

Course Syllabus
KNP1443HF – Human Growth & Spiritual Journey
Knox College
Toronto School of Theology
Fall 2026

Instructor Information

Instructor:	Eser Kim
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Office Hours:	Please send me an email to schedule an appointment

Course Identification

Course Number:	KNP1443HF
Course Format:	<i>Online</i>
Course Name:	Human Growth & Spiritual Journey
Course Location:	Online – Synchronous
Class Times:	Mondays 10:00 am-1:00 pm
Prerequisites:	

Course Description

This course will explore various theories of human development, stages of human growth, and lifespan spiritual journey in correlation to human growth, and will discuss implications for Christian Ministry. We will reflect on our own growth and journey along with theories of human growth and spiritual journey.

Additional course information

This course engages with the theme[a post-Christendom context and Gender and Sexuality] in the Knox MDiv.

How can psychotherapy engage theories of human development that emphasize universal patterns while remaining attentive to the particularity of individual, cultural, and contextual life stories? Drawing on key developmental theorists and theological voices, the course investigates how individuals grow cognitively, morally, emotionally, and spiritually in context. Through critical engagement with interdisciplinary scholarship and theological reflection, students will develop integrated frameworks that inform faith formation, pastoral care, and Christian education. This course emphasizes cross-cultural awareness, theological imagination, and ministry application.

A note about “trigger” warnings: You are preparing for vocations (congregational ministry, spiritual care, psychotherapy, teaching, research, etc.) that by their nature present you with stimulating situations, including domestic violence, child sexual abuse, effects of addiction, and other very traumatic events. Your vocational preparation anticipates that you will meet such situations in the real world, that

you will not be warned about the nature of the stimulus, and that you have to protect a person from your own reaction to situations that may “trigger” a response in you. Your faculty advisor, the registrar’s staff, and the Ecumenical Chaplains can direct you to resources for you to engage in care for your own self. In your studies you will likely not be warned about the kind of “triggering” event that you may encounter.

In this course, if you begin to lose control of your emotions, you may leave with one colleague from the class until you can collect yourself, or you may engage in other practices (journaling, meditation) that allow you to regain control. If you or your colleague are concerned that you cannot regain control or are unduly distressed, you and your colleague should seek assistance from the Knox Registrar’s office. Staff there have access to immediate assistance. In the end, your emotional safety is your own responsibility.

Course Resources

Required Course Texts/Bibliography

Required Texts

- Cahalan, Kathleen A. and Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore: *Calling all years good: Christian Vocation throughout Life's Seasons*, 2017.
- Kelcourse, Felicity ed. *Human Development and Faith: Life-cycle Stages of Body, Mind, and Soul*, chapters 1 – 4. (second edition). St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2015.
- William Crain, *Theories of Development: Concepts and Applications*, 5th ed. 2005.
- Azmitia, Margarita, Paulette D. Garcia Peraza, and Saskias Casanova. “Social Identities and Intersectionality: A Conversation About the What and the How of Development.” *Annual Review of Developmental Psychology* 5 (2023): 169–191.
- Newman, B. & Newman, P. *Theories of Human Development*, chapters 4 & 8, First edition. Psychology Press. 2005.
- Ellis, Wes, “Human Beings and Human Becomings: Departing from the Developmental Model of Youth Ministry,” *Journal of Youth and Theology* 14(2): 119-137
- Erikson, Erik H. *The Life Cycle Completed*, (Extended Version), chapter. 3, New York, New York: W.W Norton & Company Ltd, 1998.
- Gibbs, J.E., Basinger, K.S., Grime, R.L., & Sanrey, J.R. (2007). “Moral Judgement Development across Cultures: Revisiting Kohlberg’s Universality Claims.” *Developmental Review*, 27, 443-500.
- Kim, Sharon. “Hybrid Spiritualities: The Development of Second Generation Korean American Spirituality” in *Human Architecture* 4 (Summer 2006) 225-238.
- Linn, Denis, Et al. Good Goats – Healing our Image of God.
- Miller, L. (2021). “A Different Life.” Chapter 10 in *The Awakened Brain*. Random House. pp. 137-145.
- Palombo et al. (2009). *Guide to Psychoanalytic Developmental Theories*. Chapters 15.
- Snarey, J. & Bridgers, L. (2006). James, William. *Encyclopedia of Spiritual and Religious Development* (pp. 227-231). Sage.

