

## SYLLABUS - Adult Faith Development

ED 4072

3 Units

Starr King School for the Ministry - Graduate Theological Union

Fall 2020

This course provides an overview of the theory and practice of adult faith formation in the progressive church. Topics include adult learning theories, including culture and context in the theory and practice of adult learning; frameworks for understanding the congregation as a multi-generational, liberatory, learning community; and the power of education and spiritual growth to address injustice and foster the wholeness and liberation of people, their communities and environment, especially in Unitarian Universalist congregations. The second half of the course will be conducted as a seminar with students researching existing approaches to adult and multigenerational faith development and making constructive proposals for best practices in congregations. Evaluation based on weekly participation, reflection papers, and a final project. The course is suited to MDiv, MA/MTS, DMin, and certificate students. SKSM thresholds, it is most related to #7, 1, and 6. It also addresses MFC competencies #3, 4, and 7. This is a hybrid residential course accepting students participating through distance technologies. Maximum 12 students.

### Instructor Information:

Rev. Dr. Sheri Prud'homme

sprudhomme@sksm.edu

Office Hours: By appointment at [calendly.com/sprudhomme/30min](https://calendly.com/sprudhomme/30min)

### Learning Objectives:

During this course students will

- Examine their personal journey of religious education as adults.
- Study adult learning theories, including the culture and context in the theory and practice of adult learning.
- Consider several frameworks for understanding the congregation as a multi-generational, liberatory, learning community.
- Explore the power of education and spiritual growth to address injustice and foster the wholeness and liberation of people, their communities and environment, especially in a congregational context.
- Develop an understanding of what spiritual maturity means for Unitarian Universalists and consider how congregations help develop that in their members.
- Learn about the history of adult religious education in Unitarian Universalism in its cultural context.
- Research and design a process or program of adult (or multi-generational) religious education for a congregation.

### Learning Outcomes:

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

- Articulate a working definition of spiritual maturity for Unitarian Universalists and identify three ways it can be nurtured in a congregation.
- Define three to five adult learning theories and determine which is most congruent with and useful to the student's approach to adult religious education and spiritual deepening as a religious leader rooted in the Unitarian Universalist values of countering oppressions, cultivating multi-religious life and learning, and creating just and sustainable communities.
- Describe and analyze the historical development of adult religious education within Unitarian Universalism, recognizing the influence of cultural context in its formation.
- Design a congregational program of adult religious education and spiritual deepening that addresses injustice and fosters the wholeness and liberation of people, their communities and environment.

#### Course Policies:

- Absences - one week's absence is permissible when you alert the instructor. Additional absences can be negotiated with the instructor in extreme situations.
- Academic Conduct see <https://www.sksm.edu/current-students/statement-academic-integrity-misconduct/>
- Plagiarism see <https://www.sksm.edu/plagiarism/>
- Notice to Students About Your Privacy (FERPA) see <https://www.sksm.edu/academics/policy-statements/ferpa-family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act/>
- Students with Disabilities Policy see <https://www.sksm.edu/resources/student-handbook/starr-king-policies/students-with-disabilities-policy/>

#### Course Assignments:

Weekly participation in class discussions and coming to class prepared, having completed the reading, are both required in this course. We will be constructing our learning together throughout the course of the semester. **If you do not have time in your schedule for course reading, independent research, analysis, and creative work, this course is not for you.** In addition the following assignments are required:

- A statement that delineates your understanding of spiritual maturity in a Unitarian Universalist (or insert your faith tradition here) context. Due Sept 24.
- A class presentation on Unitarian Universalist adult religious education during an assigned historical time period, including an analysis of the influence of cultural context in its formation. Due Oct 22.
- A 5-10 page paper that outlines three to five adult learning theories and identifies which is most congruent with and useful to the your approach to adult religious education and spiritual deepening as a religious leader rooted in the Unitarian Universalist values of countering oppressions, cultivating multi-religious life and learning, and creating just and sustainable communities. Due Nov 5.

