

# Online Course Syllabus

## KNP3121HF – Youth Ministry as Practical Theology Knox College Toronto School of Theology Summer 2017

### ***Instructor Information***

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Instructor: Blair D. Bertrand, PhD, Adjunct Professor  
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Office Hours: none; online course

### ***Course Identification***

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Course Number: KNP3121HF  
Course Name: Youth Ministry as Practical Theology  
Course Location: Online  
Class Times:  
Prerequisites: KNT1101H – Reformed Theology (or equivalent)

### ***Course Description***

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Youth ministry is ministry and therefore demands that youth ministers articulate a compelling theological understanding of the world and a deep understanding of young people in contemporary culture. Students will organize their own theological understanding in ways that make sense both to themselves and to the practice of ministry with young people. Topics include theological anthropology in conversation with adolescent development, Christian community in a world filled with mediated social relations, faithful worship with the lurking temptation of spectacle, vocation in a difficult economy, eschatology and the death of a young person. Students will engage their theological tradition through readings, video lectures, and online discussions. Assignments include reading reflections, a video presentation, and an interdisciplinary final paper that interprets best practices in whatever youth ministry situation students find themselves in.

### ***Course Resources***

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#### **Required Course Texts/Bibliography**

- Andrew Root and Kenda Creasy Dean, *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry* (Downer's Grove, IL: IVP, 2011)
- Andrew Root, *Taking Theology to Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013)
- Andrew Root, *Unpacking Scripture in Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013)
- Andrew Root, *Unlocking Mission and Eschatology in Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013)

- Andrew Root, *Taking the Cross to Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013)

### Course Website(s)

- Blackboard <https://weblogin.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Blackboard for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT portal login page at <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Blackboard-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access to the course website at Blackboard.) Note also the information at <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>. Students who have trouble accessing Blackboard should ask [xxx] for further help.]

### Course Learning Objectives

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#### College

#### Religious Faith and Heritage

1. *Articulate* a coherent and personal theological position pertinent to youth ministry using a deep knowledge of at least one key doctrine essential to the student's own theological tradition.
2. *Interpret* at least one "classic" Christian text (understood to be a text that has had significant impact in the theological tradition of the student) using the lens of practical theology as a means to offer faithful leadership in ministry with and for youth.

#### Culture and Context

3. Critically and faithfully *describe* the relationship between faith practices and current youth culture, especially as it is lived out digitally and within particular settings, using various methodologies.
4. Give evidence of critical *self-awareness* with regard to one's own and others' faith perspectives, practices and theologies, within an integrated theological framework rooted in the student's context.

#### Vocational and Spiritual Formation

5. Demonstrate an ability to *reflect* critically on one's call to leadership and service with youth that relates to both the general call to discipleship and within the particular student's understanding of their own gifts.
6. Develop and demonstrate *pragmatic* ways of attending to the vocational and spiritual development, practices and well-being of young people.

## ***Evaluation***

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### **Requirements**

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in three areas.

- (1) Participation (16%) – students will actively engage with the content presented and with their colleagues through regular online discussion. 8 sessions x 2% = 16% of final mark
- (2) Reading Reflections (35%) – to demonstrate knowledge of and engagement with the assigned readings, students will hand in 8 reading reflections. The instructor will give a format for these reflections at the start of the class. Students may drop one reflection for whatever reason. 7 reflections x 5% = 35% of grade.
- (3) Video/Digital Presentation (24%) – by constructing some kind of video/digital presentation, students will theologically engage young people directly in a creative manner. No expertise beyond basic computer skills necessary. Grading matrix available at first class.
- (4) Final paper (25%) – building from the video/digital presentation, students will write a 10-15 page academic paper substantively interacting with a particular theological doctrine and the practice of youth ministry. Grading matrix available at first class.

### **Grading System**

A+ (90-100)  
A (85-89)  
A- (80-84)  
B+ (77-79)  
B (73-76)  
B- (70-72)  
Failure

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

**Late work (BD).** Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date agreed upon in consultation with the instructor. Students will fill out a form the first week of class that declares when they will hand in each assignment within a range of dates given by instructor. Reading reflections are due the same day of the week each week, determined by the student. A reflection handed in one day late is 50% of the assessed mark; a reflection handed in two days late is 0% but counts towards completion of the course. The video/digital project and final paper are due on the day that the student commits to within parameters given by instructor. Each major assignment is minus 20% each day it is late. After six days the assignment is considered incomplete and the course is a failure.

