AIM

An ecological approach to family and youth ministries calls for systems thinking. Using such thinking, this course aims toward contextual, holistic and systemic transformational ministry. This course is a basic course not only for youth ministry, but for all ministry programs, as it sharpens students’ contextual and holistic perspective and practice. This course helps fulfill the Seminary’s Mission Statement in terms of cooperating with the Church, furthering God’s redemptive work throughout the world and to provide leadership and resources for church and society.

GOALS

1. To increase student understanding of systems thinking as it relates to families, children, youth, church and community—and to understand the Seminary’s Mission Statement in such contexts. The capacity to articulate and apply such understanding will be measured by discussion and papers.
2. To demonstrate understanding as to how social science, systems thinking, biblical and theological studies apply to pastoral ministry, as demonstrated in discussions and written work. This goal helps fulfill the Seminary’s intention (Mission) to make “historic orthodoxy” expressible “in language and actions understandable in the modern world.
3. To able to explain, and minister to, the family as a more or less functional or dysfunctional system—among other dysfunctional social systems raising our children, as measured by quizzes and papers.
4. To describe various theories of youth ministry being suggested in the transition toward greater family-integrated children/youth ministry, as measured by presentations and papers
5. To be able to teach and implement the Ten Stages of Youth Ministry and the Four Basic Questions in that ministry, as evaluated from quizzes and written work. This and all the above goals are meant to increase students’ capacity to think theologically, live biblically and engage globally.

TEXTS

Report to the Nation from the Commission on Children at Risk (2003) Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities, YMCA/Dartmouth Medical School, Published by Institute for American Values, 82pp. ISBN 1-931764-04-2 ($5 to $8). A significant critique of societal culture and current approaches calling for stronger and more effective families and programs.

regarded text.


FURTHER READING
(You are to choose one of the following as your final text—and add more if you’re able.)

Jack O. and Judith K. Balswick (3rd ed. 2007) The Family: A Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home, Baker Academic, 398pp. This married couple, professors of sociology and psychology have produced a classic on marriage and family. It draws on social science research and insights as well as biblical and theological principles on marriage and the family. Covers marital and parenting issues, sexuality and gender roles, communication issues and social dynamics of family life, relationship of the Christian family to modern culture.

John Bradshaw (1988, revised ed. 1996) Bradshaw On: The Family, a New Way of Creating Self-Esteem, Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications, Inc. 303pp. This best seller, augmented by TV specials, speeches and workshops, has helped millions seeking self-help and recovery. Striking insights and help on individual and familial dysfunction and return to relational and emotional health are offered the reader. You can bypass specific disagreements with his rather dogmatic paradigm and its omissions of any vertical, transcendent reference and let the book what it purposes to accomplish—restore health and self-esteem to those who have been “shamed down.”

James Garbarino (1992) Children and Families in the Social Environment, Aldine Transaction, 400pp. 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-, esso- and meso-, and micro-systems themselves, and systems thinking. Though somewhat dated, its material is still very relevant.

Brian Haynes (2009) Shift: What it takes to finally reach families today, Loveland, CO: Group, 139pp. If you are looking for an actual, biblical plan for family ministry, here it is. It works off 7 milestones in the life of a child/youth. It is a workable strategic plan that might be modified in urban and various ethnic contexts.

Jawanza Kunjufu (2004) Solutions for Black America, Chicago: African American Images, 208pp. This book is not just for African-Americans; all of us can profit greatly from reading his strong Christian, Afrocentric perspective. He deals with the system of racism but also the family, economic, social and church systems as well. It is a provocative book that ought to be discussed.

Mark Matlock (2010) Real World Parents: Christian Parenting for Families Living in the Real World, Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 143pp. Here is an easy reading emphasis on countering the world’s story with God’s story from the home. It may be a bit simplistic, but there are sound, practical suggestions here.

Mark Matlock (2012) Raising Wise Children: Handing Down the Story of Wisdom, Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 147pp. Here is a simple and readable biblical and practical exposition on wisdom and passing it on to our children.


ASSIGNMENTS

Prompt attendance of all sessions, except in emergency situations, is expected of all students—especially because these are interactive class sessions. Attending to Emails, Facebook, etc. is restricted to class breaks—as this course and your classmates deserve your full and undivided attention. The course intends to integrate your past and present experience with your readings, professorial presentations, small group and class discussions, your assigned interaction with families, and your written work. Your reading and Annotated Bibliography should be considered a first step in research; books should be cited in proper bibliographic style; your writing should never border on plagiarism as the Seminary explains it, and the ideas of authors should be clearly and properly referenced.

