

HJ International Graduate School for Peace and Public Leadership

Doctor of Ministry

MIN 8502: Religious Education and Ministry

Needs of the Postmodern Family

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Office hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 10am -4pm

Term: Spring 2026

Credit: 3

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Most ministries and faith communities today are composed of diverse families, made up of individuals of different ages, needs, and family configurations, all situated within complex social contexts. This diversity raises important considerations for ministry, particularly how family members learn individually and collectively across generational, developmental, and personal differences, and how family structure shapes learning dynamics. Religious Education offers valuable tools for addressing these realities. Since many faith communities understand themselves as “family,” this field provides critical insight into nurturing spiritual growth. This course explores cognitive and affective learning, intergenerational formation, and the influence of culture, ethnicity, gender, and educational technology, offering practical approaches for effective ministry in a postmodern context where traditional religious beliefs and practices are increasingly questioned.

II. COURSE OUTCOMES:

1. Students will develop a multifaceted understanding of how we learn as individuals and in families and communities.
2. Students will be able to integrate their understanding of spiritual formation and religious education in defining programs that address the faith needs of the family/congregational context.
3. Students will be equipped with the skills needed to assess the religious education needs and resources for individuals, diverse groups and families in the church or faith community.
4. Students will be equipped with the skills to design basic religious education programs that support the development of healthier functioning individuals, families, and congregations/ communities.

Course Rubric

Course Outcomes	Progressing (1)	Fair (2)	Good (3)	Excellent (4)	Score
Develop a multifaceted understanding of how we learn as individuals and in families and communities.	Demonstrates a basic understanding of learning concepts	Is able to discuss several aspects of the learning process and theories and can offer deeper reflection as to how they work together	Is able to discuss multiple learning theories, including neuroeducation and the interplay of individuals, families and congregation in the religious learning and faith development process	Discusses and reflects on in depth the congregation as a community of practice in which individuals and families impact each other's learning and faith development and can make use of these theories	
To integrate their understanding of spiritual formation and religious education in defining programs that address the faith needs of the congregational context.	Can discuss the basics of spiritual formation and religious education	Demonstrates an understanding of characteristics of effective faith formation programs for congregational development	Is able to assess the faith needs of one's congregation and recognize basic education programs that would be effective for congregational faith development	Is able to formulate a coherent spiritual formation and religious education viewpoint and implement that viewpoint in defining programs	

				that will address the faith needs of one's congregation	
Be equipped with the skills needed to assess the religious education needs and resources for individuals, diverse groups and families in the church or faith community.	Is able to discuss a congregation's religious education situation from a broad perspective	Demonstrates an understanding of one or two theories to assess the religious education needs of any congregation	Is able to apply assessment theories and perspectives to one's own congregation.	Is able to fully assess the religious educational needs of one's congregation corporately and individually from multiple theories and perspectives and use the information to define effective programs	
Be equipped with the skills to design basic religious education programs that support the development of healthier functioning individuals, families and congregations/communities.	Recognizes the need for new and/or revised religious education programs in one's congregation	Is able to develop 1 helpful program that supports one's congregation's development	Is able to develop a few programs based on one's assessment of what is needed for healthy growth	Can assess and develop a well-rounded religious education program that supports a healthy congregation	

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

The course is taught as a flipped classroom on canvas. Students are expected to log in regularly on canvas each week. Even Though assignment can be completed according to each student's schedule, it is important to be present throughout the course week. It is not acceptable to do everything in one session and ignore the course for the rest of the week (missing the chance to interact with others and potentially missing important communications). Students must have access to the Internet, a (real) computer, and Microsoft Word iPads and similar devices allow you to perform many, but not all, of the required activities. Students must have the proper hardware/software (video camera, microphone, etc.) to participate in synchronous and asynchronous learning sessions and to record presentations. Be advised that assignments submitted after the deadline will incur a reduction in points.

Weekly Assignments

Students will be required to read all the 4 textbooks. In addition, students should write a two-to-three-page substantive review of the 4 textbooks and email them to d.kone@hji.edu by week 8 latest. The review should share new insights derived from the text. Also, provide a critical analysis of the point(s) of concern within each text. Expound on your reasoning. Students are expected to integrate learning within the context of their ministry. Summarize in just a paragraph or two at the most, the key themes covered in the text. For the rest of the document, discuss what you liked, did not agree with, what was particularly helpful and what was missing. The purpose of this exercise is to learn to be concise, and to encourage self-reflective thinking a key point of the D.Min. program and ministry. Each paper should be approximately 1000-1500 words. Follow Chicago formatting with a cover page and footnotes, if needed.

