

INTRODUCTION TO YOUTH MINISTRY (CE 33-612)

Spring 2023/Fall 2023

Professor: Dr. Reginald Blount E-MAIL: rblount@garrett.edu
TA: TBD

OFFICE: 847-866-3962
E-MAIL: TBD

Course Description

What do we really know about the life and culture of today's youth? Who or what serves as contemporary socializing agents competing for the cultural identity of youth? What role is, can or will the church play in ministering to the spiritual yearnings of today's "Gen Z" generation? What role is, can or will youth play in transforming the church for the future? The aim of this course will be to broaden our understanding of Christian education and its role in engaging in the spiritual development and faith formation with youth. The course will explore the human development and culture of today's youth, the context necessary for spiritual development to take place, and various pedagogical models that can be used to guide youth from adolescence to young adulthood.

Class Goals and Outcomes:

- A. **Knowing:** To know practices and disciplines of Christian education and formation and to understand how these are affected by differing cultural contexts.
- B. **Doing:** To examine, assess, and lead a variety of approaches to teaching and learning with youth. In particular, to explore Christian practices and faith in intentional ways to address the developmental and faith issues of young people.
- C. **Being:** To construct a critical, spiritually-grounded, practice-based self-understanding necessary for transformative faith formation

Course Texts

Dean, Kenda Creasy, Wesley W. Ellis, Justin Forbes, and Abigail Visco Rusert, **Delighted: What Teenagers Are Teaching the Church about Joy**, Eerdmans (April 28, 2020), ISBN-10:080287780X; \$18.99

Meyers, Jeremy P. **Liberating Youth From Adolescence**, Fortress Press (October 1, 2018); ISBN-10: 9781506433431; \$18.99

Siegel, Daniel, **Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain**, TarcherPerigee Publishing, 2015; ISBN-10: 0399168834; \$16.95

Twenge, Jean M. **Generations: The Real Differences Between Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers, and Silents—and What They Mean for America's Future**, Atria Books (April 25, 2023), ISBN-10:1982181613; \$32.50

Wimberly, Anne E. Streaty and Sarah F. Farmer, **Raising Hope: Four Paths To Courageous Living for Black Youth**, United Methodist General Board of Higher Education, 2017; ISBN-10: 0938162349; \$24.99

September 5th: Orientation, Introductions and The WHY of Youth Ministry

- Hopes for the Class
- Review of Syllabus
- The Importance of Understanding the WHY of Youth Ministry
- Your Definition of Youth Ministry

September 12th: The WHY of Youth Ministry II

- Defining and Understanding Culture
- Understanding the Gen Z generation

Reading: "Generations" (Chapters 1 & 6)

September 19th and 26th: The Human Development of Youth

- The "messiness" of adolescent development
- Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain
- Why understanding adolescent human development is key to effective youth ministry
- Teaching Youth

Reading: "Brainstorm"

October 3rd: The Seven Spiritual Yearnings of Youth

- The Seven Spiritual Yearning of Youth
- Why understanding the spiritual yearnings of youth is key to effective youth ministry

Reading: "Liberating Youth from Adolescence"

October 10th: The Spiritual Development of Youth I

- Learnings from "The Youth Hope Builders Academy" and its contribution to adolescent spiritual development

Readings: "Raising Hope"

October 17th: The Spiritual Development of Youth II

- Learnings from "The Joy and Good Life Project" and its contribution to adolescent spiritual development

Readings: "Delighted "

October 24th: TEACHING PREPARATION

October 31st: PEER TEACHING

November 7th: PEER TEACHING

November 14th: PEER TEACHING

November 21st: THANSGIVING BREAK

November 28th: Guest Lecturers

December 5th: A Vision for Youth Ministry

- Again, the WHY of Youth Ministry
- Approaches to guiding youth from adolescence to young adulthood

Course Requirements

Assignment 1: Immersion into Youth Culture: Spend at least 30 minutes per week (September 5th – October 10th), listening and/or reading what youth watch, listen to or read. Intentionally engage:

- What do you hear?
- What do you see?
- What did you learn?

Be prepared to share your experience in class.