- A presentation about a current innovation or approach in adult faith development and spiritual deepening from a congregational context that you identify and research. Due Nov 12 or 19.
- A final project consisting of a proposed design for a congregational program of adult religious education and spiritual deepening that addresses injustice and fosters the wholeness and liberation of people, their communities and environment. Due Dec. 18.

Grading: This course will be evaluated based on Starr King School for the Ministry's narrative evaluation. If you require a grade, the instructor must be notified by the end of the second week of class.

Required Texts:

Sharan B. Merriam & Laura L Bierema. *Adult Learning: Linking Theory and Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2014. ISBN-10: 111813057X. \$37

Essex Conversations Coordinating Committee. *Essex Conversations*. Boston: Skinner House, 2001. ISBN: 9781558964143 \$16 UUA Bookstore

Karen Bellavance-Grace. *A Full Week Faith*.

[http://fullweekfaith.weebly.com/uploads/1/2/2/9/12293877/finalto\\_web.fahs\\_fellowship\\_paper\\_copy.pdf](http://fullweekfaith.weebly.com/uploads/1/2/2/9/12293877/finalto_web.fahs_fellowship_paper_copy.pdf)

Maria Harris. *Fashion Me A People: Curriculum in the Church*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1989. ISBN 664-24052-6 \$19.50

*The Mosaic Project Report: An Assessment of Unitarian Universalist Ministry to Youth and Young Adults of Color and Latina/o and Hispanic and Multiracial/Multiethnic Descent* <https://www.uua.org/multiculturalism/mosaic>

Thom S. Rainer, Eric Geiger. *Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples*. B&H Publishing Group, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-8054-4799-6 \$11.50

Readings on Moodle –

chapter from bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, “Embracing Change: Teaching in a Multicultural World”

Chapter 2 and concluding chapter from *Educating Congregations* by Charles Foster

Optional –

Mary Elizabeth Moore, Boyung Lee, Katherine Turpin, Ralph Casas, Lynn Bridgers & Veronice Miles (2004) “Realities, Visions, And Promises of a Multicultural Future,” *Religious Education*, 99:3, 287-315.

Roberto, John, ed. *Faith Formation for All the Seasons of Adulthood*. Naugatuck, CT: Lifelong Faith Associates, 2015.

Additional suggested readings –

Aron, Isa. *Becoming a Congregation of Learners*. Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2002.

Boys, Mary. *Educating in Faith: Maps and Visions*. Lima, OH: Academic Renewal Press, 1989.

Groome, Thomas H. *Christian Religious Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.

Lee, Boyung. *Transforming Congregations through Community: Faith Formation from the Seminary to the Church*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013.

Wilkerson, Barbara, ed. *Multicultural Religious Education*. Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1997.

<b>CLASS SCHEDULE</b>
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*(Note: the instructor reserves the right to modify the course schedule; if changes are made, efforts will be made to consider student needs and communicate changes in a timely manner)*

<b>Sept 10</b>	<p><b>General Topic: Introductions</b>  <b>Preparation:</b>          Reflect on your personal experience of faith formation          Distant/remote students come prepared with a large piece of paper and art supplies to depict your journey of adult faith development and spiritual deepening</p>
<b>Sept 17</b>	<p><b>Congregation as Multi-generational Learning Communities</b>  <b>Preparation:</b>          Ask a spiritual leader in your faith tradition how they would characterize spiritual maturity in your faith tradition and bring their answer  <b>Read –</b>  <i>Fashion Me a People</i> by Maria Harris, part 1 (ch 1-3)  <i>Educating Congregations</i> by Charles R. Foster, ch 2 and concluding chapter (available on Moodle)  <i>A Full Week Faith</i> by Karen Bellavance-Grace  <a href="http://fullweekfaith.weebly.com/uploads/1/2/2/9/12293877/finalto_web.fahs_fellowship_paper_copy.pdf">http://fullweekfaith.weebly.com/uploads/1/2/2/9/12293877/finalto_web.fahs_fellowship_paper_copy.pdf</a></p>
<b>Sept 24</b>	<p><b>Congregations as learning communities that address injustice and foster the wholeness and liberation of people, their communities and environment</b></p>

