



## CM506 Trinitarian Youth Ministry

### Short Syllabus

**Instructor:** Greg Williams, D.Min., assisted by Jeff Broadnax, M.A., M.P.S.

**Note:** The best way to contact the course instructors is via the GCS online system: log into the course, and in the right-hand column go to the block labeled “message my professor.”

### GCS Mission Statement

*“Equipping the Saints for Pastoral Ministry.”* We are committed to equip the saints for pastoral ministry through quality graduate-level distance education programs in biblical, theological, ministerial and pastoral studies informed by Incarnational Trinitarian faith.

### Course Description

This course examines the relationship of theology and youth ministry practice as it has developed in North America. The course explores the centrality of Jesus in all ministry in the relationship that Jesus already has with young people. That relationship is explored in its post-Christian, post-modern cultural context, with an emphasis on the importance of mentoring as a relational/incarnational tool in youth ministry.

### Required Textbooks

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: Touchstone, 1959.  
ISBN: 978-0-648-81500-8 (sells for about \$10).

Root, Andrew. *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-8308-3488-4 (sells for about \$13).

Torrance, Thomas F. *The Mediation of Christ*. Helmers & Howard, 1992. ISBN 0-939443050-3 (sells for about \$14).

Whitfield, Charles. *Boundaries and Relationships: Knowing, Protecting and Enjoying the Self*. Deerfield Beach: Health Communications, 1993, ISBN 1-55874-259-X (sells for about \$8).

## **Optional Textbook**

Barth, Karl. *The Call to Discipleship*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press Facets edition, 2003. ISBN 978-0800636326 (sells for about \$10).

## **Student Learning Outcomes (see appendix for further details)**

1. Students will identify and describe an approach to youth ministry that is expressive of a theology of ministry that is Trinitarian, Christ-centered and incarnational. This outcome will be demonstrated through contributions to online discussions and the short reflection paper.
2. Students will describe the history of youth ministry in North America and the trending of North American culture toward post-Christendom and post-modernity. This outcome will be demonstrated through contributions to the online discussions and in the final paper.
3. Students will describe how these historical/cultural forces impact the contemporary practice of youth ministry. This outcome will be demonstrated through contributions to the online discussions.
4. Students will compare a *Trinitarian, incarnational* approach to youth ministry to other approaches. This outcome will be demonstrated through contributions to online discussions, including reporting on a visit to an existing youth ministry program in the student's community.
5. Students will design a youth ministry program that is faithful to a Trinitarian, incarnational theology in their particular ministry setting. This outcome will be demonstrated in the final paper, which sets forth the student's assessment of current youth ministry programming and their proposal for the redesign of that programming.

## Course Objectives

This course seeks to address the application of Trinitarian (Christ-centered, incarnational) theology to the practice of Christian ministry to, with and through teens (youth). Rather than ministry that seeks merely to *influence* teens toward certain goals, with this approach youth ministers participate in sustained, meaningful ways in what the incarnate, crucified, risen and ascended Jesus Christ is actually doing through his ongoing relationship, in the Spirit, with young people and their ministers. The course is designed to benefit youth ministers, pastors, parents, grandparents and guardians—all who wish to participate in Jesus’ ministry to and through young people, with the primary focus being on congregationally based ministries that seek to disciple older children and teens.

The course begins with an overview of the relationship between the *theology* and *practice* of youth ministry, and a review of the historic development of youth ministry within North America. The course then continues by exploring the centrality of Jesus in all ministry—and how youth ministry may be viewed as our active sharing in the relationship that Jesus, in the Holy Spirit, already has with young people. Next, the course explores that relationship in an increasingly post-Christian, post-modern cultural context.

The course also explores the importance of *mentoring* as a relational-incarnational tool in service of a Trinitarian-incarnational approach to youth ministry. Online class discussions will examine the practical application of these concepts within the context of contemporary, “real world” youth ministry.

The course includes a variety of readings (in textbooks and journal articles), and places significant emphasis on students’ responses to those readings posted to the online forum. These responses then lead to an online dialog between students and with the class teacher as the class interacts in community in ways that mirror the community that the class advocates.