Follow the “Guidelines for Writing a Critical Book Review,”

https://d3pi8hptl0qhh4.cloudfront.net/documents/dmin/Book_Review_Guide.pdf

Student Presentations - Student presentations will be assigned to each student each week; topics and dates to be announced in advance. The presentation should be in PowerPoint form for 5-10 min followed by discussion.

Discussion & Participation - Doctoral students should actively participate in the 15 classes -- engage, listen, share ideas, ask questions, challenge themselves as well as each other in class. In addition, students should take advantage of the online Discussions feature on canvas. This is an opportunity to engage, converse and support your cohorts in open dialogue.

Final Project Presentation - Students will give a presentation (PowerPoint, 20-30 min) in which they analyze their faith community, target congregation's current religious educational efforts toward helping nurture the individuals and families within their ministry/congregation in terms of their faith. The presentation should include a discussion of the current religious educational

efforts with an analysis of the effectiveness of these efforts, incorporate what they feel individuals and families need because of living in the world of today and what changes they anticipate in the coming few years, and an analysis of what efforts need to change or what new programs need to be developed if they are to support their learners more effectively. Students should incorporate their SWOT analysis and conclusions from their analysis, insights from their preliminary lists, integrate relevant content from course textbooks, class discussions and other readings into their analysis and paper. Afterwards, the presenter will lead cohorts in an effective discussion.

IV. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:

Each student's work is expected to be a product of his or her own effort. Plagiarism is a form of dishonesty that occurs when a student passes off someone else's work as their own. Plagiarism in its most severe form occurs when a student purchases a paper from a third party or submits an entire body of work written by a third party, as the student's own. These most serious cases can be reported to the Office of the Provost for disciplinary action. Possible actions include probation, suspension, or dismissal/separation from HJI. Cutting and pasting material from various websites without citing the source of said material also constitutes plagiarism, as is a failure to cite sources in a paper, conveying the impression, intentionally or not, that another writer's work is the student's own. In these cases of plagiarism, the instructor may give the student an "F" for the offending assignment, require that the student repeat the assignment, or if the plagiarism continues, give the student an "F" for the course. A pattern of such behavior may be reported to the Office of the Provost. It can lead to serious consequences as listed above.

Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT in assignments is permitted only with prior permission of the instructor. If the instructor permits students to use AI for research, students should know that it may give false results, and its facts need to be checked and verified. Any passages generated by AI must be given proper citation, just as for citing other authors' works. In addition, students must append a paragraph at the end of their work explaining how and why they used ChatGPT, which includes what prompts were used and what measures were taken to verify its accuracy. Students may not use AI to produce the content for an assignment. If an AI tool is used without obtaining prior permission and/or without providing the required citation or explanation, it will be treated as plagiarism. Faculty reserve the right to use plagiarism detection software, such as Turnitin, to find instances of AI-generated writing, as well as plagiarism from other sources, in student assignments.

NETIQUETTE: When posting online or by email, you need to follow the same ethical standards and laws as you would in face-to-face communications. Your language should be respectful of faculty members and fellow students. Do not post private or confidential information about anyone, and do not provide personal information that could put yourself at risk. The Seminaries LMS has robust security measures to protect communication between teacher and student. Yet please be aware that anything that you post in discussions and groups in which other students

participate can be retrieved by others and copied. Do not download and share course materials without permission of the instructor, as this may violate copyright. HJI reserves the right to delete postings on HJI maintained sites that are considered insensitive, harassing, or illegal. Language that is illegal, obscene, defamatory, threatening, infringing of intellectual property rights, invasive of privacy, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing abusive, hateful, or embarrassing to any person or entity, or otherwise, is a violation of the Student Code.

V. GRADING

1. Book Review	20
2. Student Presentations	25
3. Discussion & Participation	20
4. Final Project Presentation	<u>35</u>
	100%

In computing the cumulative grade point average (G.P.A.) the following quality point scale is used:

A 4.00	A- 3.67	B+ 3.33
B 3.00	B- 2.67	C+ 2.33
C 2.00	C- 1.67	D+ 1.33
D 1.00	D- 0.67	F 0.00

Incompletes are given only when there are compelling medical or personal reasons.

*See college catalog for a detailed grading policy.

