

**GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**  
**CO/PC/YM 725 COUNSELING THE ADOLESCENT**  
**FALL 2009**  
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**I. Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to understand the nature of adolescent development as it relates to counseling goals and techniques. This course is designed to provide both theoretical and practical understanding of this complex period of development. There is a heavy emphasis on clinical understanding of the adolescent in his/her family system. Integration of our biblical, theological and psychological understanding of persons will provide a holistic foundation for intervention.

**II. Text**

Borgman, Dean (2003). *Hear my story: understanding the cries of troubled youth*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.

Micucci, J. A. (1998). *The Adolescent in Family Therapy*. New York: Guilford Press.

**III. Course Requirements**

**A. Reading Log**

Reading is an important element in the development of understanding of any phase of development. Students are expected to read materials, which relate specifically to adolescent development, the family system of the adolescent, and issues related to the counseling of adolescents. An illustrative bibliography is attached. Students are not required to restrict themselves to that list.

Each student is to turn in an annotated reading log of materials at the last class period used for this part of the requirement. Annotations are to be made using the following format: (1) a brief statement of the thesis of the material used; (2) a statement of the relevance of the material for development of understanding for the course; and (3) a critical appraisal of the author's strengths and weaknesses as these relate to the holistic understanding of persons.

You will be able to contract for this portion of your grade. The expected levels are:

A = 2000 pages

B = 1500 pages

C = less than 1500 pages

## **B. Adolescent Autobiography**

Each student will write an autobiography of his/her own adolescent period and experience. This document should describe the family system from which you come and the impact of that system on your development. Critical issues of adolescence should be described. The professor is the only person who will read this document. The outside limit for pages on this treatise is ten (10) pages.

## **C. Family Sketch of an adolescent from an adolescent point of view.**

During the course of the term each student should have a minimum of three interviews with an adolescent. Only family members are excluded from the persons acceptable for selection for these interviews. The interviews should take place over the course of the term approximately once per month. The interviews may be brief, 15-20 minutes, or more extended, to a maximum of one hour. The objective is to have an open-ended dialogue with an adolescent asking them simply to talk to you about their family. Be sure to inform and ask for parental permission. You may assure them of confidentiality since they should not be named or directly identified in the document.

It is difficult to assign a page limit to this exercise, since some will be quite verbal and others will be almost unwilling to open up about their families. You will be expected to integrate your reading and clinical experience into your paper. However, a rough limit of five (5) pages will give a good, clear picture.

## **D. Clinical Work**

The class will be divided into role play groups. Various themes and issues will be dramatized by these groups as students have the opportunity to counsel these families and/or adolescents. The second half of the class session will be used for the clinical practice.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

Day 1	Introduction and definitions of adolescence Form case study groups Clinical practice
Day 2	Self-esteem and identity development Clinical practice
Day 3	The family system of the adolescent Clinical practice
Day 4	The external world: peer groups, culture Clinical practice
Day 5	The religious experience of adolescence Clinical practice
Day 6	Moral development in adolescence Clinical practice
Day 7	Adolescence and addictive behavior Clinical practice
Day 8	Adolescence and sexual issues Clinical practice
Day 9	Adolescence and self abuse Clinical practice
Day 10	Hope for today's adolescent Clinical practice

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Kruis, J. (1992). *Quick scripture reference for counseling*. Grand Rapids: Baker House.
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