COURSE DESCRIPTION
PT530 - Creating a Functional, Holistic, & Compassionate Youth and Family Ministry
Vancouver School of Theology SUMMER 2019

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PURPOSE: This is a course on youth and family ministries that deals with the compassionate and holistic manner of doing youth ministry today, and where you do not do it in isolation, but you combine it with family ministry. Thus, this course aims to explore some of the issues that are raised in doing a combined ministry, its implications for theology in a practical setting. The issues include such things as science & theology, ecological systems and systems thinking, media & the Digital Age in a consumptive society, Bowen Theory and its eight concepts, leadership, Search Institute’s forty assets, communicating the gospel, recruiting and training volunteer leaders, supervising leaders and managing programs, facing & negotiating conflict, and reconciliation. Students are thus expected to use this course to further think about their own theological and ministerial engagement and envision a youth and family ministry that is critically informed by the issues and questions raised in the context of youth and family ministry.

EXPECTATIONS AND COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES: Assuming some experience in youth and family ministries (though not required), this course attempts to share with students the spirit, theories, and practice of youth and family ministry in a way that applies to all Christian ministries. It attempts to give students basic proficiency in systems thinking, an ecological understanding of families and youth, churches and communities resulting in a more relevant and holistic ministries.

Goals of the Course
(a) Students should grasp from the instructor’s power points, class readings, classmates’ reflections, and from the life of Jesus, the passion, and sensitivity necessary in ministering to youth and families. Outcomes of passion and sensitivity will be measured from class discussions, student responses to other students’ input in daily reflections and student’s written papers.
(b) Students should understand and integrate into their thinking and practice of ministry, theories of the youth and family ecology, systems thinking, family process, individual healing and growth, and programs for youth and family. Outcomes of theoretical understanding will be measured in student’s reflection in reading reflection papers, student papers, and student’s discussions in class with others.
(c) Along with their exegesis of Scripture and of themselves, seminarians and Christian leaders need to exegete the culture. It is expected that students of this course have some familiarity with the various aspects of our culture and subcultures as well as the different generations making up our society. This capacity will be measured by productive class discussions and specific assigned writings.
(d) This course is designed to increase the leadership capacity of students beginning with their recognition of their own leadership style.
(e) This course is intended to enable its takers to go and set up compassionate and holistic youth and family ministries in places where there are none and help give a cutting edge to those with existing ones.

Course Procedure
Intensive courses are designed to get in so much information in a short period of time therefore one needs to do a lot of advance reading before coming to class for five days. With much of the reading done in advance, the focus will be on class lectures, student reflections on readings, and class discussions. In addition to two short prior assignments before classes start (a Personal Philosophy Statement on Youth Ministry, and a Brief Analysis of a Family, Church or Christian Organization), and having a community partnership, you will also be asked to present your reading response in class at least once in the 5 days. To facilitate better discussion, the instructor will offer a PowerPoint lecture daily before getting into conceptual class discussions on the subject of the day from the allocated readings.
REQUIRED READINGS:

3 Required Course Texts

Dean Borgman. Foundations for Youth Ministry: Theological Engagement with Teen Life and Culture, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013. ISBN: 9780801049019 This is an introduction to practical theology; a way of doing theology in youth and family ministry. This text attempts to give you the biblical, theological and social science background needed in youth and family ministries. In addition to looking at the culture, it invites a careful inventory of your own self and your self-care practices. It aims for relevant, holistic ministry. (Whole Book - 299 pages)

Gilbert, Roberta M. The Eight Concepts of Bowen Theory: A New Way of Thinking About The Individual and The Group, Leading Systems Press, 2004/2013. ISBN: 097634551X This little book will surprise you. It is enlightening enough for professional therapists and readable for the lay leader. It traces dysfunction to the family and social systems beyond, while helping pastors, parents and leaders self-differentiate themselves and understand theory in a way that will affect practice. By its end, you will agree with the author, we should and can make changes where we see dysfunction or injustice. (Whole Book - 120 pages)

Report to the Nation from the Commission on Children at Risk. Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities, YMCA/Dartmouth Medical School, Published by Institute for American Values, 2003. ISBN-10: 1931764042 A significant critique of societal culture and current approaches calling for stronger and more effective families and programs. (82 pages total – Reading Only pp.5-52 – 47 pages)

1 Required Course Devotions Text

Nouwen, Henri J.M. In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership, The Crossroad Publishing Co. 1989, 2002. ISBN-10: 0824512596 These powerful, brief reflections inspire the kind of leadership needed in today's world and church. In our course, this little book will be used for progressive personal weekly devotional reflections for the subject. (Whole Book - 81 pages) To be read throughout the week for class and personal devotional. A one-page review of your experience reading this book is due at the end of the week and is worth 5% of your final grade.

