Course: 01.607 The Adult Learner.

Time: Thursday 4-6:30  Room: As Scheduled
Instructor: Dr. James Carifio  Office: 527 O’Leary Library
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Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 2:15-3:45, after class, & by appointment

Required Materials

1. Tennant, M.  Psychology of the Adult Learner.  Routledge, 0-415-37335-7

Choose one of the above two texts: Tennant is the more educational/practical/masters level one and Hansen-Lemme is the more detailed and doctoral level one.

3. Class handouts, articles, and helpful web sites: You will need to email me at the following email address (James_Carifio607@yahoo.com), and I then will email you back an electronic form of the list of on-line books and sites I will hand out in class. Emailing me will start the process of your receiving electronic handouts from me and post-class follow-up memos as well as my answering your questions and your turning in certain assignments to me. The Yahoo address is the address for doing “course business” to keep my university email relatively uncluttered.

Optional Materials


2. Perry, W. Forms of Ethical and Intellectual Development in the College Years, Jossey-Bass, 0-7879-4118-2

Choose which ones interest you if any.

Other Helpful Texts and Materials: Separate Bibliography (handout)
Course Overview

This course is intended to give doctoral (or masters) students a broad introduction to the nature of the adult learner and adult (i.e., post-secondary) education. Adult learning ranges from late adolescent (young adults) to "grey panthers" and beyond. Goethe wrote Faust and Cervantes wrote Don Quixote in their eighties, which was when Grandma Moses decided to take up painting. The list of highly productive octogenarians is exceedingly long and getting longer every day, so there is hope that you might finish a dissertation before your ninetieth birthday.

This course will review the major basic theories of adult learning and development, and then focus on adult development in detail including the developmental and adult challenges of post industrial life today. It will look at different kinds of adult learning in various contexts and in terms of a number of key contemporary issues (e.g., dynamic competence, professional development, continuous and multiple leading edge(s) and fuzzy Eriksonian challenges in one’s daily life, learning and teaching in non-traditional contexts and ways, and many of the issues and foci mentioned in this overview. It will look at the field of adult learning as it has been historically and as it will be most probably in the future. As all adult learning, according to Knowles and others, should begin with a needs assessment of the learners in the course, so too will this course begin with an assessment of the needs of the students in the course. Based on the results of this need assessment, the second half of the course will be tailored to the needs, talents and goals of students taking the course, and the syllabus for the second half of the course will be collaboratively planned and constructed within some basic ground rules (see separate handout and below for details).

In general, the top 400 "leading edge" companies in America (and elsewhere) annually list effective methods for educating their employees and keeping their knowledge and skills current as one of their top five competitive needs. Learning is now life-long and professional development has emerged as a major goal in all fields, particularly via the internet; and post-secondary education has started to become an area of intense focus and concern in all societies world wide, but particularly so in technologically advanced societies. Further, higher-order personal, social, cultural, and cognitive developments typically occur after graduation from college over the next fifty year period of the now “average person’s 75 to 80 year life span,” with people now being healthy and highly functional well beyond conventional ‘retirement’ ages. Adult learning and adult education, therefore, is rapidly becoming a hot area and topic (once again) for a number of complex reasons. Strangely, many of the newest, informal and technologically driven aspects and areas of adult education today are highly reminiscent of its early roots in guilds, vicarages, army camps, libraries, village squares, revival meetings, clubs, associations, political parties, newspapers, theaters, correspondence courses, evening schools, trade shows, conferences, talks, and private lessons (particularly self-improvement ones), concentrated seminars, professional offices, museums, radio programs, pubs, (educational) television, the telephone and telegraph, audio and video tapes, and local and world tours and travel, just to mention a few of the venues and modes of “adult education.”
The ways, places, and modes in and by which adults learn are far more **varied and diversified** than non-adult learners, and this fact is one of the reasons why the teaching of adults is known as **androgogy**, as opposed to **pedagogy**, which is the teaching of children (and a much more highly prescriptive activity and approach). The other chief and critical distinction between the adult and non-adult learner is that the **adult learner** is a “**tabula NON-rasa**,” and the **adult learner** has “**a lot of baggage (hopefully), both good and bad**,” that they bring to every learning situation and learning transaction including life experience and life demands. The adult learner, therefore, is **qualitatively** very different from the non-adult learner, and thus usually requires a different theory of learning and teaching (i.e., androgogy) than the non-adult learner. However, it is argued by many, including John Dewey, that American culture waits far too long to ‘go androgogical’ in the teaching and education of children, and thus delays “learning adulthood.” It is this delay of learning adulthood that is seen by many theorists as one of the major roots of many adult learning (and life) difficulties and problems. These points, and other related to them, will be discussed more fully in your first handout and the course.