	<p><b>At the beginning of class, turn in:</b>  a working definition of spiritual maturity for Unitarian Universalists (or insert your faith tradition here) and identify three ways it can be nurtured in a congregation</p> <p><b>Preparation:</b>  <b>Read-</b>  “Embracing Change: Teaching in a Multicultural World” in <i>Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom</i> by bell hooks (available on Moodle)  “Education as Liberation” by Rebecca Parker in <i>Essex Conversations</i>  The Mosaic Project Report: An Assessment of Unitarian Universalist Ministry to Youth and Young Adults of Color and Latina/o and Hispanic and Multiracial/Multiethnic Descent <a href="https://www.uua.org/multiculturalism/mosaic">https://www.uua.org/multiculturalism/mosaic</a>  <i>Optional:</i> “Realities, Visions, And Promises Of A Multicultural Future” by Mary Elizabeth Moore, Boyung Lee, Katherine Turpin, Ralph Casas, Lynn Bridgers &amp; Veronice Miles in <i>Religious Education</i>, 99:3, 287-315  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/00344080490483715">https://doi.org/10.1080/00344080490483715</a> (available through GTU library)</p>
<b>Oct 1</b>	<p><b>Simple Church – a possibility for liberal religion?</b>  <b>Preparation:</b>  <b>Read</b> <i>Simple Church</i> by Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger part 1 (part 2 is optional)</p>
<b>Oct 8</b>	<p><b>Adult Learning Theories Part I</b>  <b>Preparation:</b>  <b>Read</b> <i>Adult Learning: Linking Theory and Practice</i>, ch 1-6</p>
<b>Oct 15</b>	<p><b>Adult Learning Theories Part II</b>  <b>Preparation:</b>  <b>Read</b> <i>Adult Learning: Linking Theory and Practice</i>, ch 7-12</p>
<b>Oct 22</b>	<p><b>UU Adult RE – A Historical Review</b>  <b>Preparation:</b> Research adult faith development/religious education in your assigned era and come prepared with a presentation on your findings including an analysis of the influence of cultural context in its formation.  <b>Guest Presentation:</b> TBA</p>
<b>Reading Week</b>	
<b>Nov 5</b>	<p><b>Emerging Visions</b>  <b>At the beginning of class, turn in:</b>  a 5-10 page paper that outlines three to five adult learning theories and identifies which is most congruent with and useful to the your approach to adult religious education and spiritual deepening as a religious leader rooted in the Unitarian Universalist values of countering oppressions, cultivating multi-religious life and learning, and creating just and sustainable</p>

	<p>communities.</p> <p><b>Preparation:</b>  Familiarize yourself with the resources at Faith Forward  <a href="https://www.dallasuu.org/faithforward/">https://www.dallasuu.org/faithforward/</a>  Soul Matters <a href="https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com">https://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com</a>  and the resources available on the UUA website Tapestry of Faith for Adults</p> <p><b>Guest Presentation:</b> TBA</p>
<b>Nov 12</b>	<p><b>Emerging Visions</b>  <b>Reports from research</b>  <b>Optional reading:</b> <i>The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation</i>, parts 1 and 2</p>
<b>Nov 19</b>	<p><b>Emerging Visions</b>  <b>Reports from Research</b>  <b>Optional reading:</b> <i>The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation</i>, part 3</p>
<b>Dec 3</b>	<b>Final Project Presentations</b>
<b>Dec 10</b>	<b>Final Project Presentations</b>
<b>Dec 17</b>	<b>Study Week</b>
<b>Dec 18</b>	<b>End of Semester – last day to turn in final projects</b>