2 Required Selected Book Chapters

Dorr, Donal. Faith at Work: A Spirituality of Leadership. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2006. ISBN: 0814631827 This is a text that not only defines what leadership is, but, deals deeply with authentic leadership. It primarily addressed to those who lead volunteer or non-governmental agencies and religious organizations. Dorr is the thing that they must provide a model of effective, humane leadership for the business world, public service, and politics. He focuses on scriptural sources for a spirituality of leadership and draws insight from various spiritual traditions in the history of the church. He emphasizes the surprisingly strong and consistent democratic tradition within Christianity. He also draws on key elements in the thinking of political philosophers and management theorists. He describes four different kinds of leaders and outlines five styles and manners in which good leadership is exercised. He concludes with a discussion of techniques for individual and communal discernment and the use of intuition in decision-making. (184 pages: READ Chapters 6-8; - 36 pages)

Halverstadt, Hugh F. Managing Church Conflict. Westminster John Knox Press, 1991. ISBN-10: 0664251854 In this instructive book, Hugh Halverstadt advocates a Christian vision of shalom for an ethical process of conflict management. He shows how respectfulness, assertiveness, accountability, and a focus on the larger common good should all serve as Christian behavioral standards. The book is ideal for addressing ministries, church systems, and other non-profit organizations in conflict. (236 pages: READ Chapters 1,2 and 5; - 30 pages)

2 Required Course Resources

Search Institute’s Forty Developmental Assets - http://page.search-institute.org/dev-assets-download_1212-17 Download PDFs of these 40 developmental assets using the link above. Make sure you have the four age groups, Early Childhood, Children, Middle Childhood and Adolescents. These are 40 research-based, positive experiences and qualities that influence young people’s development, helping them become caring, responsible, and productive adults. (4 pages)

“Volunteer Forms” - https://smartchurchmanagement.com/church-volunteer-forms/ (8 forms)
10 Required Course Articles (18 pages)

ARTICLE 1: Daniel Aronson - Overview of Systems Thinking, Copyright 1996-8 (3 PDF pages provided)


ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reading and class participation: All Students including auditors are expected to do all the required readings and participate in class discussions. 100% attendance is required of Certificate and Degree students.
2. Certificate students: Certificate students are required to hand in 5-6 pages of writing that demonstrates the ability to thoughtfully engage the material and reading for the class and gives a personal reflection on the reading and material covered.
3. Basic degree students (Diploma; MA; M.Div): are required to do any required oral assignments during the course itself and submit any combination of written assignments totaling approximately 1500-1875 words/6-8 pages.
4. Advanced degree students (Th.M): are required to do any required oral assignments during the course itself and submit any combination of written assignments totaling approximately 3750-4250 words/15-17 pages.

Further details about assignments will be provided on the course syllabus.
**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Benson, Peter L. *Sparks: How Parents Can Ignite the Hidden Strengths of Teenagers*, Jossey-Bass, 2008. This researcher (Search Institute) has written this practical and extremely helpful book for parents—too many of whom (us) have not discovered the hidden mission and special talents of our teenagers. (256pages).

Burns, Jim & DeVrie Mike. *Partnering with Parents in Youth Ministry: The Practical Guide to Today's Family-Based Youth Ministry*, 2003. Two nationally respected youth ministers, trainers and consultants provide you with practical “how-to's” missing from the rest of this course. (152pages)

Cannister, Mark. *Teenagers Matter: Making Student Ministry a Priority in the Church*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013. A seasoned, solid practitioner, and an involved and respected professor of youth ministries at Gordon College and leader of the professional society, Association of Youth Ministries Educators, has given us this thoughtful text on church, youth and family ministries. Note particularly Ch. 6, “Parents Matter.” If not able to read through this current text, take a careful look at topics such as “Culture,” “Parents,” “Church”—as found in its Index. (254pages).

Cosgrove, Charles H. and Hatfield Dennis D. *Church Conflict: The Hidden Systems Behind the Fights*. Abingdon Press, 2004. ISBN: 0687081521 This book treats the church as a family, and one that fights due to conflicts that inevitably naturally arise. The church must be particularly careful in the manner in which it handles these ‘family fights.’ By using stories and examples of real problems at actual churches, Cosgrove and Hatfield apply family-systems theory to help us identify the hidden structural boundaries in any group relationship. They show how the dynamics and ‘family rules’ operating in the informal family-like church system powerfully influence how church members relate to each other and how the church should handle and resolve conflict. (192 pages)

Everist, Norma Cook. *Church Conflict: From Contention to Collaboration*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004. ISBN: 9780687038015 This is a text that deals with a variety of responses to conflicts extant in ministry. It moves chronologically from avoidance to accommodation, to compromise, and to collaboration. It is a practical minded book as it deals with practical needs of ministries especially congregations and it serves a reliable guide to navigate conflict in such a way that there still is authentic fulfillment of one’s calling to ministry leadership. (157pages)

Friedman, Edwin H. *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*, NY: The Guilford Press, 1985, 2011. Family issues are not seen as individual issues but issues of a dynamic system. You need this, not only for pastoral family counseling, but to understand family dynamics generally. A highly regarded text. (319pages).

Garbarino, James. *Children and Families in the Social Environment*, Aldine Transaction, 2nd ed. 1992. This lays the social science, ecological and systemic basis of this class. From a respected expert on urban youth comes this substantial text incorporating established family ecological principles. You will find here an excellent introduction to Bronfenbrenner’s ecological description of macro-, eso- and meso-, and micro-systems themselves, and systems thinking. Though somewhat dated, its material is still very relevant. You won’t be able to finish all of it this semester, but it should be a valuable resource for your future ministry. (400pages).


Smith, Casandra. *Letters to God: Diary of an Unsilenced Generation*, 2013. Here are poignant, genuine letters from the hearts of troubled youth, written at the conclusion of youth revival services and gathered by a compassionate leader of youth-at-risk. (223pages).

Turkle, Sherry. *Alone Together*. New York: Basic Books, 2011. A highly accessible savvy text that helps ministers to understand the psychology of technology and relationships. The picture she paints helps explain the many behaviors that society today exhibit when in contact with technology especially the young people. A necessary read for whoever works with young people and wants to understand these digital natives’ life on social media in this digital age. (305pages).