

Mountain Theological Seminary Graduate Course Syllabus

Development and Counseling Adolescents *PC622*

Summer 2026
MTS
Arvada, CO 80004

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides students with a framework for understanding the adolescent time period as a window of opportunity for healthy growth and development for the whole person with a special emphasis on spiritual maturity.

COURSE RATIONALE

Adolescence is a window of opportunity for healthy spiritual development yet a vulnerable time in life as well. Students will gain an understanding of the adolescent time period as a means to help young people successfully navigate this time in life.

MTS MISSION

The mission of Mountain Theological Seminary is to equip followers of Jesus around the world to be spiritual leaders and servants in Christ's church by providing them with a transformative biblical distance education.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

As a result of this course, students should accomplish the following objectives:

1. Critically analyze the multidimensional changes of adolescence and assess how these developmental processes create both opportunities and vulnerabilities for counseling and spiritual care.
2. Critically evaluate the diverse contexts of adolescent development and interpret their significance for the emotional, relational, and spiritual maturation of young people.
3. Synthesize major theories and research in adolescent development with biblical and theological reflection in order to construct effective counseling approaches for adolescents in ministry settings.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

Steinberg, Laurence. *Adolescence*. 2025 release. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.
ISBN10: 1265920109 | ISBN13: 9781265920104.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

For writing papers please use *Turabian* style and format: The following link is available for reference: http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html

Assignment/ Objective	Description	Requirements	Due Date	Time Needed	% of Final Grade
Discussion Board Posts/ 1	Each week students will respond to discussion prompts related to the week's content. Students are also required to comment on two of their classmates' postings.	250 words for the post and 100 words per response to classmates.	Wednesday of the week for original posts; Saturday of the week for responses	2 hours each week	20%
Knowledge Quiz/1	10 multiple choice question quizzes will be given each week to test students' knowledge of material covered in the course	10 multiple choice questions	Each week	30 minutes each	10%
Book Review/1, 2, 3	5-page paper summarizing key points in the book selected from the course bibliography and includes a page on how the book will be relevant in the students' current or future setting	5-page paper	August 1	7.5 hours writing + selected book reading (10-15 hours reading time)	15%
Primary Changes of Adolescence/ 1,2	5-page paper summarizing plus a description of why this matters in your counseling context.	5-page paper	June 27	7.5 hours	15%
Contexts of Adolescence/ 1,2	5-page paper summarizing plus a description on how you can influence 2 contexts in a way that promotes positive youth development through counseling.	5-page paper	July 11	7.5 hours	15%
Final Project/ 1,2,3	Adapt YOUR context of counseling Adolescents (Teen Ministry, Parenting Classes, etc., Personal Practice) based on what you learned in the class and describe how the secondary changes and spiritual maturity will improve. 5-10 page paper plus a presentation (via your chosen means).	5-10-page paper plus video presentation	August 10 (Presentation) August 15 (Paper)	12-14 hours	25%

USDE REQUIREMENTS

The United States Department of Education (USDE) requires a minimum of 135 hours of work for *any* 3-hour course, regardless of how long the course lasts. It does not have to be the *same work* as a traditional 15-week course, but it must be the *same amount* of work. To meet this USDE requirement, ***all MTS instructors must list in their syllabi the amount of time that each assignment might take. The total hours for all work in a 3-hour class must equal at least 135 hours, including any in-class time.*** Use the following formula for reading and writing workloads: an average adult student takes 1 hour to read and absorb 20 pages of graduate-level text and 1.5 hours to research and write and rewrite 1 page of graduate-level text. Our reading and writing guidelines require about 1,000 pages of reading per course and up to 50 pages of writing per course (including any online posts). Using the formula above, reading 1,000 pages should take about 50 hours and writing 50 pages should take about 75 hours. That is a total of 125 hours, not including any in-class time for any onsite or offsite courses.

45 hours in class + (X pages /20) hours of reading + (Y pages of writing x 1.5) hours of writing \geq 135 hours. Note that the total number of hours in a course may be more than 135, but it cannot be less. We at RMSMT are requiring at least 135 hours of work.

- 1 hour in the classroom = 1 hour of course work
- 20 pages of reading = 1 hour of course work
- 1 page (300 words) of research and writing = 1.5 hours of course work
- 1 hour of field research = 1 hour of course work
- 1 page of online posting (200+ words) = 1 hour of course work.

COURSE EXAMS/QUIZZES

Ten quizzes will be given to test students' knowledge of the main content covered including adolescent health, biological transitions, adolescent sexuality, cognitive and affective development, contexts for development, media/internet, developmental psychology, and substance use. Quizzes will be given at the end of each week that covers content, and will be worth 10 points each and 10% of overall grade.

COURSE GRADING

Below is the RMSMT grading scale for this class:

A	Excellent	94–100	4.00
A-		90–93	3.67
B+		87–89	3.33
B	Good	83-86	3.00
B-		80-82	2.67
C+		77-79	2.33
C	Average	73-76	2.00
C-		70-72	1.67
D+		67-69	1.33
D	Passing	63-66	1.00
D-		60-62	0.67
F*	Failing	0–59	0.00

COURSE GRADING RUBRICS

Details of Discussion Board Post Scoring Rubric are noted below:

Through successful completion of the discussion board posts, the student will demonstrate the ability to apply graduate level research and writing skills to biblical/theological and development issues that are relevant to academic and ecclesial settings.				
	Exemplary	Proficient	Adequate	Unacceptable
Clarity and Accuracy Clearly and accurately responds to the discussion prompt related to the week's covered content	23-25 pts	20-22 pts	18-19 pts	0-17 pts
Responses Two reflective responses related to the original post	23-25 pts	20-22 pts	18-19 pts	0-17 pts

Details of Book Review Paper Rubric are noted below:

Through successful completion of the 'Book Review' paper, the student will demonstrate the ability to apply graduate level research and writing skills to a major biblical/theological/developmental project that is relevant to academic and ecclesial settings.				
	Exemplary	Proficient	Adequate	Unacceptable
Summary of Major Points in the Book Clearly and succinctly summarizes the major theme/points in the book	23-25 pts	20-22 pts	18-19 pts	0-17 pts
Theological/Contextual Relevancy Clearly articulates the relevancy of the content of the book to theological/contextual matters. Scripture is encouraged but not necessary for full credit	23-25 pts	20-22 pts	18-19 pts	0-17 pts
Citations/Footnotes/Endnotes Correctly uses the 'Turabian' style of writing. Footnotes or endnotes are acceptable.	23-25 pts	20-22 pts	18-19 pts	0-17 pts

Details of Primary Changes of Adolescence Paper Rubric are noted below:

Through successful completion of the 'Primary Changes of Adolescence' paper, the student will demonstrate the ability to apply graduate level research and writing skills to a major biblical/theological project that is relevant to academic and ecclesial settings.				
	Exemplary	Proficient	Adequate	Unacceptable
Knowledge of Developmental Construct(s) Identify and accurately describe the developmental construct	23-25 pts	20-22 pts	18-19 pts	0-17 pts
Theological Relevancy Clearly articulates the relevancy of the developmental construct to theological matters. Scripture is encouraged but not necessary for full credit here	23-25 pts	20-22 pts	18-19 pts	0-17 pts
Contextual Application Effectively describes the translation of the developmental construct and theological relevancy to the author's current counseling context which includes a detailed description of how counseling should be adapted.	23-25 pts	20-22 pts	18-19 pts	0-17 pts
Citations/Footnotes/Endnotes Correctly uses the 'Turabian' style of writing. Footnotes or endnotes are acceptable.	23-25 pts	20-22 pts	18-19 pts	0-17 pts

Details of Contexts of Adolescence Paper Rubric are noted below:

Through successful completion of the 'Contexts of Adolescence' paper, the student will demonstrate the ability to apply graduate level research and writing skills to a major biblical/theological project that is relevant to academic and ecclesial settings.				
	Exemplary	Proficient	Adequate	Unacceptable
Knowledge of Developmental Contexts Identify and accurately describe the developmental contexts as they relate to adolescents	23-25 pts	20-22 pts	18-19 pts	0-17 pts
Theological Relevancy Clearly articulates the relevancy of the developmental construct to theological matters. Scripture is encouraged but not necessary for full credit here	23-25 pts	20-22 pts	18-19 pts	0-17 pts
Contextual Influence and Adaptation Effectively describes the influence on the context and how this influence could translate into an adaptation leading to effective counseling for positive growth and spiritual development	23-25 pts	20-22 pts	18-19 pts	0-17 pts
Citations/Footnotes/Endnotes Correctly uses the 'Turabian' style of writing. Footnotes or endnotes are acceptable.	23-25 pts	20-22 pts	18-19 pts	0-17 pts

Details of Final Project Rubric are noted below:

Through successful completion of the Final Project, the student will demonstrate the ability to apply graduate level research and writing skills to a major biblical/theological project that is relevant to academic and ecclesial settings.				
	Exemplary	Proficient	Adequate	Unacceptable
Context Description Clearly and thoroughly describes the counseling context or element that will change and why this was chosen	23-25 pts	20-22 pts	18-19 pts	0-17 pts
Changes and Potential Outcomes Clearly articulates the changes that will be made to the counseling context/element supported by a thorough developmentally based rationale. Effectively outlines the intended positive outcomes due to the developmentally based changes	23-25 pts	20-22 pts	18-19 pts	0-17 pts
Presentation Effectively and clearly communicates the main points of the paper via chosen means: Video (Instagram, YouTube, etc.), Canva Infographic, Prezi/PowerPoint presentation, etc.	23-25 pts	20-22 pts	18-19 pts	0-17 pts
Citations/Footnotes/Endnotes Correctly uses the 'Turabian' style of writing. Footnotes or endnotes are acceptable	23-25 pts	20-22 pts	18-19 pts	0-17 pts

COURSE SCHEDULE

Summary Course Schedule for PC622 Counseling Adolescents					
Module /Week	Session Topic	Reading/ Viewing	Module Workload	Written Assignments	Points (due: midnight)
1 May 24-30	Introduction, Adolescent Health	Text pgs. 1-12 Teens and The Bible 3 pgs. Black et al, 2018 8 pgs. WHO MH, 2019 5pgs. YRBS 20pgs. MTF 20pgs. 68 pgs. total 1 hour lecture	3.4 hours reading 1 hour viewing 30-minute quiz <u>3.75 hours writing</u> 8.65 hours work	Discussion post (250 words) Discussion Response post to <i>two</i> discussion submissions (100 words total)	10 points (Wed. 5/27/26) 10 points (Sat. 5/30/26)
2 May 31- June 6	Biological Transitions: Puberty, Sleep, and Brain Development	Text pgs. 13-40, 48-57 Susman & Dorn, 2009 32pgs. Murray, 2014 10 pgs. UNICEF, 2017 50 pgs. 130 pgs. Total 1 hour lecture	6.5 hours reading 1 hour viewing 30-minute quiz <u>3.75 hours writing</u> 11.75 hours work	Discussion post (250 words) Discussion Response post to <i>two</i> discussion submissions (100 words total)	10 points (Wed. 6/3/26) 10 points (Sat. 6/6/26)
3 June 7-13	Biological Transitions: Counseling with the Adolescent Brain in Mind	Roaten & Roaten, 2012 27 pgs. Total 1 hour lecture	1.35 hours reading 1 hour viewing <u>5.25 hours writing</u> 8.1 hours work	Discussion post (250 words) Discussion Response post to <i>two</i> discussion submissions (100 words total)	10 points (Wed. 6/10/26) 10 points (Sat. 6/13/26)
4 June 14-20	Cognitive and Affective Development and Self-Regulation	Text pgs. 40-47 & 68-93 Kuhn, 2009 40pgs. Moffitt et al, 2011 7 pgs. OPRE-YA, HS, MS, 2017 6pgs. 87 pgs. total 1 hour of lecture	4.35 hours reading 1 hours viewing 30-minute quiz <u>5.25 hours writing</u> 11.1 hours work	Discussion post (250 words) Discussion Response post to <i>two</i> discussion submissions (100 words total)	10 points (Wed. 6/17/26) 10 points (Sat. 6/20/26)
5	Contexts for Development: Relationships	Text pgs. 94-151, 262-291	8.1 hours reading 1 hour viewing <u>5.25 hours writing</u> 14.85 hours work	Discussion post (250 words)	10 points (Wed. 6/24/26)

