



CEYH8301 The Emerging Landscape in Youth Ministry

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Church Ministry Division
Fall Semester | September 21-23, 2026

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Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College is to prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

This professional doctoral seminar is designed to explore the influence of postmodern and post-Christian culture upon the contemporary practice of youth ministry. Emphasis will be placed upon theological and practical evaluation of contemporary trends in youth ministry. Students will analyze various contemporary approaches to local church youth ministry with the goal of developing biblically sound and theologically sound ministry strategies to be implemented in current youth and adult culture.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- Apply the knowledge and comprehension of the history of youth ministry, the contemporary models of youth ministry, and the role of the youth minister for the purpose of envisioning various options for implementation of particular models in a local church youth ministry.
- Value ministry to youth in the local church through gaining an awareness of postmodern cultural influences.
- Identify and evaluate resources for youth ministry, formulate an overall strategy for youth ministry in the local church, and envision cultural influences and their implications for future models of youth ministry.

Course Requirements

Textbooks:

You are expected to read all of the following three books:

Odom, David. *Youth Ministry Deconstructed: Rethinking Your Ministry to Build Lasting Faith in Students*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2026.

Pruitt, Shane and Shelly Melia. *Reaching Generation Alpha: A Ministry Guide for Discipling the Church Beyond the Screen*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2026.

Root, Andrew. *The End of Youth Ministry?: Why Parents Don't Really Care about Youth Groups and What Youth Workers Should Do about It (Theology for the Life of the World)*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2020.

And ONE of the following:

Elmore, Tim. *Marching Off the Map: Inspire Students to Navigate a Brand New World*. Atlanta: Poet Gardener, 2017.

Haidt, Jonathan. *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*. New York, NY: Penguin Press 2024.

Kinnaman, David and Mark Matlock. *Faith for Exiles: 5 Ways for a New Generation to Follow Jesus in Digital Babylon*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2019.

McGarry, Mike. *A Biblical Theology of Youth Ministry*. Nashville, TN: Randall House, 2019.

McKnight, Tim. *Navigating Student Ministry: Charting Your Course for the Journey*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2022.

Parr, Steve and Tom Crites. *Why they Stay: Helping Parents and Church Leaders Make Investments That Keep Children and Teens Connected to the Church for a Lifetime*. Bloomington, IN: WestBow Press, 2015.

Powell, Kara and Brad Griffin. *3 Big Questions That Change Every Teenager: Making the Most of Your Conversations and Connections*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 2021.

Powell, Kara, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin. *Growing Young: Six Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 2016.

Renn, Aaron. *Life in the Negative World: Confronting Challenges in an Anti-Christian Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2024.

Ross, Richard. *Youth Ministry that Last a Lifetime*. Ft. Worth, TX: Seminary Hill Press, 2016.

Twenge, Jean. *10 Rules for Raising Kids in a High-Tech World: How Parents Can Stop Smartphones, Social Media, and Gaming from Taking Over Their Children's Lives*. New York, NY: Atria Books, 2025.

White, James Emery. *Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing, 2017.

Seminar Requirements

Before the Seminar

1. Foundations Paper: (10%)

Each student will write a 4-5 page paper offering a sociological and theological foundation for ministry to youth. Students should refer to the required textbooks for help with this assignment. The paper should have three primary sections.

- a. Definitions and parameters of the people group identified as “Teenagers.”
- b. Biblical and theological principles supporting youth ministry.
- c. A brief reflection on implications for ministry to youth.

Complete this assignment before beginning the others. **Submit the paper on to Canvas before midnight on Sunday, September 20.**

2. Book Summary (10%)

Each student will complete a 4-page summary and review of a specific assigned textbook from the secondary textbook list on page 2 of this syllabus. Students will be expected to lead a class discussion regarding the contents of the assigned text. Students should email the professor your top three choices of book assignment. Assignments will be made by August 16, 2026. Copies of student summaries will be provided to all seminar participants via Canvas.

- The summary should include a brief summary of the book, key ideas and principles, strengths and weaknesses of the author's position, points of agreement and disagreement, and application. The application section should be related to the student's personal ministry context and should identify at least five potential application points.

Submit the book summary on to Canvas before midnight on Sunday, September 20. Each student will lead a seminar discussion of the assigned textbook (See Assignment #6 below).

3. Ten Questions: (5%)

Each student will identify major life needs, challenges, opportunities, or issues related to youth ministry and generate a list of 10 questions based on the reading assignments. Proposed questions should reflect significant concepts addressed in the texts and the implications to various ministry contexts. **Submit on to Canvas before midnight on Sunday, September 20.**

4. Resource Contribution (10%)

All students in the seminar are expected to contribute resources such as: books, blogs, websites, articles, dissertations, projects, etc on Canvas Discussion Board. A brief narrative entry of 2-4 sentences along with a reference citation should be included. **Submit on Canvas at least six resources before midnight on Sunday, September 20.**

5. Interviews (15%)

Each student will interview at least 7 teenagers from a variety of backgrounds (be sure to include some unchurched and/or dechurched). Use the following list of questions in the interview. The questions are based on Christian Smith's research on what he calls Moral Therapeutic Deism. The same five questions below should be posed and responses recorded. Prepare a brief written summary (4-5 pages) of the interviews highlighting the most salient responses and your personal observations. **Submit on Canvas before midnight on Sunday, September 20.** Be prepared to discuss your conclusions during the seminar.

- a. What is the religious background of you and your family members?
- b. Do you believe God exists and created the world and watches over human life on earth? If so, explain by recalling an example of God's watch-care over the Earth.
- c. What do you believe to be the central goal of life?
- d. True or false: God wants people to be good, nice, fair, to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions. If true, explain why the Bible is true.
- e. True or false: God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem. Why or why not?

During the Seminar

6. Textbook Presentation and Discussion (5%)

Students must read all the primary textbooks and be prepared to discuss key ideas, theological framework, and practical applications addressed in each. Each student will lead seminar discussion of the textbook assigned by the professor for the Book Summary (Assignment #2). Be prepared to introduce the book, the author(s), and main ideas/key points – then prompt discussion by asking questions and waiting for responses.

7. Seminar Participation (5%)

Each student must be an active participant in all sessions of the seminar. Note: The seminar actually begins with the receipt of the syllabus and continues until all assignments are completed and submitted. The seminar does not consist only of the class time component.

After the Seminar

8. Teenager Profiles (20%)

After the seminar each student will create profiles of designated categories or subgroups of teenagers. Seminar participants will collaboratively design a template as part of the learning experience on day two of the seminar. Each student will use this template as a starting point for the assignment. Profiles should include United States nationwide demographic information where possible (census data, Barna, Pew Research, etc). Characteristics such as religiosity, lifestyle, and socioeconomic status should be discerned from the assigned readings, seminar exercises and supplemental resources. Include appropriate and relevant ministry resources (books, articles, websites, blogs, etc) for each subgroup. Lastly, the profile should demonstrate the ministry opportunity for each subgroup for the local church. Email the assignment to the professor. **Submit the profiles on to Canvas before midnight Sunday, October 25.**

9. Abbreviated Strategic Ministry Plan (20%)

Each student will prepare an abbreviated strategic ministry plan for youth ministry in his/her church or ministry situation. Instructions will be provided during the on-campus portion of the seminar with regard to the scope and length of the report. It is anticipated that the paper will follow a format created from a synthesis of the presented material. Email the assignment to the professor. **Submit the paper on to Canvas before midnight Sunday, October 25.**

Evaluation of Grade

The student's grade will be computed as follows:

Foundations Paper	10%
Book Summary	10%
10 Questions	5%
Resource Contribution	10%
Interviews	15%
Presentation	5%
Participation	5%
Teenager Profiles	20%
Strategic Ministry Plan	20%

Seminar Schedule

Projected Seminar Schedule (subject to change)

The seminar is scheduled to meet from 1:00 to 9:00 p.m. on Monday, September 21, and 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday. All times are Central Time and include breaks and meal times.