All readings are available in hard copy from the library, on reserve or through Quercus.

Course Website

Quercus: <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at <https://q.utoronto.ca/> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701> . Students experiencing difficulties accessing Quercus should contact the registrar's office of their college.

Course Schedule (subject to change)

Week 1 Introduction to Human Development

Monday, September 14

Required Readings

- Kelcourse, Human Development and Faith, chapter 1.
- Azmitia, Margarita, Paulette D. Garcia Peraza, and Saskias Casanova. "Social Identities and Intersectionality: A Conversation About the What and the How of Development." *Annual Review of Developmental Psychology* 5 (2023): 169–191.

Week 2 Life-Cycle Stages in Body, Mind, and Soul

Monday, September 21

Required Readings

- Kelcourse, Human Development and Faith, chapter 2.

Week 3 Jean Piaget – Cognitive Development

Monday, September 28

Required Readings

- Newman and Newman (2007). *Theories of Human Development*. Chapter 4.

Week 4 Erik Erikson – Psycho-social Stages

Monday, October 5

Required Readings

- Erikson (1997). *The Life Cycle Completed*. Chapter 3: "Major Stages in Psychosocial Development." pp. 55-82.
- Optional: Ellis, Wes, "Human Beings and Human Becomings: Departing from the Developmental Model of Youth Ministry," *Journal of Youth and Theology* 14(2): 119-137
- Optional: Newman and Newman (2007). *Theories of Human Development*. Chapter 8: "Psychosocial Theory"

Monday, October 12 No Class, Thanksgiving

Week 5 Lawrence Kohlberg, Carol Gilligan & Jonathan Haidt – Moral Development, Feminist Revisions, Moral Foundations Theory

Monday, October 19

Required Readings

- William Crain, *Theories of Development*, chapter 7. Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development
- Gibbs, J.E., Basinger, K.S., Grime, R.L., & Snarey, J.R. (2007). "Moral Judgement Development across Cultures: Revisiting Kohlberg's Universality Claims." *Developmental Review*, 27, 443-500.

- Haidt J. "The new synthesis in moral psychology." *Science*. 2007 May 18;316(5827):998-1002. doi: 10.1126/science.1137651. PMID: 17510357.
- Optional:
https://www.ted.com/talks/jonathan_haidt_the_moral_roots_of_liberals_and_conservatives

Autobiographical Narrative Due Friday, October 23, 2026, 11:59pm.

Monday, October 26, No Class, Reading Week

Week 6 James Fowler – Faith Development

Monday, November 2

Required Readings

- Fowler, James W. *Stages of Faith*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1995, pp.1-34.
- Miller, L. (2021). "A Different Life." Chapter 10 in *The Awakened Brain*. Random House. pp. 137-145.
- Snarey, J. & Bridgers, L. (2006). James, William. *Encyclopedia of Spiritual and Religious Development* (pp. 227-231). Sage.

Week 7 Ana Maria Rizzuto and Bowlby – Attachment Theories and Images of God

Monday, November 9

Required Readings

- Rizzuto, Ana-Maria. The birth of the living God: a psychoanalytic study, Introduction & Ch. 10, pp.177-211, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
- Palombo et al. (2009). *Guide to Psychoanalytic Developmental Theories*. Chapters 15.

Optional

- Linn, Denis, Et al. Good Goats – Healing our Image of God.

Week 8 Culture, Race, Family, and Developmental Inequity

Monday, November 16

Required Readings

- Kelcourse, Human Development and Faith, chapter 3.

Week 9 Culture, Race, Family, and Developmental Inequity

Monday, November 23

Required Readings

- Kelcourse, Human Development and Faith, chapter 4.
- Kim, Sharon. "Hybrid Spiritualities: The Development of Second Generation Korean American Spirituality" in *Human Architecture* 4 (Summer 2006) 225-238.

Week 10 Development in Stages: Infancy to Youth

Monday, November 30

Required Readings

- Cahalan, Kathleen A. and Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *Calling all years good: Christian Vocation throughout Life's Seasons*, 2017

Week 11 Development in Stages: Young Adult to Elderly

Monday, December 7

Required Readings

- Cahalan, Kathleen A. and Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, *Calling all years good: Christian Vocation throughout Life's Seasons*, 2017

Exam Week

Submit your final exams by Monday Dec 14, 23:59.

