

PSYC 7810B: TRANSITIONS

Fall 2018

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Office Hours: Mondays, 11am – 1 pm

Class Meetings: TUE, 3:30-4:25, Pafford, 307.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will explore transitions as a significant change in a person's self. This change leads the person from a *familiar community* with *familiar "life forms"* (social, cultural, and discourse practices), which are experienced with *familiar significant others* (e.g., relatives, peers, neighbors etc.) to an *unfamiliar community* with *unfamiliar life forms* (new/different socio-cultural and discourse practices), which have to be accomplished with *unfamiliar others*. The self experiencing such a transition is viewed as a dialogic self to which different voices belong. These are individual (voices of relatives, friends, enemies, fictional characters) as well as collective voices (the voice of a culture, of a certain community the person is member of). Thus, the self's constellation of voices articulates the person's individual and social aspects to each other: we are unique *and* socialized individuals—we are polyphonic persons.

A transition—typically occurring in adolescence though not exclusively—is led by the *agenda* of the particular community (becoming a successful teacher, a good Rogerian therapist, a good mother, a successful moneymaker). This agenda sets up the path to an expected identity and the related social role of the person; it includes forms and ways of behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, and community acknowledged practices expected from its members. I link such a community agenda to the collective voice: the embodied expression of a group's certain stance towards reality; it has psychologically a major leading, organizing, and shaping role for a person's self, and particularly for the accomplishment of the *aim* of a developmental transition task (Havighurst, 1956) in accordance with the *agenda* of a community.

I am specifically interested in transitions that take a deviation, i.e. that do not follow one's community agenda but a *different* agenda belonging to a *different* community. Such a "deviated transition" is expected to have significant effects on the self's voices, where the collective voices of the respective communities will play a core role: the self has to negotiate these voices through external and internal

dialogues.

Generally, a transition is a movement performing relations as well as distinctions, where the self has to integrate sameness and difference to its former and future self as well as to others (and their voices). Time is inherent to this performance of relations – distinctions; “continuous dialogicality” (Bertau & Karsten, 2018) might be the means allowing for both qualities in this movement. This more principal level of questioning is followed in the course **Co-arising and Distinctions**.

AIM OF UNDERSTANDING

Human beings are subject to change and development throughout their lifetime, processes are the gist of life. Within this principal changeability, cultures and societies distinguish specific crucial moments and attend to them through diverse symbolic activities. Membership to a specific cultural and societal community is at stake in a particular, salient way in these transitions, such as adolescent transition to adulthood, women transition to motherhood, or worker transition to retiree. In this sense, a significant transition is organized, witnessed and acknowledged (positively as success, negatively as failure) by the transiting person’s community, which thereby enacts the valid norms and usual expectations of the community. In the case of a transition that does not question the transition’s aim, the transiting person herself appropriates these norms and comes to enact them – first as novice, then more and more as expert until the day she herself becomes a “professional witness and acknowledger” of others’ transitions for her community. Language activity is an eminent means to any transition, both for the transiting person and the witnesses-acknowledgers. It takes the form of different types of voices that voice (and relate) personal and transpersonal levels. The transpersonal voice (collective voice) plays a specific role. Students will develop and elaborate this socio-cultural and polyphonic idea of transitions that rests upon a dialogic notion of the self, as well as to a dialogic notion of language.

ASSIGNMENTS, REQUIREMENTS

All the texts that we will read and talk about in class will be supplied as PDF on Course Den. Regarding attendance, I expect that you will be attending classes regularly, as well as participating actively. Coming in time is a mark of respect for the whole class. The following specific assignments will be given:

- **all sessions:** active reading in preparation and discussing in class;
- **Pilot research:** this class has an empirical research part; students will conduct a short pilot research consisting of one face-to-face interview and the analysis of the verbal data.
 - **Workshops:** there will be two 3-hours workshops outside of class time:
 - In Workshop 1, students will learn about the interview method to be used;
 - in Workshop 2, students will learn about and explore the possibilities of analyzing the verbal data in terms of voices.
- **Class presentation about the research:** Students will present their pilot research in 10 minute talks + 5 minutes discussion on **November 27 and December 4**. The format is similar to an academic conference presentation. Grading rubric given below. **Please submit your presentation (ppt or handout) to Course Den by 12/04.**
- **Final paper about the research:** The final paper is the research report presented as an academic paper. This report should include theoretical background to the research (dialogic language notion, dialogic notion of the subject; notions of developmental task and transition); a summary of the field notes taken by the student researcher; an overview of the data collected (summary to participant, length of interview, core themes of the interviews); and a summary to first results of analyses.

