

CO5530 HUMAN GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT Reformed Theological Seminary – Jackson

Summer 2026
3 Credit Hours

Instructor

Stephanie Wielgosz, LPC-S

Class meeting time

Monday & Wednesday
1:00 – 3:30 pm

Contact Information

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Office Hours

Open door policy and by appointment

Course Description

This course centers on human growth and development and will provide an overview of the major theories, concepts, and issues of life span development. Life is an ever changing and dynamic process which can be studied and understood as an interaction between story, setting, themes and the unique issues of each developmental epoch.

Course Objectives (Knowledge and Skill Outcomes)

Students will gain an understanding of the nature and needs of persons at all developmental levels and in multicultural contexts, including all of the following:

- CO1. **Developmental Theories.** Develop a working knowledge of the theories of individual and family development across the life-span (2.F.3.a)
- CO2. **Learning Theories.** Become familiar with theories of learning (2.F.3.b)
- CO3. **Personality.** Become familiar with theories of personality development (2.F.3.c)
- CO4. **Addiction.** Theories and etiology of addictions and addictive behaviors (2.F.3.d)
- CO5. **Biology Factors.** Develop a working knowledge of biological, neurological, and physiological factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior (2.F.3.e)
- CO6. **Systemic and Environmental Factors.** Gain an awareness of systemic and environmental factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior (2.F.3.f)
- CO7. **Trauma.** Effects of crisis, disasters, and trauma on diverse individuals across the lifespan (2.F.3.g)
- CO8. **Differing Abilities.** A general framework for understanding differing abilities and strategies for differentiated interventions (2.F.3.h)
- CO9. **Resilience.** Gain awareness of ethical and culturally relevant strategies for promoting resilience and optimum development and wellness across the lifespan (2.F.3.i)
- CO10. **Developmental Treatment.** Developmentally relevant counseling treatment or intervention plans (2.F.5.h)

Methods of Instruction

This course will be taught in a traditional classroom format, using lecture, classroom activities, & discussions.

Required Materials:

- M1. Broderick, P., & Blewitt, P. (2019). *The life span: Human development for helping professionals* (6th ed.). Pearson. ISBN-13: 978-0135227763
- M2. Balswick, J.O., Ebstyn King, P., & Reimer, K.S. (2016). *The Reciprocating Self: Human Development in Theological Perspective* (2nd ed.). IVP Academic. ISBN-13: 978-0830851430
- M3. O'Shaughnessy, R., Berry, K., Dallos, R., & Bateson, K. (2023) *Attachment Theory: the basics*. Routledge. ISBN-13: 978-1138570016

Reference Articles:

Articles and additional references will be provided in the final draft of the syllabus.

Assignments (Student Performance Evaluation Criteria)

A1. Documentation of Reading (10%): At each class, students will document the percentage of reading completed before class time. Students will specify what percentage they read in full, what percentage they skimmed, and what percentage they did not read. Students are expected to use integrity when documenting their reading.

Students will receive 100% credit for any amount read in full, 75% credit for any amount of reading skimmed, and 0% credit for any amount of incomplete reading. Grades will be calculated accordingly for each class session's reading documentation

Example of reading documentation: 50% read, 40% skimmed, 10% not read

Grade: $(50 \times 1.0) + (40 \times 0.75) + (10 \times 0.0) = 50 + 30 + 0 = 80\%$

A2. Class Participation (10%): Details will be provided in final draft of the syllabus.

A3. Theological Reflections (20%): At the end of each week, students will write a brief reflection on their observations of theological applications related to the developmental stages covered in that week's material. Some reflective prompts will be provided each week as inspiration but will not be required as the prompt for each reflection.

Each reflection should be a minimum of 400 words and does not need to exceed 1,000 words. The instructor will grade reflections based on meeting length requirement and based on demonstration of genuine thought and effort in the reflection.

A3. Attachment Theory Paper (30%) – KPI 1. Students will write a 4-6 page paper connecting the content in the O'Shaughnessy et al. text and their personal experience with relational attachment throughout their development. At least one stage of development should be described and incorporated into the reflection on their own attachment experiences. While students are reflecting on their lived experiences in relationships, the paper should also include citations to this text and at least one additional source. A detailed rubric will be available on Canvas.

A4. Developmental Interview Paper (40%) – KPI 2. Students will interview someone of the opposite sex who is over 50 and write a paper that discusses two of their developmental stages while reflecting on theological implications.

- The interviewee must be someone outside of RTS (not a student/staff).
- Students will form their own interview questions that help the student learn about the interviewee's development across their existing stages. One goal of the interview is to identify ways the interviewee aligns with or diverges from developmental theories learned in class.

