

Advanced Study Programme: Gestalt Pedagogy

1. General information on the programme

Since its very beginnings, the Faculty of Theology (hereinafter: the TEOF) at the University of Ljubljana (hereinafter: the UL) has nurtured, in addition to theology, several other doctrines related to this fundamental scientific area. Apart from basic theological education, catechetical-evangelistic activities are part of the basic programme. With the introduction of double honours pedagogics study, this pedagogic dimension even expanded the area of its research and activities. Taking care of pedagogical sense and of education of pedagogues who work in pastoral as well as in wider educative field, remain one of the primary missions even today. The advanced study programme Gestalt Pedagogy is dedicated to this objective.

Gestalt Pedagogy is considered one of the most integrative pedagogical approaches and its fundamental 'method' is the use of creative media, from drawing and sculpting to working with body and voice. It builds on the legacy of humanistic psychology and is becoming an ever more significant factor in pedagogical-psychological work and consulting within formal and informal institutions for upbringing and education. As holistic pedagogics it is compatible with integrative and inclusive pedagogics, and is based on life-long biographic and experiential learning.

Connected to European tradition, Gestalt pedagogy draws its fundamental notional perspectives from Jewish-Greek and Christian heritage, and is therefore able to integrate spiritual-religious dimension of life and learning in pedagogic theory and practice. It is an international programme of Gestalt pedagogy (EU-Marke 0037 517 57), patented in 2004, based on biblical anthropology and Christian tradition and is the property of Dr. Albert Höfer or AHG (Albert Höfer Gesellschaft); its different variations are already taught at higher education institutions in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Luxemburg and Slovakia. Education is carried out in collaboration with and under supervision of international scientific and professional associations - ARGE (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Gestaltpädagogik und Seelsorge) and AHG (Albert Höfer Gesellschaft) - the members of which are some of the designers and teachers of this programme.

The programme is intended for:

- Pedagogues and all who want to obtain competences for more creative teaching and productive solving life issues at their work with children and adolescents.
- Catechists who want to professionally upgrade their didactic and methodological as well as consulting work.
- Pastoral workers who strive for sensitive and creative pastoral.
- All who want to upgrade their pastoral and pedagogical work and vision with integrative Gestalt approaches and methodology.
- All who want to participate in diagnosing and solving pastoral, upbringing and educational problems more actively and with deeper professional knowledge.
- All pastoral and pedagogical workers who want to professionally deepen their collaboration with families and parents of children and adolescents.
- Parents and couples who want to upgrade the values of child-raising and communication within family with the help of professional knowledge.

2. The programme has one year credit load but takes two years, mostly on weekends as whole-day seminars. Such form and length of study is also presupposed by the European Association of Integrative Gestalt Pedagogy. Our programme has the license of the above mentioned European association and is therefore internationally recognized.

3. Programme objectives

Advanced study of Gestalt pedagogy is above all designed to strengthen acquired pedagogical and pastoral skills and transform them so that with new methodological approaches they will benefit all who participate in upbringing and pastoral educative process. This being integrative education, its primary goal is support and lead the reflection of pedagogical and pastoral workers who can then create new innovative paradigms in educational process. The final goal is a pedagogical and pastoral worker who can build a stable personal image and responsibly and with satisfaction copes with challenges in concrete upbringing and education and pastoral work. In addition to specifically methodological skills, these are also the basic competences which participants will acquire during study. Gestalt anthropology and psychology presuppose reflection and strengthening of internal structure, which is a precondition for an effective and satisfied pastoral and pedagogical worker. With these professionals routine work performance is not sufficient - a stable personality and testimony are required, too; therefore, this strengthening of internal awareness is a precondition in life-long learning process.

Apart from this, the advanced study programme focuses on team learning; in a group, an individual learns appropriate pedagogical communication and responsiveness.