Monday, September 21

1:00 - 1:30pm Introductions and Seminar Overview
1:30 - 3:00pm Class Discussion: Foundations Paper
3:00 - 3:15pm Break
3:15 - 4:30pm Book Discussion: Primary Textbooks
4:30 - 5:00pm Break
5:00 - 6:30pm Book Discussion: Primary Textbooks (Continued)
6:30 - 7:00pm Wrap Up & Dismiss

Tuesday, September 22

8:15 - 8:30am Devotion
8:30 - 10:00am Class Discussion: Begin Profile Construction
10:00 - 10:15am Break
10:15 - 11:00am Chapel
12:00 - 1:00pm Lunch
1:00 - 2:30pm Class Discussion: Teenager Interviews Debrief and Ten Questions Discussion
2:30 - 2:45pm Break
2:45 - 4:00pm Secondary Textbook presentations

Wednesday, September 23

8:15 - 8:30am Devotion & Review
8:30 - 10:00am Secondary Textbook presentations, cont'd
10:00 - 10:15am Break
10:15 - 11:45am Opportunities, Challenges and Barriers to Youth Ministry
11:45 - 1:15pm Lunch
1:15 - 2:30pm Ministry Impact and Application, Sharing Resources
2:30 - 4:00 pm Conclude Profile & follow up assignments.

Reading Assignments

Students are responsible for completing all reading assignments.

Classroom Parameters

Please arrive on time.

Turn off or silence mobile phones. Utilize laptops and other technology for class purposes only.

Respect the professor and other members of the class.

Maintain confidentiality when someone shares personal information.

Participate in class and group discussions.

Professor's Policy on Late Assignments

All work is due on the assigned date and time in the syllabus. Assignments are due before midnight on the day they are due. Late assignments will be penalized an initial 10 percent penalty and one percent for each day after the due date. No assignments will be accepted more than two weeks after the original due date. Submit all assignments electronically on Canvas. Do not send files as attachments via email to the professor.

Professor's Availability and Assignment Feedback

The student may contact the professor at any time using the email address provided in the course syllabus. The professor will make every effort to return answers to emailed questions within a 24-hour period of time. Assignments requiring grading will be returned to the student within a reasonable period of time.

Style and Formatting

All assignments are to be typed, double-spaced with a 12-point font, Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins. Include your name, date of submission, and the assignment title on the cover page.

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Please be aware that plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. Refer to the NOBTS Student Handbook <http://www.nobts.edu/resources/pdf/student-services/NOBTSHandbook.pdf> where the definition, penalties and policies associated with plagiarism are clearly defined.

Canvas and ITC Technical Support

Here is the contact information for the ITC support team, who are to help you with your NOBTS/LC technical questions/issues/support requests:

1. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email general technical questions/support requests. If you are not sure who to contact, use this email address!
2. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu or My.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
3. Canvas@nobts.edu - Email technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Canvas Learning Management System, Canvas.nobts.edu site, / nobts.instructure.com.
4. VCHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email technical questions/support requests with NOBTS Microsoft Teams (Flex & Live classes)
5. [504.816.8180](tel:504.816.8180) - Call for any technical questions/support requests. (Currently available Mon, Tues & Thurs 7:30am-7:00pm, Wed 7:30am-6:00pm & Fri 7:30-12:00pm Central Time)
6. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Academic Policies

Academic policies related to absences, grading scale, final examination schedules, and other topics can be found in the current online catalog: [New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Graduate Catalog](#).

Grading Scale

Each students final grade will be based on your total accumulation of points as indicated under the Assignments and Evaluation Criteria section of this syllabus, according to the grading scale in the NOBTS catalog.

A 93-100 B 85-92 C 77-84 D 70-76 F 69 and below

NOBTS Emergency Text Messaging Service

Once you have established a SelfServe account, you may sign up for the NOBTS emergency text messaging service by going to <http://nobts.edu/NOBTSEmergencyTextMessage.html>.

Disability Accommodations

Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by the Assistant Dean of Students for Student Affairs. If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval please contact Conner Hinton immediately at chinton@nobts.edu or 504-816-8246. Students must complete the Accommodation Request Form and provide documentation of their disability. The Assistant Dean of Students notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations. The seminary reserves the right to consider each request for special accommodations on a case-by-case basis pursuant to the criteria enumerated above
