott W. Alexander. *Everyday Spiritual Practice: Simple Pathways for Enriching Your Life*. Boston: Skinner, 1999. 1-55896-375-8. (Unitarian Universalist focus)

Student Expectations

For the period of the course, participants will covenant to participate in the course. This includes setting aside 1/4 hour *daily* five days per week for personal spiritual practice, in addition to the usually academic expectations of an online seminary course.

Students will be required to have a field placement in a local congregation with a adult faith development program. They will participate in Sunday worship (part of adult faith formation) and one series of adult faith development/religious education programming series. They will negotiate their in-class role with the Parish Minister, Director of Religious Education, and the program facilitator. Ideally, participant will not remain in their home congregation for this course requirement, but this may not be possible given the geographic diversity of participants.

Participants will participate in weekly interactive discussions.

Participants will write several personal 2-page reflective memos throughout the course that they will share with the facilitator: an interview with an MRE or religious educator on Adult Faith Development, a statement of personal philosophy on Adult Faith Development, a statement on the intersection of Adult Faith Development with liberal theology and social justice, and a reflection paper on their field education experience.

Participants will design a new adult faith development program for implementation at their congregation. The topic will reflect the student's interest. The program will focus on a (w)holistic mind-body-spirit approach to adult faith formation. Students will be encouraged to think outside the UU box. Options can include kinesthetic experiences, artistic or musical or literary creativity (or performance), reflective musings, experimental communing with nature, issues of sexuality and spirituality, etc.

Schedule

1. Introductions. Your religious/spiritual journey. Your religious/spiritual questions. Your spiritual practice. Field Experience. Hamilton-Holloway, workshop 1
2. Ontology of AFD: the human condition. Tolle, chapters 1-5. Hamilton-Holloway, workshop 2.
3. Popular spirituality. Tolle, chapters 6-10. Hamilton-Holloway, workshop 3.
4. Teaching and learning spirituality 1. Glazer, parts I-II. Hamilton-Holloway, workshop 4.
5. Teaching and learning spirituality 2. Glazer, parts III-IV. Hamilton-Holloway, workshop 5.
6. Young adults 1. Parks, chapters 1-6. Hamilton-Holloway, workshop 6.
7. Young adults 2. Parks, chapters 7-10. Hamilton-Holloway, workshop 7.

Reading week

8. Congregational spiritual needs. Williamsen. Hamilton-Holloway, workshop 8.

9. Your spiritual leadership style 1. McNeal, chapters 1-4. Hamilton-Holloway, workshop 9.
10. Your spiritual leadership style 2. McNeal, chapters 5-7, conclusion.
11. Structuring an AFD program, Groome (PDF excerpt), Middleton.
12. Sampling AFD curricula. Wickstrom (for UU students) or Bass (for Christian students). Buddhist and Jewish students, we'll work out an alternative before the reading week.
13. Field Education Peer Review
14. Course Project Peer Review

Starr King's Eight Threshold Areas

This course focuses on the intersection between “Spiritual Practice and the Care of the Soul” and “Educating for Wholeness and Liberation.” Participants will engage in their own spiritual exploration and practice, with an eye for facilitating soul work with their congregants. They will focus on best practices of adult faith development (as opposed to religious education) to guide their congregants through their spiritual journeys.

Starr King's commitment to Educating to Counter Oppressions and Create Just and Sustainable Communities.

The course will include spiritual materials from the religions of the world, as they are practiced in the United States today. It will include Christian, Jewish, Buddhist and Religious Naturalist traditions as well as popular American spiritual explorations. The goal will be to learn about the spectrum of contemporary spiritual practices and how they affect people's lives. It will specifically include the practices of Women, African-Americans, BGLTs, and White middle class.

Historically marginalized social locations

The course will include the spiritual quests of historically marginalized groups. Within the Unitarian Universalist movement, this includes women's spirituality and traditional religious spiritual practices. The course includes a breadth of learning styles and intelligences that reflect the diverse characteristics of Unitarian Universalist congregants. It includes the spiritual expression in social justice work. It will invite all students to share their spiritual histories and life experiences.

Level of graduate work

The course will be intermediate in nature. Ideally, students will have completed a UU or other denominational Introduction to Religious Education course. This course will quickly review basic principles, and build upon them with a focus on the adult spiritual journey through life.