YM 670 Postmodern Youth Ministry

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The issues of adolescence, after all, are the issues of being human, in acute form. All human beings long for something “to die for.” All human beings must convert to a truth worthy of enduring commitment, a truth that makes life worth living and, yes, death worth dying. Adolescents seek this truth instinctively, incessantly, and intuitively simply because they must. Postmodern adolescents will not settle for generic, relative truth. When we are honest, neither will we.


I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course explores the dynamics of living in a postmodern culture and its attendant impact on the church and its ministry to adolescents. The focus is on developing a theology of youth ministry which takes seriously the unique needs of postmodern students, and then look at how that theology should culminate in specific practices of ministry to youth. Special attention is given to the fact that we are living “between worlds” and how our ministries need to become bi-lingual, speaking both the language of faith and the language of culture. (Proposed Catalog statement)

II. PLACE OF COURSE IN THE CURRICULUM:
This is an elective course and is open to any student who has taken either CM 510 or YM 510.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES:
As a result of taking this class students will be able to:
1. Identify postmodern issues that impact the church’s ministry to adolescents.
2. Demonstrate how one’s local context (geographical, cultural, and theological) can impact how postmodern issues are fleshed out.
3. Critically evaluate from a Wesleyan theological perspective the various models addressing postmodern youth ministry.
4. Formulate a philosophy of youth ministry that takes seriously the need to minister to both modern and postmodern students and works itself out in specific ministry practices for youth.

IV. REQUIRED READING

Textbooks
Sweet, Leonard; Crouch, Andy; McLaren, Brian; and McManus, Erwin (eds.). Church in Emerging Culture: Five Perspectives. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003. 256 pages
Articles

In addition, you will need to read an additional 150 pages of collateral reading on postmodernism. You will list these resources on your reading report.

V. COURSE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
1. Regular class attendance and participation is expected since much of our class time will center on a dialogical format. A cooperative learning environment will govern our class time. Therefore, student participation is very much a part of the learning experience.
2. The course requirements will be the core of the course. It is acceptable for students to work together and share resources on these projects. We are all learners and we can be greatly enriched by the ministry experiences of others.
3. Since this is a course in Youth Ministry, it is imperative that students engage in reading and be exposed to youth. It is greatly encouraged that students be actively involved in some aspect of youth ministry. Much of the course will focus on youth ministry from a congregational ministry perspective.
4. A praxis method of teaching will govern the class sessions. The continual interaction between theory and practice will be explored. Practical applications should be properly informed by educational theories.

VI. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
1. Reading and Class Participation:
The intentional, ongoing personal formation of the minister is critical for ministry effectiveness. This necessarily involves reading and reflection. This course provides students with an opportunity for regular reading and reflection. The reading load is heavy, but it is essential for class participation. We are not after just the transmission of data, but rather transformative-learning. Simply put, if you haven’t read the material, you won’t be able to constructively engage in the discussion, and chances are you will not have the opportunity for personal and ministerial transformation. In addition to the required texts, I have provided a bibliography of supplemental readings that those of you who plan to be engaged in youth ministry as a primary portion of your ministry will want to read.

Attached to this syllabus is a reading form you will need to fill out showing what percentage of the reading you have done for class. It will be turned in at the end of the term and will count as 15% of your total grade. It will be graded as follows: 100% - 15 points; 90% - 13.5 points; 80% - 12 points and so on. Due January 28 2004.

2. Class Attendance
Class attendance is required. If for some reason you cannot attend, notification should be given to the professor before class in writing (email preferably). After a total of four hours have been missed, the overall grade for the course will be negatively affected by 2% for each additional absence. A total of 8 hours of absences will result in a failing grade. It is your responsibility to obtain class lectures and information from peers in the class. “Excused absences” (as defined by the Dean’s office) are not included in the above formula, however you should notify the professor each time an “excused absence” occurs.
3. Book Review:
Write a five page review of the Ward text. Special attention should be given to how he approaches church from a theological perspective and how this ultimately impacts his practices of ministry. Critique it from the position of your own theological tradition and understanding of postmodernism and ecclesiology. DON’T just disagree with him because his ideas seem weird to you. If you need help writing a book review, please see “How to Write a Book Review” by Joel Green and Brent Strawn located on First Class/Wilmore Campus/Help Desk/Resource Center. Due January 28, 2004.

4. Group Presentations
The following list presents different types of youth ministry practices (based on the categories created by Kenda Dean and Ron Foster in The Godbearing Life). Affinity groups will choose one practice from the list and make a 30 minute presentation on it to the class. The presentation should demonstrate for the class what the practice would look like from a postmodern perspective. Grading for this project will be based on the following:
* Ability to show how the practice can assist both modern and postmodern students.
* Ability to dialogue with the class reading and lectures.
* Ability to incorporate an understanding of adolescent development.
* Ability to integrate a Wesleyan understanding of Scripture and theology.

Practices include:
* Worship
* Teaching and Nurture
* Compassion
* Communion
* Witness
* Dehabitation

The class will NOT meet on January 16 and 19 in order that students may work on their group projects. Presentations will occur on January 21-22, 2004.

VII. COURSE GRADING PROCEDURES:

1. Final Grade Criteria
Reading Report 15%
Participation 10%
Book Review 30%
Group Project 45%
100%

2. Grading Scale
A = 93-100
A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89
B = 84-86
B- = 80-83
C+ = 77-79
C = 74-76
C- = 70-73
D+ = 67-69
D = 64-66
3. **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)

4. **Promptness**

All papers and reports should be turned in on the scheduled dates. All work is due at class time.

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.

5. **Special Accommodation:** Students needing special accommodations for this class should notify the professor during the first two days of the course.
### VIII. PROGRAMMING CALENDAR AND COURSE OUTLINE

*NOTE*: As a general rule, assignments and due dates will not vary from this schedule. Any changes will be announced in advance of the due dates for assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 12</td>
<td>Course / syllabus overview</td>
<td>Read <em>PYM</em> 8-79, 144-165</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Module 1: What is postmodernism and why should I care? Historical/theological/cultural examination.</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Module 2: What does a postmodern student look like and what difference does it make? Looking at how adolescent faith formation is changing, and the ways culture influences this.</td>
<td>Read <em>PYM</em> 80-143; <em>VF</em> 1-189</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Module 3: Do We Need Youth Ministry Any More? Can youth ministry continue to function in a postmodern world, and if so, how?</td>
<td>Read <em>PYM</em> 166-193, 214-231; Zahner article</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Module 4: Postmodern ways of doing church. The possibilities and limits of postmodern ministry.</td>
<td>Read <em>CEC</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Students work on group projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Students work on group projects</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Module 5: Practice or Theory: It’s not an either/or but a both/and (also known as praxis)</td>
<td>Read Baker article and Roebben article</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Module 6: Creating Balance in Ministry: Remember, the church still has a lot of moderns too. How do we practice postmodern ministry and not lose our moderns along the way?</td>
<td>Book review of <em>Liquid Church</em> due; Reading report due</td>
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Name:__________________________________________________________________

I have read (not just skimmed) all course readings except for the following:

In addition, I have read the following resources to account for my 150 pages of collateral reading: