

“Philosophers of education are interested in analyzing and clarifying concepts and questions central to education. Long before there were professional philosophers of education, philosophers and educators debated questions familiar to contemporary philosophers of education: What should be the aims and purposes of education? Who should be educated? Should education differ according to natural interests and abilities?”

Nel Noddings. *Philosophy of Education* (1)

Course Description

This course seeks to engage participants in investigation of the theoretical foundations and current practices of educational ministry. Participants will explore theories and practices that shape and support educational ministry, articulate a personal religious education theory and engage in curriculum design and evaluation. This course prepares educators for church leadership in the area of Religious Education Theory and Practice and fulfills the requirements for coursework in this area for PCUSA educator certification.

Purposes of this course

Students will:

1. investigate definitions and approaches to religious education.
2. become familiar with the components of religious education theory.
3. engage in reading and reflection on current literature in religious education theory and practice.
4. identify and critically assess a personal theory of religious education.
5. design and evaluate educational events that demonstrate understanding of theoretical foundations and best practices in educational ministry.

Required Text

Seymour, Jack L. *Teaching the Way of Jesus: Educating Christians for Faithful Living*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014.)

Required Reading (required chapters available on course Blackboard site)

Elias, John L. *A History of Christian Education: Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox Perspectives*. (Malabar FLA: Krieger, 2002.)

Noddings, Nel. *Philosophy of Education, 3rd edition*. (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2012.)

Roberto, John. *Reimagining Faith Formation for the 21st century*. (LifelongFaith Associates, 2015.)

Particular Theorists (for class presentation: assigned by the instructor)

Caldwell, Elizabeth. *God's Big Table: Nurturing Children in a Diverse World*. (Pilgrim Press, 2011.)

Dykstra, Craig. *Growing in the Life of Faith: Education and Christian Practices*. (Westminster/John Knox, 2005)

Foster, Charles. *From Generation to Generation: The Adaptive Challenge of Mainline Protestant Education in Forming Faith*. (Cascade Books: 2012.)

Wimberley, Anne Streaty. *Nurturing Faith and Hope*. (Wipf and Stack Publishing, 2010)

Web resources

Life Long Faith Associates:

“Reimagining Faith Formation” <http://www.reimaginefaithformation.com/>

“Faith Formation Learning Exchange” <http://www.faithformationlearningexchange.net/>

Talbot School of Theology internet resource: Religious Educators of the 21st century

<http://www2.talbot.edu/ce20/> (last accessed May 15, 2019)

Course Requirements

1. Course Participation:

Participants engage in online and face to face learning. All assignments must be successfully completed to receive notice of satisfactory accomplishment for PCUSA certification and/or Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

- This course includes four weeks of online engagement, in which students will participate in online discussion and directed individual assignments. Posted reading assignments should be completed in advance of online discussion to ensure full participation. Written assignments should be submitted in a timely manner and submitted as directed by the instructor.

- Face to face session: students are expected to attend and fully participate in the scheduled twelve hours of class.

Assignment Descriptions

1. Weekly online discussion of posted reading assignments.

2. Small Group Project: Students will critically read an assigned text written by a Christian education theorist. The small group will design and teach a class session (one hour) that introduces learners to the assigned author’s theoretical framework. Teaching sessions will occur during the face to face session. Texts will be assigned by the instructor at the beginning of the course. This assignment is comprised of 2 components: a lesson plan that will be shared with class mates and teaching of the class session. Guidelines may be found on the class Blackboard course site.

3. Personal Theory of Religious Education: This paper presents the student’s own philosophy of religious education and articulates understanding of the 5 basic components discussed in class. The paper should begin with an opening definition/ description of religious education that is elaborated in subsequent sections of the paper with the headings: purpose and aim of education; context; the role of teachers and learners; curriculum; methods. Explicit connections to existing models of religious education must be included. This final paper should be 5-7 pages in length or a page for each section listed above.

Due by February 16, 2020.

Schedule of Topics

Week 1: January 6-12

Overview, Definitions of Religious Education

Philosophy and Education

Components of Religious Education theory

Week 2: January 13-19

Purpose and Context of Religious Education Theory

Historical and contemporary contexts

Religious educators of the 20th century

Week 3: January 20-26

Best Practices in lesson planning and evaluation
Learners and Teachers
Curriculum and Methods
Particular Theories: John Roberto

Week 4: January 27-29: Face to face session of 12 hours, Little Rock, AK

Particular Theories: teaching presentations
Education through Worship: Anne Wimberley, *Nurturing Faith and Hope*
Education in Communities of Faith: Charles Foster: *Generation to Generation*
Education as Spiritual Formation: Craig Dykstra: *Education and Christian Practices*
Education as Christian Instruction: Elizabeth Caldwell: *God's Big Table*

Week 5: February 3-16

Integration, Reflection, Evaluation

Final papers due on February 16, 2020