MIN641: THEOLOGY OF YOUTH MINISTRY
Syllabus – Fall 2015

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION
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Email: brian.mclaughlin@cornerstone.edu
Office Hours: Thursdays (before or after class) or Skype appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Students will seek to integrate a theologically informed perspective with sound principles to create a philosophy of youth ministry. Special attention will be given to exploring how adolescent faith is nurtured.

COURSE OUTCOMES
By the conclusion of this course, participants should be able to:

1. Understand and apply the process of practical theology to youth ministry. Primary resource: Osmer.
2. Identify contextual considerations that affect and reflect ministry practice. Primary resource: Morgan.
3. Articulate a theology and philosophy of ministry for youth ministry context. Primary resources: Root books.
4. Critique current youth ministry methods, approaches, and programs. Primary resources: Root books.
5. Define transformation and reflect on how to guide adolescents in their own formation. Primary resource: King.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS (7)


**SUPPLEMENTAL READING:**


ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEW
Rubrics for the following assignments are provided at the end of this syllabus.

1. **Classroom Participation** (15%). Students are expected to actively participate in each class. This includes showing up on time, interacting with the instructor and your peers, asking meaningful questions, making appropriate applications, and remaining for the entire class.

2. **Morgan Reaction Paper – due September 24** (10%). Write a 2 to 3-page reaction paper to Brock Morgan’s *Youth Ministry in a Post-Christian World: A Hopeful Wake-Up Call*. Briefly describe your current ministry context. Compare and contrast this context to Morgan’s ministry context. Include your definition of post-Christendom, examples of how your context is or is not post-Christian, and practical youth ministry implications you gleaned from this comparison.

3. **Taking Theology to Youth Ministry Reaction Paper – due October 15** (10%). Write a 2 to 3-page reaction paper to Andrew Root’s *Taking Theology to Youth Ministry*. Briefly explain Root’s understanding of youth ministry. Do you agree with this proposal? How might you modify this proposal? How might Root’s understanding, or your modified proposal, influence a church’s youth ministry and the role of the youth minister?

4. **The Relational Pastor Reaction Paper – due November 5** (10%). Write a 2 to 3-page reaction paper to Andrew Root’s *The Relational Pastor*. Interact with one or more of the following questions:
   - How does *The Relational Pastor* challenge your presuppositions concerning youth ministry or the role of the youth pastor?
   - How can you envision implementing Root’s understanding of relational ministry in your ministry?
   - What potential cautions or dangers do you see with Root’s understanding of relational ministry?

5. **Philosophy of Youth Ministry – due November 19** (20%). Write a 2-3 page paper outlining your philosophy of youth ministry. This should include:
   a. **Core theological commitments.** What are the theological foundations on which this ministry exists? What are the major biblical indicatives and imperatives for your ministry?
   b. **Core principles.** What principles arise out of your core theological commitments? What are the non-negotiables that must be present in your ministry, regardless of how they are actually implemented?
   c. **Possible methodology.** Keeping in mind that methodology is contextual, how might these principles be implemented? What resources might be required? What activities may be implemented?

This assignment may be completed in APA format or may consist of well-organized and explained bullet-points. You should demonstrate an awareness of the course reading and
class discussions, but do not provide direct quotations or references. This philosophy
should be written in your own words, with biblical passages only referenced
parenthetically.

6. **Reshaping Your Ministry Paper – due December 17** (35%). Write a 10 to 12-page
paper detailing how one aspect of a youth ministry can be reimagined. This paper can
focus on your youth ministry or another youth ministry. This paper should include:

   a. **Ministry Context**: Provide an analysis of the context of this youth ministry. This
   includes the immediate cultural context as well as the local congregational
   context. It also includes a description of the current ministry and the key problem
   or concern that is being addressed (3-4 pages).

   b. **Theological Analysis**: Interact with the ministry and the key problem of concern
   biblically and theologically. How does the Bible challenge the current ministry
   assumptions and practice? How does Church tradition challenge the current
   ministry assumptions and practice? What can you learn from other sources of
   God’s truth that can impact this problem? (3-4 pages)

   c. **Ministry Implications**: Provide a description of the new or revised ministry,
   including a detailed path forward for implementing changes in this ministry. This
   includes a proposal for evaluating the success of this ministry transition (3-4
   pages).

**PAPERS AND PROJECTS**

Papers in Bible and Theology courses should be formatted and sources documented according to
the *GRTS Guideline for Papers* (see sample footnotes and bibliography on p. 10-13). This
guideline is based on the Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style and the *SBL Handbook of Style*.

Papers in *Ministry* and Counseling courses should be formatted and sources documented
according to APA Style.