Evaluation

Requirements

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in four areas:

(1) Participation (10%) – In addition to participating in the regular activity of the class, including the reading of the required texts, students are expected to participate in conversation in small groups about the material and interact in large group. This “interaction” does not necessarily mean speaking up, in fact sometimes those who speak the most do not equitably participate. Interaction could be verbal comments or questions, posting in the group chat, or participating in other manners.

(2) Facilitation and Context Presentation (20%) – Due: **A day before each class**

Everyone will participate in a small group and students will take turns facilitating group discussion of the readings for a particular week (about 35-40 mins, usually at the beginning of class).

Facilitators will: 1) give a 5 minute concrete context. To make the topic concrete, students need to add a brief hypothetical or composite example, a relevant example from the media or public life, or their own lived experience. Personal disclosure is not required. For example, at week 10, an example on migration and bicultural identity might describe a young adult navigating different cultural expectations at home and in Canadian society. This example can show how development can differ among cultures. Then use the theory and class required / supplemental readings to help the class understand that experience. The example is not meant to be a formal case analysis, but simply a way to connect the topic with lived experience. 2) Think up three questions on the readings for that week to animate group discussion; 3) post those three questions by Sunday morning to the Padlet 4) create an open and inviting space for all to participate; 4) attempt to hear from all members in the group; 5) attempt to maintain the natural flow of discussion while also keeping the group on topic; 6) bring key insights from their group's discussion to the whole class when it resumes.

(3) Autobiographical Narrative (30%) – Due: **Friday Oct 23.**

Write a 6 page paper of your life story which relates to your own human development and spiritual journey. Describe your family of origin, current family relationships, and important supportive social relationships. Give examples of significant events, describing how these have impacted your personal growth and development. Describe how your life history influences who you are personally and professionally. You must relate your personal story to the course readings, and should have a critical eye to what developmental theories (if any) support your journey, and even what theory(s) may be lacking in providing substance to your personal social location.

(This is a required paper for the CPE application).

(4) *Final Paper (40%)* Format: 8-12 pages double spaced, plus title page and reference list, 12 point font, Times New Roman, one inch margins, numbered pages, indented paragraphs, subheadings preferred, Chicago style, either author-date or notes-bibliography. Due: **Thursday Dec 15.**

Psycho-Spiritual Biography: Write a spiritual biography on the life of a prominent person, integrating 1-2 theories we have discussed in the course which support the understanding of this individual. The person can be alive today (ie: the Pope) or a historical figure (ie. St. Teresa of Avila). You should use Erik Erikson's text "Young Man Luther" as a guide to a psycho-spiritual biography, which differs from a historical biography in that it seeks to interpret the life of an individual of prominence through the lens of human development spiritual journey theories.

OR

Research Paper: Summarize and critically examine one or more developmental models that you find interesting or want to know more about. You might choose to compare/contrast/integrate two or more models. Look for peer-reviewed research that confirms or critiques certain aspects of the model, and discuss the history of research on the model if applicable. You might choose to look at how a particular model is or is not finding validation in recent neuroscience and cognitive science research. Make sure to discuss how the model intersects with spiritual development.

Grading System - Basic Degree Students

1000, 2000 and 3000 level courses use the following numerical grading scale:

90-100 (A+)	Exceptional
85-89 (A)	Outstanding
80-84 (A-)	Excellent
77-79 (B+)	Very Good
73-76 (B)	Good
70-72 (B-)	Acceptable
0-69 (FZ)	Failure

Please see the appropriate Conjoint Degree handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc.).

Policies

Class attendance. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner congruent with the vocation they are seeking to enter and in which they desire to give leadership. To that end, it is a regulation of Knox College that a minimum of approximately 80% attendance at courses (10 of 12 weeks) is required for credit; 100% attendance is expected at seminar courses. Habitual lateness for class will be counted as absence.

