Abilene Christian University
Graduate School of Theology
Online Course Syllabus

Dr. Houston Heflin
houston.heflin@acu.edu
ACU Phone: 325-674-3714
ACU Office: 242
ACU Box: 29401

MISSION OF ACU
To educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.

MISSION OF THE COLLEGE OF BIBLICAL STUDIES
To provide leadership preparation and resources for effective worldwide ministry in the cause of Christ.

MISSION OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
To equip men and women for effective missional leadership in ministry in all its forms, and to provide strong academic foundations for theological inquiry.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is an analysis of the theoretical principles and practical components of effective ministry to youth and families. The content is an exploration of the theological, philosophical, cultural, educational, family, and administrative foundations of youth and family ministry in the church. This course is designed to equip professionals to be relevant theorists and reflective practitioners of youth and family ministry. The course is 3 credit hours and has no prerequisites.

TEACHING METHODS
The online learning environment of this course is assisted through the use of Blackboard as a Learning Management System. Within this LMS we will use video, audio files, text, Google documents and discussion forums to create an environment of collaboration and cooperative learning.

RHYTHM OF COURSE
This online course is structured to invite consistent engagement in the learning process throughout the semester. Each week students will be asked to contribute three posts to the discussion forum: one of these posts should be made by midnight Tuesday. The second and third posts should be made by midnight Thursday. The major assignments (listed on page 4 of the syllabus) are due by midnight Friday.
**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** As a result of this course I want students to ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Measurement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Identify significant learning and contribute thoughtful discussion on issues pertaining to youth and family ministry.</td>
<td>Post three comments in the online discussion forum each week.</td>
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<td>Acquire skills of listening to improve working relationships with coworkers and church leaders.</td>
<td>Meet with at least one other staff member or church leader and listen to their hopes and dreams for your church and your ministry.</td>
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<td>Create a strategic plan for ministering to a group of adolescents currently unreached by your church.</td>
<td>Create a proposal that envisions a ministry to an unreached group of adolescents in your community.</td>
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<td>Create a plan for the spiritual formation and education of students in the ministry.</td>
<td>Create a six-year curriculum scope and sequence of classes that addresses the developmental needs of adolescents.</td>
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<td>Practice skills of curriculum writing and evaluate personal teaching effectiveness.</td>
<td>Create one new teaching note for a class that you've never taught but plan to teach.</td>
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<td>Involve evaluation of your teaching by a volunteer who attends one of your classes and write a reflection on the evaluation.</td>
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<td>Serve as a continuing resource for parents, volunteers, and church leaders in matters related to youth culture.</td>
<td>Make five contributions to a Google Document that will become a compilation of resources for parents, elders, and volunteers.</td>
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<td>Identify and understand the implications of personal giftedness and tendencies in ministry, as well as those of the volunteer team.</td>
<td>Complete the Youth Ministry Style Profile in <em>Youth Pastor</em> and write a reflection on personal tendencies in ministry.</td>
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<td>Identify opportunities for churches to minister to and with families.</td>
<td>Create a specific family-ministry focused event, curriculum, or strategy that will facilitate parents taking more initiative in the spiritual formation of their children.</td>
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<td>Demonstrate wisdom in responding to ministry issues.</td>
<td>Compose written responses to cases emerging from ministry conflicts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research topics related to the profession and articulate that learning in clear ways.</td>
<td>Write an 8 to 10 page paper on an area of personal interest related to youth and family ministry.</td>
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Additional desires I have for you as students are for you to ...

1. Grow in personal relationship with God.
2. Gain confidence in your role as a youth pastor in a specific context.
3. Value the importance of quality communication, service, and programs, as part of professionalism in ministry.

These will not be accomplished explicitly through course assignments but will nonetheless be part of the course curriculum and will be woven into our conversations throughout the semester.

REQUIRED RESOURCES

Books


Articles


**Video Blogs**

McKenzie, Robbie (Blip.tv/youth-ministry-63)

McKenzie, Robbie (Blip.tv/youth-ministry-63)

**OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS & GRADE WEIGHTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Forum Posts</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Theology &amp; Philosophy of YFM</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview with Church Leader</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unreached Adolescents Proposal</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Scope &amp; Sequence</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Teaching Note</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation of Teaching and Reflection</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resources for the Church</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection on Youth Ministry Style</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Ministry Proposal</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper on Youth &amp; Family Ministry</td>
<td>20%</td>
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**EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

**Discussion Forum Posts – 30%**

Ongoing

Each student is expected to contribute to the online “Discussion” forum in response to the course readings each week. Your contribution will be in the form of three posts per week. You will respond to two different questions related to relevant passages from the weekly reading or presentations and then make at least one post in response to a classmate’s comments.

Your first post should be made by midnight on Tuesday (Central Standard Time). This will allow other students the opportunity to see your post and comment on it. Your second and third posts in response to other students’ comments should be made by midnight Thursday night.

Posts do not need to be lengthy in order to be substantive. Let me repeat that point: a post that is too long is less likely to be read. A post that is too short (e.g. “nice job”, or “I agree”) is less likely to be taken seriously.

A weekly grade will be given for your online presence in this course as determined by the number of posts, their timeliness, and their substance.

**Personal Theology & Philosophy of YFM – 5%**

Week 1 – Fri. 20 Jan.

Write a one-page single spaced (400 to 500-word) theology and philosophy of youth and family ministry. This reflective paper should explain your understanding of the purpose, mission, and/or objectives of youth and family ministry. You should incorporate scripture references as appropriate to connect your beliefs with biblical principles. If you’re unsure about what to write, consider the following questions: Why does the profession exist? What do churches hope to accomplish through youth and family ministry? Why should the term “family” be included in the
title youth and family ministry? What biblical stories or principles inform what we do as youth and family ministers?

**Interview with Church Leader – 5%**  
Week 2 – Fri. 27 Jan.
Meet with at least one other staff member or church leader and interview them about their hopes and dreams for both your church and your ministry area. Ask these questions:
1. What do you love about our church?
2. How have we lived up to our potential? What stories reflect the essence of our church?
3. What do you envision for our future? What are your dreams for our church?
4. What are the specific challenges that will need to be addressed in order for these dreams to become a reality?
Write a one-page single-spaced response (400-500 words) to this meeting.

**Unreached Adolescents Proposal – 5%**  
Week 3 – Fri. 3 Feb.
Create a proposal as though submitting it to the elders of your church that envisions a ministry to (or effort to connect with) an unreached group of adolescents in your community. Who are these people? How will you minister to them? This proposal should be one single-spaced typed page (400-500 words) and should be for something that you have not yet done in ministry.

**Curriculum Scope & Sequence – 10%**  
Week 6 – Fri. 24 Feb.
Create a six-year curriculum scope and sequence of classes that address the developmental needs of adolescents. The class will be divided into several working groups. Using a Google Document or another form of file sharing you will work to create a curriculum scope and sequence that applies to students in 6th through 12th grades. Aim for a balance in the most important textual (biblical) material to cover and the most relevant topical (teen issues, etc.) to cover. While you may know of others who have created one of these I strongly encourage you to build one from the ground up before consulting others that you may know of. What educational content is most important for your students? How would you sequence this content in ways that match the ages of your students? Where does family ministry appear in your plan?

After you have created the diagram or chart of your scope and sequence write a short (less than 400-word) explanation of your scope and sequence. This explanation should answer the questions: Why did you include/exclude what you did and why is it in this order?

**New Teaching Note – 5%**  
Week 7 – Fri. 2 Mar.
Create one new teaching note for a class that you’ve never taught (but plan to teach). This teaching note should follow the guidelines provided on *The Weekend Teacher* podcast (iTunes) episodes 5, 7, and 9. Remember to designate the age group on your teaching note.

**Evaluation of Teaching and Reflection – 5%**  
Week 7 – Mon. 5 Mar.
Invite evaluation of your teaching by an adult volunteer who attends one of your classes. This volunteer should answer the following questions:
   a. What did the teacher do well that helped the message or the communication?
   b. What could the teacher have done differently to improve the message or communication?
   c. What did you personally learn from the experience of being in this class?
Write a one-page single spaced (400-500 word) reflection on your own teaching after receiving the evaluation by an adult volunteer. What did you do well as you taught? What could you have improved on as you taught?
Resources for the Church – 5%  
**Week 8 – Fri. 9 Mar.**

Make five (5) contributions to a Google Document that will become a compilation of resources for parents, elders, and youth volunteers. Each student should post at least five (5) resources. These posts can be in any (or several) of the following eight categories: Podcasts (audio or video blogs), Youth Culture, Parenting, Youth Ministry Conferences, Technology in Ministry, Resources for Teens, News Articles, Other.

