PSY 606 Lifespan Development

Fall 2026

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Course Dates: November 16-20, 2026
Course Delivery Method: Online Modular

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course surveys the psychological models for understanding human development. Emphasis is given to personality, social, intellectual, spiritual and physical development, and the major theories used to describe how people change throughout their life span.

COURSE INTEGRATION

This course seeks to fulfill Briercrest Seminary-wide Outcome (SO#3) by prompting students to think about how one's soul, mind and strength are formed and molded throughout their lifespan.

This course also provides a systemic understanding of development that is foundational for any work with children, adolescents, or adults fulfilling the MACC Program Outcome (PO#1). It aims to create an awareness of the maturation processes in the context of attachment, from how we connect and relate to ourselves (PO#4), our family system (PO#1), our community and our God, throughout the lifespan. It provides a body of knowledge and thought that lays the bedrock for understanding people, problems and how people change (PO#2).

COURSE TEXTS

Crain, William (2024). *Theories of development: Concepts and application*. Routledge.
(*note that the 7th Edition (2024) is the most recent, however you can use any edition for the purposes of this course).

O'Shaughnessy, R., Berry, K., Dallos, R., & Bateson, K. (2023). *Attachment Theory: The Basics*. Routledge.

Siegel, Daniel (2015). *Brainstorm: The power and purpose of the teenage brain.* TarcherPerigree.

Recommended:

Neufeld, G. & Mate, G. (2004). *Hold on to Your Kids: Why parents matter*. Knopf.

MacNamara, D. (2016). *Rest play grow: Making sense of preschoolers (or anyone who acts like one).* Vancouver, BC: Aona Books.

Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers*, available as PDF documents here: https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/currentstudents/documents.*

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: https://textbooks.briercrest.ca/.

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (https://briercrest.instructure.com) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

SEMINARY-WIDE OUTCOMES

Students will graduate:

1. Describing and demonstrating evangelical faith and values.
2. Preparing to serve God's kingdom in its diversity. Describe God, God's kingdom, and your calling (vocational sensitivity) within it, including the types of contexts and people you feel best prepared to serve.
3. Participating in the action of our Triune God through formation of the soul (i.e., virtue and spiritual integrity), mind (academic rigour), and strength (vocation).

MACC PROGRAM OUTCOMES (PO)

Students and graduates will:

1. Demonstrate a systemic and strength-focused perspective on people and their problems.
2. Demonstrate competence in a client-centred, collaborative therapeutic approach.
3. Demonstrate ethical clinical practice.
4. Take a reflective stance in their clinical work.

COURSE OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, each student should:

1. Have a working knowledge of the factors of attachment, vulnerability, and maturation, especially as they apply to children, adolescents and adults;
2. Recognize significant transitional experiences across the lifespan along with risks and opportunities for the individual
3. Understand human development as a continuous series of changes and psychological processes;
4. Think and write critically about theoretical or empirical research in lifespan development and link their ideas to their own experiences and clinical practice.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

1. Understanding how attachment, maturation, and vulnerability impact development
2. Understanding the role of emotion in development throughout the lifespan
3. Understanding the science of social connection and physiological safety throughout the lifespan
4. Understanding transition as a *process* rather than a series of stages

Class will start at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning (SK time). Class times for the remainder of the week will be established by the professor. Students should plan to be in class until 1:00 p.m. on Friday.

ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas following Briercrest's APA guide. **Please note: The use of AI, such as Grammarly, can only be used for final editing of the papers and presentation. AI cannot be used for any outline or content creation for any of the assignments. Acknowledgement of any AI use must be included in the assignment as per the Academic Honesty policy.**

Pre-Course Assignments:

1. Person of the Therapist Paper (4-5 pages) (SO#2, PO#4)

   Students will read *Attachment Theory: The Basics* and write a thoughtful reflection which interacts with the material. This paper is not intended as a book review or summary of attachment, though material from the text should be referenced throughout the paper. Students will identify their attachment style, the factors from their family of origin that influenced their attachment, how their attachment has impacted their development through childhood, adolescence and adulthood, and how that may impact their ability, as a therapist, to sit with clients.

   Effective therapy is not determined by the therapist's attachment style. It is determined by the therapists knowledge of their attachment style and what they do with that knowledge. This paper is meant to be an exploration of compassionate curiosity for the person of the therapist.

   Due on the first day of class (November 16, 2026)
   Value: 20%

2. Nature VS Nurture Opinion Paper (4-5 pages) (SO#2, PO#2, PO#4)

   Students will read Crain and Siegel in their entirety and write an opinion paper stating their current view on the Nature versus Nurture debate. They should use evidence from the texts to support their stance.

   Due on the first day of class (November 16, 2026)
   Value: 20%

Mid-Course Assignments:

Participation (in-class, forum responses, end-of-class reflection): 10%

Post-Course Assignments:

1. Community Presentation (SO#1, SO#2, SO#3, PO#1)

Students are to create a community or church presentation educating a population group of a particular life stage. This may be directed towards individuals, and/or their caregivers, and/or their families. The presentation should be informative as well as practical and should include a handout for the participants. It should be approximately 20 minutes long and must be original content.