## Course Requirements

*Trinitarian Youth Ministry* is organized in accordance with the chapter topics in the primary textbook, *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry* (one topic for each week). This textbook is augmented with readings from *The Cost of Discipleship*, *Boundaries and Relationships*, *The Mediation of Christ*, online articles and written lectures from Ted Johnston and Greg Williams. To these readings are added a variety of projects, two written papers, the viewing of videos and contributions to

the online discussion forum. These class assignments are summarized in the chart below and then described in detail in the text that follows.

## Course Assignments Summary

| <b>Week Number</b> | <b>Topic for the Week</b>                      | <b>Assignments for the week</b><br>(see details following this chart, including requirements for online discussions)         |
|--------------------|--|--|
| 1                  | Theology forms ministry                        | Reading: lecture, books and articles<br>Project: view two online videos  |
| 2                  | The history of youth ministry in North America | Reading: lecture, books and articles<br>Project: visit a local youth ministry meeting  |
| 3                  | Our relational motivations                     | Reading: lecture, books and articles   |
| 4                  | Who is Jesus Christ?                           | Reading: lecture and books   |
| 5                  | Where is Jesus Christ?                         | Reading: lecture and books<br>Project: begin work on reaction paper (due no later than Monday of week 8)                     |
| 6                  | What then shall we do?                         | Reading: lecture, books and articles<br>Project: continue work on reaction paper   |
| 7                  | Place-sharing                                  | Reading: lecture and books<br>Project: view GenMin website and the movie “Goodwill Hunting,” continue work on reaction paper |
| 8                  | Relational transformation                      | Reading: lecture, books and articles<br>Project: turn in reaction paper (see week 5)—due no later than Monday this week      |
| 9                  | Place-sharing in community                     | Reading: lecture and books<br>Project: view assigned videos  |
| 10                 | Local application                              | Reading: lecture, books and articles<br>Project: begin work on final report  |
| 11                 | (work on projects)                             | Project: continue working on final report  |
| 12                 | (work on projects)                             | Note: your final report is due no later than Monday this week (Dec. 5)   |

## Course Assignments Details

### Week one: Theology forms ministry

#### Assigned reading:

- Root: preface and introduction (pp. 9-23)
- Bonhoeffer: introduction and costly grace (pp. 35-56)
- Article: Post-Relational Youth Ministry—(download on GCS website)
- Lecture: *Theology Forms Ministry*, Ted Johnston

#### Assigned projects:

- View two “You’re Included” interviews:
  - Jeff McSwain, “Helping Youth Experience Christ,” at: <https://www.gcs.edu/mod/page/view.php?id=4401>
  - Andrew Root, “Real Relationships in Youth Ministry,” at: <https://www.gcs.edu/mod/page/view.php?id=4437>
- During this week and next, post online (in the discussion forum) your reactions to this week’s assigned reading and viewing. Then interact with comments from other students and the class instructor.

### Week two: History of youth ministry in North America

#### Assigned reading:

- Root: chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 25-61)
- Bonhoeffer: the call to discipleship (pp. 57-78)
- Torrance: chapter 1 (pp. 1-23)
- Article: *Reconsidering the Non-Negotiables*
  - [https://web.archive.org/web/20160402052508/http://www.generationsministries.org/uploads/2/5/2/7/25278738/reconsidering\\_the\\_non-negotiables.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20160402052508/http://www.generationsministries.org/uploads/2/5/2/7/25278738/reconsidering_the_non-negotiables.pdf)
- Lecture: *The Historical Ascent of Relational Youth ministry*, Greg Williams

#### Assigned projects:

- During this week or next, visit in your community a regular meeting of an established youth ministry group (church based or parachurch is acceptable).
- Post this week and next (in the online discussion forum), your observations about that visit, and about the assigned reading. Interact with the comments from other students and the course instructor.

## **Week three: Our relational motivations**

### **Assigned reading:**

- Root: chapter 3 and introduction to part two (pp. 62-84)
- Bonhoeffer: single-minded obedience (pp. 79-85)
- Torrance: chapter 2 (pp.24-46)
- Article (chart): *Stages of Development in Youths*  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20170114055423/http://www.son.wisc.edu/net/wistrec/net/developstagetext.html>
- Lecture: *Incarnational Ministry vs. Personal Influence Strategy*, Ted Johnston

### **Assigned project:**

- During this week and next, post online (in the discussion forum) your reactions to this week's assigned reading. Interact with comments from other students and the course instructor.

## **Week four: Who is Jesus Christ?**

### **Assigned reading:**

- Root: chapter 4 (pp. 85-103)
- Bonhoeffer: discipleship and the cross (pp. 86-93)
- Torrance: chapter 3 (pp. 47-72)
- Lecture: *The Mediation of Christ*, Ted Johnston

### **Assigned project:**

- During this week and next, post online (in the discussion forum) your reactions to this week's assigned reading. Interact with comments from other students and the course instructor.

## **Week five: Where is Jesus Christ?**

### **Assigned reading:**

- Root: chapter 5 (pp. 104-123)
- Bonhoeffer: discipleship and the individual (pp. 94-101)
- Whitfield: chapter 2 (pp. 11-38)
- Lecture: *Relational Ministry as Participation in God's Presence*, Greg Williams

### **Assigned projects:**

- During this week and next, post online (in the discussion forum) your reactions to this week's assigned reading. Interact with comments from other students and from the instructor.
- Complete the "Survey on Personal Boundaries" found in chapter 2 (pp. 11-14) of Whitfield's book. Read the full chapter and write a **reaction paper** (minimum of 500 words, 12 point Times New Roman or Arial font, double spaced), summarizing and analyzing what you have learned about yourself through taking the survey and reading chapter 2. Discuss which boundary areas in your life need the most personal attention/development. **The reaction paper is due no later than Monday of week eight.** Note that this paper will be graded for content, style, grammar and spelling.
- Note: an interim grade for your contributions to the online discussion forum will be given this week in order to assess your progress in the course.

## **Week six: What then shall we do?**

### **Assigned reading:**

- Root: chapter 6 (pp. 124-141)
- Bonhoeffer: The disciple and unbelievers (pp. 182-188)
- Torrance: chapter 4 (pp. 73-98)
- Article: *Perichoretic Parenting*  
<https://web.archive.org/save/https://www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk/articles/perichoretic-parenting/>
- Lecture: *Participating in Jesus' Ministry*, Ted Johnston

### **Assigned project:**

- During this week and next, post online (in the discussion forum) your reactions to this week's assigned reading. Interact with comments from other students and from the instructor.

## **Week seven: Place-sharing**

### **Assigned reading:**

- Root: chapter 7 (pp. 142-165)
- Bonhoeffer: the great divide (pp. 189-195)
- Lecture: *The Complicated Person*, Greg Williams

### **Assigned projects:**

- Become familiar with the content of the *GenMin* website.

- <https://resources.gci.org/genmin>
- View the movie *Goodwill Hunting*
- This week and next post in the discussion forum your reactions to the movie, to the content of the GenMin website, and to the assigned reading. Interact with comments from other students and from the instructor.

## Week eight: Relational transformation

### Assigned reading:

- Root: chapter 8 (pp. 166-196)
- Bonhoeffer: the work and suffering of the messengers (pp. 206-217)
- Article: *Evangelizing Postmodern Youths*  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20150908001755/https://www.gci.org/church/youth/postmodern>
- Lecture: *Postmodern, Post-Christian Culture*, Ted Johnston

### Assigned projects:

- During this week and next, post online (in the discussion forum) your reactions to this week's assigned reading. Interact with comments from other students and from the instructor.
- Note: your 500-word **reaction paper** (see week 5) is due no later than Monday of this week.

## Week nine: Place-sharing in community

### Assigned reading:

- Root: chapter 9 (pp. 197-217)
- Bonhoeffer: the body of Christ & the visible community (236-271)
- Lecture: *Mentoring Youth*, Greg Williams

### Assigned projects:

- View online two *YouTube* videos that discuss the GCI Pastoral Internship Program:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpXVJYhtkbb>  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2mDjmrsA\\_w&feature=related](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2mDjmrsA_w&feature=related)
- During this week and next, post online (in the discussion forum) your reactions to this week's assigned video viewing and textbook reading. In commenting on the videos, observe the uniqueness of the pastoral interns and comment on the relationships that developed. Interact with comments posted by other students and by the instructor.