Basic objectives are therefore:

- To qualify pedagogical and pastoral workers for more quality carrying out their mission.
- To make pedagogical and pastoral workers more sensitive for quick identification of upbringing issues and for creative selection of adequate responses.
- To qualify parents for better carrying out their upbringing mission.

4. General competences obtained by Gestalt pedagogue

a) Personal competences:

- Recognition of one's own life story as the starting point for pedagogical work.
- Discovering and recognizing one's own boundaries and resources.
- Building positive self-image.

b) Pedagogical professional competences:

- Recognition of the complexity of pedagogical and didactic process.
- Theoretical foundation and practical application of integrative pedagogical and didactic methods.
- Focusing of pedagogic and didactic questions and finding adequate professional answers.
- Use of Gestalt integrative principles in pedagogical work.

c) Social competences:

- Formation of pedagogical groups as communities with profound and heterogeneous interpersonal relationships.
- Group dynamics on the basis of heterogeneous socialization, where not only quantitative but also qualitative level of relationships within a group is important.
- Sensitiveness for relationships within a group and consideration for weaker group members.
- Ability for solving conflicts and conflict situations within a group.

d) Religious competences:

- Recognition and acceptance of one's own religious biography and ability to learn from it.
 - Capability of critical theological, psychological and pedagogical reflection of one's own religiousness.
 - Respectful articulation of religious and theological life questions and formation of open religious pedagogical visions.
- e) Counselling competences:
- Ability to listen.
 - Ability to counsel, not suggesting directions but opening new possibilities.
 - Ability to give the individual an opportunity to make his/her own decisions.
 - Ability to motivate a group to support the individual in acting out his/her decisions.

5. Subject-specific competences

Students are able to make a distinction between Gestalt pedagogy and other Gestalt disciplines; are able to apply the principles of Gestalt pedagogy; are able to identify and apply resources for self-support in pedagogical work.

They plan how to build an image of pastoral worker, teacher and educator through the narration of their own stories; they are qualified to prepare and use various devices in pastoral, learning and teaching according to narrative methods; they learn the connection between the anthropological foundation of narration and education; they master hermeneutic laws and are capable of including them in the analysis of their own and others' narratives.

They perceive the basic traits and reactions of individual characters; they identify the impact of psychological pain on physical well-being; they are able to include body in processing of emotional pain and advise those coping with mental distress.

Through interaction and group work with their own life role, they learn possibilities for empathetic and creative openness to the roles of others.

Through C. G. Jung and his image of man (mask, shadow, animus, anima) they reveal their own role and its layers.

Through understanding the notions such as empathy, establishing a distance to one's role, ambiguous tolerance, and expression of identity, they learn the relation between role and identity.

They recognize key characters in the Bible as those who are, with open anthropological and religious communication, in the service of life; they learn how to read the Bible biographically and how to actualize biblical stories.

They understand and know the notions such as physicality, sensuality and sexuality; they are able to understand and value body and physicality as something positive; through body they are able to identify possibilities to establish their own personality; they recognize the body in its social role, not only on the individual level.

They become aware of and reasonably transform their parents' messages and behaviour patterns; they identify key dynamics of family relations and logically apply them in their educative work; are able to advise those processing emotional tensions in their work with parents.

They are trained to established critical and creative distance to their own moments of crisis and are able to use them as a source of strength for their further personal growth; are able to learn for others' crises and identify potential resources to solve the problems; within institutional upbringing and educational process they are able to identify personal crises of individuals and effectively advise and guide them towards solution; they are able to understand moments of crisis and advise in solving these.

