YM 510 Foundations of Youth Ministry

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The teenagers I know are both cynical and harshly passionate. What they want is so big, it’s hard to get your eye around it at first. Who would’ve thought that teenagers talking about sex would end up talking about their souls? For that’s what they’re talking about, isn’t it? Not body heat but life everlasting. Not the adventure of skin on skin, but a dinner table in the skies. They have none of our ambivalence—indeed the world, distinction vs. belonging. Their struggle is with the world—will it let them lose their loneliness? And how? They want something bigger than themselves to live for, something steadier and stronger than one-on-one love; something I long for and loathe, something eradicating—a “we” in their lives; a family feast that never ends, a tribe of friends, God’s will.

Kathie Dobie, Mother Jones (January/February 1995)

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Explores roles and responsibilities of the career youth minister, grounded in the vocation of “ministry as change agent,” including grounding in a theology of youth ministry, studies in formative needs of youth; staff development, resource development and selection; with special attention to maximizing multiple-staff opportunities and responsibilities, ministry through facilitating and empowering staff, and coordinating a multidimensional youth development ministry. (Catalog)

II. PLACE OF COURSE IN THE CURRICULUM:
This course is required of all MAYM majors. It is the foundational course out of which all other Youth Ministry courses grow. It is designed to help the prospective youth minister not only understand youth ministry as practical theology, but also learn how to think theologically about youth ministry as a holistic ministry within the church.

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES:
1. Provide a framework for youth ministry that is grounded in biblical theology and ecclesiology.
2. Understand developmentally the “critical years” of adolescent from existing theoretical models with a view toward how these years shape one’s identity and faith commitments:
   A. Identify the crucial issues confronting youth in our culture
   B. Distinguish one’s own identity issues as distinct from those of the target population and establish anchor points for one’s own spiritual formation.
3. Identify and critique models and styles of youth ministry:
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A. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of each approach
B. Develop a capacity to holistically evaluate an existing youth program.
C. Seek designs that integrate youth students into the intergenerational community of faith
4. Acquire the skills necessary to be effective in youth ministry through developing strategies for recruiting, training and motivating lay volunteers.
5. Create habits of reflecting on one’s own journey, call, and spiritual formation with places of accountability and with attentiveness to the Spirit of Christ.
6. Gain an acquaintance with resources available for equipping ministry enhancement.

IV. CLASS RESOURCES

Textbooks
Electronic Course Packet for YM510 (291 pages)

Other Resources
Barefoot Ministries subscription -
NOTE: You will need a PDF viewer to read these articles. If you don’t have one, you can download the Adobe PDF viewer at: http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html

V. COURSE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

1. Regular class attendance and participation is expected. Since this course is focusing on a professional ministry area, 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.

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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 semester and will count as 10% of your total grade. It will be graded as follows: 100% - 10 points; 90% - 9 points; 80% - 8 points and so on. Due December 14, 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 the third absence, the overall grade for the course will be negatively affected by 2% for each additional absence. A total of 6 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. Media Focus:
Each class member will present to the class at a designated time a short (no more than 4 minute) film clip portraying an issue of adolescence and/or youth ministry, particularly as these apply to the chosen topic(s) discussed in class that day. You will need to provide the clip for the class to watch, as well as turn in to the instructor a one-page written explanation of film, this scene and its relevance to youth ministry. Of course, watching a movie wouldn’t be complete without a snack, so it would be nice if you could also bring some small snack for the class to enjoy. I will demonstrate the first one.

Presentations will begin September 14.

NOTE: ITEMS 4 AND 5 ARE THE OUTCOME OF WHAT YOU SHOULD LEARN IN CLASS.

4. Theology of Youth Ministry Paper
This 8-12 page paper should summarize your vision for youth ministry as it should be practiced from within your particular theological tradition. What is the Biblical basis and theological grounding from which you do ministry? Identify the primary theological doctrine(s) which serve as the starting point for your theology of youth ministry and the distinctive ways this/these doctrine(s) is/are understood by your particular theological tradition. Be sure to include the following:

- Mission statement for your ministry
- Scripture(s) that describe and define why
- How your theological doctrine(s) impact the purposes that drive your youth ministry.
- Whether your theology of youth ministry leans more toward nurture or conversion.
- How this theological starting point addresses youth, both in terms of their stages in the lifecycle and in terms of their cultural position.
5. **Youth Ministry Portfolio:**

Working together with an assigned small group, your group will create a one-year portfolio which shows what a youth ministry looks like when it is based on a proper theological foundation as its starting point. Your group should address the following issues:

- **Ministry Context** – Identify the following:
  - The “communities” of which the youth group is a part
  - The overall climate of the youth ministry
  - The social and developmental needs and the youth culture present

- **Mission Statement** – This should be supported by your chosen theology of youth ministry and should be in dialogue with your own personal history and current philosophy of youth ministry.

- **Goals** this youth ministry will seek to accomplish.

- **Model of Youth Ministry** – What model of ministry best serves the theological doctrine(s) you have chosen to base your ministry on and how does that model contribute to the furthering of your theology of youth ministry? Describe the model of youth ministry you choose, then consider the following questions:
  - *Why do you believe this model would be effective in this locale?*
  - *How does your model reflect your chosen theological doctrine as expressed in this youth ministry’s theological tradition?*
  - *How does this model reflect sensitivity to the developmental issues pertinent to your targeted age group?*
  - *What will be your strategy for reaching the unchurched in a postmodern world?*
  - *What are the programmatic levels that encourage deepening discipleship, leadership, and missional opportunities?*

- **A description of the leadership approach** for the ministry and the necessary characteristics of such leaders.
  - What are your particular gifts and graces for ministry? How are they reflected in the chosen leadership approach?
  - How will your ministry team be organized? How will you utilize volunteers?

- **A list of church and community resources and services** that address the needs of youth.

- **A one-year calendar** of programming that reflects the theological and philosophical foundations on which the youth ministry is based. Be aware of how the traditional and church calendar may influence your planning. Your calendar should include the following:
  - Topics for Sunday School and youth group meetings.
  - Leadership training and meetings (both youth and adults).
  - Fun activities
  - Ministry/service projects
  - Fundraisers
  - Worship
  - Parent support
  - Etc.

- **An annotated bibliography** of youth ministry resources. Each of the following headings should have at least 5-7 resources listed:
  - Adolescent Development
  - Youth Ministry Theology and Philosophy
  - Youth Ministry Programming
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- Discipleship/Mentoring
- Worship
- Service/Ministry
- Fun/Games


VII. COURSE GRADING PROCEDURES:

1. Final Grade Criteria
   - Reading Report 15%
   - Video Clip Presentation 15%
   - Theology of Youth Ministry Paper 30%
   - Youth Ministry Portfolio 40%
   - 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
   - D- = 60-63
   - F = 0-59

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)
   - "I"-INCOMPLETE WORK (is rarely given; it denotes that the work of a course has not been completed due to an unavoidable emergency, which does NOT include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment. If the work of a course is incomplete at the end of a term without an emergency, a letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as “F”)

4. Academic Honesty
   - Any instance of cheating or plagiarism of any kind will result in an automatic zero on that specific
assignment. Any repetition of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course. I operate on the honor system that all work turned in is your own.

5. **Promptness**
   All papers and reports should be turned in on the scheduled dates. All work is due at class time. **Any work turned in late will receive a deduction of one letter grade per class period that it is late. No work will be accepted later than one week from the date it was due.** [NOTE: This does not apply to the Media Focus since this is a class presentation. This will be presented on the date due or a failing grade for the project will be earned.] Papers may be emailed to the professor in order to meet the due date.

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.**

6. **Special Accommodation:** Students needing special accommodations for this class should notify the professor during the first two weeks 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.

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<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 7</td>
<td>Course / syllabus overview</td>
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<td>Module 1: Foundations</td>
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<td>Historical Perspective: Conversion or Nurture?</td>
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<td>Cultural Look at Adolescence</td>
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<td>Faith Development</td>
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<td>Module 2: Understanding Current Practices</td>
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<td>Oct. 5</td>
<td>Theology and Programming</td>
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<td>Theology and Context</td>
<td>B&amp;W, pp. 3-190</td>
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<td>Calendaring, Programming and Budgeting</td>
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<td>Traditional Models of Youth Ministry, part 1</td>
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<td>Traditional Models of Youth Ministry, part 2</td>
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<td>An Alternative Paradigm: The Godbearing Life</td>
<td>GL, pp. 11-102; C&amp;A (online)</td>
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<td>Theology of Youth Ministry Paper due</td>
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<td>Practices of Teaching/Nurture</td>
<td>GL, pp. 159-172</td>
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<td>Practices of Witness</td>
<td>GL, pp. 173-184</td>
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<td>Nov. 2</td>
<td>Practices of Communion and Compassion</td>
<td>GL, pp. 139-158</td>
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<td>Practices of Worship and Dehabituation</td>
<td>GL, pp. 185-205</td>
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<td>Module 3: Reflecting on Concrete Situations</td>
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<td>Leadership Styles</td>
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<td>Evaluation: Formative and Summative</td>
<td>BSS, pp. 7-223</td>
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<td>Resourcing and Networking</td>
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<td>FALL READING WEEK – NO CLASS</td>
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<td>Legal and Safety Issues</td>
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<td>Youth Worker Panel</td>
<td>Portfolio due</td>
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<td>Dec. 2</td>
<td>Why Youth Ministers Fail . . . and How to Keep it from Happening to You</td>
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THEOLOGICAL MODELS OF YOUTH MINISTRY


Ng, David. *Youth in the Community of Disciples*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1984. (REFORMED)

HISTORY OF YOUTH AND YOUTH MINISTRY


DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES


Loder, James E. *The Transforming Moment*.


YOUTH AND CULTURE


PROGRAMMING


COUNSELING YOUTH


Name:______________________________________________________________

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