The final paper is due by December 7. Students submit their paper via Course Den.
- **Alternative to pilot research:** since the workshops are outside of class time, an alternative is proposed for those students who cannot attend. These students submit a theoretical paper about a specific kind of transition from the dialogic point of view. Students will have to discuss their specific topic with me. This paper will also to be presented on the final presentations day. Grading of both presentation and final paper are the same as for the research; the same due dates apply.

Grading Rubric for the Final Paper:

1. **Submit by due date** **[40 pts]**
2. **Respect formal aspects:** **[60 pts]**
 - a) Word document, 12 pt., 1,5 line spacing, page numbering
 - b) length of paper: 5 pages without references
 - c) Cover sheet with due information: name of course, your name and student number, name of teacher, task and title of your paper, date. This cover sheet is not counted in the 5 pages

- d) Correct spelling and phrasing (“written style”)
- e) Correct quotation (APA style)
- f) Correct referencing (APA style)

3. Use of the following structure for the paper [100 pts]

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Middle part with appropriate sections (give number and title to each one)
- 3) Conclusion
- 4) References, APA style

Grading rubric for the Presentation:

- 1) Being on time (10 minutes) – 25 pts
- 2) Speaking in a clear language – 25pts
- 3) Presenting results in a synthetic way (not a list) that helps to grasp the relevant aspects – 25 pts
- 4) Offering one question to the discussion – 25 pts

- **Overall grading is composed of course participation (= reading preparation + attendance), presentation, and final paper**

Overall Grading Scheme:	<i>(possible 400 points)</i>	Grading Scale:
Final Paper	200	A = (360-400 pts
Presentation	100	B = (320-360(pts
Course Participation	100	C = (280-320(pts
		D = (240-280(pts
		F = <240 pts

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Week 1 Tuesday, August 21

Introduction to the course: overview on content and common organization.

What is a transition?

Week 2 Tuesday, 08/28

Bertau: *Dynamics of individual and collective voices for a self's significant transition* (10th International Conference on the Dialogical Self, Braga, PT, 2018) [lecture](#)

Week 3 Tuesday, 09/04

Basic notions (1): The dialogical self – Hermans (2001) [common reading](#)

Week 4 Tuesday, 09/11

Basic notions (2): The language spacetime – Bertau (2014) [common reading](#)

Week 5 Tuesday, 09/18

Basic notions (2): Types of voices and the field of addressivity [lecture](#)

Week 6 Tuesday, 09/25

Basic notions (3): continued – discussions, clarifications [discussion](#)

WORKSHOP 1: INTERVIEW TRAINING, FR 09/28 11am – 2:00pm

Week 7 Tuesday, 10/02

Basic notions (4): developmental task and voices – joining concepts [lecture](#)

*Fall Break -- **Starting the Interviews***

Week 8 Tuesday, 10/09

Transition to motherhood: Duarte and Gonçalves (2007) [common reading](#)

Week 9 Tuesday, 10/16

Transition to motherhood – continued [discussion](#)

Week 10 Tuesday, 10/23

Transition to adulthood: symbolic responsibility – Zittoun (2007) [common reading](#)

WORKSHOP 2: ANALYZING VOICES, FR 10/26 10:00am – 1:00pm

Week 11 Tuesday, 10/30

Transition to adulthood: continued [discussion](#)

Week 12 Tuesday, 11/01

Liminal hotspots in transitions: a dangerous place – Stenner et al. (2017) [common reading](#)

Week 13 Tuesday, 11/06

Liminal hotspots and the transition to polyamory – Domínguez et al. (2017) common reading

Week 14 Tuesday, 11/13

Liminal hotspots – continued

discussion

Thanksgiving

Week 15 Tuesday, 11/27 FINAL PRESENTATIONS (1)

Week 16 Tuesday, 12/04 FINAL PRESENTATIONS (2)

Fall classes end December 7

PAPER DUE BY DECEMBER 7

REFERENCES

- Bertau, M.-C. (2018). *Dynamics of individual and collective voices for a self's significant transition* paper presented at the 10th International Conference on the Dialogical Self, Braga, PT, 13-16 June 2018.
- Bertau, M.-C. (2014). Exploring language as the 'in-between'. *Theory and Psychology, 24*(4), 524-541. DOI: 10.1177/0959354314534334
- Domínguez, G. E., Pujol, J., Motzkau, J. F., & Popper, M. (2017). Suspended Transitions and affective orderings: From troubled monogamy to liminal polyamory. *Theory & Psychology, 27*(2), 183-197.
- Duarte, F. & Gonçalves, M. M. (2007). Negotiating motherhood: A dialogical approach. *International Journal for Dialogical Science 2*(1), 249-275.
- Havighurst, R. T. (1956). Research on the developmental-task concept. *The School Review, 64*(5) 215-223.
- Hermans, H. J. M. (2001). The dialogical self: Toward a theory of personal and cultural positioning. *Culture & Psychology, 7*(3), 243-281.
- Hermans, H. J. M. & Gieser, Th. (Eds) (2012). *Handbook of Dialogical Self Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Roncancio-Moreno, M. & Branco, A. U. (2017). Developmental trajectories of the Self in children during the transition from preschool to elementary school. *Learning, Culture, and Social Interaction, 14*, 38-50. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2017.05.002> [additional]
- Rommetveit, R. (2003). On the role of "a psychology of the second person" in studies of meaning, language, and mind. *Mind, Culture, and Activity, 10*(3), 205-218. DOI: 10.1207/s15327884mca1003_3
- Stenner, P., Greco, M. & Motzkau, J. (2017). Introduction to the special issue on liminal hotspots. *Theory & Psychology, 27*(2), 141–146. DOI: 10.1177/0959354316687867
- Zittoun, T. (2007). Symbolic resources and responsibility in transitions. *Young, 5*(2), 193-211.

COURSE POLICIES

Accessibility. Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. To make an appointment, please contact Counseling & Career Services in 123 Row Hall, or call 678-839-6428. For additional information, visit the following website: http://www.westga.edu/counseling/index_8884.php. Any student in this course who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of abilities should also contact me as soon as possible to discuss appropriate accommodations.

Civility. We should work together to create a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning. While we may sometimes disagree with each other on topics discussed in class, it is important that we remember that appreciating diversity in perspectives is an important part of the learning process. With that said, all opinions are welcome. However, disagreements should be directed at an argument and not the person. It is expected that everyone will be treated with respect. **If you ever feel that you are not being treated with respect in the classroom, please let me know.**

Cell phones and other noisy things. Cell phones, pagers, iPods, headphones, etc. are not to be in use while in class or during exam days. Please refrain from texting, instant messaging, gaming, and emailing while in class. It is distracting to the instructor as well as to those around you. If you require an exception to this rule, come and talk to me about your situation asap. If any of these issues becomes a problem, you will be excused from the class.

Academic and Personal Integrity: As outlined by the University of West Georgia Honor Code, “West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity.” Violations of this policy will be met with sanctions and ignorance of its provisions is not an acceptable excuse. Make sure to read the university policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty in your student handbook. Plagiarism involves the use of others’ words and/or ideas without giving them proper credit, which includes passing another person’s paper off as your own and failing to cite a source. If you copy a student’s paper or copy a paper off the internet, you will get caught. Plagiarism software can detect copied papers and copied text. You are responsible for knowing how to properly cite sources with APA formatting.

Communication Policy. As the instructor, I will endeavor to reply to all messages that conform to conventional standards of polite, respectful correspondence within 48 hours. I will reply to other (i.e., less than polite) messages as circumstances permit. Please note that I reserve the right (and have the responsibility) to purge offensive or excessively aggressive posts to Course Den. Although it should go without saying, please refrain from attacking, harassing, or threatening either fellow students or instructors via the Course Site (or any other means, for that matter).

Intellectual Property Rights. Course materials prepared by the instructor, together with the content of all lectures and notes presented by the instructor are the property of the instructor. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, course materials may not be modified and **must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person**, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course.

Note: The syllabus contains a lot of essential information about the course so please make sure to read it carefully and revisit it regularly during the semester. In addition, all students must review the following information about university policies:

https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/assets/docs/faculty-resources/common_language_for_course_syllabi_v2.pdf

Students should also review the following information:

https://www.westga.edu/academics/assets/docs/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf