**Capstone: Adulting**

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“Adulting” has recently appeared in the Oxford English dictionary, made the American Dialect Society’s 2016 list of notable new words, and entered the lexicon of American youth as a shorthand for what it means to be a grown-up. Adulting can be defined as:

…the assumption of tasks, responsibilities and behaviors traditionally associated with normal grown-up life, along with the implication that the individual in question does not particularly identify as an adult and that acting as one does not come naturally. Adult, in this context, is a verbed noun and is also used to describe forcing someone else, such as an employee, to behave like an adult (Rouse, 2017, italics in original).

The transition out of college challenges students to behave like adults, making decisions about their future and preparing to take care of themselves. Research on emerging adulthood confirms that students in their early twenties do not feel fully adult (Arnett, 2000), nor are they fully competent in the post-college tasks and roles that they see just ahead. Developmentally, traditional-aged college seniors are at a crossroads, sensing that the scripts from their family and society might not be an exact fit, but not yet fully capable of defining their own values, identities, and relationships (Baxter Magolda, 2004).

The proposed course will use developmental theories of young adulthood as a foundation for a discussion-based seminar focused on the self-reflection, experiences, and decisions that will help seniors in their road to becoming self-authored adults leading lives of purpose and meaning. The semester will be divided into major topics: identity, relationships, work, citizenship, and purpose/spirituality.

**Course objectives:**  
1) To *review* the pattern of choices and formative influences in one’s education; and

2) To *preview* long-term commitments (or the process of making such) in four key areas:

work/career; relationships/family; citizenship; spirituality.

**Readings (Provisional)**Developmental theory:

Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist, 55*(5), 469-480.

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P.A. (2006). The bioecological model of human development. In R.M. Lerner (Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 793-828). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Baxter Magolda, M.B. (2004). Self-authorship as the common goal of 21st-century education. In Baxter Magolda, M., & King, P.M. (Eds.) (2004). *Learning partnerships: Theory and models of practice to educate for self-authorship*. (pp. 1-35). Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Chickering, A., & Reisser, L. *Education and identity.* (Excerpts from 2nd Edition).San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Parks, S. D. (2000). *Big questions, worthy dreams*. (Excerpts). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Savickas, M. L., Nota, L., Rossier, J., Dauwalder, J. P., Duarte, M. E., Guichard, J., & van Vianen, A. E. M. (2009). Life designing: A paradigm for career construction in the 21st century. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *75*(3), 239–250. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2009.04.004>

Schlossberg, N. K. (2011). The challenge of change: The transition model and its applications. *Journal of Employment Counseling, 48*, 159–162. doi:10.1002/j.2161-1920.2011.tb01102.x

Popular media (articles and book excerpts):

Twenge, J. (2017). Has the smartphone destroyed a generation? *The Atlantic*.

Brooks, D. (2008) *The road to character*. (Chapter on self-examination). New York: Random House.

Coontz, S. (2018, Feb. 11). *For wedded bliss, act single*. *New York Times*, p. 6(L).

Elgin, S.H. (1985). *The gentle art of verbal self-defense*. New York: Dorset Press.

Gardner, H., Csikszentmihalyi, M., & Damon, W. *Good work: When excellence and ethics meet.* (2001). New York, Basic Books.

Lahiri, J. (2003). *The namesake*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Pausch, R., & Zaslow, J. (2008). *The last lecture*. New York: Hyperion.

**Assignments (Provisional)**

Papers:  
Reflective autobiography

Goal setting paper

Final reflection paper

Weekly captioned Instagrams on senior year experience (private class-only account)

Reflection interview with mentor or another significant adult

In-class assignments:

Class presentation on self-chosen book or article

Free writing on journal prompts

In-class developmental self-assessments and adult task inventories