



## **Ministry with Older Adults Online DF 975Z**

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Meeting Location: Online

*Elective. Three credit hours*

In an online course there is an expectation and requirement for students to post frequently (two or three times) every week responding to other students and the professor in the places provided. Students need to post comments weekly and no late postings in a given week will count toward your final posting grade in the course.

Why do we require posting in an online course? Posting is the electronic equivalent of participating in a face-to-face class where you raise your hand and ask a question or make a comment either in response to what the professor has said or to what another student has said. Good online pedagogy strongly encourages online interaction between and among all participants. In addition, our accreditors will only approve the offering of online courses if we can demonstrate that students are interacting and demonstrating through their interactions that they are learning course concepts (see Course Platform below). If you wish to see Erskine continue to offer accredited online courses, your cooperation will go a long way in seeing that this option continues.

### **Course Description**

This course helps students understand the life tasks, problems, challenges, life stages, and issues of older adults who comprise almost half of the average congregation. It is designed to help students enter the world of older adults through novels and film or video as well as through sociocultural analysis. Biblical norms are also used to help students plan strategies for ministry with older adults and with the local Church. Particular attention is given to issues of spiritual maturity and development, and of losses experienced through the aging process.

### **Course Objectives**

1. To gain a deep appreciation for what the Bible teaches regarding the elderly and their place in the Mission of God.
2. To understand the essential ingredients of adult aging theory and its significance for designing ministry to older adults.



3. To develop a rudimentary grasp of older adult spiritual formation and its implications for ministry to older adults.
4. To develop ministry strategies that effectively promotes the spiritual well-being of older adults in church ministry.

## Resources

Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required textbooks. The Erskine Campus Bookstore will carry a limited number of copies of every required text and orders for books can be placed through the Campus Bookstore. The seminary also has a bookstore portal on its website at <http://www.erskineseminary.org/bookstore.html>. Here you will find links to familiar vendors and can check availability of texts, compare prices, and place orders. While students may order their books from any source, orders placed with the vendors listed, **through the seminary's web site**, earn a small rebate, a percentage of which goes to benefit the Seminary's Student Body Association.

## Required Course Textbooks

Designing an Older Adult Ministry (1999), Richard H. Gentzler.

Senior Adult Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (2002), David P. Gallagher.

Aging Well: Surprising Guideposts to a Happier Life from the Landmark Harvard Study of Adult Development (2003), George E. Valliant.

Aging with Grace: What the Nun Study Teaches Us About Leading Longer, Healthier, and More Meaningful Lives (2002), David Snowdon.

Ministering to Older Adults: The Building Blocks (2005), Donald E. Kopeke.

## Grading Criteria and Scale

*I will use the following criteria to assess student work for this course. In order for a student to earn an "A" for course work submitted, it must reflect exceptional skill and mastery above the minimum requirement of fulfilling the assignment as stipulated in the course syllabus.*

*A Level Work = Exemplary ability to differentiate constituent parts; assess and critique theories, thoughts, ideas, concepts, proposals, and relevant literature; and the ability to reason in a logical and compelling manner.*



*B Level Work = Reflects above average grasp of the subject matter; displays a superior ability to use new knowledge in a creative manner; and can demonstrate an above average ability to discriminate among alternative viewpoints.*

*C Level Work = Adequate but not exceptional ability to think cogently and clearly; sufficient ability to understand and comprehend subject matter; and a satisfactory ability to integrate and organize course concepts in a logical and coherent manner.*

*D Level Work = Inadequate and unexceptional ability to think cogently and clearly; insufficient ability to understand and comprehend subject matter; and an unsatisfactory ability to integrate and organize course concepts in a logical and coherent manner.*

Grades for the course will be processed as quickly as possible. If you have not received written notification of your final grade for the course after a month has elapsed at the end of the semester, please contact the Registrar's Office. According to institutional policy, professors do not notify students of their final grade in a course. Only the Registrar's Office can issue final grades.

## Course Components

The purpose and objectives of this course will be achieved through four learning sequences. See the information listed below for more information.

1. Biblical Perspectives on Aging
2. Developmental Perspectives on Aging
3. Faith Development of Older Adults
4. Designing Older Adult Ministry

### FAQ's

1. All assignments must be submitted via e-mail attachments unless otherwise notified.
2. Please use Microsoft Word when submitting assignments electronically.
3. All assignments should be clearly marked on the e-mail subject line with the student's last name and assignment number. Failure to include this information will result in a returned assignment.

### COURSE PLATFORM

Erskine Seminary is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). According to the ATS Standard 10.3.4.3, "Institutions shall ensure that distance education programs provide appropriate opportunity for collaboration, personal

development, interaction among peers within a community of learning, and supervised field or internship opportunities when appropriate to the degree program.” It is with this stipulation that EDEN has implemented a web-based learning platform which will serve to provide a number of collaborative learning experiences. The learning platform is Moodle and according to their website, “Moodle is a course management system designed to help educators who want to create quality online courses . . . and create effective online learning communities.” You will be provided with additional information concerning Moodle tutorials, site information, and the peer mentoring program. In order to meet the online discussion component of this course, you will need:

- A computer (or access to a computer)
- High speed access to the Internet

## Course Sequence

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### Sequence One – Biblical Perspectives on Aging

