In this class, we will collectively engage in asking critical questions about the theories of learning and development that most influence student affairs practice. These include considerations of the students a theory includes and those it excludes. When we do that, we ask about a theory’s representativeness. We will also ask questions about how and where a theory was produced. In asking those sorts of questions, we are seeking information about a theory’s generalizability. Finally, we will ask questions about when a theory should be used and how best to use it. Those questions seek to determine a theory’s utility and assist us in making high quality theory-to-practice translations.

Nota Bene: On Our Course Readings

This course is constructed such that the readings are most extensive at the outset and then taper off as the assignments get underway. This design should allow you time to read the things that were not assigned but are important to the completion of your course papers. Please plan accordingly.
Course Texts

Nota Bene: An asterisk indicates a required text; all others are optional


Grading & Assignments

Grading will be based upon a 100 point scale with the following correspondences between the points earned and the grade awarded:

- A: More than 94 Points
- A-: 90-93 Points
- B+: 87-89 Points
- B: 83-86 Points
- B-: 80-82 Points
- C+: 77-79 Points
- C: 73-76 Points
- C-: 70-72 Points
- D: 60-69 Points
- F: Less than 59 Points

The following assignments are included in the course grade:

1) **Participation [20 Percent of Final Grade]**: I expect that you will attend each week’s class meeting and that you will have reviewed the week’s readings in advance. If that will not happen, I expect you to notify me in advance. Both elements are critical to your success in the course since our class meetings will consist mostly of discussion.

2) **Is Theory Useful? [30 Percent of Final Grade]**: As we go through this course, we will explore how both formal theories shape student affairs practice. For this assignment, you will need to produce a “draft” of an essay that attempts to answer the question: Is theory useful?
That draft will be due early in the semester, so you will need to draw upon your experiences and prior coursework to complete it. This draft should be approximately 2-3 pages in length and should provide both an answer to the question and a justification. You will revisit your draft answer near the end of the semester—revising, expanding, and/or rejecting parts of it to reflect the way that your thinking has evolved. Your “final” answer to the question should make extensive use of readings and be 4-6 pages in length. **Initial Draft Due: September 9 (10 Percent of Final Grade) | Final Draft Due: December 9 (20 Percent of Final Grade)**

3) **Original Readings Assignment [20 Percent of Final Grade]:** For this assignment, you will read a book that expands on the theories we discuss in this class. Acceptable choices are listed following each week’s readings as the “Featured Book.” You will then write a paper discussing the book and providing your reaction to it. The paper should include the following information: 1) title and author of the book, 2) an explanation of the format of the book and a summary of key points; 3) the most important information about the theory that you learned from the book; 4) a discussion of the application of the theory to your practice; and 5) the strengths and weaknesses of the book itself. You need to cite other literature to support your discussion. There is no fixed page length requirement for this assignment, but it can typically be completed in 6-8 pages. **Due: Varies by Selection (Due Week Featured)**

4) **Theory-to-Practice Paper [30 Percent of Final Grade]:** For this paper, you will select and describe a problem in practice (e.g. working with at-risk students, advising the student government association). You must then address the problem through the lens of at least one theory from both of the following categories: 1) psychosocial and identity development and 2) cognitive-structural and moral development. Your textbooks serve as an excellent starting point for this assignment, but to complete it successfully, you will need to support your description with additional readings. You should also describe potential concerns in using these theories in response to the problem you have identified. You should then describe the strategies that you believe would be effective in addressing the issue that you selected. Please take care to connect these strategies directly to your analysis of the theories you selected. When creating strategies for practice, you could focus on designing a formal program, describing how you would work with a student one-on-one, or both. You will turn in this assignment in three parts. First, you will provide an analysis of an intervention based on a psychosocial or identity development theory. Second, you will provide an analysis of an intervention based on a cognitive-structural or moral development theory. Both of these papers will likely be 4-5 pages. Finally, you will submit an integrated paper that uses these drafts to compare theories and interventions. This assignment can be completed successfully in 10-12 pages. **Part 1 Due: October 28 (10 Percent of Final Grade) | Part 2: November 12 (10 Percent of Final Grade) | Final Paper: November 25 (10 Percent of Final Grade)**
Course Meetings

Week One: September 2
Towards a Theory of Reflexive Practice

Textbook(s):

Jones & Abes (2013) – Chapters 1-2 [Optional]

Article(s):


Week Two: September 9
Learning and/or Development

Textbook(s):

Phillips & Soltis (2009) – Chapters 1-3, 5-7 [Optional]

Article(s):


Week Three: September 16
Emerging Adulthood: An Integrative Approach?