While this is not a research paper, it should include learning from all required texts, class material, 3 current journals articles as well as integrate their Biblical worldview. Bio-psycho-social-spiritual themes should be included as well as a list of resources. Students have the opportunity to be creative with this project!

Students should choose a format that feels most comfortable for them. This may include a recording of some sort (movie or slideshow recording) or a typed out role-play. Some possibilities include an interactive sermon, a class setting, a Q&A session. This assignment is open-ended to give students the opportunity to use a format that best suits their personality and development. A rubric will be provided on canvas for this assignment.

Choose one of the following groups, or speak to the professor if you wish to use a different population group:
Pre-natal class
Parents of toddlers
Teens and/or parents
Young Adult: singles or couples
Empty Nesters/Retirees
Seniors

Due Date: January 8, 2027
Value 35%

2. Community Presentation Follow-Up (2-3 pages) (PO#2, PO#4)):

Students will write out an imaginary conversation between an attendee of their community presentation and themselves as the presenter. It should include questions that the attendee has personally about the stage of life presented about and the presenter's responses based on class learning and theory.

Due Date: January 8, 2027
Value: 15%

SEMINARY CALENDAR

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar:

Attendance Policy
In order to benefit fully from a seminary education, to be good stewards of time and finances, and to be considerate of their classmates and faculty members, students must be in class at every opportunity.
Modular Courses
Students are expected to attend 100 per cent of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course

professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one (1) full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Online Courses

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending scheduled meeting times, then up to 20% of meeting time can be foregone. Students missing scheduled meeting times should make every effort to inform the course professor prior to any time missed. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Semester-Based Courses

All students missing more than two full weeks of a particular course from registration to the last day of classes will receive an automatic fail (0%). A student may appeal a course failure due to excessive absences. Successful appeals will be granted only in rare cases where all absences are clearly beyond the student's control. Appeals must be made through the Academic Appeal Process.

Modular Course Schedules

Modular classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

Assignment Submission

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the academic calendar.

Return of Graded Assignments

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the Seminary. If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

Academic Honesty

As members of the Briercrest learning community, students have a responsibility to conduct themselves with integrity and honour. Students who cheat on exams, plagiarize, inappropriately collaborate, or use generative AI without instructor authorization violate the trust placed in them by their instructors, fellow students, and the seminary. Any such actions constitute a breach of academic honesty and will result in serious consequences, such as failure of an assignment, failure of a course, or expulsion from the seminary.

> Plagiarism, whether intentional or involuntary, is the submission of the work of others, published or unpublished, in whole or in part without acknowledgment or proper documentation. All information, ideas and/or direct quotations taken from other primary or secondary sources must be documented appropriately.

> Generative AI is an umbrella term for a type of machine learning and a group of algorithms that can create new content, such as text, code, images, videos, music, or a combination of all these formats. Generative AI produces output in response to a query or prompt using generative models such as Large Language Models (LLMs) that rely on large datasets. Generative AI features are also often embedded within tools such as Grammarly, allowing these tools to generate new content, such as the rewriting, paraphrasing, or summarizing of existing text. The generated responses of these tools are probabilistic, which can result in errors and biases in responses.

The use of generative AI to create audio or visual media, to produce outlines, to generate partial or complete drafts of assignments, to answer questions on quizzes or exams, or to edit the grammar of assignment drafts is considered unauthorized unless it is explicitly permitted by the course instructor in writing. All use of generative AI tools must be properly documented.

Students are responsible for ensuring they are using their sources and completing their assignments with transparency and honesty. For more details, consult the Seminary Calendar and the Briercrest Format Guide. In addition to being familiar with these pages, instructors assume that you have completed the Briercrest Academic Integrity course on Canvas and understand the information contained in it.

Academic Accommodations

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition (mental or physical) who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should contact the ARC Coordinator in person (Room 217), by phone (1-306-801-6159), or by email (arc@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.). It is recommended that students meet with their professors to discuss the requirements of their accommodations (i.e., how the student will receive lecture notes, or how the professor wants to receive extension requests).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arnett, J. (2017). *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood: A Cultural Approach* (6th ed.). Pearson.

Bjorklund, B. (2019). *The journey of adulthood* –Access Card (9th ed.)1. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall

Crain, William (2010). *Theories of Development: Concepts and Application*. NJ: Prentice Hall.

Laser, J. A., & Nicotera, N. (2021). *Working With Adolescents A Guide For Practitioners*. (2nd ed.). The Guilford Press.

Mercer, Jean. (2006). *Understanding Attachment: Parenting, child care, and emotional development.* Praeger Publishers.

Neufeld Intensive: Making Sense of Kids, 2013.

O'Shaughnessy, R., Berry, K., Dallos, R., & Bateson, K. (2023). *Attachment Theory: The Basics*. Routledge.

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