This scale severely penalizes Fs. Therefore, it is better to hand in a poorly done assignment than not to hand one in at all.

Grades for each assignment are recorded by letter, and are understood as follows:

Excellent (A)

Good (B)

Acceptable (C, D)

Failure (F)

Failure to hand in an assignment will result in an F for that assignment.

*See HJI catalog for a detailed grading policy.

VI. TEXTS

Required texts:

1. Bengtson, Vern I., Putney, Norella, Harris, Susan. (2013). *Families and Faith: How Religion is Passed Down Across Generations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN:

978-0190675158; \$19.95. (ebook option).

2. Foster, Charles. (2012). *From Generation to Generation: The Adaptive Challenge of Mainline Protestant Education in Forming Faith*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock. ISBN: 13:978-1620321959; \$14.73. ebook option
3. Seymour, Jack. (2014). *Teaching the Way of Jesus: Educating Christians for Faithful Living*. Nashville: Abingdon Press. ISBN: 978-1426765056; \$15.24. ebook option.
4. Tye, Karen. (2000). *Basics of Christian Education*. St. Louis: Chalice Press. ISBN-10:0827202296; \$12.49. ebook option.

VII. COURSE SCHEDULE

The Plan may change according to the progress of student learnings. Follow detailed instructions on Canvas.

Time/date is Eastern Standard Time, USA.

Week 1: Introduction: Overview of the syllabus

Lect. Defining the terms: Religious education, Post-Modern Family

Class discussion session Q/A

Week 2: History of religious education

Lecture. An Historical perspective

Readings: St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology: *Religious Education* by Friedrich Schweitzer ***p11-p10*** <https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/ReligiousEducation>

Student Presentation and discussion

What is the origin of your faith tradition and what are the major turning points? What major challenges your faith tradition is facing today? How religious Ed. could help address some of the challenges?

Week 3: Religious theories

Lecture. Theories of learning and religious education

Reading: St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology: *Religious Education* by Friedrich Schweitzer ***p11-p20*** <https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/ReligiousEducation>

Student Presentation and discussion

On what religious theory your faith is built upon on?

Expose the SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats) of the theory.

Week 4: Religious education in the family

Lecture: The Child's Religious Ideas

St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology: Religious Education by Friedrich Schweitzer p20-p24 <https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/ReligiousEducation>

Student Presentation and discussion

How you were educated religiously in your family.

How the concept of God, prayer and Heaven/Hell were first introduced to you?

How those concepts evolved over time? What factors contributed to the changes?

Week 5: Religious education in your community

Lecture. Diverse needs in a religious community

Reading: Inter Faith Issues and the Religious Education Curriculum: Educating our children for a multi faith society: reflections on the importance of educating for mutual respect and social harmony by The Baroness Uddin p.9-12 https://www.interfaith.org.uk/uploads/IFinRE_final.pdf

Student Presentation and discussion

Evaluate the types of religious educational activities and programs that are currently offered in your target community/congregation for the families and age groupings.

List the diverse programs that are available. For age specific programs, indicate the specific age or type of groups targeted by those programs.

Reflect on your list of programs and begin to develop a preliminary list of the additions and/or changes you would make to the religious education programs and activities that will help address the SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats) analysis created.

Week 6: "The Needs of the Youth"

Lecture: The Millennials religious needs

Inter Faith Issues and the Religious Education Curriculum: *Addressing inter faith issues in the school curriculum*, by John Keast, P. 13-20

https://www.interfaith.org.uk/uploads/IFinRE_final.pdf

Student Presentation and discussion

What are some of the challenges the youth in your community are facing?

What type of religious education program would introduce the youth of your community?

Expose the SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats)

Week 7: The Family and the Church

Lecture. Young adult's ministry needs.

Reading: The Faith Formation of Young Adults: Opportunities and Challenges by Joan Weber P.29-36 :

https://faithformationlearningexchange.net/uploads/5/2/4/6/5246709/faith_formation_of_young_adults_-_weber.pdf

Student Presentation and discussion

What are the challenges the young families are facing in your community?

What type of religious education program would introduce to this specific group of your community?

Expose the SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats)

Week 8: Sexuality and the youth (Moral crisis) BOOK REVIEW DUE DATE

Lecture. The issue of sexual abstinence

Watch: *Interfaith Comprehensive Faith-Based Sexuality Education Partnerships: OWL in the Global South:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vTj8tX8CgBU>

Student Presentation and discussion

How is sexuality perceived by the Youth? The challenges of abstinence before marriage.

