



ERSKINE
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

For Christ and His Church

Teaching Adults and Teachers of Adults DF 963

Doctor of Ministry Functions Elective

[Stephen D. Lowe](#), Ph.D.

Associate Dean for Distributed Education
Professor of Christian Education
Erskine Theological Seminary
Three Credits

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church.

CONTACT INFORMATION



Email

slowe@erskine.edu



Phone

864.379.8748



Fax

864.379.8887



Mail

Mailing Address: P.O. Drawer 668, Due West, SC 29639. Office location: Room 14, Reid Hall



Website

http://www.erskineseminary.org/Academics_Files/Faculty/SLowe.html

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course focuses on helping pastors and educators improve their teaching of adults in the church through development of skills such as preparing and delivering educationally sound lectures, leading lively discussions, constructing and posing probing questions, and helping adults to articulate their faith. Special attention is given to the design of training workshops for transferring these skills to teachers of adults in the church.

COURSE PURPOSE

The purpose of this course is to provide the student with a comprehensive Biblical framework or paradigm that guides our understanding of the Biblical principles of religious education as contained in the Hebrew Old Testament and the Christian New Testament.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Students will be introduced to the concept of adult development and the impact such development may have on teaching adults in the church.
2. Students will acquire a basic working knowledge of adult learning theory and how adults learn.
3. Students will acquire a basic working knowledge of adult teaching theory and how best to teach adults.
4. Students will develop appropriate skills for facilitating adult learning and improving one's teaching of adult learners in the Church.
5. Students will learn how to design instruction (workshops and seminars) for teachers of adults and to practice providing that instruction in an educational setting similar to what one might experience in a Church education ministry.

Hybrid Learning Experience

In addition to the face-to-face component of this course, there will also be an online component that will enable students to stay connected with other learners, the professor, and be able to interact with course concepts between live class sessions each week. Students will be required to spend time in the online classroom, upload their course assignments for viewing and reaction from other learners, post comments and feedback to assignments written by other students, and react to class presentations and discussions. The professor may require live chats sessions between the live class sessions that will be held online during the days between when the class meets at Fort Jackson. The Teaching Adults online classroom will be presented and explained on the first day of class.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

I invite you to order your textbooks for this course by visiting the [Bookstore Portal](#) on the front page of the seminary web site. Please click the "Shop by Course" link to see if the books required for this course are listed under the courses shown. If they are not available on ecampus, you may order them from other online book distributors.

Taking learning to task: Creative strategies for teaching adults, Jane Vella. Jossey-Bass, 2001.

The third update on adult learning theory, Sharan B. Merriam (Ed), Jossey-Bass, 2008.

An update on adult development theory: New ways of thinking about the life course, M. Carolyn Clark (Ed), Jossey-Bass, 2000.

Learning Experience # 1

Come prepared to the first class session to discuss the subject of adult development by reading self-selected portions of *An Update on Adult Development*. You may finish reading the entire book after the first class session. In addition, come prepared to make a class presentation in which you identify what you think are the key concepts of adult development and explain how you plan to start integrating these and other adult development concepts in your preaching, teaching, and leading. As part of this you should study the section in Merriam's book entitled "Spirituality and Adult Learning" as well as the resource provided in the online classroom by the professor. You should plan on speaking about 15-20 minutes and then entertain questions and comments from the class. Submit a written version of your presentation via email attachment to the professor for grading and upload a copy to the online classroom. This can be turned in during the week following the presentation in class.

Learning Experience # 2

In preparation for the second class session read *Making Sense of Adult Learning*. Come prepared to discuss and explain how adults learn and also come prepared to lead a 15-20 session in which you model how to utilize one key concept of adult learning in your preaching, teaching, or leading of your congregation. You should plan to have the class assume a role either as worshipers, students, or church leaders and illustrate how you would apply an adult learning principle to church ministry. The written portion of this assignment should be uploaded to the online classroom and an email attachment sent to the professor during the week following the class presentation.

Learning Experience # 3

In preparation for the third class session read *Taking Learning to Task*. Come prepared to explain and discuss not only Vella's concept of teaching tasks but the general subject of teaching adults. Also come prepared to lead the class in the application of one of Vella's adult teaching concepts. You will have between 15-20 minutes to conduct this portion of the assignment. You will need to identify which Vella concept you will illustrate and communicate that to the other class members to avoid duplication. You can do this via email or in the online classroom. Again upload a copy to the online classroom and send me a copy as an email attachment.

Learning Experience # 4

Based upon our reading of all of the course texts, class presentations, and mastery of course concepts, the class will actually design a church workshop entitled “How Adults Learn and What That Means for Teaching Adults.” Consult the “Guidelines for Conducting Workshops and Seminars” located in the online classroom. There will be a portion of the workshop that addresses adult development, adult learning, and adult teaching strategies. Class members will divide responsibilities so that each makes a significant contribution to the overall success of the event. Students will be encouraged to select one of the three concept areas to lead. You are expected to illustrate and apply adult development, adult learning, and adult teaching principles to your presentation. You will lead your portion as if leading a group of adult learners in your congregation. Anyone student in the course who would like to have the workshop conducted at your church may contact the professor to see if we can make arrangements to offer it during the last Saturday afternoon class period in a location in Columbia, SC. Or you may wish to have several churches join together for the event. Grades will be assessed on the basis of your demonstration/presentation. This assignment may be modified based upon the number of students in the class and the location of their church.

