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## YM 665 Youth Culture and Trends

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YM665 - Youth Culture and Trends  
Asbury Theological Seminary  
Class Sessions meet June 12-15, 2006

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**Course Description:** This course explores the issues facing youth today including sex, drugs/alcohol, media, music, family pressures, and modern philosophies. Students will examine theories of adolescent development, observe teenagers in secular and church settings, and prepare to minister to youth as they struggle with the issues of their culture.

**Course Focus:** This class studies the realm of youth in relation to their culture and the broader social influences that shape their thinking and living; and our perspective of youth. The class will study youth as a micro-culture (local youth culture) and as a macro-cultural phenomenon (including the broad cultural influences that have shaped our notion of youth across the centuries). A central thesis of this course is that youth culture struggles much like the Church in its attempts to resist and transform the broader social influences of the dominant culture. Unfortunately youth often do not have the resources to achieve their goal. Instead youth are often "domesticated" by the dominant culture through consumer strategies. The challenge for the church is to provide the resources for youth and adults to mutually create an authentic "Christian Youth Culture" that mirrors the local church's effort to model a counter-culture through formation, discernment and transformation strategies.

**Course Outcomes:** Upon completion of this course the student will

1. Define youth and "adolescence" as broad cultural concepts
2. Identify key components of local youth culture
3. Identify larger social influences that shape both youth practice and adult perspectives of youth
4. Develop ministry strategies that faithfully employ the ability of youth in ministry formation and discernment.

## Class Texts

- 1) Web-based Publications: Chapman R. Clark, "Entering Their World: A Qualitative Look at the Changing Face of Contemporary Adolescence," *Journal of Youth Ministry* (Fall 2002) available on-line (3/13/2006) at [http://ayme.gospelcom.net/jym\\_article.php?article\\_id=21](http://ayme.gospelcom.net/jym_article.php?article_id=21) Read also the five part seminar on Qualitative Research courtesy Don Ratcliff (3/14/2006) at <http://don.ratcliffs.net/qual/> (apx. 25 pages).
- 2) Patricia Hersch, *A Tribe Apart: A Journey Into the Heart of American Adolescence* (New York: Ballentine Books Readers Companion, 1999), 379 pages; and Christian Smith, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (London: Oxford Press, 2005) 271 pages, appendices optional.  
  
NOTE: Hersch and Smith are the primary texts but please read Thomas Hine, *The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager* (New York: Avon Books, 1999; 315 pages) if you have read either Hersch or Smith for a different class. Regardless bring your copies of Hersch and Smith to class (we will discuss both texts at some point during class).
- 3) Pete Ward, *God at the Mall: Youth Ministry that Meets Kids Where They are At* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 160 pages.
- 4) David White, *Practicing Discernment with Youth* (Cleveland: The Pilgram Press, 2005), 209 pages.
- 5) For an audio resources that supports the class, see audio interviews with Christian Smith and special journals like Youth Culture & the Church with Mardi Keyes & Pastor Mark DeVries from the Mars Hill Audio Journal: [www.marshillaudio.org](http://www.marshillaudio.org)

## Class Assignments:

1. **Class participation:** (350 pts total) Class participation in an intensive format includes not only class discussion but also faithful reading and reflection of the assigned material before and during class sections. While book reports are not required of all assigned reading, it is assumed the student will read to develop a familiarity with the major concepts discussed by each author as a part of class discussion (200 points). In addition to general participation in class, preparation for the class includes the following specialized class assignments:

- A) Read the qualitative resources provided by Ratcliff and complete a **preliminary survey of your local youth culture based on the LASTS guidelines for cultural analysis provided later in the syllabus.** (100 points)  
This preliminary survey should be a self assessment of your current understanding of youth culture, which does not require additional outside interviews/research. Using the LASTS worksheet provided below merely record the cultural "clues" you already possess about your current youth culture (particularly of the youth in your church or local setting).
- B) Identify at least one **on-line resource for culturally sensitive youth ministry.** Please give the internet site location and a brief assessment "why" it is a resource. (50 points)
- C) Please Note: We will plan on one "Field Trip" to the local Mall on Tuesday evening to observe and discuss local youth culture. Please reserve the evening for this assignment.

2. **Comparative Book Analysis/Synthesis** (250 points) : Write one 10-15 page comparative book report on *A Tribe Apart* and *Soul Searching*. Due June 12th

3. **Macro Culture Research** paper: (12-15 pages, 400 points). Due June 28th (12 noon CST) by email attachment: Choose one large generative theme (sexuality & abstinence, violence, education, poverty, ethnicity) trace its relationship to youth culture in the United State, using research to back your investigation, and suggest a ministry response using Ward and White as resource texts. Resources include class readings, library research, and other credible outside research such as

- National Study of Youth and Religion at <http://www.youthandreligion.org/>
- The ADOL (Adolescent Directory On Line) : <http://education.indiana.edu/cas/adol/adol.html>
- National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth <http://www.ncfy.com/index.htm>
- Bolt.com at <http://www.bolt.com/>.
- Additional statistical information may be helpful in some circumstances, for an example see: <http://www.youthspecialties.com/free/view.php?category=Stats>.

#### FORMAT FOR ALL ASSIGNMENTS:

- All papers should be double-spaced, typed, with one-inch margins and 12 font. Citations should follow standard form and style (APA, MLA, Turabian/Chicago) including bibliography.
- Papers are due on the day assigned and, in most cases, will be used for class discussion
- Quotations should be clearly marked and sources must be noted in end/footnotes Please Note: quotations should be kept to a minimum

- No folders or binders please, email attachments preferred for feedback & grading purposes
- See Grading Rubric to guide both comparative book report and macro paper

#### Grade Scale:

1000-926: A    925-901: A-  
 900-875: B+    874-826: B    825-801: B-  
 800-775: C+    774-726: C    725-701: C-  
 700-675: D+    674-626: D    625-600: D-    599 or Below: F

#### Grade Descriptions

"A"-EXCEPTIONAL WORK (surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives)

"B"-GOOD WORK (strong, significant achievement of course objectives)

"C"-ACCEPTABLE WORK (basic, essential achievement of course objectives)

"D"-MARGINAL WORK (inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives)

"F"-UNACCEPTABLE WORK (failure to achieve course objectives)

**Professor's warning:** if using outside websites be sure to utilize credible sources based on accuracy, authority, objectivity, currency and coverage. If unsure a website is credible check with the professor first before using/citing it as a source.

#### Promptness

The instructor will provide both "timely" and "substantive" feedback to students regarding their assignments. "Timely" response means that for assessments of student work during the course of the academic term, the professor will have work marked, graded, and returned within one week of its submission; if the class has more than 40 students, the professor may take up to two weeks. In addition, the professor will provide "substantive" feedback that alerts students to what they have done well and how they might improve their performance in subsequent work.

**Late papers** will not receive written feedback, nor is the professor bound to meet the one week turnaround.

#### Special Accommodation

Students needing special accommodations for this class should notify the professor no later than the first day of the course.

**Inclusive Language:**

Students are urged to use inclusive language wherever possible both in their oral and written work/participation. This guideline is intended to help sensitize the Asbury Theological Seminary community and to provide help in moving beyond our present habits to more just expressions.

**Academic Integrity:**

The standards of conduct that are articulated in the Asbury Theological Seminary's Student Handbook concerning academic matters are important to the integrity of our community and the high ethical standards we expect of those who are preparing for Christian ministry. Abuse of these policies will be handled as stipulated in the handbook.

**Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is the presenting of another's ideas or writings as one's own; this includes both written and oral discourse presentations. Response to plagiarism may include requiring an assignment to be redone, automatic failure of a course or, in some extreme cases, recommended dismissal from the Seminary (FH). Please make sure any borrowed material is properly documented.

**Resource Texts for research paper:** The following list of books is provided as resources for further research. While not an exhaustive list they provide a range of topics for your research paper. (Additional options may be adopted but require advance approval)

- Chap Clark, Hurt: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic 2004).
- Dean Borgman, Hear My Story: Understanding the Cries of Troubled Youth (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003).
- Colleen Carroll, The New Faithful: Why Young Adults are Embracing Christian Orthodoxy (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2002)
- James E. Côte' and Anton L. Allahar, Generation on Hold: Coming of Age in the Late Twentieth Century (New York: New York University Press, 1996) Currently out of print.
- Richard W. Flory and Donald E. Miller, Gen-X Religion (New York: Routledge, 2000)
- Henry A Giroux, Channel Surfing: Racism, The Media and the Destruction of Today's Youth (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998)
- Henry A. Giroux, Fugitive Cultures: Race Violence & Youth (New York: Rutledge, 1996)