Expose the SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats)

Week 9: The Family and the Church

Lecture. Senior ministry needs.

Reading: Ministry with the Aging: Designs, Challenges, Foundations, by William M. Clements. p.209-219 https://api.pageplace.de/preview/DT0400.9781136553882_A23851141/preview-9781136553882_A23851141.pdf

Student Presentation and discussion

What are some of the challenges the older couples might be facing in your community?
What type of religious education program would introduce to this specific group of your community?

Expose the SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats)

WEEK 10: Educational technology

Lecture: The challenges of modern technology and the Church

Watch: Religious Belief and Practice in the Age of AI

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8JH0jAITng>

Student presentation and discussion

Expose the SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats)

Week 11: Death and Dying

Lect. Death and dying ministry.

Reading: Ministry with the Aging: Designs, Challenges, Foundations, by William M. Clements. George, P. *Death, Dying, and the Elderly*, p.220-234.

https://api.pageplace.de/preview/DT0400.9781136553882_A23851141/preview-9781136553882_A23851141.pdf

Student Presentation and discussion

How death and dying is perceived and taught in your faith community?

Expose the SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats)

Week 12: Interpretation of scriptures in religious education curriculum

Lecture. How scripture is interpreted in context.

Reading: Matthew Lane, *Teaching with Sacred Texts*, p1-27.

<https://www.reonline.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/REsourceNorfolk-Presentation-notes-ML.pdf>

Student Presentation and discussion

What scripture do you use in your faith tradition? What are some of the challenges in the interpretation of the word of God? How to address some of those issues?

Expose the SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats)

Week 13: “World religions and the future of religious education

Lect. Teaching World religion to a postmodern world.

Haynes, J. *Religion, secularization and politics: a postmodern conspectus*. Third World Quarterly, Vol 18, No 4, pp 709- 728, 1997.

<https://library.fes.de/libalt/journals/swetsfulltext/11220690.pdf>

Student Presentation and discussion

How your faith tradition teaches religion to a diverse religious and non-religious audience?

Expose the SWOT (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats)

Week 14: Final Project Presentations

Students present their final project.

Week 15: Final Project Presentations

Students present their final project.

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES

General Teaching Sources:

- Anderson, Ray. (2007). *Something Old, Something New: Marriage and Family Ministry in a Postmodern Culture*. Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers.
- Anthony, Michael & Michele (eds). (2011). *A Theology for Family Ministry*. Nashville: B & H Academic Press.
- Baker, Dorie. Ed. (2010). *Greenhouses of Hope: Congregations Growing Young Leaders Who Will Change the World*. New York: The Alban Institute.
- Barnes, L. Philip. (2014). *Education, Religion and Diversity: Developing a New Model of Religious Education*. London: Routledge.
- Beckwith, Ivy. (2004). *Postmodern children's ministry: Ministry to children in the 21st century*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
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- Everist, Norma Cook. (2002). *The Church as Learning Community: A Comprehensive Guide to Christian Education*. Nashville: Abingdon.
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- Foster, Charles. (1982). *Teaching in the Community of Faith*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- Foster, Charles. (2010). *Wired for God: The Biology of Spiritual Experience*. United Kingdom: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Fowler, James. (1984). *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Faith*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.
- Gangel, Kenneth O. (1996). *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Family Life Education*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.
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- Hightower, James E. (1999). *Caring for People from Birth to Death*. California: Haworth Press.
- Hull, John M. (1991). *What Prevents Christian Adults from Learning?* Philadelphia: Trinity Press International.
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- Johnson, Sandra, Taylor, Kathleen, Eds. (2006). *The Neuroscience of Adult Learning: New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (Wiley Periodicals), No. 110, Summer 2006.
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- Kyle, Eric. J. (2013). *Living Spiritual Praxis*. Oregon: Wipf & Stock.
- Lee, Boyoung (2013). *Transforming Congregations through Community: Faith Formation from the Seminary to the Church*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press.
- McEwan, Elaine. (1991). *Spiritual Growth Begins at Home: Helping Families Grow*. Chariot Family Publications.
- McIntosh, Gary L. (1995). *Three Generations: Riding the Waves of Change in Your Church*. Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell Publishing.
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- Palmer, Parker. (2004). *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
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- Yust, Karen Marie, Anderson, E. Byron. (2006). *Taught by God: Teaching and Spiritual Formation*. St. Louis: Chalice Press.