

PHL 343-A -- Spring 2006 -- AGES & STAGES OF LIFE -- TTh 2:10-3:50pm-- Dr. John G. Sullivan

Office: **Philosophy House 101**

The Philosophy House is on *corner of E. Haggard Street* (across from the Science Building)
and N. Antioch Street (across from the tennis courts).

It is two houses east of Holland House; one house east of Sociology House.

Office Hours: **Mondays** -----10:30-11:30 am and 3:30 - 4:30 pm
Tuesdays and Thursdays -----10:30-11:30 am and 12:50 - 1:50 pm
+ other times by appointment.

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I do not use Blackboard. Go to my homepage above, scroll down to courses, click on Ages and Stages

The subject matter of this course -- transpersonal psychology or philosophy -- is relatively recent as a recognized study. The transpersonal approach seeks to **integrate the insights of lifespan developmental psychology** with the **wisdom of many traditions of spiritual development**. Such an integration marks a space where philosophy, psychology and spirituality -- East and West -- intersect and mutually enhance one another. Here, issues of meaning and value are raised explicitly.

Most stage theories are variants of either a cognitive developmental model (e.g. Piaget, Kohlberg, and followers) or a psychoanalytic model (e.g. Freud, Jung, and followers). Transpersonal psychologists/philosophers can be found in both camps. Thus, Ken Wilber is an example of a cognitive developmentalist approach and Michael Washburn is an example of a Jungian approach.

GOALS OF THE COURSE:

The larger purpose of the course is twofold:

- (a) to introduce students to an original model large enough to encompass pre-personal, personal and trans-personal perspectives, and
- (b) to help students use this framework to live life more deeply.

Note: In addition to those taking Phl 343 as an elective or for general studies, some will be taking the course for the philosophy major. I wish to do some (out of class) work with the philosophy majors (and any others so inclined) to hone their skills and to discuss more technical problems and issues. We shall arrange this through office visits.

Objectives: At the end of this course, students will be able to

- a) understand a different way to think about the **first and second half of life** and have the ability to utilize the key distinctions of the five stages as possibilities for living larger at any stage,
- b) know how to recognize and unhook from **personal conversations** that are too small to live in and know how to critique and revise **cultural conversations** that are too small to live in,
- c) know how to think **symbolically and archetypally**, employing the mythic method of reading and creating teaching stories,
- d) at the personal level, begin to have a **sense of living large**, of **choosing more wisely and more effectively**, and of **situating choices within a larger framework of stillness and service**,
- e) at the intergenerational level, to **appreciate the gifts and wounds of each stage of life**.

REQUIRED READING:

John G. Sullivan, article: "On Becoming an Elder," reprinted in the Tenth Anniversary Issue of Meridians, **Meridians**, Vol. 10, Winter/Spring 2003, pp. 54-57. (Originally published **Meridians**, Vol.2, Number 2, Winter 1994) -- **will be distributed as handout.**

Anthony De Mello, **Awareness: the Perils and Opportunities of Reality** (New York: Doubleday Image Books, 1992) ISBN 0-385-24937-3 pbk

Ken Wilber, **No Boundary: Eastern and Western Approaches to Personal Growth** (Boston: Shambhala, 1981) ISBN 1-57062-743-6 pbk

Robert Bly, **A Little Book of the Human Shadow**, edited by William Booth (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988) ISBN 0-06-254847-6 pbk

David Whyte, **The Heart Aroused** rev. ed. (New York: Doubleday Currency, 2002). ISBN 0-385-48418-6 pbk

Additional material to be made available as handouts or enrichment material on my homepage.

VEHICLES FOR FEEDBACK: HOMEWORK, GROUP PRESENTATIONS and TESTS:

A) HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS ----- a possible 32 points

Homework questions will be available in handout form and on my webpage.

Doing homework faithfully is a discipline. Homework questions are the basis for class discussion. The homework answers will be collected at the end of each class. Each day's homework is worth 1.5 points; the 2 assignments for 20 weeks are worth three points. The 21st assignment is worth two points. Over the course of the semester you can earn 32 points – equivalent to three letter grades! -- just by faithfully doing your daily work. Unless you have an excused absence, [see below] ASSIGNMENTS HANDED IN LATE WILL GAIN NO CREDIT.

B) TWO GROUP PRESENTATIONS ----- each worth 10 points; together, 20 points

Seven groups of approximately 5 persons each will be formed. Each will draw by lots a color of the rainbow as its name. The order of presentation will follow the order in which the colors appear in the rainbow, namely: ROY G. BIV = Red-Orange-Yellow-Green-Blue-Indigo-Violet.

First presentations (1st 1/2 semester) will be on: R = Feb.14; O= Feb. 16; Y= Feb. 21; G= Feb. 23; B= Feb. 28; test on Mar 2; I= Mar. 7; V = Mar. 9.

The 2nd presentations (2nd 1/2 semester) will be on: R = Mar. 30; no presentation April 4th – short class due to Convocation; O= April 6; Y= April 11; G= April 13; B= April 20; no class April 25 for SURF; I= April 27; V= May 2nd.

C) ONE IN-CLASS TESTS ----- worth 21 points.

The test will be given on **Thurs. Mar. 2nd. There will be no make-up tests given.** If missing a test is unavoidable, a student with a serious reason will be allowed to write an 8-10 page, typed paper in lieu of the missed test.