- James Garbarino, *Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them* (New York: The Free Press, 1999)
- Tom Hine, *The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager* (New York: Avon/Bard Books, 1999)
- Lorraine Delia Kenny, *Daughters of Suburbia: Growing Up White, Middle Class, and Female* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2000)
- Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson, *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys* (New York: Ballentine Books, 1999)
- Lauraine LeBlanc, *Pretty In Punk: Girls' Gender Resistance in a Boys' Subculture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002)
- Mike A. Males, *Framing Youth: 10 myths about the Next Generation* (Monroe, Ma.: Common Courage Press, 1999)
- William R. Myers, *Black and White Styles of Youth Ministry: Two Congregations in America* (New York: The Pilgrim Press 1991) Currently out of print.
- Walter Mueller, *Understanding Today's Youth Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale 1994, 1999).
- Mary Pipher. *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls* (New York: Ballantine Books 1994)
- Chris Richards, *Teen Spirits: Music and Identity in Media Education* (London: Taylor & Francis/UCL Press, 1998).
- Quentin J. Schultze, Roy M. Anker, James D. Brattt, William D. Romanowski, John W. Worst, Lambert Zuidervaart, *Dancing in the Dark: Youth, Popular Culture and the Electronic Media* (Eerdmans, 1991) Currently out of print.
- Barbara Schneider & David Stevenson, *The Ambitious Generation: America's Teenagers, Motivated but Directionless* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999)
- Rachel Simmons, *Odd Girl Out* (Harcourt, 2002)
- Merton P. Strommen and Richard A. Hardel, *Passing on the Faith: A Radical New Model for Youth and Family Ministry* (Winona, Minn.: Saint Mary's Press, 2000)
- Rosalind Wiseman, *Queen Bees and Wannabes: Helping Your Daughter Survive Cliques, Gossip, Boyfriends, and Other Realities of Adolescence* (Crown Pub, 2002)
- Note: Other readings may be provided and additional sources are expected for research papers For organizations at work developing new forms of youth ministry see the following: Princeton Institute for Youth Ministry at <http://www.ptsem.edu/iym/index.htm> Search Institute at <http://www.search-institute.org> Youth Theological Institute at <http://candler.emory.edu/RESOURCES/YTI/>

## Tentative Class Schedule (subject to change)

Monday	Topic	Activities
9:00-10:15		
<b>NOTE: Time are approximate</b>	Entering Their World WHY Important? Knowing Youth Matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Class introductions</li> <li>* PP Does this look familiar</li> <li>* How do we know youth?</li> <li>* Beloit College Handout</li> <li>* Exercise in discernment</li> <li>* PP Overview</li> <li>* Lost Children tease</li> </ul>
	Cultural Clues Cultured Church Youth/Church face similar challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Overview of Micro/Macro</li> <li>* WWJD Optional Reading (what is different?)</li> <li>* WWJD Marketing</li> <li>* Bo Cassell article on WWJD (take home resource)</li> <li>* PP Present</li> </ul>
10:30-Noon	Understanding Micro-Culture Where do youth meet...? Defining Ethnography Defining Culture Youth Ethnographer Process of Ethnography Participant Observation (Matirx)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Video from American Beauty</li> <li>* PowerPoint questions</li> <li>* Group Discussion (why important for Tribe Apart? Why important for ministry?)</li> <li>* PP present</li> </ul>
Noon-1:00	Lunch	
1:00-1:30	Ratcliff Review Qualitative Analysis Defining Youth and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Ratcliff Website Discussion</li> <li>* PP present</li> <li>* Distribute &amp; Discuss LASTS</li> </ul>

	Subculture A Tribe Apart	
1:30--4:00 (break in middle)	Lost Children	* LASTS analysis with Lost Children Video * Give out Tribe Apart Assignment * Give out Generation on Hold Handout
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Activities</b>
9:00-10:15	A Tribe Apart	* Discuss Book as Case Study using LASTS
10:30-Noon	Understanding Youth in Culture Understanding Youth In Culture History of Youth Defining Youth in Major Categories Current Categories	* PP Presentation * PP History of Youth-Current Categories * Discuss Generational Categories (handout)
Noon-1:00	Lunch	
1:00-2:30	Cultured Youth?	* PP of Cultured Youth * Merchants of Cool video
2:30-4:00	Time Off	
5:00-9:00	Field Trip to Mall	
	Field Notes	* Discussion of Field Trip using LASTS and General Observations/Comments on Micro-Culture
<b>Wed</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Activities</b>
9:00-10:30	Generative Themes Interpretive Grid	* PP Presentation * What a Girl Wants Discussion * What a Girl Wants handouts Lyrics and Date my Daughter discussion * Rize Conversation
10:45-11:30	Adult Views of Youth Implications What are the Issues?	* Play Elephant segment * PP Mike Males * PP What are the issues