1. Attendance and Contributions to Class Discussions (20% of grade)

2. Besides your readings, you will observe and reflect on your experiences in and around three families: your own family of origin and two further families of your choice willing for you to get to know them better. You will report on the potential and realities of each of these families following a Family Guide. (40% of grade)

3. Annotated Bibliography. About a half a page on each book written. Who is the author(s), what is the author’s aim or purpose in this book, how successful is her/his development or argument of that purpose. What, briefly is/are your critique/critiques of the book and how would you use this in the future? (20% of grade)

4. There will be two quizzes on your reading (date to be announced); the first on *Hardwired* and *Generation to Generation* and the second on *Perspectives on Family Ministry* and *Partnering with Parents*. (20% of grade)

TOPICS TO BE COVERED

1. Systems thinking applied to Ministry: Sharing in Small Groups
2. The Individual as set of systems operating functionally or dysfunctionally—personal balance
3. Family system dynamics: Sharing experiences and insights from families of origin
4. Assets approach rather than problems approach; Raising capacities as Empowerment
5. Community: Intervention to Prevention to Development to Transformation
6. Discussion of *Hardwired to Connect*; Discussion of family dynamics and observed family
7. Discussion of *Generations to Generations*; Discuss observed family
8. Discussing differing Philosophies of youth and family ministries
9. Discussion of Perspectives on Family Ministry: Three Views; Discuss class experience
10. Discussion of Partnering with Parents in Youth Ministry: The Practical Guide to Today’s Family-Based Youth Ministry

ADDITIONAL READING


Several handouts of selected readings illustrating particular situations and problems.

BACKGROUND READING

(Particularly for those needing basic information for youth ministry)

Jim Burns and Mike DeVries (2001 revised) The Youth Builder, Gospel Light, 316p. Jim Burns is an esteemed trainer of youth leaders. He put this book out many years earlier. It is the basic “nuts and bolts” of youth ministry text. Mick DeVries is one of those promoting family-based youth ministry. If you’re looking for a book on “nuts and bolts” of youth ministry, this, along with Wayne Rice’s Junior High Ministry, is the place to start.


Doug Fields (2002) Your First Two Years of Youth Ministry: a personal and practical guide to starting right, Zondervan/Youth Specialities, 290pp. You might find this on the suburban and middle class, but I think you’ll get a lot of good, practical advice here for getting into youth ministry in a church context.

Ginny Olson, Diane Elliot & Mike Work (2001) Youth Ministry Management Tools: Everything you need to successfully manage youth ministry, Zondervan, 420 pp with CD. After you understand, you will need a toolbox of practical, ready-to-use helps. Believe me, this book lives up to its title for those of you up to your neck in youth ministry. Here are tools for planning yearly calendars and events, time management, risk management (legal, etc.), budgeting and finances, office and personal management, building a youth ministry team, how to get and leave a job and much more. Permission requests to parents, when accidents happen—it’s all here for you to copy or download from this invaluable CD!
FURTHER BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, Elijah (1999) *Code of the Street: decency, violence, and the moral life of the inner city*, NY: W.W. Norton, 352 p. This is the book that follows his *Atlantic Monthly* article. Here he raises the questions: Are inner cities more violent than suburbs, and if so, what factors make them so? Anderson is an African-American sociologist, and this interpretation of urban violence is based on his ethnographic work in his earlier book, *Streetwise* and article, “The Code of the Streets.” This book is important for those who would develop relationships with street youth and see community change.

Elijah Anderson (1990) *Streetwise: Race, Class, and Change in an Urban Community*, Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 276 pp. The streetworker can find no better cultural analysis of the streets than is found here. Black and white, middle-class and lower-class, young and adult, individual and systemic all find their place in the contemporary urban crisis.

Robert Sam Anson (1988) *Best Intentions: The Education and Killing of Edmund Perry*, New York: Vintage of Random House, 221 pp. This is a powerful piece of investigative reporting into the controversial killing of a young black honors student by a plain-clothes cop. Who was Edmund Perry, and what was he up to that night? Can well-intentioned help of street kids sometimes miss the mark? Here are penetrating insights into the adolescent identity crisis and the struggle between street culture and middle-class culture. If you are middle-class and want to help working-class or welfare kids, you ought to let this book challenge you and your program.


Dean Borgman (2003) *Hear My Story: Understanding the Cries of Troubled Youth*, This is a basic text for YM 690 “Ministering to Troubled Youth. But, for this course, Chs.4-7, Part 2 and Chs. 8, 10 and 11 from Part 3 are pertinent. Read Ch. 11, “Urban Violence” especially carefully looking not only for the dynamics of gangs and street violence, but for a theology of justice as well.