6. Ensuring learning outcomes and competences

Graduates of Gestalt pedagogy will be qualified for independent pedagogical and consulting as well as pastoral-catechetical work, where their vision and skills will be helpful for individuals and various groups. They will be qualified to handle special upbringing and educational moments in spiritual and personal growth: spiritual retreats, convivence, camping, open-air school, etc. In andragogy they will be especially qualified for creative approach to those who want to strengthen their self-image, e.g. in various self-help groups, education for parents, groups of the elderly. Those with andragogy and pedagogy backgrounds will upgrade their competences, which is very welcome in planning, carrying out and evaluation of education programmes. In upbringing and education institutions they will be specifically qualified for creative work, integrating both individuals' specifics and the demands of the group (e.g. work with pupils and students with special needs; discipline and learning difficulties). At work with people in distress (hospitals, crisis centres, charitable institutions, prisons) they are especially qualified for sensitive facing the past and brave, hopeful opening to the future. Their capability of planning and evaluation is also suitable for the upgrading of consulting in evaluation. Gestalt pedagogy skills are of great support for everyone qualified for social and pedagogic work.

The programme offers additional competences for people who work or want to work in Church and other educative-consulting institutions which need people with such skills.

7. International comparability of the programme is guaranteed since the programme was established by ARGE (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für integrative Gestaltpädagogik und Seelsorge), the European Association of Integrative Gestalt Pedagogy, and AHG (Albert Höfer Gesellschaft). On the second Bologna level, it is taught as an independent module at several European universities; as an advanced study programme, however, we are the first in Europe.

8. Curriculum

	Lect.	Sem.	Tutorials	Student's independent work	Hours total	ECTS
Integrative Learning According to the Principles of Gestalt Pedagogics	10	10	10	60	90	3
Narrative Didactics	10	10	10	60	90	3
Personality and Identity	10	10	10	60	90	3
Introduction to Psychology of Character and Basic Psychodiagnostics	10	10	10	60	90	3
Social Roles and Vocation	10	10	10	60	90	3
Biblical Didactics	10	10	10	60	90	3

Body and Sexuality		10	10	10	60	90	3
Family Systems and Parents' Messages		10	10	10	60	90	3
Crisis, Resources and 'New Beginning'		10	10	10	60	90	3
Final work					150	150	5
Total		90	90	90	690	960	32

9. Admission criteria

Advanced study programme Gestalt Pedagogy is open for those who completed:

1. A first cycle study programme or equal education corresponding to the first cycle in adequate professional fields (theology, education sciences and education for teachers, social work, social sciences, humanistic, health care), with min. 3 year experience in working with people.
2. A first cycle study programme or education corresponding to the first cycle in other professional fields with min. 3 year experience in working with people and prior to enrolment fulfil study requirements which are essential for enrolment; these requirements are determined by the Study Committee at the TEOF UL and comprise from 10 to 20 ECTS.
3. A second cycle study programme or education corresponding to at least second cycle in adequate professional fields (theology, education sciences and education for teachers, social work, social sciences, humanistic, health care).
4. A second cycle study programme or education corresponding to at least second cycle in other professional fields if they, prior to enrolment, fulfil study requirements which are essential for enrolment; these requirements are determined by the Study Committee at the TEOF UL and comprise from 10 to 15 ECTS.
5. An equal education abroad and also meet other stated requirements.

10. Admission criteria when numerus clausus is applied

When the number of applicants is higher than the number of available places, in addition to general criteria, the candidates will need to meet the following criteria:

- Average mark of the first cycle/master programme (30%)
- Graduate paper/master thesis and graduate/master examination mark (20%)
- Selecting examination (50%)

Selecting examination consists of the assessment of:

- Bibliography, awards, references (40%)
- Professional work so far (40%)
- Interview by the committee (20%)

11. Assessment of knowledge

Student work is assessed with written and/or oral examinations, in seminars, reports/reflections and tutorials. The pre-requisition for an examination are fulfilled requirements in tutorials, seminars and reports/reflections. Assessment scale ranges from 6 to 10 (positive marks - passed) and from 1 to 5 (negative marks - failed). Examination regime is in compliance with the UL Statute and Regulations and Study rules of the TEOF UL.