This penalty is not applied to students with medical or compassionate difficulties; students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor. The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course. Students who for exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness) are unable to complete work by this date may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An SDF must be requested from the registrar’s office in the student’s college of registration no later than the last day of classes in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the

conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

**Course grades.** Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grading.htm>) or college grading policy.

## **Policies**

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**Accessibility.** Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

**Plagiarism.** Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/content/handbooks>) and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871>. A student who plagiarizes in this course. Students will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges ([http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library\\_Archives/Theological\\_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm](http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm)).

**Other academic offences.** TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

**Back-up copies.** Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

**Obligation to check email.** At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up a utoronto email address which is entered in the ROSI system. Information is available at [www.utorid.utoronto.ca](http://www.utorid.utoronto.ca). The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. *Students should check utoronto email regularly* for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder.

**Email communication with the course instructor.** The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students should be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure,

and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses.

## ***Course Schedule***

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### **Week 1**

More Than Egg-in-the-arm-pit Relays: Youth Ministry as Practical Theology  
Practical Theology:Methodology

Root and Dean, "God is a Minister: Youth Ministry as Fundamentally Theological," 37-47; Root and Bertrand, "Postscript: Reflecting on Method – Youth Ministry as Practical Theology," 218-236

Michael D. Langford, "Spirit-driven Discipleship: A Pneumatology of Youth Ministry," in *Theology Today*, 71(3), 323-336.

Richard Osmer and Malan Nel, "Practical Theology: A Current International Perspective," *HTS Theologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 67(2), 7 pages.

### **Week 2**

Not What But Who: The Person of the Youth Minister  
Spiritual Theology: Praxis

Root and Dean, "God's Hiddenness, Absence and Doubt," 119-138

Andrew Root, *Taking Theology to Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 112 pages.

### **Week 3**

The Barbarians at the Gate: Adolescent Identity and Development  
Theological Anthropology: Adolescent Development

Root and Dean, "Proclaiming Salvation: The Ministry of Youth for the Twenty-First-Century Church," 63-78

Blair Bertrand, "Kegan and Barth: Theological Anthropology and Developmental Psychology in Lived Experience," *Karl Barth in Conversation*, ed. W. Travis McMacken and David W. Congdon (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications), 216-230.

Jane Kroger, "Kegan's constructive-developmental approach," *Identity in Adolescence: The Balance between Self and Other*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Routledge, 1996), 144-173.

John McDargh, "Faith Development Theory and the Postmodern Problem of Foundations," in *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 11(3), 185-199.

Kil Jae Park, "Yellow on White Background: Korean American Youth Ministry and the Challenge of Constructing Korean American Identity," in *Journal of Youth Ministry*, 4(1), 23-37.

### **Week 4**

A Tribe Apart: Koinonia in a Mediated World  
Koinonia: Media Culture

Root and Dean, "Doubt and Confirmation: The Mentor as Co-doubter," 192-198

Andy Root, *Unpacking Scripture in Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 128 pages

### **Week 5**

Holding Onto Our Kisses: Sexual Identity in a Sexualized Culture

Love: Sexual Identity

Root and Dean, "Holding On to Our Kisses: The Hormonal Theology of Adolescence," 155-168

Kate Ott, "Re-Thinking Adolescent Sexual Ethics: A Social Justice Obligation to Adolescent Sexual Health," in *Journal of Lutheran Ethics*, 7(2). 17 pages

### **Week 6**

Moving Out: Mission in a Disenchanted World

Mission: Secularism

Root and Dean, "The Mission Trip as Global Tourism: Are We OK with This?," 182-191

Andrew Root, *Unlocking Mission and Eschatology in Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 128 pages

Darrell Guder, "Missio Dei: Integrating Theological Formation for Apostolic Vocation," in *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. XXXVII, no 1, 63-74.

### **Week 7**

Working It Out Now and Then: Adolescent Vocation

Vocation: Work

David White, "Empowering the Vocation of Youth as Youth: A Theological Vision for Youth Ministry," *Journal of Youth Ministry*, 2(2), 13-29.

### **Week 8**

Back to the Future: Youth Ministry in an Eschatological Perspective

Eschatology: Death

Root and Dean, "The Eschatological Significance of Summer Camp," 169-173; "What Are We Doing In These Mountains: The Outdoor Trip and the Theology of the Cross," 174-181

Andrew Root, *Taking the Cross to Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 128 pages

"Erik Hansen," "Patrick Mills," "Anne Elizabeth Kuzee" *This Incomplete One: Words Occasioned by the Death of a Young Person* ed. Michael D. Bush (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 21-26, 27-32, 131-136.