Course Learning Environment

The learning environment for this course will be built upon the assumptions of adult learning theory as espoused in the andragogical model of Dr. Malcolm Knowles and upon the biblical/theological premise of the priesthood of all believers. In practice, this means that the course will be highly interactive, collaborative, and participatory.

Teaching Philosophy

Benjamin Bloom, a leading educational theorist and researcher for the last forty years, asserts in his model of mastery learning that “Most students (perhaps over 90 percent) can master what we have to teach them, and it is the task of instruction to find the means which will enable our students to master the subject under consideration” (“Learning for Mastery,” 1981:153). The aim of good instruction should be to facilitate maximum student learning and comprehension. With this approach to adult learning in mind, all students will be allowed to re-submit written assignments until the expected grade is achieved. All previously graded submissions must accompany any new re-submission.

Written Work

In general, please consult the [seminary style manual](#) located on the seminary web page and also included as a part of the student handbook. All written submissions should be edited for errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and style format prior to submission. All written submissions will be graded on the basis of these elements in addition to content.

Oral Presentations

Since this class is operated as a graduate seminar, each student must come to class fully prepared to contribute and participate in the learning experience. Each student will be asked to make formal presentations and to guide the seminar discussion. Part of your grade will be based on how prepared you are to participate as a co-learner and how effective you are in making your presentations to the seminar participants. Each student will be expected to make significant oral and written contributions. My role will be one of facilitator and guide. Each student is expected to come to each class session fully prepared to engage in critical discussions and offer constructive feedback to fellow students. All will be encouraged to participate and offer personal perspectives and viewpoints. One caveat: each student should monitor his/her own level of participation to ensure that no one person dominates class discussions or question and answer periods. Full participation also requires fair participation by all members of the class.

Grade Criteria

Each student enrolled in the class will automatically be given an “A” grade at the beginning of the course. The only way a student cannot achieve a grade of “A” is by not participating in the course learning experiences and not achieving at an “A” level. Students are expected to participate in the class at the “A” level description offered below. It is expected that all student projects and assignments will be performed at the “A” level as described below. When, in the estimation of the professor, the student does not perform at the contracted “A” level, the student must re-submit the work until it achieves an “A” level. Students have the option of contracting for a lower grade that involves less work.

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 mastery of basic facts and information presented in the course; insufficient or inappropriate use of common terms and language indicating an inadequate grasp of the material; and an inferior ability to analyze and judge proposals, ideas or concepts.

| Grade Scale | |
|--------------------|--------|
| A | 95-100 |
| A- | 93-94 |
| B+ | 91-92 |
| B | 88-90 |
| B- | 86-87 |
| C+ | 84-85 |
| C | 80-83 |
| C- | 78-79 |
| D+ | 76-77 |
| D | 72-75 |
| D- | 70-71 |

As a courtesy to other students and me, please do not use your cell phones or PDA's during class. If you bring one of these devices to class, please turn the ringer off and manage your messaging and calls during scheduled breaks. Similarly, if you bring a computer to class, it is expected you will use it only for work pertinent to the class.

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. Enter your comments in message section. Hit “post to forum” when finished.

RELEVANT INSTITUTIONAL AND CLASS POLICIES

Conduct in Theological Discussions

Erskine Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and it expects its students to show respect for all who identify with that one Church. In all written work, oral presentations, and discussions both inside and outside the classroom, the Seminary expects students to conduct discussions of controversial issues in a context of respect for those with whom one disagrees. Please see the Community Life Statement in the *Catalog* for more information.

1. Language about God and Humanity. Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church’s historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should

use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men").

2. From the Seminary Catalog, "the grade of 'I' or incomplete is given at the discretion of the professor. A grade of "I" normally is given when a student has substantially completed the requirements for a course but has been prevented by extraordinary circumstances from completing all course requirements. If a grade of "I" is given for a course the remaining course work must be submitted for grading prior to the final date established in the current Seminary Catalog. Otherwise, the grade of "I" automatically becomes a grade of "F." Note that there is a fee associated with an "Incomplete" grade.

3. Any late project will be automatically reduced by one letter grade regardless of reason. *Please make this class a high priority and keep ahead of projects in order to compensate for the exigencies of ministry and life.*

4. Seminary policy regarding drop/adds. I understand that once I have completed, signed, and submitted my registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a BINDING CONTRACT, and my billing will be based on this registration. I further understand if I decide not to take this class, a "drop/add" form must be completed, including securing appropriate signatures. Failure to properly withdraw from the class will result in receiving a grade of "F" for the course and full tuition charges will apply. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE TO THIS POLICY.

5. My normal office hours are posted on my office door for each semester. However, there are times when I will not be in my office during those posted hours. If you need to see me or speak with me, please send me an email (slowe@erskine.edu) or leave me a voice mail on my office phone (864.379.8748).

6. Christian Education is a hybrid of the fields of Education and Theology. Typically theologians prefer the Turabian or footnote style of citation. Educators as well as others in the social sciences prefer the American Psychological Association (APA) in-text citation style. The Seminary allows either at the graduate level. I allow students who use either style in my classes. My only requirement is that you do not mix the two citation styles. Choose either APA (my preference) or Turabian (the Seminary's preference).

7. Plagiarism, defined as the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise, is a clear violation of the Erskine Seminary Honor Code as set forth in the [Student Handbook](#) and [Seminary Catalog](#). It is also a clear violation of the will of God in regard to taking something that belongs to someone else without his/her permission.

The penalty for an infraction of the plagiarism policy is severe and may potentially result in the permanent dismissal of a student from the seminary. If you have any questions concerning the appropriate use of referenced sources, please contact me prior to submitting your work for grading.