For this assignment, read my lecture notes *Biblical Perspectives on Aging* and view the PowerPoint slides (found in the online classroom) that accompany them. Read the short article entitled “Old Age Heresy” by Tim Stafford (found in the online classroom). Write a one page Memo to Myself reaction and reflection over what you learned regarding what the Bible has to say about the aged. Send me an email attachment of the Memo and upload\* another copy of your Memo to the Memo Depot in the online classroom. As a part of this assignment you are to read and react to at least one other student’s Memo in the Memo Depot discussion forum. No post hoc responses will be allowed. Your response must be made sometime during the first month of the course (if no other students are taking the course this requirement is waived). **This assignment is due at the end of the first month of the course.**

\*Steps to upload your assignment:

1. Find the “Memo Depot” discussion forum in the online classroom.
2. Click on that link and you will find assignment listed there.
3. Click on “Add a new discussion topic” and this will take you to the upload area
4. Type in your name and reaction paper title (i.e. Joe Smith’s Assessing CE Ministry paper) in the subject line.
5. Type a BRIEF explanation in the message section (i.e. Memo)
6. Click on the “browse” feature at the bottom of that paper and find your paper.
7. Double-click on your document and select “post to forum” shown at the bottom of the screen.

Steps to download (or read) others’ assignment:



1. Find the “Memo Depot” discussion forum in the online classroom.
2. Click on that link and you will find student postings listed there.
3. Click on the title of the student posting listed under Discussion.
4. Click on the Word document in that posting.
5. Select “open” to read the document instantly or “save” to save the document to your desktop folder.
6. Post your comments related to the paper by hitting “reply” on the discussion board.
7. Enter your comments in message section. Hit “post to forum” when finished.

## Sequence Two – Developmental Perspectives on Aging

For this module, read my lecture notes Lifespan Development and the Older Adult and view the PowerPoint slides that accompany them (all found in the online classroom). Find a copy of the movie, [The Trip to Bountiful \(1985\)](#) starring Geraldine Page and watch it. When you are done with the lecture materials and viewing the movie, write a one page Memo to Myself in which you reflect upon any new insights or understandings that emerged as you viewed the materials and the movie. Send me an email attachment of the Memo and upload another copy of your Memo to the Memo Depot in the online classroom. As a part of this assignment you are to read and react to at least one other student’s Memo in the Memo Depot discussion forum. No post hoc responses will be allowed. Your response must be made sometime during the first month of the course (if no other students are taking the course this requirement is waived).

In addition, read *Aging Well* by Valiant and *Aging with Grace* by Snowden. Write a one to two page response to your reading of both texts comparing and contrasting what you learned about the aging process from both of them. Identify one major new insight or piece of information about the aging process that you did not know before and how you think this might possibly alter how you do ministry with older adults. Send me an email attachment and upload another copy to the Book Report Depot in the online classroom. As a part of this assignment you are to read and react to at least one other student’s Memo in the Book Report Depot discussion forum. No post hoc responses will be allowed. Your response must be made sometime during the first month of the course (if no other students are taking the course this requirement is waived). **Both assignments are due at the end of the second month of the course.**

## Sequence Three – Faith Development of Older Adults

For this module, read my lecture notes *Faith Development of Christian Older Adults* and the PowerPoint slides that accompany them. Then read the article *Spirituality in Older Adults* housed in the online classroom. After completing these assignments, write a one page Memo to Myself in which you consider the



implications of what you have learned about how older adults continue to grow in their faith. Send the Memo to me as an email attachment and then upload a copy to the online classroom for other students to view. As a part of this assignment you are to read and react to at least one other student's Memo in the Memo Depot discussion forum. No post hoc responses will be allowed. Your response must be made sometime during the first month of the course (if no other students are taking the course this requirement is waived). **Both assignments are due at the end of the third month of the course.**

### Sequence Four – Designing Older Adult Ministry

Read the books, *Designing an Older Adult Ministry*, *Senior Adult Ministry in the 21st Century*, and *Ministering to Older Adults: The Building Blocks*. When you have finished reading, map out a ministry plan for senior adult ministry in a local church or other ministry setting. This should not be a ministry plan of a current church or organization but your own creative vision of what an older adult ministry could be given what you have read in the three texts. Email an attachment of your plan to me and upload a copy in the Memo Depot for other students to read. The plan should be between 10-12 pages in length, double-spaced. As a part of this assignment you are to read and react to at least one other student's Memo in the Memo Depot discussion forum. No post hoc responses will be allowed. Your response must be made sometime during the first month of the course (if no other students are taking the course this requirement is waived). **This assignment is due at the end of the fourth month of the course.**

### WRITING THEOLOGICAL PAPERS

The seminary has produced a *Writing Theological Papers* document that guides a student through the process of producing a high quality theological paper. It is included as part of the materials for this course located in the online classroom and is part of your Student Handbook provided by the seminary.

Please edit your paper for typographical errors, misspelled words, stylistic miscues, and grammatical mistakes. The paper should be double-spaced and constitute original work written for this course only and cannot include material previously used in another course or for another purpose. Please read over the notation regarding the seminary policy on plagiarism included at the end of this syllabus. Your use of the work or thoughts of another without proper citation and acknowledgement constitutes plagiarism. **Content found at an Internet web site is construed to be copyrighted material written and produced by another person.** Undocumented wholesale use of words from an Internet web site passed off as the student's own work in a research paper of this sort constitutes plagiarism and will be considered a violation of the seminary plagiarism policy. Students who are determined to have violated the seminary's

policy on plagiarism will receive a grade of zero for the paper, will not be allowed to re-submit another paper, and will have a written record of the violation added to their permanent student record. Further violations of the seminary's plagiarism policy could result in temporary or permanent dismissal from the seminary.

### Relevant Institutional and Class Policies

[http://seminary.erskine.edu/content\\_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSStudents.pdf](http://seminary.erskine.edu/content_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSStudents.pdf)