To access these style guides in Moodle (Learning Management System):
   1. Go to moodle.cornerstone.edu
   2. Select “New Student Resources” course
   3. Click on the “General Information” tab/folder
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 10</td>
<td>Course overview, the process of practical theology</td>
<td>Course overview, the process of practical theology</td>
<td>Osmer, Introduction</td>
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<td>Sept. 17</td>
<td>What is the cultural context of today’s youth ministry?</td>
<td>Ministry Context: Culture</td>
<td>Osmer, chap. 1 Morgan, chaps. 1-4</td>
<td>Morgan reaction paper</td>
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<td>Sept. 24</td>
<td>What is the context of today’s typical adolescent?</td>
<td>Ministry Context: Adolescence</td>
<td>Morgan, chaps. 5-8</td>
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<td>Oct. 1</td>
<td>How has youth ministry developed over the years? Where are we today?</td>
<td>Theological Analysis: Ecclesiology and the history of youth ministry</td>
<td>Osmer chap. 2</td>
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<td>Oct. 8</td>
<td>What is a theology of youth ministry?</td>
<td>Theological Analysis: Theology and youth ministry</td>
<td>Osmer, chap. 3 Root, Taking Theology to Youth Ministry</td>
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<td>Oct. 15</td>
<td>What is the role of Scripture in youth ministry?</td>
<td>Theological Analysis: Scripture in youth ministry</td>
<td>Root, Unpacking Scripture in Youth Ministry</td>
<td>Taking Theology to Youth Ministry reaction paper</td>
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<td>Oct. 22</td>
<td>What is relational youth ministry and why might it be a problem?</td>
<td>Theological Analysis: Relational ministry</td>
<td>Root, The Relational Pastor, chaps. 1-7</td>
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<td>Oct. 29</td>
<td>What is relational youth ministry in light of the incarnation?</td>
<td>Theological Analysis: Incarnation and youth ministry</td>
<td>Root, The Relational Pastor, chaps. 8-15</td>
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<td>Nov. 5</td>
<td>How does youth ministry live in the already-not yet?</td>
<td>Theological Analysis: Mission and eschatology in youth ministry</td>
<td>Root, Unlocking Mission and Eschatology</td>
<td>The Relational Pastor reaction paper</td>
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<td>Nov. 12</td>
<td>How can we be used by God to nurture faith in adolescents?</td>
<td>Ministry Implications: Spiritual formation</td>
<td>Osmer, chap. 4 King, chaps. 1-6</td>
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<td>Nov. 19</td>
<td>What is a philosophy of youth ministry?</td>
<td>Discussing our philosophies of ministry</td>
<td>Philosophy of Youth Ministry</td>
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<td>Nov. 26</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break</td>
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<td>Dec. 3</td>
<td>How can we be used by God to nurture faith in adolescents?</td>
<td>Ministry Implications: Spiritual formation</td>
<td>King, chaps. 7-11</td>
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<td>Dec. 10</td>
<td>What happens after youth ministry?</td>
<td>Ministry Implications: Transition into Adulthood</td>
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<td>Dec. 17</td>
<td>Final Exams Week</td>
<td>Wrap-up and final discussion</td>
<td>Reshaping Your Ministry Paper</td>
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EVALUATION
Grades for individual assignments and the overall course grade will be determined using the following grading scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>96-100</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92-95</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-91</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>66-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 66</td>
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LATE WORK POLICY
Student work submitted after the posted due date without prior approval from the instructor will receive grade reductions according to the following:

- Within the first week after the due date: one full letter grade reduction for the assignment (e.g., “A” will become a “B”).
- After the first week but before the end of the second week: two full letter grade reduction for the assignment (e.g., “A” become a “C”).
- After two weeks beyond the due date: “F” grade for the assignment.

ATTENDANCE POLICY
Students are expected to attend all class sessions. A maximum of one absence will be allowed without grade implication for work conflicts, sickness, scheduling conflicts and all other reasons. An absence involves not being present for the class. Implications for more than one absence are outlined below:

- 1 absence: no grade reduction for the course
- 2 absences: one letter grade reduction for the course
- 3 absences: two letter grade reduction for the course
- 4 or more absences: “F” letter grade for the course

EMAIL COMMUNICATION
Email is the official means for communication with every enrolled student. Students are expected to receive and read those communications in a timely fashion. Since the seminary will send official communications to enrolled students by email using their Cornerstone University email addresses (i.e., first.last@cornerstone.edu), students are expected to check their official email addresses on a frequent and consistent basis to remain informed of seminary communications.