- The paper will
 - briefly introduce the interviewee (1-2 paragraphs),
 - discuss the interviewee's development using Erikson's psychosocial theory
 - discuss the interviewee's development using one learning theory (e.g., Cognitive Development, Social Learning)
 - and provide theological reflections that help you understand this person from a Christian perspective.
- The paper will be 8-10 pages in length, and students will identify at least 1 additional source in addition to class texts to reference in the paper.

A detailed rubric will be available on canvas.

A5. Course Evaluation (0% but required for course completion). Course evaluations are crucial for assessing and improving the MAC program. Therefore, each MAC course includes an assignment to complete an anonymous online course evaluation.

Academic Policies and Important Information

Written Work Format. Unless otherwise noted, all written work must conform to American Psychological Association (APA) style, 7th edition. If a student does not have a copy of the APA manual, one should be purchased, or students may use one of the many APA style websites available online (e.g. <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). Assessment will include how well students represent their thoughts on paper, craftsmanship in writing, and organization of all written work.

Disability Accommodation Policy. If you require a special adaptation or accommodation to participate fully in this course, please contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss your request. You must provide a letter from the Dean of Students that verifies your disabled status. Last-minute special requests will be subject to the same late assignment policy as other students.

Access to Research Database. RTS provides the Jackson MAC students access to the APA PsycARTICLES and the EBSCO Psychology & Behavioral Science Collection full text journal databases. You can access these databases in the library and from any device with an Internet connection. Remote access instructions are provided at <https://rts.edu/academics/library/databases/>.

Submission of work. All assignments should be submitted or completed via Canvas. There will be a reduction of 1/3 a letter grade for each day the assignment is late.

Grading Scale:

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|------------|------------|--------------|
| A (97-100) | B- (86-87) | D+ (75-77) |
| A- (94-96) | C+ (83-85) | D (72-74) |
| B+ (91-93) | C (80-82) | D- (70-71) |
| B (88-90) | C- (78-79) | F (Below 70) |

Attendance Policy: Regular attendance is expected and required. If serious illness or an emergency prevents a student from attending any class, please notify the instructor before the class begins. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain any materials handed out or presented during the missed class from a classmate.

Class Participation: Students are expected to participate in all components of the class and will be evaluated on the quality and quantity of discussion. Each student is expected to read all of the assigned materials in advance for

each class and have prepared written comments and questions for class discussion. Contributions should reflect knowledge of the reading assignments or other sources.

AI Policy. The use of Artificial Intelligence. In addition to the currently published RTS AI policy for students, Dr. Richardson adds the following policy statement.

Students may not submit any work generated by an AI program as their own. Students may use AI programs to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, students should be aware that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, or otherwise problematic. If students include material generated by an AI program, it must be cited like any other reference material. If not clearly cited, this would be considered plagiarism and will be dealt with severely under relevant RTS policies with consequences ranging from assignment-grade-deduction to course failure and possible program dismissal.

Of course, there will be cases where professors may not be able to conclusively detect AI plagiarism. If for any reason, including doubts about whether the document was written with AI external help, any student can be required to meet with the professor for an oral examination on their submitted assignment. In such a case, a grade for the oral examination will replace that for the original document.

Course Process and Schedule

It is important that you be prepared when class begins. ***Assigned readings must be completed prior to the start of class.***

| Lecture ID | Date | Topic | Reading Due | Assignments Due | CACREP 2024 Standards |
|---------------|------|-------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Week 1 L1 | 6/23 | | | | |
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| Week 1 L2 | 6/25 | | | | |
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| Week 2 L3 | 6/30 | | | | |
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| Week 2 L4 | 7/02 | | | | |
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| Week 3 L5 | 7/7 | | | | |
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| Week 3 L6 | 7/9 | | | | |
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| Week 4 L7 | 7/14 | | | | |
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| Week 4 L8 | 7/16 | | | | |
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| Week 5 L9 | 7/21 | | | | |
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| Week 5 L10 | 7/23 | | | | |
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| Week 6 L11 | 7/28 | | | | |
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| Week 6 L12 | 7/30 | | | | |
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| Week 7 L13 | 8/4 | | | | |
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| Week 7 L14 | 8/6 | | | | |
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| Week 8 L15 | 8/11 | | | | |
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| Week 8 L16 | 8/13 | | | | |

Student Learning Outcome Table

The table below shows how the objectives of this course will be met, and how they relate to CACREP Standards. Details about specific course objectives, assignments, and evaluation methods can be found in earlier sections of this syllabus.