Textbook(s):

Arnett et al (2011) – Chapters 1-5

Article(s):


Featured Book (Nota Bene: See Original Readings Assignment for More Information):

Week Four: September 23
Psychosocial Development: Accounting for the Affective Domain

Textbook(s):
Evans et al (2010) – Chapters 3-4

Article(s):

Featured Book (Nota Bene: See Original Readings Assignment for More Information):

Week Five: September 30
Models of Social Identity Development

Textbook(s):
Evans et al (2010) – Chapter 13
Jones & Abes (2013) – Chapters 3-5

Featured Book (Nota Bene: See Original Readings Assignment for More Information):

Week Six: October 7
Models of Racial and Ethnic Identity Development

Textbook(s):
Evans et al (2010) – Chapters 14-16
Jones & Abes (2013) – Chapters 6 & 7 [Optional]

Article(s):
Tanaka, G. (2009). The elephant in the living room that no one wants to talk about: Why U.S. anthropologists are unable to acknowledge the end of culture. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 40*(1), 82–95.

Featured Book (Nota Bene: See Original Readings Assignment for More Information):
Week Seven: October 14

No Class: The University says today is Monday

Week Eight: October 21
Models of Gender & Sexual Identity Development

Textbook(s):
Evans et al (2010) – Chapters 17-18
Jones & Abes (2013) – Chapter 8 [Optional]

Article(s):

Featured Book (Nota Bene: See Original Readings Assignment for More Information):

Week Nine: October 28
Cognitive / Structural Models of Development

Textbook(s):
Evans et al (2010) – Chapters 5 & 7

Article(s):

Featured Book (Nota Bene: See Original Readings Assignment for More Information):

Week Ten: November 4
Model of Moral Reasoning & Spiritual Identity Development

Textbook(s):
Evans et al (2010) – Chapter 6
Evans et al (2010) – Chapter 11
Featured Book (Nota Bene: See Original Readings Assignment for More Information):

**Week Eleven: November 12 (Wednesday Class Meeting)**
**Review, Recap, & Forecasting the Closing Weeks of Class**

Article(s):

**Week Twelve: November 18**

No class: Today is the third day of the NASPA Region One Conference, which you should consider attending if you are interested in a student affairs career.

**Week Thirteen: November 25**
**Developmental Ecology & Self-Authorship: Attempts at Integration**

Textbook(s):
  Evans et al (2010) – Chapters 9 & 10

Article(s):

**Week Fourteen: December 2**
**Closing Thoughts: Putting our Theories Away Neatly... And Messing Them Up Again...**

Textbook(s):
  Arnett et al (2011) – Chapter 8

Article(s):
Course Policies

Academic Honesty - Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department head or chair. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent (http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/).

Accommodations - The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), Learning Disabilities Support Services (LDSS), or Psychological Disabilities Services (PDS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify the instructor within the first two weeks of the semester so that I may make appropriate arrangements. Also, please inform the instructor of any religious observances that will require you to miss class or require special accommodation.

Citation Style - Wherever possible, you should provide references to sources utilizing APA style, which is standard in most education-related areas of study. The full guide to APA style is can be found in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (Sixth Edition). A short guide is available online at Purdue’s Online Writing Lab (http://owl.english.purdue.edu). In all written assignments, you should provide a bibliography. Apart from citation style, you may format your written assignments however you would like provided you do so consistently.

Electronic Submission of Work - Unless otherwise specified, all assignments should be submitted by email. I will respond to your email within one business day to let you know that I have received it. If you do not receive an email to that effect, you are responsible for contacting me to confirm that I have received it. Please do not provide a paper copy.

Late Assignments - It does not matter to me when you turn in your assignments; I will spend the same amount of time offering feedback regardless of when you submit them. However, it has been my experience that sometimes deadlines are missed because they are started too late, which in turn inhibits both the quality of assignment and what can be learned from it. As a result, if you would like to turn in an assignment later than the date on the syllabus, I require that you notify me at least 72 hours in advance. Late works for which an extension is not received will be awarded a grade one letter grade lower than that which it would otherwise have been assigned. All work must be submitted prior to the end of the semester; since a grade is supposed to be a measurement of learning over a discrete period of time, I do not award incompletes.