12. Recognition of knowledge obtained prior to enrolment, qualifications or competences obtained through formal, informal or experiential learning:

Specific knowledge and skills obtained before enrolment can be recognized as part of study requirements if they are obtained within Gestalt pedagogics study in collaboration with the ARGE and/or AHG. Their contents must correspond to the contents of Gestalt Pedagogy subjects. Recognition of knowledge and skills obtained before enrolment is decided by the Study Committee of the TEOF UL in collaboration with ARGE and AHG.

For recognizing knowledge obtained prior to enrolment in the programme, the following criteria will apply:

- appropriateness of the conditions for enrolment and required prior education for enrolment in the programme,
- comparability of the scope of education with the scope of the subject where the requirement is recognized,
- adequacy of the contents of education according to the contents of the subject where the requirement is recognized.

If the committee determines that the acquired knowledge may be recognized, it is evaluated with the number of ECTS credits that equals the number of credits with the subject. Up to 15 ECTS of knowledge obtained outside this study programme can be recognized.

13. Criteria for completing the study

To complete the study, a student should fulfil all requirements according to the programme, acquire 32 ECTS, and positive mark and successful presentation of the final work.

14. A short introduction of the subjects in the advanced programme Gestalt Pedagogy

Integrative Learning According to the Principles of Gestalt Pedagogics	1/3	
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Since Gestalt Pedagogy builds on the legacy related to 'image' (*morphe, eidos, typos, charakter*), we shall first separate it from other Gestalt disciplines (Gestalt philosophy, Gestalt psychology and Gestalt therapy). We realize that its distinction lies in its pedagogical preventive and consulting function, and in relation to didactics it builds on holistic experiential learning and teaching. In addition to the division into theory and practice, the contents include the following elements:

- The principles and characteristics of integrative and experiential learning and teaching.
- The principle of focusing on a person.
- The principle of dialogic teaching.
- The principle of experiencing the moment (here and now).
- The principle of self-support.
- The principles of integration, synergy and responsibility in pedagogical process.

Narrative Didactics	1/3	
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On the basis of the fundamental notions of narration in upbringing and education we first position the subject within the system of educative sciences. On the examples of various hermeneutic approaches we learn about its importance for effective upbringing and education for contemporary man. In an overview of historical development and eminent personalities of didactic thought we reveal the rich variety and laws of its application in teaching and upbringing today. Through searching connections with other upbringing and education approaches we define its specific tasks in the contemporary upbringing and education concept. From anthropological perspective, we learn about the role of narrative in growing up, establishing self-image, and the dynamics of growing in faith. Through the analysis of our own narrative we learn about the empathetic approach in upbringing and education. At the same time we become more sensitive for the openness to certain narration for the continued personal growth. We get to know the laws of creating general and partial upbringing and learning objectives in the narrative didactic model. Based on great narrations in human history, we use the methods of dramatization, empathy, interpretation, illustration and other creative approaches to learn how to build social bonds which make us committed to each other, thus connecting us in a society of solidarity.

Personality and Identity	1/3	
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The subject presents personality as a system of correlative and causal relations among personality traits, with a special focus on its consistency and distinctiveness. By means of theory and dynamic personal process students arrive to a truer self-image which is a pre-condition for a more real picture of others and good relationships with them. From the perspective of various identities of personal self - physical, executive, individual, psychosexual, psychosocial and spiritual - we train for an integrative personal accompanying and consulting which encourages a fellow person in the development of his/her individual personal traits. We emphasize learning about the models of referential function of self and profound self-respect.

Psychodiagnostics and Psychology of Character	1/3	
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The essential contents are character traits based on Riemann classification of schizoid, depressive, anankastic and hysterical personalities. This is not an analytic approach; rather, it is a question of processing and transformation of these traits resulting in an integrated personality who will be able to appropriately build character traits into pedagogical work. A special emphasis is placed on

the perception of connections between psychological and physical pain, so that in the process of recognition they are able to use it for personal growth and learning process in themselves and in others.

