

SYLLABUS

SW 501 Introduction to Urban Youth Ministry
CUME, Spring2006, Wed. 6:30-9:45 pm
12th Baptist Church, 150 Warren St., Roxbury
(contact for appointments usually...

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978-546-5146
Wed.4-6pm CUME)

Scope & Purpose of the Course

Urban, for the purposes of this class, will be defined as areas with dense population—usually non-white or mixed and lower-income, often immigrant—, and slighted in municipal delivery services. This course seeks understanding especially of at-risk youth, their street cultures, strategies for living, and hip-hop culture. Nine Stages of Youth Ministry will be proposed and explained—including sharing the Gospel in such an urban context. For those students who live among minority populations and/or in the inner city, this course provides a time to step back for reflection, to rethink, research and plan strategy, as well as to develop a way to help suburban partners understand urban realities. For suburban students, this class serves as a basic orientation for cross-cultural ministry.

General Intentions and Direction of the Course

1. To appreciate the beauty of the city and its diverse populations;
2. To develop a general understanding of the inner city and urban youth or street culture with special considerations into the problems of racism, poverty, hip-hop, street life, gangs and drugs;
3. To appreciate the insights that urban realities and people can offer all churches as to the liberating and empowering aspects of the Christian Gospel;
4. To understand the Nine Basic Stages of Youth Ministry and to contextualize these in urban realities and urban youth culture.
5. To develop a sense of the importance of research (topical and community research) for community and church planning, for fund raising, for networking, for referrals, and for contextualization of curriculum and the preaching of the Gospel;
6. To become familiar with a few models of urban ministry responding to urban problems.

Specific Goals of Course

1. To be more able to communicate and relate cross-culturally.
2. To feel more comfortable on the streets and relating to young people there.
3. To understand the importance of topical and community research in any ministry.
4. To know how to find information and research on various issues of adolescent life.
5. To work with a team in developing urban youth programs.

Course Format

The class will follow a seminar format with presentations and general discussion. You will be expected, not only to participate, but to lead discussions on one of our books (see Tentative Schedule). At times you will share in small groups. Videos and music will make certain issues tangible and specific. We will move from topic to topic rather quickly feeling the need for longer discussions at certain points. Please express opinions honestly, be open and tolerant of opposing points of view, and try to spread the give and take evenly among the members of the group—in other words, don't dominate the discussions. Look around the class; work for an even balance of contributions from all participants. Please allow for ignorance or even biases in certain matters and give your instructor and classmates room to grow if they express an opinion very different from your own. Let us work through this complex material and face difficult challenges as the body of Christ. You are encouraged to visit other churches and youth programs in the city—before and after this course.

Course Texts

(These articles and books are not placed alphabetically, but *in the order you should read them*. This may seem like too much reading at first, but you will not be asked to read all of it. These readings should provide a good basis for further study of urban youth ministry—and have in some cases, changed a student's life.)

Articles

Anderson, Elijah (1994) "The Code of the Streets: How the Inner-City Environment Fosters a Need for Respect and a Self-Image Based on Violence," *The Atlantic Monthly*, May, 1994. This is the best single, brief analysis of street culture and description of "juice" I know. Many of its insights have found their way into your texts.

Bergner, Daniel (2006) "The Case of Marie and her Sons," *The New York Times Magazine*, 23Aug06. A single mother in Stamford, CT is fighting to keep her own sons. Her spotted past with drugs and abusive men present questions that linger into the present. This case is illustrative of many similar situations, and they pose a difficult challenge for her case worker, Annette Johnson, also African American. Connecticut's Department of Children and Families (DCF) is much like Massachusetts's DSS (Dept. of Social Services), and this article raises issues we need to address: the origin of teenagers' "pain-based behaviors," the importance of family structure, the safety of children and role of the state (vs. family).

DeParle, Jason (2004) "Raising Kevion," *New York Times Magazine*, 22 August 2004. This is a powerful story of resilience, a father raising his son against so many odds. Reactions to the article (letters to the Editor) are also included. There is much to discuss from this article.

Jones, Vanessa E. (2006) "Younger Blacks Absorb a Wariness of Marriage," *The Boston Globe*, 9Aug06) A1,4-5. African American teenagers met to discuss their opinions about marriage which leads to a sociological discussion among adults as to the cause of their generally negative views about marriage and family. Response from a reader should provoke discussion.

Textbooks

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.