## Week ten: Local application

### Assigned reading:

- Root: appendix (pp. 218-219)
- Bonhoeffer: the saints and the image of Christ (pp. 272-304)
- Article: “Blending Builders, Boomers, Busters, and Bridgers” starting on page 28 of [https://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/-/media/Enrichment/Issue-PDFs/2002/EJ\\_2002\\_01\\_Winter.pdf#page=28](https://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/-/media/Enrichment/Issue-PDFs/2002/EJ_2002_01_Winter.pdf#page=28)
- Lecture: *Putting It All Together*, Ted Johnston and Greg Williams

### Assigned projects:

- Begin work on your 15 page **final report**, which is due no later than Monday of week 12. See the week 10 lecture for final report requirements. Note that this paper will be graded for content, style, grammar and spelling.

## Estimated hours to complete course assignments

Following is an estimate of the number of hours that students will need to spend to complete course assignments. Some students will complete the assignments in less time, and some will take more.

| Assignment   |                 | Estimated hours for average student | Percentage of final grade |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
|  | Number of pages |                                     |                           |
| Course lectures  | 43              | 3.6                                 |                           |
| Root textbook  | 197             | 13.1                                |                           |
| Bonhoeffer textbook  | 155             | 10.3                                |                           |
| Whitfield textbook   | 25              | 1.3                                 |                           |
| Torrance textbook  | 98              | 8.2                                 |                           |
| Online articles/essays   |                 | 7                                   |                           |
| On-site youth ministry visit, assigned movie   |                 | 10                                  |                           |
| Online forum participation: commenting on assigned reading, video viewing, field visits, and comments from other students and the course instructor (10 sections; 3.5 hours/section) |                 | 35                                  | 60                        |
|  | Number of pages |                                     |                           |
| Reflection paper at week five  | 1               | 2                                   | 10                        |
| Final research/project report  | 15              | 45                                  | 30                        |
| Total estimated hours  |                 | 135.5                               | 100                       |

## Grading Standards

Individual course assignments will be graded according to the grading standards noted in this section. The final grade for the course will be assessed on a 100-point scale with a grade letter assigned as follows:

- 95 - 100 % = A
- 90 - 94 % = A-
- 87 - 89 % = B+
- 84 - 86 % = B
- 80 - 83 % = B-
- 77 - 79 % = C+
- 74 - 76 % = C
- 70 - 73 % = C-
- 0 - 69 % = F

Grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

- A to A- = Outstanding work: Above and beyond the requirements; outstanding effort and significant achievement are evident. Some measure of remarkable skill, creativity, or energy is also evident.
- B+ to B = Above average work: Fulfills all aspects of the assignment and goes a bit beyond minimum competence to demonstrate reflection, research, and integration of the texts that show extra effort, achievement or improvement.
- B- to C = Average work: Fulfills all aspects of the assignment with competence. Assignments are completed as assigned.
- C- = Below average work: Below average either because some aspect of the assignment has not been fulfilled or because the number of errors interferes with clear communication. A grade of C- may also indicate failure to follow directions, failure to follow specific recommendations, or failure to demonstrate effort and improvement.

- F = Work not acceptable: Not acceptable, either because the student did not complete the assignment as directed, or because the level of performance is below an acceptable level for graduate level work.

The final course grade will be given by combining the grades for individual assignments, weighted as follows:

- 60% of total grade: the grade given for *online forum contributions*. Those contributions will be graded based on the quality, thoroughness and consistency of contributions, which include:
  - written summarization of key points gleaned from assigned reading (including lectures) and assigned projects (visits, video viewing, etc.)
  - written interaction with what other participants (including students and instructor)
  - an interim grade for this part of the course will be given at week five in order to assess progress
- 10% of total grade: the grade given to *the reaction paper*
- 30% of total grade: the grade given to *the final report*

## Library resources

In doing research and writing papers, you may find it helpful to use a few books. Some students will already have ready access to appropriate books; others will need to plan ahead, to obtain these books at a local seminary library, through interlibrary loan at a public library, or by mail from the GCS library. Often, quality resources are available on the internet. For guidance on that, see the document on our website, “Research Resources Available Off Campus.”<sup>1</sup> That’s on the “Student Handbook” section of our website. Also in that section is the GCS library catalog. For details on how our library works, see the *Student Handbook*, section V.H.

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<sup>1</sup> Posted at <http://www.gcs.edu/mod/resource/view.php?id=1989>.