D) CUMULATIVE FINAL ----- in exam period, a take-home final ----- worth 27 points

Grading at a Glance

Homework -- a possible	= 32 points
Two Group Presentations	= 20 points
First Test (Mar. 2nd)	= 21 points
Final cumulative exam	= <u>27 points</u>
TOTAL	= 100 POINTS

ATTENDANCE, PREPARATION, PARTICIPATION:

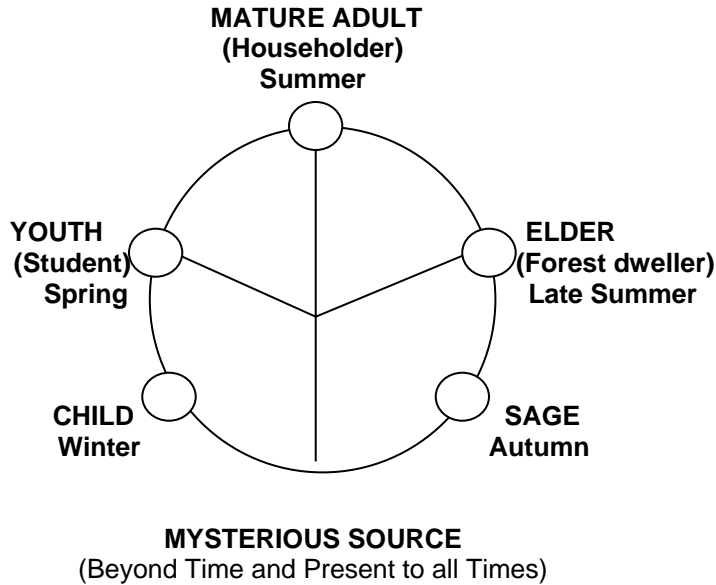
FAITHFUL ATTENDANCE IS ESSENTIAL. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES WILL BE PENALIZED AT THE RATE OF ONE POINT OFF FOR EACH.

For absences to be excused, please report them to me within a day on either side of a missed class. Otherwise you will be penalized at one point off for every unexcused absence. You may phone me and leave message on my office phone 278-5697 or contact me via my e-mail address: sullivan@elon.edu This is an elementary courtesy that adults are expected to show to one another when engaged in collaborative work. NOTE: Absences the day before or the day after a break will be penalized, even if you call in. Elon policy speaks strongly against such absences.

PREPARATION: Come to class prepared, having done the reading and homework. Class preparation and participation will be taken into account as an important factor when I judge borderline marks.

May our journey together enlighten our minds and enkindle our hearts for the good of all beings.

Our Model of Five Seasons of Life:



Some traditions speak of two initiations:

- the **Initiation by Fire** -- the time of testing -- as we move from **Youth** to take our place in society as **Householder**, and
- the **Initiation by Water** -- the Night Sea Journey -- as we move from **Householder** to become an **Elder** who is both in society and beyond society.

GETTING STARTED ON THE HOMEWORK
for PHL 343-A -- AGES & STAGES OF LIFE -- SPRING 2006

Homework assignments in full form are to be found on web by going to
<http://www.elon.edu/sullivan> and scrolling down to Courses and clicking on Ages and Stages of Life.

Doing homework faithfully is meant to be a discipline.

Homework questions are also the basis for discussion in the following class.

- (A) Homework answers should be **brief essays** -- no less than 1/2 page; no more than one page.
In first half of the course, we shall use DeMello's work Awareness in small portions (generally less than ten pages per class for the first 18 classes.) DeMello is best read to support personal practice, hence a few pages a day with attention to trying out the ideas. We shall also read Ken Wilber, No Boundary, and work with this in conjunction with the five season model that I will give you. See my "On Becoming an Elder."
- (B) Suppose a real life situation arises for you -- one relevant to your study of this material. You may write about this as a "**Wild Card**" entry in place of one of the questions asked. Label as such and show how you are using "Ages and Stages" insights in relation to the situation. (You still must answer 2 of the 3 assigned questions.)
- (C) The homework answers will be **collected at the end of each class**. Each day's homework is worth 1 1/2 points; each week's 3 points. Over the semester, you can earn 32 points just by faithfully doing your daily work. **ASSIGNMENTS HANDED IN LATE WILL GAIN NO CREDIT; the only exception is when you were not in class because of an excused absence.**
- (D) Please title each set of homework questions as below: e.g. Assignment 1 (for Tues. Feb. 2nd, 2006)
Please TYPE, PROOFREAD AND STAPLE pages of your homework together!

Assignment 1: Given Tues. January 31, 2006 for Thurs. February 2nd, 2006. Tues. Read De Mello Awareness, pp. 3-11; read my "On Becoming an Elder." -- handout given out in class. [The text of article is also on my website. Go to my homepage <http://www.elon.edu/sullivan> and scroll down to Courses. Click on Ages and Stages. This will give a menu page. Click on Enrichment Material to find the article.]

- 1. Read the De Mello assigned material carefully and reflectively. Write a reflective essay that encompasses the **kernel of ALL De Mello's teachings** in this assigned section. Don't just summarize. Pay attention to how it applies to YOU! If De Mello has suggestions, try them and report what you learn. If you disagree, struggle with and write about that.
- 2. Explain the difference between thinking of ages as time-periods (childhood, the teen years, the twenties, the thirties, etc.) and thinking of ages as each having a distinctive task -- such as the four tasks of the view in traditional India. Show what those stages are and also show how one can be chronologically an adult but not have truly become an adult and how one can be chronologically a senior citizen but not have truly become a forest-dweller or sage.
- 3. Explain the two types of mentoring that I distinguish: what I call "parently" mentoring and what I call "grandparently" mentoring. I assume that you have encountered both of these mentorings? In what form did you encounter them and what did you learn? Discuss.

For Assignment 2 and subsequent assignments, go to my homepage: <http://www.elon.edu/sullivan> and scroll down to Courses. Then click on Ages and Stages and a Menu Page will direct you to the Assignments. **I do NOT use Blackboard.**

**To find your calling is to find the intersection between
your own deep gladness and the world's deep hunger.** Frederick Buechner

"It would be good if we would wake up before we died." Hindu saying