Each post should contain the following information: a) the name of the resource, b) the web address to the resource, c) a brief (one or two sentence) description that you provide telling us why it is helpful, and d) your name.

Reflection on Youth Ministry Style – 5%  
**Week 9 – Fri. 23 Mar.**

Complete the Youth Ministry Style Profile on page 147 of *Youth Pastor* and write a reflection on personal tendencies in ministry. Where are you strongest? What areas (roles) do you find yourself avoiding or struggling with? What is your plan for supplementing your areas of less inclination with adult volunteers, others staff, or interns? This should be a one-page single spaced (400 to 500-word) reflection.

Family Ministry Proposal – 5%  
**Week 11 – Fri. 6 Apr.**

Create a specific family-ministry focused event, curriculum outline, or ministry strategy that will facilitate parents taking more initiative in the spiritual formation of their children. Create a one-page proposal for this family-ministry focused initiative that connects parents and youth in meaningful, spiritually formative ways. This proposal should be one single-spaced typed page (400-500 words) and should be for something that you have not yet done in ministry.

Research Paper on Youth & Family Ministry – 20%  
**Week 14 – Fri. 27 Apr.**

This 8 to 10-page (double spaced) paper should represent scholarly research on a topic relevant to youth and family ministry. Your topic should be selected by Week 4 of the semester and approved by the professor. The paper should include at least 8 sources in the reference list.

**OVERVIEW OF SCHEDULE**

Week 1: Introductions  
Week 2: Theology  
Week 3: Philosophy  
Week 4: Youth Culture – Morality  
Week 5: Youth Culture – Technology  
Week 6: Education  
Week 7: Teaching  
Week 8: Youth Ministers  
Week 9: Adult Volunteers  
Week 10: Interns & Other Mentors  
Week 11: Family Ministry  
Week 12: Family Ministry  
Week 13: Administration  
Week 14: Administration  
Week 15: Conclusions
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Violations of academic integrity and other forms of cheating, as defined in ACU’s Academic Integrity Policy, involve the intention to deceive or mislead or misrepresent, and therefore are a form of lying and represent actions contrary to the behavioral norms that flow from the nature of God. Violations will be addressed as described in the Policy. While the university enforces the Policy, the most powerful motive for integrity and truthfulness comes from one’s desire to imitate God’s nature in our lives. Every member of the faculty, staff and student body is responsible for protecting the integrity of learning, scholarship and research. The full Policy is available for review at the Provost’s office web site (http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/provost) and the following offices: Provost, College Deans, Dean of Campus Life, Director of Student Judicial Affairs, Director of Residential Life, Education and Academic Departments.

PLAIGIARISM

Plagiarism is a form of cheating and will be dealt with as explained above in the policy on Academic Integrity. Plagiarism occurs whenever a person offers someone else’s writing, research or ideas as their own. Some common cases of plagiarism are:
- Lifting a paper off the internet, or from a fellow student, even if you alter it a bit.
- Lifting sentences or whole paragraphs from other’s work without clearly putting the material in quotation form and giving full credit in proper citation form.
- Using another’s research results without giving them credit.
- Putting someone else’s ideas in your own words without giving them credit.
Please avoid these and other kinds of plagiarism. Like all cheating, it is sinful and it robs students of the educational gain they should have had.

RESPECT FOR DIVERGENT VIEWPOINTS

Students are expected to respect other individuals as created in the image of God and value each other in spite of differing viewpoints. In an academic environment where multiple perspectives are encouraged it is important to respect people when disagreeing with positions.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments for the course are to be completed on time. Those turned in late without prior discussion with the instructor will result in a significant deduction in grade. More specifically, assignments will be subject to a 10-point reduction for every 24 hours they are late.
The following guidelines should be followed when submitting papers:
1. Include a cover page with assignment name, course title & number, your name, and date.
2. Use Times New Roman 12 point font or its equivalent.
3. Paragraphs should be double-spaced and margins should be set to 1 inch on all sides.
4. Use correct spelling and grammar.
5. Pages should be numbered bottom center.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Students with special needs should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course.
COURSEWARE
This course syllabus is intended to accurately reflect the learning objectives, course format, assignments, assessments, course protocols, grading scale, policies on assignments, and course schedule that allow students to appraise the course. However, the instructor reserves the right to modify any part of this syllabus as may be necessary at any point due to circumstances that occur.

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