Students can access their Cornerstone University email account as follows:
- Go to gmail.cornerstone.edu
- Enter CU username (e.g., n0236522) and password

Students can forward or IMAP their “@cornerstone.edu” email to a preferred address as follows:
- Log into CU email
- Select “Settings” in the upper right hand corner
- Select “Forwarding and POP/IMAP”
- Follow the on-screen instructions
Students are responsible for any consequences resulting from their failure to check their email on a regular basis for official seminary communications.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCLOSURE
Students may request that information shared with a faculty or staff member in individual settings will remain confidential, except under the following conditions:

- There has been serious harm or threat of harm to self or others.
- There is reasonable suspicion of abuse of a child, elder or vulnerable person.
- There is a court order mandating disclosure of information.
- There is a dispute between a student and faculty/staff member and disclosure is necessary for resolution.
- The faculty or staff member seeks appropriate consultation with CU faculty and/or administration.

STUDENT COURSE EVALUATION
In the last week of each resident course, all students are expected to complete a course evaluation (IDEA Form). This paper-based assessment form will be distributed and completed in class. In Ministry Residency, Counseling Practicum and Counseling Internships, and for all online courses, student evaluations will be completed within Moodle. These assessments provide an opportunity for students to offer feedback to professors on the quality of the learning experience, feedback that informs future offerings of the course. More information about these evaluation processes will be provided late in the given semester.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE
As noted in the GRTS academic catalog, writing and discussion should reflect the GRTS policy on inclusive language when referring to other people, regardless of their gender, nationality, culture, social class or religion.

COPYRIGHT VIOLATION & PLAGIARISM
Copyright violation and plagiarism have serious ramifications for Cornerstone/GRTS students, both legally and ethically. Unauthorized copying or use of copyrighted materials, including downloaded files of various kinds, can result in criminal charges and fines. Plagiarizing another’s words or ideas (passing them off as your own) can result in loss of grade or failure. For a fuller explanation of these issues or of CU’s copyright policy, see Miller Library’s website (under Library Tools menu)—“Copyright, Fair Use, & Plagiarism”:  http://library.cornerstone.edu/copyright

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION
The University will make reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The purpose of accommodation is to provide equal access to educational opportunities to students affected by disabilities, and the university does not intend that the standards be altered, nor that the essential elements of programs or courses be changed. Students having documented disabilities may apply for accommodations through Student Disability Services (SDS), which is part of the Cornerstone University Learning Center located in Miller Hall on the main campus.
In the event that students have questions regarding whether they are eligible for accommodations, how they might provide appropriate documentation of disabilities, or how they might handle a disagreement with a professor over questions of accommodation, the Director of Academic Support should be contacted immediately at (616) 222-1596 or via email at learning.center@cornerstone.edu. Further information about applying for and utilizing accommodations is provided in the Student Handbook and on the university’s website.
## Reaction Paper Rubric

This rubric will be used for the three required reaction papers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content: Analysis (70 points)</th>
<th>A or A-</th>
<th>B+, B, or B-</th>
<th>C+, C, or C-</th>
<th>D+, D, or D-</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64-70 points: Response interacts with the required questions provided in the syllabus. Response is focused, detailed, and insightful. It is presented in logical progression. The response is supported with relevant biblical texts, personal experience, potential application, or other scholarly academic sources. Supporting evidence is accurately cited. Disagreement is thoroughly explained and respectfully discussed.</td>
<td>56-63 points: Response is insightful, but lacking some focus or detail. The response is supported with relevant biblical texts, personal experience, potential application, or scholarly academic sources. Supporting evidence is accurately cited. Disagreements are identified but not fully explained.</td>
<td>49-55 points: Response contains an equal amount of response and summary. As a result, the response is less detailed and may move away from the question addressed. The response interacts with some biblical texts, personal experience, potential applications, or scholarly academic sources, but the connection may not always be clear. Supporting evidence is often not accurately cited.</td>
<td>46-48 points: Response contains more summary than response, or the response does not directly address one of the questions provided in the syllabus. The response does not interact with many biblical texts, personal experience, potential application, or academic sources. Supporting evidence is not provided.</td>
<td>45 or fewer points: Response is pure summary or does not address one of the questions provided. The focus is unclear. The response is not supported by any biblical texts, personal experience, potential application, or academic sources.</td>
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| Grammar (20 points) | 18-20 points: Insightful, original introduction clearly focuses the paper. Convincing conclusion summarizes paper. Transitions are original and purposefully connect content providing strong logical flow. Strong effective academic word choice, variety in sentence structure, and active voice. Paper contains no misspellings, grammatical errors, or APA errors. | 16-17 points: Introduction clearly focuses the paper. Convincing conclusion summarizes paper. Transitions purposefully connect content providing logical flow. Academic word choice, variety in sentence structure, and active voice. Paper contains minimal misspellings, grammatical errors, or APA errors. | 14-15 points: Adequate introduction clearly focuses the paper. Plausible conclusion summarizes paper. Transitions are original and purposefully connect content providing logical flow. Paper contains several misspellings, grammatical errors, or APA errors. | 13 points: Weak introduction and conclusion. Transitions are ordinary (get the job done but in a routine fashion) and often do not connect content providing logical flow. Paper contains numerous misspellings, grammatical errors, or APA errors. | 12 or fewer points: Missing the introduction, the conclusion, or both. Transitions not used or transitions are inconsistent which provides some confusion to the reader. Paper contains regular misspellings, grammatical errors, or APA errors. |