Philippe Bourgois (1995) *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*, Cambridge Press, Those who get to know crack dealers understand how pursuing the American dream in some situations may lead to crime rather than legal and respectable jobs. To what extent do poverty, racism and societal neglect contribute to drugs and crime? What does the Gospel look like in such cultures? This anthropologist took his wife and small child into Spanish Harlem and made friends—or at least acquaintance—with the most dangerous characters. This book gets into their lives and minds as few others do.


Bart Campola (2001) *Kingdom Works: True Stories About God and His People in Inner City America.*


Elizabeth Chin (2001) *Purchasing Power: Black Kids and American Consumer Culture*, Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 258 p. You will profit from this scholarly book in many ways. It will help you understand consumer culture. More important it will take you into the lives of three black girls of about ten years of age and their poor-working class community. I think you will be inspired by the relationships and analysis of this associate professor of Occidental College, LA; she describes herself as half white and half Chinese and a native of a middle-class area of New Haven. Her analysis is penetrating and balanced.


Harvie M. Conn & Manuel Ortiz (2001) *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City, & the People of God*, Intervarsity Press, 527p. This is a most important book. It stresses the importance of biblical fidelity and theological thinking, use of the social sciences, urbanology, of missiological principles and principles of ministry. It is a necessary text for those who would be urban missionaries.

David Elkind (1984, 1998) *All Grown Up and No Place to Go*. Addison Wesley, 290pp. Students find this the best book to describe the changing, inner nature of adolescents. It will enable you to understand the consequences of changing families and school settings, the “patchwork self” and the stress it creates. Truly a classic, and a book I have had students read since its first edition in the mid-eighties. You really need to study at least the Cover, Table of Contents, Preface and then skim its chapters.

Basil Entwistle (1992) *Making Cities Work: How Two People Mobilized a Community To Meet Its Needs*, Pasadena, CA: Hope Publishing Co., 196 pp. John and Denise Wood did more than care. Neither brilliance nor extraordinary resources were the secret of all they accomplished in one city that was really two cities. Here are principles that can be used anywhere by Christians and secular activists.

Edwin H. Friedman (1985, 2011) *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue*, The Guilford Press, 319pp. Emphasis on family system and process rather than a patient with problems, and on the importance of emotional life. He sees the minister as working in and out of three families: his or her own family, the congregation as family system, and particular families in that system.

Kathlene Hirsch (1998) *A Home in the Heart of the City: A Woman’s Search for Community*, NY: North Point Press, 244p. The author, a middle-class white woman, moves with her family to Jamaica Plain, Boston, in the summer of 1990. “*A Home in the Heart of the City* is for every city dweller who has ever asked: How can my life become a richer and deeper source of connection, possibility, hope, and everyday joy?” The answer comes through stories of actual urbanites promising that community is ours for the asking.

David Hilfiker (1994) *Not All of Us are Saints: A Doctor’s Journey with the Poor*, NY: Ballantine Books, 258 p. When a white, middle-class, Yale-educated, physician moves into inner-city Washington with his family to practice medicine, he finds he has much to learn. This book, he explains, is more about class, race, culture and vanishing governmental services that it is about his practice of “poverty medicine” that differs so much from what most of us expect. Hilfiker writes in the spirit of Kozol and Kotlowitz. An important look at what it means to be poor, to be a doctor, and to find hope in the interaction.

LeAlan Jones and Lloyd Newman with David Isay (1997) *Our America: Life and Death on the South Side of Chicago*, Pocket Books, 200p. Just read the reviews at Amazon.com to see why this book should be read for this course. You should get from it a sense of what it is like growing up in a neighborhood in the likes of which very few of us live; it should point us to issues with which we must wrestle, and it should show us what kids can do if we give them a chance—as David Isay did.

Alex Haley. ed. *Autobiography of Malcolm X*. New York: Ballantine, 1964. An important book in many ways: understanding a young man’s quest for identity, the ethos of youth who have felt the pressures of racism and/or poverty, a legacy that remains with youth even to this day, and more.

Bakari Kitwana (2002) *The Hip Hop Generation: Young Blacks and the Crisis in African-American Culture* New York: Basic Civitas Books, Perseus Books Group. This book is necessary to understanding youth culture in the urban setting and helpful in appreciating anywhere hip-hop is popular. Realize that no study of youth culture today is worth much without an understanding of hip-hop. Here we are also dealing with the fact that many urban youth do not fit into Gen X and Millennial descriptions; generations of African Americans are described as Civil Rights, early Hip-Hop and later Hip-Hop.

Jonathan Kozol (1995) *Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation*, HarperCollins, 284 p. If nothing else, please read and meditate on the first three pages of Chapter One (pp. 3-5). It’s striking picture of two different worlds: ours and theirs is a high challenge. Written in sensitive, caring and loving style, this book describes a tragedy of our society without extreme anger toward those who have or condescension toward our victims.