		* Tough Guise or Continue RIZE *Balmer: Jesus Northwest * Reviving Ophelia Handout
11:30-Noon	Chapel	Chapel
Noon-1:00	Lunch	
1:00-2:30	Theological Perspectives Ministry Responses Shaping Youth Ministry	PP Youth Theological Perspectives
2:45-4:00	Ministry Responses Ward & White	PP presentation The Devil Made me Do It White & Ward discussion (reflection)
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Activities</b>
9:00-10:30	Wesleyan Response	* PP
10:45-Noon	Synthesis of Week	Case Study "Thirteen"
Noon-1:00	Lunch	
1:00-2:15	Synthesis	Case Study "Thirteen" continues
2:30-3:30	Reflection/ Debriefing	Discuss class and responses

### Lasts Guide:

You will find a guide that can be used with students (introduction written with them in mind) or with leaders in youth ministry. Take a moment and use the following guide as a way to explore what you already know about the culture your youth live in.

## **L.A.S.T.S.: *Exploring & Explaining Youth Culture***

Ever wanted to help someone understand your world? Ever felt like you needed to be a "cultural guidebook" for someone so they could better understand what is meaningful for your generation? Here is your chance. You are about to become both a "cultural anthropologist" and cross-cultural guide to help other people take your world seriously. Think about the five categories that often describe the "lasting" aspects of a culture (what gives the culture enduring meaning): Language, Actions (and Actors), Space, Time and Symbols. How a given group of people uses these categories tells a lot of about what is lasting and enduring about their culture.

### **L *anguage***

Language communicates key thoughts and ideas. Sometimes we use code language or "slang" (a type of insider language) that is important for our friends. At other times language communicates central concepts and values (like "security," "compassion," "friendship") that are meaningful to our lives. Can you identify either code language or valued concepts that are important in your world?

### **A *ctions***

Actions (and the people who perform the actions) often tell us what is meaningful in what we "do" in our day-to-day lives. They may involve a simple process (shaking hands) or complex activities (playing sports). Some actions have a "ritual" quality (a particular way of greeting someone), other actions help us just get through the day. Often we associate different types of activity with different people (sports/athletes, academics/intellectuals, relationships/dates, etc.) What are some key activities you engage in daily or at specific times of the week and with whom?

### **S *pace***

We often associate certain aspects of our lives with particular spaces. We have buildings dedicated to education, to religion, to sports, to business, to legal activities, etc. Sometimes we divide up a building into social, private, and even "safe" spaces. Think about your week, where are some key "spaces" that you spend time inhabiting and why? Where are the places your friends get together? Where do you spend most of your time each day or during key times of the day?

### **T *ime***

If space identifies our physical presence, time identifies both our needs and desires. Often time identifies how we "order" and prioritize our activities and relationships. Sometimes the most important things in our lives are not necessarily the things we spend the most time doing, so "timing" is important as well. How do youth around you spend most of the time? What are some key moments or times that are especially important?

### **S *ymbols***

Every culture has certain "concrete" images/symbols that convey meaning, whether an art-form or commercial product. There are certain images that do not need explaining; instead they ignite our passion and imagination. Advertisers understand this as well as governments and churches. If you could bring three or four images/symbols that are meaningful to your youth culture what might they be?

## **LASTS JOURNAL**

Take a couple of minutes to identify key components of your culture under each domain strictly from memory. Feel free to include anything you like from the profound to the ridiculous (you can change it later). Then keep an eye out during the day for new entries for each category and add them in when you have the chance. You will be surprised at what you "notice" each day.

**LANGUAGE:**

**ACTIONS (and actors):**

**SPACE:**

**TIME:**

**SYMBOLS:**

### LASTS Intersections:

Obviously there are moments when these five domains intersect. Think it through and see what is important. Do certain actions occur at certain times? Are key symbols associated with selected spaces? Try to sift through and identify what is crucial about your culture if you tried to explain it to someone else.

	Language	Action	Space	Time	Symbols
Language	LASTS				
Action		LASTS			
Space			LASTS		
Time				LASTS	
Symbols					LASTS