| Format (10 points) | 9-10 points: Assignment was submitted prior to the deadline, meets length requirements, and includes a cover page and references. | 8 points: Assignment was submitted one day late and/or 0.5 page below length requirements and/or doesn't include cover page or references. | 7 points: Assignment was submitted two days late and/or is 1 page below length requirements and/or doesn't include cover page or references. | 6 points: Assignment was submitted three days late and/or is 1.5 pages below length requirements and/or doesn't include cover page or references. | 5 or fewer points: Assignment submitted more than three days late and/or is more than 1.5 pages below length requirements and/or doesn't include cover page or references. |

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**Major Paper Rubric.** This rubric will be used for the Philosophy of Youth Ministry Paper and the Reshaping Your Ministry Paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content: Analysis (70 points)</th>
<th>A or A-</th>
<th>B+, B, or B-</th>
<th>C+, C, or C-</th>
<th>D+, D, or D-</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64-70 points: Project interacts with all topics required in the syllabus. Analysis is insightful and presented in logical progression. The thesis, main points, and/or claims are supported with relevant biblical texts and scholarly academic sources. Supporting evidence is accurately cited. Alternative perspectives/positions are identified and respectfully discussed.</td>
<td>56-63 points: Analysis is insightful, but one required topic is missing or underdeveloped. The thesis, main points, and/or claims are supported with relevant biblical texts and scholarly academic sources. Supporting evidence is accurately cited. Alternative perspectives/positions are identified.</td>
<td>49-55 points: Analysis is evident, but less than insightful. Two required topics are missing or underdeveloped. The thesis, main points, and/or claims are supported with relevant biblical texts, but minimal scholarly academic sources.</td>
<td>46-48 points: Analysis is general or vague but presented in a somewhat logical progression or no logical progression at all. Two required topics are missing or underdeveloped. The topic statement, main points, and/or claims are not supported with general or vague personal examples. Supporting evidence is for the most part accurately cited.</td>
<td>45 or fewer points: Several topics required in the syllabus are missing. Analysis is general or vague with no logical progression at all. The topic statement, main points, announcement and/or claims are not supported or are supported with general or vague.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Grammar (20 points) | 18-20 points: Insightful, original introduction clearly focuses the paper. Convincing conclusion summarizes paper. Transitions are original and purposefully connect content providing strong logical flow. Strong effective academic word choice, variety in sentence structure, and active voice. Paper contains no misspellings, grammatical errors, or APA errors. | 16-17 points: Introduction clearly focuses the paper. Convincing conclusion summarizes paper. Transitions purposefully connect content providing logical flow. Academic word choice, variety in sentence structure, and active voice. Paper contains minimal misspellings, grammatical errors, or APA errors. | 14-15 points: Adequate introduction clearly focuses the paper. Plausible conclusion summarizes paper. Transitions are ordinary (get the job done but in a routine fashion) but purposefully connect content providing logical flow. Paper contains several misspellings, grammatical errors, or APA errors. | 13 points: Weak introduction and conclusion. Transitions are ordinary (get the job done but in a routine fashion) and often do not connect content providing logical flow. Paper contains numerous misspellings, grammatical errors, or APA errors. | 12 or fewer points: Missing the introduction, the conclusion, or both. Transitions not used or transitions are inconsistent which provides some confusion to the reader. Conversational word choice, some variety in sentence structure, active and passive voice or just passive voice. Paper contains regular misspellings, grammatical errors, or APA errors. |

| Format (10 points) | 9-10 points: Assignment was submitted prior to the deadline, meets length requirements, and includes a cover page and references. | 8 points: Assignment was submitted one day late and/or 0.5-1 page below length requirements and/or doesn't include cover page or references. | 7 points: Assignment was submitted two days late and/or is 1-2 pages below length requirements and/or doesn't include cover page or references. | 6 points: Assignment was submitted three days late and/or is 2-3 pages below length requirements and/or doesn't include cover page or references. | 5 or fewer points: Assignment submitted more than three days late and/or is more than 3 pages below length requirements and/or doesn't include cover page or references. |

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