Write a critical reflection paper (5-7 pages, double spaced, 12 pt font) placing in dialogue one of your Immersion Experiences with what we've read, and thoughts offered in class. (Due October 17th by class time)

Assignment 2: Peer Teaching Session: Complete a **team-teaching session** as well as an **individual written evaluation**. The assignment includes:

- Preparing a 45-minute Bible study targeted for youth or adults that incorporates learnings from one or more of your immersion experiences.
- Preparing for class a one-page handout offering a brief summary of your approach.
- Writing an individual evaluation paper (**5-7 pages; due week after teaching**). The evaluation should address the following:
 1. Assessment of the strengths and weaknesses from biblical/theological and educational perspectives.
 2. Assessment of yourself as a teacher, including what you learned about your strengths and weaknesses.
 3. As you write these papers, use the vocabulary we develop together in class drawing on readings.
 4. United Methodist students will find using the *Board of Ordained Ministry Bible Study Guide* will enhance their preparation of documents for meeting with the Board of Ordained Ministry. Other denominations may have a similar guide which can be used.

Assignment 3: Final Project-A Vision for Youth Ministry (Due December 15th)

In a **10-page double spaced page paper**, reflect on the current model of youth ministry taking place in your local congregation or another youth ministry context you know best. Drawing from your assignments, readings, class discussions and personal reflection, offer your theological and educational vision for guiding youth from adolescence to young adulthood, and a model for implementation in a local church or other youth ministry context. Your vision and model should be offered in such a way that demonstrates you have engaged in dialogue with the authors we have read as well as class discussions.

Course Policies

1. **Cheating and Plagiarism:** These are serious breaches of academic integrity, involving claiming credit for the work that someone else has done. Don't do this! If you are uncertain in any way as to what is entailed in these activities, talk with the instructor.

2. **Excellence in Writing:** Even though this is a Christian Education course, everything you have learned about good writing style still counts! Obtuse or inelegant writing in your essays will be reason for a reduced grade. If you need help with your writing, please talk with the instructor.

3. **Intellectual Virtue:** We are striving not only to learn about a subject but also to sharpen our abilities to think critically. To do this, we must practice intellectual virtue by being open-minded, straightforward, and thoughtful in our spoken and written work. We show our scholarship not only by considering issues and questions that are central to our faith, but by being careful and respectful in our treatment of the authors of our texts, the ideas we discuss, and the thoughts of our fellow classmates.

4. **Late Work:** The instructor is under no obligation to accept late work. It is the instructor's discretion whether to accept late work, and under what conditions to accept it if it is to be accepted. As a general rule, late work is unacceptable.

5. **Disability Accommodation Statement:** Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary is committed to providing equal access to its programs of graduate professional education for all qualified students with learning, physical, medical, or psychological disabilities. The Seminary aims to provide reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with a disability (based on clinical documentation) to ensure their access and participation in Seminary programs. For details, see "Disabilities Policies and Procedures" in the Student Handbook.

Grades

It is assumed that everyone in the class is capable of the work required to receive a "B" grade for each assignment. The following interpretations of the meaning of each grade have been developed to help class members identify the strengths and problems in their written work. The syllabus has provided detailed information on each assignment to limit the amount of "guess work" by students about what needs to be included and addressed in the assignment.

A "B" means that the basic elements of the assignment are in place.

A "B+" means that the assignment is also well crafted.

An "A-" means that the assignment is well crafted and probes the issues with considerable insight.

An "A" means the assignment is well crafted, reveals considerable insight, and moves beyond the range of the student's knowledge to begin to construct new perspectives and meanings for the subject.

A "B-" means that the assignment lacks clarity or focus. It tends to explore issues superficially.

A "C+" means that the assignment lacks clarity and focus, tends to be superficial, and lacks personal insight into the issues being discussed.

A "C" means that the assignment does not move beyond the reporting of information from readings and class discussions to engaging them with the issues being discussed.

A "C-" means that despite some moments of focused discussion and insight, major gaps exist in the development of the argument or discussion.

A "D" is a grade of grace.

An "F" indicates that the assignment has not been fulfilled at all points.