

Multigenerational Ministries and Religious Education

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According to the "Western," European calendar, we are in the first decade of the 21st century. Other cultures and communities have different ways of measuring time, depending on the starting point, but most individuals agree that the life of an individual can be described in terms of a journey. In faith communities, people ranging in chronological age from a few days old to living in the 9th or 10th decade form a religious organization in which all stages of life are included. In this class, we will explore ways in which to make a full range of worship and educational experiences available, as well as structures and processes that add value to multigenerational experiences. References and examples of working to counter oppressions systemically are foundational to this course.

Students will have the opportunity to:

- explore the theological bases for multigenerational ministries
- describe generational cultures in relation to multigenerational programs and events
- include psychological, social, spiritual, cognitive, and moral changes that occur in a life journey, and their implications for multigenerational ministries
- explore congregational cultures in relation to planning and presenting multigenerational programs and ministries
- develop ways of assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of multigenerational programs and ministries

Student expectations

With the goal of creating a learning community, students will share biographical information and learning goals they create for themselves. They are required to log in periodically throughout the week to post assignments, review materials posted by other students, and participate actively in an ongoing discussion of course materials. If they wish to do so, students can contact the instructor to get approval for questions they design, rather than using questions posted by the instructor. Students are required to engage with the course materials, the instructor and each other.

Course materials will include opportunities for engagement with issues of fairness, equity and justice in areas where people experience oppression in this culture, to prepare students for work to create just communities to counter oppression.

Students have options for their final projects. They can write and post final papers consisting of case studies describing multigenerational approaches and programs, or use artistic media such as photography, calligraphy, collage, music, lyrics, or any other medium that lends itself to digital posting, to illustrate a multigenerational event or program.

All student work should be original. When the work of others is cited or quoted, information about source materials should be included, using a standard format for citation.

Book list

Please note that all titles are available through the Unitarian Universalist Association bookstore, www.amazon.com, or other on-line booksellers such as Powells, Borders, and Barnes & Noble.

**Students should select EITHER Paul Kivel's *Uprooting Racism* OR Beverly Tatum's *Can We Talk About Race?*

Farber-Robertson, Anita (2000). *Learning While Leading: Increasing Your Effectiveness in Ministry*. Washington, DC: Alban Institute.

Hurd, Tracey L. (2005). *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guide*. Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association.

**Kivel, Paul (1996). *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.

Mosaic Project Report (2009). URL where you can download the report is <http://www.uua.org/aboutus/professionalstaff/identity-basedministries/racialand/mosaicproject/index.shtml>.

Patton, John (2005). *Pastoral Care: An Essential Guide*. Nashville: Abingdon.

Rendle, Gil. (2002). *The Multigenerational Congregation: Meeting the Leadership Challenge*. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute

Richards, Michelle. (2008). *Come Into the Circle: Worshipping With Children*. Boston, MA: Skinner House Books.

Tapestry of Faith Curricula and Resources, Available on-line:

<http://www.uua.org/religiouseducation/curricula/tapestryfaith/index.shtml>

**Tatum, Beverly Daniel (2007). *Can We Talk About Race? And Other Conversations in an Era of School Resegregation*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Vanderwell, Howard, (Ed). (2008). *The Church of All Ages: Generations Worshiping Together*. Herndon, VA: Alban Institute.

White, James W. (1988). *Intergenerational Religious Education*.

Youth Ministry Working Group Report (2009). URL from which to download the report is

<http://www.uua.org/members/youth/youthministries/index.shtml>.

Weekly topics and assignments

Week 1 - Becoming a learning community

Farber-Robertson, Chapters 1 - 3

White, Chapters 1 - 3, 12

Students will begin to create a learning community by posting short bios and digital photos of themselves, and share their learning goals for this course. They will discuss how espoused theories compare with theories in use in relation to multigenerational ministries

Week 2 -- The theological bases for multigenerational ministries

Farber-Robertson, Chapters 4 - 5

Vanderwell, Chapters 1 - 4

White, Chapter 8

Students this week will describe the theological bases for multigenerational ministries, and illustrate these perspectives using artistic and written work. They will examine ways of assessing congregational readiness for change in relation to multigenerational ministries, as well as coaching for change.

Week 3 - What is my theology of multigenerational ministries?

Students will post a 2 - 3 page paper on their theologies of multigenerational ministries, and reflect on the postings of other students.

Week 4 -- Who are we as a congregation?

Farber-Robertson, Chapters 6 - 8

Hurd - All

Students will discuss how to help a congregation consider itself as a multigenerational community. They will also explore psychological, social, spiritual, cognitive, and moral stages of development in children and youth

Week 5 - How do we want to engage in multigenerational ministries?

Kivel, Parts I & II, OR Tatum, Chapters 1 - 2

Vanderwell, Chapter 5

Students will explore espoused theories and theories in use around the issue of race in multigenerational ministries, including transracial families in congregations with little racial diversity. They will consider "signs and portents" that a congregation is ready to embrace multigenerational ministries.

Week 6 - Designing multigenerational ministries

Tapestry of Faith - on-line

Kivel, Parts III & IV, OR Tatum, Chapters 3 - 4

Students will examine at least two curricula from *Tapestry of Faith*, and explore ways of using these resources in multigenerational ministries. They will discuss how insights from Kivel's or Tatum's work could inform their use of particular curricula.

Week 7 - Finding resources

Richards, All

Vanderwell, Chapters 6 - 8

Students will discuss how to plan and deliver multigenerational worship that acknowledges the psychological, social, spiritual, cognitive, and moral stages of development of everyone in the worshipping community.

Reading week

Students may wish to catch up on reading and assignments, or work on their final papers/projects.

Week 8

Kivel, Part V, OR Tatum, Afterword

Students will explore the ways in which their faith communities or nonprofit organizations are actively addressing issues of fairness, equity and justice in multigenerational activities, including links to public institutions.

Week 9

Kivel, Part VI, OR a web-based resource on working with children and youth on a local initiative in your community

Students will conduct an assessment of a particular organization or faith community to explore messages of how multigenerational ministries and focus can address issues of fairness, equity and justice.

Week 10

Patton, Chapters 1 - 3

Students will explore pastoral presence and guidance in multigenerational settings. They will develop multigenerational resources that relate to their

theological perspectives on pastoral care, and post these resources for discussion and dialogue.

Week 11

Patton, Chapters 4 - 6

Students will explore multigenerational pastoral care in relation to loss, grief, illness, and abuse. They will develop and post resources that address these issues in multigenerational multicultural settings.

Week 12

Patton, Chapters 7 & 8, plus "A Final Reflection"

Students will discuss pastoral care and counseling in family settings, and develop resources (texts, web sites, community-based organizations) that offer contextual grounding for multigenerational pastoral care.

Week 13

Students will post drafts of their final projects, and read/comment on drafts of other final projects. They will use these drafts as the basis for dialogue and discussion in their organizations or faith communities about how multigenerational work relates to readiness for change.

Week 14

Students will post final projects, and read/comment on drafts of other final projects.