Teaching and learning are interactive, not passive, activities. Therefore, students may not "attend" an in-person class through unauthorized audio or video streaming or by watching or listening to a recording; instructors are not obligated to record or permitted to stream their in-person classes. Online classes that include a synchronous video component require the same level of attendance as an in-person course, and students may not "attend" by watching or listening to a recording. Online classes

that include an asynchronous component require participation in all the activities for each week or module to meet the attendance requirement. Students requiring accommodations to attend class must present medical and/or Accessibility Services documentation that outlines the type and duration of accommodation(s) required.

Online class camera requirement. Knox College courses require active learning and participation. Students in synchronous online classes are required to have their cameras on during class time. Students who turn their cameras off for more than a few minutes during class time will be deemed to be absent for that class meeting. A student who is absent for more than 20% of class meetings will not receive credit, in accordance with the Knox College attendance policy. Students concerned about protecting their privacy are encouraged to use a virtual background to obscure their surroundings. Virtual backgrounds are available in both Zoom and Teams. Students should consider choosing a background that is professionally appropriate. Students should also consider the effect their “natural” background may have on viewers.

Class recording. Much of the learning that goes on in the virtual or in-person classroom is founded upon mutual disclosure that takes place between instructor and student, and between students. Parties outside of this learning community have not committed themselves to this relationship of trust. A student without an approved accommodation who wishes to make an audio recording of an in-person class must secure the agreement of the instructor and all classmates; livestreaming and video recordings are not permitted. Online video-streamed classes may be recorded at the discretion of the instructor. Personal recordings may be used only by the student who made the recording; no recording may be reproduced, posted, or distributed without the written permission of the instructor.

Technology requirements. Students are advised to consult the Knox website <https://knox.utoronto.ca/online-learning-resources/> for guidance on what technology may be required to successfully participate in the course.

Late work (BD). Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. Extensions are not automatic and must be justified. Extensions will be considered up to two days prior to an assignment due date or in emergencies. Late assignment grade deduction is a half letter grade per day. The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of exam week for the semester in which the course is taught, whichever is sooner. This penalty is not applied to students with documented medical or compassionate difficulties or exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness); students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor and request an SDF. The absolute deadline for obtaining an SDF for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of examination week, whichever is sooner. An SDF must be requested from the registrar’s office in the student’s college of registration no later than the last day of exam week in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor’s college before being posted to ACORN. Grades are not official until they are posted to ACORN. Course grades may be adjusted where they do

not comply with University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy found at <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/grading-practices-policy-university-assessment-and-january-26-2012>, policies found in the TST conjoint program handbooks, or college grading policy.

Inclusive Language. Knox College has an inclusive language policy, available at https://knox.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Knox-College-Policy_Use-of-Language-Policy-and-Glossary_221003.pdf.

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to their head of college or delegate according to the Graduate program Handbook linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>. A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges: <https://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/library/research/theology/avoiding-plagiarism-in-theological-writing/>

Use of Generative AI, e.g., Claude, Copilot, ChatGPT. The use of Generative AI is not permitted in this course. Though there are ways that AI can be useful and helpful in some educational contexts, this course is specifically designed around your personal growth and learning within the framework of human development and the spiritual journey. Though AI has proven quite adept at learning and developing tools within certain contexts, it lacks what many people refer to as "soul" or "spirit." Given the spiritual nature of this course, therefore, your own content and growth are expected without the use of AI. If you have accessibility needs or if English is not your first language, please speak with the course instructor.

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>.

Online class camera requirement. Knox College courses require active learning and participation. Students in synchronous online classes are required to have their cameras on during class time. Students who turn their cameras off for more than a few minutes during class

time will be deemed to be absent for that class meeting. A student who is absent for more than 20% of class meetings will not receive credit, in accordance with the Knox College attendance policy. Students concerned about protecting their privacy are encouraged to use a virtual background to obscure their surroundings. Virtual backgrounds are available in both Zoom and Teams. Students should consider choosing a background that is professionally appropriate. Students should also consider the effect their “natural” background may have on viewers.

Technology requirements. Students are advised to consult the Knox website <https://knox.utoronto.ca/online-learning-resources/> for guidance on what technology may be required to successfully participate in the course.

Back-up copies. Please make back-up copies of assignments before handing them in.

Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. Students should check utoronto email regularly for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from me may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

Email communication with the course instructor. The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. All email communications from students in conjoint programs must be sent from a utoronto email address. Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Basic Degrees – Knox and TST

<i>This course has the following course-level learning outcomes</i>	
Outcome	Evaluation
1. Demonstrate knowledge of theories of human growth and spiritual journey.	Small group presentations will specialize in one theory. The two papers should reflect on several others.
2. Demonstrate the ability to synthesize reading material into presentations and papers.	The final paper will particularly focus on drawing on reading material and synthesizing it for biographical narrative.
3. Demonstrate understanding of one's own social location and how it interacts with developmental theories and spirituality.	The autobiographical narrative will allow students to demonstrate this ability.
4. Demonstrate sensitivity to other's social locations and how development theories and spiritual journeys are uniquely personal.	The biographical narrative will allow students to appreciate how other social locations interact with stage theories.

<i>A student successfully completing this course has made progress towards the following Knox College degree program learning outcomes:</i>		
MDiv	MTS	MPS
☐ Interprets Scripture and Christian tradition (Reformed), using a variety of methods, sources, and norms, to preach, teach, write, and to provide care and witness. <i>Evaluation:</i> Click or tap here to enter text.	☒ Demonstrates knowledge at a basic level in various theological disciplines. <i>Evaluation:</i> This course will help students integrate practical theological knowledge and psychological insights.	☒ Demonstrates knowledge at a basic level in various theological disciplines, in the Reformed or another tradition. [* the student may come from another tradition] <i>Evaluation:</i> Click or tap here to enter text.
☒ Demonstrates skills in creative, faith-centred, adaptive, and innovative leadership for current and emerging communities of faith. <i>Evaluation:</i> Click or tap here to enter text.	☒ Finds, selects, reads, and appropriately integrates theological information. <i>Evaluation:</i> Click or tap here to enter text.	☒ Demonstrates knowledge and skills in spiritual care and therapy, grounded in appropriate theories, for professional practice and leadership in community and institutional settings. <i>Evaluation:</i> Click or tap here to enter text.
☒ Enhances the vocational and spiritual development, practices, and well-being of self and others. (See Professional and Critical Competencies.) <i>Evaluation:</i> Click or tap here to enter text.	☒ Engages respectfully and constructively in a theological community of scholarship. <i>Evaluation:</i> Click or tap here to enter text.	☒ Demonstrates an appropriate spiritual and professional identity formation in relation to specialized practice. <i>Evaluation:</i> Click or tap here to enter text.

☒ Analyzes and evaluates social, cultural, and community contexts to enable communities of faith to participate in God's work and justice in a diverse and changing world. <i>Evaluation:</i> Click or tap here to enter text.	☐ Writes and speaks in English sufficiently well to engage in theological discourse. <i>Evaluation:</i> Click or tap here to enter text.	☒ Writes and speaks in English sufficiently well to engage in professional practice. <i>Evaluation:</i> Click or tap here to enter text.
TST BASIC "DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS"	CORRESPONDING COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES (see college outcomes above)	CORRESPONDING COURSE ELEMENTS / ASSIGNMENTS
EXPECTATIONS: <i>In this course students are expected to demonstrate the following:</i>		
1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge	<i>Course goals 1 and 2</i>	<i>Small group presentation and autobiographical paper</i>
2. Knowledge of methodologies	<i>Course goals 1 and 2</i>	<i>Presentation and two papers</i>
3. Application of Knowledge	<i>Course goals 1, 2, and 3</i>	<i>Presentation and two papers</i>
4. Communication Skills	<i>Course goals 2, 3, and 4</i>	<i>Presentation and two papers</i>
5. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge	<i>Course goals 3 and 4</i>	<i>Autobiographical Narrative</i>
6. Autonomy and Professional Capacity	<i>Course goals 3 and 4</i>	<i>Final Paper</i>

CRPO Entry to Practice competencies

1. Develop knowledge of human development across the life span including spiritual, moral, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth (1.1)
2. An awareness of human development both historically and within the current theory (1.2 a)
3. Engage ways and means by which to interact with persons across the lifespan (1.5a, 4.5)
4. Develop an awareness of cultural and social differences within human development (1.5)
5. Aware of the places of the learners, individual development, and 'self' in developing and engaging relationships with others (1.4, 2.2)
6. Develop an awareness of the place of one's self in the practice of ministry and to develop professional skills that develop a safe environment in which to engage others (2.1, 2.2, 3.3).