Borgman, Dean (1997) *When Kumbaya Is Not Enough: A Practical Theology for Youth Ministry*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 241pp. (The Preface and final chapter [11] are at least required. Read chapters 1-6 quickly—or at least skim them. The rest is optional.) Though this text is not directed at urban ministry specifically, it was written from a background of urban and global youth work and with urban youth leaders in mind. Many urban youth workers have appreciated it.

Recommended Reading

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.”

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?

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!

Course Assignments

[If you are taking this course as SW501, along with students under the degree program, YM689, you are taking it Pass/Fail. The following is what is expected for a grade of Pass.]

1. **Resources.** Study the Syllabus! It includes a powerful bibliography to take with you. Look over the files of news clippings and resources passed around by the professor and perhaps other students. Spend at least one hour examining the Encyclopedia of Youth Studies

(www.centerforyouth.org Check out topics (click on Encyclopedia) covered in this class or of special interest to you. Be sure to use both topic alphabetical scroll *and* a word search (upper right of home page). If you don't figure this out, please ask. Write up a 1-2 page critique of this resource. *Use this assignment as a preparation for your main project.* (Your critique counts about 5% of the grade.)

2. **Class Attendance and Participation.** We have so little time together, it is important that we use it efficiently and that we are all together in our discussions. You will be expected to lead a session on one of your required texts. You may do this in partnership with another student. If you do not sign up for one of the books, you may take any given topic listed and lead us in discussion—again alone or in partnership. Your listening and responding skills, your openness and honesty are also important for this class “to work.” (Another 5% of the course grade)
3. **Reflections.** (This counts for roughly 20% of your grade.) Keep a Personal Journal of your reactions to this class. Let it be an honest reflection upon your feelings and reactions to situations, classmates, professor, your readings and experiences. This confidential journal should cover:
 - your initial reactions to the course (classmates, subject matter, professor, syllabus and assignments, readings)
 - your personal background and factors you see shaping you
 - past personal hurts and your path of healing
 - your sense of your present place of ministry and how the course is relating to your present and future ministries
 - reaction to the course, professors presentations, discussions, classmates, reading...
 - final personal evaluation of the style and usefulness of the course and reflection on your personal growth.
4. **Reading.** You have been assigned four articles to read, one book to complete, *Our America*, and one from which you will read selections. Write up a short 8- 10 page critical review of these articles and books—including any further reading you did for this course. Tell what you think the writer's purpose was and how well he or she accomplished that, what impressed you most, that with which you most agreed or took exception. Finally note for each, how you might use or pass this information on
5. **Model of Program** From what you have learned in this class, write up a brief critique of the program you are now in or with which you are most familiar. If you want, your contribution might be put on line (www.centerforyouth.org).

Background Reading

- Burns, Jim 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.
- Copeland, Jr., Nelson E (1995) The Heroic Revolution: A New Agenda for Urban Youthwork, Nashville, TN: James C. Winston Publishing Co., 250 pp. Compelling discussions of cultural selfhood, intellectuals, gang leadership, discipline, work ethic, and involvement of older teenagers.

- This African American youth leader (and graduate of GCTS) has worked hard in his Philadelphia program. This is welcomed text on urban youth ministry which is unfortunately out of print.
- Elkind, David (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.
- Haley. ed. *Autobiography of Malcolm X*. New York: Ballantine, 1964. This book is more than recommended; it is more or less expected that you have read this book at some time as a prerequisite for this course. If not, read it as soon as possible for your further reading. Even students who have read this before are surprised as to how much they gain from a re-read in the context of this graduate course.
- Kitwana, Bakari (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.
- Kozol, Jonathan (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.
- Kozol, Jonathan (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 (1984) *Developing Positive Self-Images & Discipline in Black Children*, Chicago, IL: African-American Images, 104 pp. Lecturer, educational consultant and author of *Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys* and many other books, here considers the relationship between educating Black children and the problems of the larger society. There is serious theory here *and* a challenge to put it into practice.
- Rev. Walter Arthur McCray (1986, 1992) *Black Young Adults: How to Reach Them, What to Teach Them*, Chicago, IL: Black Light Fellowship, 143 pp. This African-American pastor, lecturer and writer considers how to “strengthen the Black church and community by educating black young adults, ages 17-24. The book is broken down into three parts: Understanding black young adults, reaching black young adults and teaching black young adults.
- Sinsabaugh, Ginger and Efrem Smith (contributor) (2001) *Help! I’m an Urban Youth Worker!: A guide to ministering in the big city*, Youth Specialties, 160 p. Practical suggestions for urban youth ministry and recruitment of volunteers amidst street culture with its peer pressure, violence, sexual activity and drug abuse. Now out of print—some copies available through Amazon.
- Copeland, Jr., Nelson E (1995) *The Heroic Revolution: A New Agenda for Urban Youthwork*, Nashville, TN: James C. Winston Publishing Co., 250 pp. Compelling discussions of cultural