| CACREP 2016 Standard | Course Objective | Materials | Lecture | Assignments |
|----------------------|---|--|--------------|----------------|
| 2.F.3.a | CO1. Developmental Theories | M1. Broderick & Blewitt, 2019. (1-15) M3. Clinton & Sibcy, 2009. | L1-13 | A1, 2, 4, 5 |
| 2.F.3.b | CO2. Learning Theories | M1. Broderick & Blewitt, 2019. (1, 3, 6) | L3-13 | A1, 5 |
| 2.F.3.c | CO3. Personality | M1. Broderick & Blewitt, 2019. (13) | L2, 4, 5, 11 | A1,4, 5 |
| 2.F.3.d | CO4. Addiction | M1. Broderick & Blewitt, 2019. (10, 14) | L6, 7, 12 | A1, 5 |
| 2.F.3.e | CO5. Biology Factors | M1. Broderick & Blewitt, 2019. (2-3, 6, 8-9, 11) | L1-2, 4-6, 9 | A1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |
| 2.F.3.f | CO6. Systemic and Environmental Factors | M1. Broderick & Blewitt, 2019. (5, 7-10, 12-15) M3. Clinton & Sibcy, 2009. | L3-7, 10-12 | A1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |
| 2.F.3.g | CO7. Trauma | M2. Perry, 2017 | L3, 5-7, 9 | A3, 4 |
| 2.F.3.h | CO8. Differing Abilities | M4. Woods, et.al., 2007. | L1, 8 | A1, 5 |
| 2.F.3.i | CO9. Resilience | M1. Broderick & Blewitt, 2019. (1, 13-14) | L1, 11-12 | A1, 3, 4, 5 |
| 2.F.5.h | CO10. Developmental Treatment | M1. Broderick & Blewitt, 2019. (1-15) M2. Perry, 2017 M3. Clinton & Sibcy, 2009. | L2-13 | A1, 2, 3, 4, 5 |

*Textbook chapters are denoted in parentheses.



Course Objectives Related to MAC* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: CO5530 Human Growth & Development
 Professor: Stephanie Wielgosz
 Campus: Jackson
 Date: Summer 2026

| MAC* Student Learning Outcomes | | Rubric | Mini-Justification |
|---|---|--|--|
| <i>In order to measure the success of the MAC curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MAC outcomes.</i> | | Strong, Moderate, Minimal, None | |
| Professional Counseling Orientation & Ethical Practice | Understands and applies the basic knowledge needed to be an effective counselor including: the history and philosophy of counseling, ethical standards of practice, personal career development, advocacy for clients, consultation & collaboration, and a Reformed, biblical and theological framework for counseling. | Moderate | Knowledge of normal human development across the lifespan is needed to be an effective counselor and informs ethics, career development, and advocacy. |
| Social & Cultural Diversity | Understands and demonstrates how living in a cultural/global society affects clients who are seeking counseling and clinical mental health services, as well as the effects of sin such as racism, discrimination, sexism, and oppression on one's own life and career and those of the client. | Moderate | Multicultural considerations are included throughout the course, and included within the primary text. |
| Human Growth & Development | Understands and applies knowledge of various theories of individual and family development, and factors affecting human development. To include biological, neurological, physiological, systemic, and environmental factors, addiction, and effects of crisis, disasters, and traumas. | Strong | This course was designed to be the primary course meeting this student learning outcome. |
| Career Development | Understands and applies theories and models of career development, counseling, and decision making. | Minimal | The modules on adolescents and emerging adults provides important information related to career development. |
| Counseling & Helping Relationships | Understands and applies theories and models of counseling, strategies for understanding and practicing consultation, and developing relevant counseling treatment and intervention plans. | Moderate | Approaches to working with developmentally specific disorders are discussed. |
| Group Counseling & Group Work | Understands and applies theories and models of group counseling and group work, dynamics of the group process and development, and therapeutic factors that contribute to group effectiveness. | None | None |
| Assessment & Testing | Understands and applies clinical knowledge effectively, including various models and approaches to clinical evaluation and their appropriate uses. To include diagnostic interviews, mental status examinations, symptom inventories, and psychoeducational and personality assessments, and is sensitive to the complications of diagnosis and interpretation of formal and informal evaluation. | None | None |
| Research & Program Evaluation | Demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate research through a biblical worldview and integrate it into counseling practice. Understands the process of program evaluation and its integration into the practice of counseling and clinical mental health counseling. | Minimal | Students learn to evaluate research related to developmental counseling practices. |
| Clinical Mental Health Counseling | Demonstrates the knowledge and skills necessary to address a wide variety of circumstances within the context of clinical mental health counseling. | Moderate | Approaches to working with developmentally specific disorders are discussed. |
| Integration (Biblical/Theological) | Knowledge of and integration of Reformed, biblical and theological concepts with counseling practices. | Moderate | Integration of biblical and developmental concepts is woven throughout the course |
| Sanctification | Demonstrates a love for the triune God. | Minimal | Consideration of how to integrate theological concepts with developmental theories |