Jonathan Kozol (2000) *Ordinary Resurrections*, NY: Crown Pub. 404 p. Here this compassionate and insightful observer (*Amazing Grace*, etc.) describes how ordinary people of the city daily rise up out of disadvantage, hardship, loneliness and fear. This takes more than the psychological term “resilience” implies. Kozol finds in these young people an incredible courage, ingenuity, and love that can only be explained in spiritual terms. Here you will also meet Mother Martha, priest of St. Ann’s Episcopal Church in Mott Haven, Bronx. Observe the quality of direction of her after-school programs for the children, and the integration of “spiritual” and “social” concerns.


Jawanza Kunjufu (1988) *To Be Popular or Smart: The Black Peer Group*, African American Images, 100 pp. What do they mean, “You goin’ white!” What is blackness? “How can we give youth the same confidence in academics as they possess in athletics and music? How can we use peer group to reinforce academic achievement?”
Jawanza Kunjufu (1993) *Hip-Hop vs. MAAT: A Psycho/Social Analysis of Values*, Chicago, IL: African American Images, 151 pp. A well-known lecturer and educational consultant challenges a reconsideration of hip-hop and our values. How has culture shaped our thoughts feelings about abortion, welfare, drugs, gun control, and “shacking”? And what positive change is possible?


Jawanza Kunjufu (2002) *Black Students/Middle Class Teachers*, African American Images, 200 pp. An educational consultant examines the relationship between middle-income teachers and low-income students and sees something missing. He reviews the many factors for poor school performance, “negative peer pressure, lack of parental involvement, school funding discrepancies, and even genetics.” But he particularly examines the lack of preparation and class issues that widen the gap between teachers and public school students. The last chapter is devoted to positive suggestions for closing the gap between poor blacks and the rest of the school-age population.


Scott Larson et al. (2003) *City Lights: Ministry Essentials for Reaching Urban Youth*, Loveland, CO: Group Publishing. Some outstanding urban leaders join Scott Larson, founder and director of Straight Ahead Ministries to young prison felons, in producing the only book on urban youth ministry in print—as far as I know. This should give you most specifically what you were looking for in this course. (out of print, but you can get it from Straight Ahead)

Brennan Manning (2002) *Abba Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimacy*, NavPress, 192 pp. This book has been recommended by Boston youth workers. I would like to recommend reading it after viewing (or re-viewing) the film, Antwone Fisher—with thoughts of our own individual pain and journeys in mind. Urban listening conferences have emphasized the importance of dealing with ourselves and our ability to trust and relate with others before thinking of our skills and performance. We are human beings, first, rather than “human-doings.”


Donald Ng ed. (1988) *Asian Pacific American Youth Ministry*, Valley Forge, PA” Judson Press, 160 pp. This was the first resource on Asian-American youth ministry to be published. It provides theological and cultural foundations, unique aspects of ministry to these cultures, and extensive program ideas.

Willie Richardson (1996) *Reclaiming the Urban Family*, Zondervan, 272p. Here is a positive challenge for Christian urban living covering everything from romance to marriage to family life. Its humor and easy readability do not detract from the seriousness of its content. It is a very practical book that should be read and discusses.

Lisbeth B. Schorr (1989) *Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*, NY: Doubleday. With compassion, optimism, and deep insight, this writer describes what can be done. Her proposals make so much sense you will have to decide whether the impediment to solutions is spiritual or lack of funding.

Amy L. Sherman (1997) *Restorers of Hope: Reaching the Poor in your Community with Church-based Ministries that Work*, Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books of Good News, 254pp. This book is highly recommended for all Christians and churches interested in an over-all strategy against urban poverty. In it you will find many references to urban youth and successful youth programs.


Carrie A. Stack (2004) *Conversations with the Future: Young people share their lives today and dreams of tomorrow*, New York: iUniverse, Inc., 295 pp. Here are the voices of children and youth themselves, a range of ethnicities, black, white, and mostly Hispanic. Interviews that tell a lot—from Lynn, Massachusetts.


David Simon and Edward Burns. *The Corner: A Year in the Life of an Inner-City Neighborhood*, New York: Broadway Books, 1997. 543 pp. (You might read the first two chapters carefully; then skim Chs. 6, 10 and the Epilogue.) A social documentary reading like a novel. (made into an HBO documentary) Captures an America where illegal drugs seem to rule and tells the story of 15-year-old DeAndre McCullough whose parents “were poised to pull themselves out of West Baltimore when they succumbed to the corner’s temptations. DeAndre is determined to avoid his parents’ fall into addiction, but he too seems “cornered.”