selfhood, intellectuals, gang leadership, discipline, work ethic, and involvement of older teenagers. A welcomed text on urban youth ministry. Unfortunately this book is out of print.

Recommended Reading

- 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.
- Anderson, Elijah (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.
- Anson, Robert Sam. *Best Intentions: The Education and Killing of Edmund Perry*, New York: Vintage of Random House, 1988, 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.
- Bakke, Ray, Jim Hart and Raymond Bakke (1987) *The Urban Christian: Effective Ministry in Today's Urban World*, InterVarsity Press. A true veteran and professor of urban ministry "pinpoints the special needs of urban dwellers and outlines effective strategies for ministry in the cities."
- Baldwin, James (1952) *Go Tell It On The Mountain*, NY: The Modern Library, 291 p. An intense and insightful novel of a Harlem family "haunted by lust and searching for sainthood—a brutal and sanctimonious father, a guilty and frustrated mother, a searching and rebellious son." Deep family and religious/spiritual insights for those seeking deeper understanding for ministry.
- Billingsley, Andrew (1992) *Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Enduring Legacy of African-American Families*, NY: Simon and Schuster. This is an important book on a crucial and very controversial issue, helpful background for controversial aspects in your other reading.
- Borgman, Dean (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.
- Bourgois, Philippe (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.
- Campola, Bart (2001) *Kingdom Works: True Stories About God and His People in Inner City America*,
- Chin, Elizabeth (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.

- Conn, Harvie M. & 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.
- Entwhistle, Basil (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.
- George, Nelson (1998) Hip Hop America, New York: Penguin Books, 226p. Exceptional music critic, especially in the field of hip hop, Nelson takes you on a helpful journey through history of hip hop along with an insightful tour of hip hop life style, fashions, media, advertising and sports. This book is an important complement of Kitwana's Hip Hop Generation.
- Hirsch, Kathlene (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.
- Hilfiker, David (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.
- Larson, Scott, 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.
- National Commission on America's Urban Families (U.S.) Families First: Report on the National Commission on America's Urban Families, President of the United States: Washington, DC, 1993.
- McKinney, Lora-Ellen (2003) Christian Education in the African American Church: A Guide for Teaching Truth, Judson Press, 160 p. You will find here a sense of the importance of Christian education, teaching skills and learning strategies, a variety of venues and formats, and the building of a successful program from a real African American perspective. The author is a deacon at the Metropolitan Baptist Church in Washington DC and holds numerous degrees, one in public administration from Harvard.
- Prothrow-Stith, Deborah (1993) Deadly Consequences: How Violence Is Destroying Our Teenage Population and a Plan to Begin Solving the Problem, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 269 pp. Simply the best analysis and solutions available.

- Richardson, Willie (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 discussed.
- Schorr, Lisbeth B. Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage, NY: Doubleday, 1989. 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.
- Sherman, Amy L. Restorers of Hope: Reaching the Poor in your Community with Church-based Ministries that Work, Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books of Good News, 1997, 254. 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.
- Stott, John. The Contemporary Christian: Applying God's Word to Today's World, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992, 432 pp. Changing the World begins with correct thinking. A narrow understanding of the Gospel prevents many Christians from having any impact on, or even sensitivity to, city life today. Note Ch. 12, "Transposing the Word" and Ch. 20 "Holistic mission and social responsibility."
- Simon, David and Edward Burns. The Corner: A Year in the Life of an Inner-City Neighborhood, New York: Broadway Books, 1997, 543 pp. (If you cannot read the entire book, be sure to read the first two chapters carefully; then skim Chs. 6, 10 and the Epilogue.) This long book is a social documentary which reads like a novel. (In fact it was made into a documentary shown on HBO.) It 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 succumb to the corner's temptations. DeAndre is determined to avoid his parents' fall into addiction, but he too seems "cornered."