



P*370 Contemporary Issues in Youth Ministry

3 Credits

Fall 2009

Instructor

Jason Vanbinsbergen, M.A.

Course Description

This course is designed to help prepare students to gain a deeper understanding of some of the struggles faced by today's adolescents. We will look at specific behavioral, emotional and relational issues of teens and will also look at the influence of the media culture. This course will equip the student to better address contemporary issues and effectively deal with them as they minister to the students in their sphere of influence.

Textbooks

Mueller, Walt. Youth Culture 101

Van Pelt, Rich and Jim Hancock. The Youth Worker's Guide to Helping Teens in Crisis

Course Objectives

1. Identify the influences of media and pop culture on the lives of adolescents.
2. Develop a strategy to help teens learn the needed skills to filter the influence of media and pop culture.
3. Create a personal biblical paradigm to address media and pop cultural influences in order to minister more effectively to this generation.
4. Identify major relational, emotional, and behavioral issues faced by adolescents today.
5. Be able to address and discuss the major relational, emotional, and behavioral issues with adolescents and/or parents.
6. Become aware of the legal ramifications and responsibilities of various related issues.
7. Feel prepared to counsel adolescents in crisis (e.g. suicide, pregnancy, etc.)
8. Learn skills needed to stay abreast on current trends and issues in the complex world of today's adolescent.

Course Assignments

1. Textbook Reading

Youth Culture 101 – the reading of this book will be broken up into 3 smaller assignments. After reading assigned chapters, write a one page personal reflection paper. **This is not a book report!** Answer questions like: what did you think of that chapter? What did you agree/disagree with?

What quote will you walk away with? What was helpful to you? Have you seen the points of the book true in the lives of adolescents you know or work with?

Chapters 1 and 2 – due September 28

Chapters 3 and 4 – due October 26

Chapters 5 and 6 – due November 30

Youth Worker’s Guide to Helping Teenagers in Crisis – since this book is mostly a reference tool, read only to the end of chapter 2 (page 78). Use a highlighter and pencil while reading to highlight key points and important insights, or to jot down thoughts/comments/questions of your own. You will hand in your highlighted and penciled book November 18.

2. Media Critique

Choose one form of teen targeted media (movie, magazine, website, tv show, cd, etc) and provide a thorough 4-6 page critique. Your paper should address the following questions:

- What are the blatant messages of the media item you chose?
- What are the subtle messages that may be even more damaging?
- What might the adulthood of a teenager look like if they embrace the message promoted by your media item? How would that affect culture at large?
- How do you help teens develop discernment and a personal way of evaluating the media messages they consume –especially in regards to their spiritual journey?
- Give a biblically based response to the messages of your media choice.

****Your media choice must be approved by the instructor BEFORE you begin your research and paper.** Possible examples would be the movie *Thirteen* or *American Teen*, magazines like *CosmoGirl* or *Seventeen*, websites like *alloy.com* or *teen.com*, or a cd from the current top 40.

Due November 2.

3. Youth Issue Research Project

Choose one of the 22 crisis issues presented in chapter 5 of *The Youth Worker’s Guide To Helping Teenagers In Crisis* as your research project topic. This assignment is not meant to be a typical term paper but more of a “package” of collected data, written material or articles, and ministry tools related to your topic. Your project should include the following:

- 7-10 Photocopied articles from magazines, journals, or websites
- List of 5-8 related websites with a short synopsis of each site
- 1 page list of current statistics
- Resource list (annotated bibliography of books on your topic)
- An outline of a talk/seminar you would do with teens on your topic
- A 4-6 page summation paper that shows a thorough understanding of your topic, its origins and effects, and how you would counsel or deal with this issue when a teen comes to you for help.

This assignment is due December 2.

Horizon College/University of Saskatchewan Assessment of Student Work

90-100% [Exceptional] – a superior performance with consistent strong evidence of:

- a comprehensive, incisive grasp of the subject matter;
- an ability to make insightful critical evaluation of the material given;
- an exceptional capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
- an excellent ability to organize, to analyze, to synthesize, to integrate ideas, and to express thoughts fluently.

80-89% [Excellent] – an excellent performance with strong evidence of:

- a comprehensive grasp of the subject matter;
- an ability to make sound critical evaluation of the material given;
- a very good capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
- an excellent ability to organize, to analyze, to synthesize to integrate ideas, and to express thoughts fluently.

70-79% [Good] – a good performance with evidence of:

- a substantial knowledge of the subject matter;
- a good understanding of relevant issues and a good familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;
- some capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
- a good ability to organize, to analyze and to examine the subject material in a critical and constructive manner.

60-69% [Satisfactory] – a generally satisfactory and intellectually adequate performance with evidence of:

- an acceptable basic grasp of the subject material;
- a fair understanding of the relevant issues;
- a general familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;
- an ability to develop solutions to moderately difficult problems related to the subject material;
- a moderate ability to examine the material in a critical and analytical manner.

50-59% [Minimal Pass] – a barely acceptable performance with evidence of:

- a familiarity with the subject material;
- some evidence that analytical skills have been developed;
- some understanding of relevant issues;
- some familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;
- attempts to solve moderately difficult problems related to the subject material and to examine the material in a critical and analytical manner, which are only partially successful.

Under 50% [Failure] – an unacceptable performance