Social Roles and Vocation	1/3	
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Through role playing, students learn about the way from the role as a mask to a person, following various elements in the contents which a concrete person receives and emits during this process. We discover both role and function between unity and flexibility. The experience of a role as a shadow. Through creative work with masks, drawing and processing in the group they discover social and personal function of role-taking. Through dance and various roles we learn about and discover maintenance of typical roles in everyday life. By means of C. G. Jung and his image of man (mask, shadow, animus, anima) we are unveiling our own role and its layers which leads to learning empathy, establishing distance to the role, ambiguous tolerance, expressing identity and learning the relation between role and identity. Through various biblical characters and their roles we discover our own role in front of the Transcendent and in bibliodrama, where we establish the tension between personal and biblical role, we try to feel the unity of spirit and body.

Biblical Didactics	1/3	
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The Bible is an inexhaustible source of challenges in pedagogical work, which requires certain didactic qualifications. The main contents is discovering and actualization of characters which, on one hand, reveal the drama of traditional as contemporary relationships within and outside family, and on the other hand they emanate the possibilities of processing and overcoming life distress. Didactic aspect is also highlighted in the methodology of work including art and drawing, and working with clay and other materials.

Body and Sexuality	1/3	
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Students get to know the concepts such as: body, physicality, sexuality, gender, taking gender roles. We learn about sexuality and physicality in various cultures and historical periods. They learn about dualism (Plato, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, etc.) and its transcendence. They identify various places of physicality and sexuality in their own lives, understanding that it is not necessary always either sacrifice for others or follow one's own desires to get along with oneself. We deal with different stories about physicality and sexuality in classical literature. While reading biblical stories of physicality, they open to the transcendent value of sexuality and body. They recognise desire and ardour as a God's gift. With various biblical passages they experience their own body creation, the call to life from their own sexuality, and open their body as a gift to the other. We learn about responsible parenting.

Family Systems and Parents' Messages	1/3	
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The subject deals with various dynamics of family relationships known throughout human history, focusing on Jewish-Christian legacy and biblical concept of family life. The subject comprises the following topics:

- The forms of family life through history
 - Relationships in a traditional (Jewish-Christian) family
 - o Family with one child
 - o Family with two children
 - o Family with three or more children
 - Compulsive repetition and possibilities of its overcoming
 - The impact of couple relationship on raising and interpersonal relations of children
 - Trauma and salvation of primary relationships within family.
- Identifying relationships within family as a starting point to build a social relationships network. Through learning about biblical context of family, we open to new possibilities of family today.

Crisis, Resources and 'New Beginning'	1/3	
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Laws of building an integrated personality, a Gestalt, in the light of anthropological laws as seen by Gestalt Pedagogy. We examine psychoanalytical theories in order to more easily identify a crisis as a need of re-orientation of one's life. Using integrative methods, we open individual life stories to find their moments of crisis and consequently recognize the principles of solution, creation and growth. Through practical tutorials of empathizing, observing, participating etc., we identify current crises and, according to the principles of group dynamics, search for creative solutions. We accompany others in their understanding their life stories, solving critical situations, and planning a fuller life. In concrete education process of each student, we search for the opportunities for understanding, finding the meaning, encouraging, and planning personal growth of all participants in educative process.

Final work	/5	
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Student meets independent professional and research work and its review. The final work is a touchstone for student's ability of implementing various professional activities, as well as a certificate of successful study. It shows acquired skills of collecting, analysis and presentation of material, focusing on a specific issue, and thematic dealing with a problem.

Students prove their competence of written and oral expression and use of acquired knowledge. They further develop the skill of writing longer texts (acquiring basic skills necessary for writing plans for education work in the future).

Students acquire new and specific knowledge in research topic and the area of education, as well as practical experience in collection, analysis and presentation of materials and their interdisciplinary application. Specifically, they independently combine everything they acquired during their personal work and include this knowledge in planning educative work with others.