**Evaluation and Grading**

1. Each student will chose a topic or area to research and then do a class presentation (10 points) and paper on that research area or topic (20 points). The topic and presentation date must be finalized by sixth meeting date. The paper is formally due on the last meeting date.

2. Each student will join a learning group and meet with their group once a week (class time will be provided to meet this minimum meeting and meeting mode requirement and other modes of meeting will also be strongly encouraged) to engage in various androgogical learning activities (15 points).

3. Each student will complete a self-assessment and communicate to their group and class what knowledge and skills they have that may be of value to others (5 points) and what knowledge and skills they need some help with from others by the third meeting date (5 points).

4. Each student will develop three learning goals or objectives for the course for themselves by the third class meeting and make these known to the instructor and their group (10 points).

5. Each student will construct an assessment procedure to evaluate the degree to which they've met their goals (within the general ground rules of the course) by the fifth class meeting, and carry out and report the results of this evaluation by the last class meeting (15 points).

6. Each group will establish it own ground rules (within the general ground rules of the course) for conducting the group and tracking and evaluating the groups performance and
effectiveness in facilitating the achievement of goals, and each group will give a brief summative report on these matters in weeks 9 and 14 of the course (10 points).

7. The instructor in this course will seek to encourage speech, discussion and even debate on various topics and issues according to scholarly rules of engagement (see separate handout), and students will seek to encourage the same, participate, and abide by the scholarly rules of engagement in such exchanges both within class and within their groups (15 points).

Student research topic presentations will occur in the last third of this course. A group standard (and rubric) will be developed to assess and assign the points for group and class presentations and participation. Several short essay questions or micro-problems may be assigned to learning groups to do which will be part of the group’s "androgogical activities." Groups may or may not assign or elect a leader or chair.

Grading will be done either on a simple percentage basis relative to the 100 points indicated in the evaluations above (the default grading system), or by a system devised by the class that is approved by the instructor. The alternative grading system, if devised, must be established by the fourth meeting of the course.

Ground Rules

Details on the four major grounds rules for the course (i.e., Making and Keeping Covenants, Concern for Others, Active Curiosity, and Being “Competence and Performance-Centered”), will be handed out and discussed in the first class. These ground rules are representative of some of the characteristics of the ‘adult classroom” and the “adult learner.”

Schedule


F16: Definitions of adulthood, the workplace and other realities (the home-place and the personal-place) and view of adult development. Reading: review Tennant 24-40; begin Tennant 66-88. F20: Adult development. Readings: finish Tennant 66-88; read Tennant 123-140; start Dagostino and Carifio article.
M23: Identities and identity formation and adult development (affective, social, cultural). **Readings:** finish Dagostino and Carifio article; Tennant, 140-152; Start Merrian. **Assessment Procedure due.**


M9: Character, Personality, ethics, roles and professionalism: handouts:

M16: Spring Break: continue work on personal goals

M23: Learning style and other individual difference variable including learning and other disabilities. **Readings:** Tennant 89-106; handouts

M30: Generic and life-long skills and literacies: critical thinking, communicating, problem-solving, inventiveness, negotiating, goal-setting, evaluating, contract making, ethics, self-regulation, caring, nurturing, citizenship, productivity, work habits and life attitudes. **Student presentations. Readings:** Handouts

A6: Models of Career Choice and Post-secondary education (undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education). **Student presentations. Readings:** Handouts

A13: Learning in the workplace including professional development, coaching, mentoring, and advancement education. **Student presentations. Readings:** Handouts

A20: Models of leadership and followership; team play and cooperative learning and management (getting your achievement through the achievement of others). **Student presentations. Readings:** Handouts

A27: Social, Health and Life-living Learning including prevention, parenting, relationships, family and caring. **Student presentations. Readings:** Handouts

M4: Adult education and the economy; Adult education and the quality of the culture. **Student presentations. Readings:** Handouts.

M11: Learning with and through technology and learning and the internet and specialized agents (e-books, ipods and various players, e-assistants, and software of various kinds including virtual worlds). **Paper due.**

M19: learning encounters and brief and short-term learning events and programs (i.e., the directions for your new gadget, instructions from your doctor, and audio-tape on meditation, a book or video on parenting or investing or planning your retirement). **Group Reports**