June 21-27	(Family, Peers, etc.)	Laursen & Collins, 2009 42 pgs. Brown & Larson, 2009 32 pgs. 162 pgs. total 1 hour lecture		Discussion Response post to <i>two</i> discussion submissions (100 words total) 5-page Primary Changes in Adolescence Paper Due	10 points (Sat. 6/27/26) 15% of final grade (Due Sat. 6/27/26)
6 June 28- July 4	Contexts for Development: Schools, Religious Institutions and Spirituality	Text pgs. 152-178 Eccles & Roeser, 2011 17pgs. Emmanuel & Delaney 2013 12pgs. 55 pgs. total 1 hour lecture	2.75 hours reading 1 hour viewing 30-minute quiz <u>7.35 hours writing</u> 11.6 hours work	Discussion post (250 words) Discussion Response post to <i>two</i> discussion submissions (100 words total)	10 points (Wed. 7/1/26) 10 points (Sat. 7/4/26)
7 July 5-11	Media/Internet	Text pgs. 192-207 Teague et al., 2026 16 pgs. Maheux et al., 2024 20 pgs. Borodovsky et al., 2024 10 pgs. 62 pgs. total 1 hour of lecture	3.1 hours reading 1 hour viewing 30-minute quiz <u>7.35 hour writing</u> 11.95 hours' work	Discussion post (250 words) Discussion Response post to <i>two</i> discussion submissions (100 words total) 5-page Contexts for Development Paper Due	10 points (Wed. 7/8/26) 10 points (Sat. 7/11/26) 15% of final grade (Due Sat 7/11/26)
8 July 12-18	Identity and Autonomy	Text pgs. 208-261 Kerig et al 2012 26pgs. Meeus, 2011 20pgs. 100 pgs. total 1 hour lecture	5 hours reading 1 hours viewing 30-minute quiz <u>8.35 hours writing</u> 14.85 hours work	Discussion post (250 words) Discussion Response post to <i>two</i> discussion submissions (100 words total)	10 points (Wed. 7/15/26) 10 points (Sat. 7/18/26)
9 July 19-25	Developmental Psychopathology: Depression, Suicide, Anxiety, Eating Disorders,	Text pgs 348-353 & 364-384 Cicchetti & Rogosch, 2002 15pgs.	2.4 hours reading 1 hour viewing 30-minute quiz <u>8.35 hours writing</u> 12.25 hours work	Discussion post (250 words) Discussion Response post to <i>two</i> discussion	10 points (Wed. 7/22/26) 10 points (Sat. 7/25/26)

	Conduct Problems	Hallfors et al, 2005 8pgs. 50 pgs. total 1 hour lecture		submissions (100 words total)	
10 July 26- August 1	Substance Use	Text pgs 354-363 Chassin et al, 2009 42pgs. Kumpfer & Alvarado, 2003 9pgs. 61 pgs. total 1 hours lecture	3.05 hours reading 1 hour viewing 30-minute quiz <u>8.85 hours writing</u> 13.4 hours work	Discussion post (250 words) Discussion Response post to <i>two</i> discussion submissions (100 words total) Book Review Due	10 points (Wed. 7/29/26) 10 points (Sat. 8/1/26) 15% of final grade (Due Sat 8/1/26)
11 August 2-8	How to Help Adolescents, Positive Youth Development, Spiritual Formation, and Mentoring	Macfarlane, 2009 11pgs. Erbe, 2024 10 pgs. Niles & Gutierrez, 2024 15 pgs. Chiroma, 2015 19 pgs. Cloete, 2012 8 pgs. (optional) 55 pgs. total 1 hours lecture	2.75 hours reading 1 hour viewing <u>5.25 hours writing</u> 9 hours work	Discussion post (250 words) Discussion Response post to <i>two</i> discussion submissions (100 words total)	10 points (Wed. 8/5/26) 10 points (Sat. 8/8/26)
12 August 9-15	Final Projects	View Final Project Presentations Total Pgs.: 855 (plus book of choice ~210 pages)	2 hours viewing proj. 2.5 hours responding <u>3 hours writing</u> 7.5 hours work Total Course Hours = 135	Post Final Project Presentation Response post to two Final Project Presentations (500 words total) Submit Final Project Paper	Due Monday 8/10/26 Due Friday 8/14/26 25% of final grade (Due Sat 8/15/26)

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY (Choose one from this list for ‘Book Review’ assignment)

Adolescent Development Books

Carter, C. (2020). *The New Adolescence*. Dallas, TX: BenBella Books.

Damour, L. (2023). *The Emotional Lives of Teenagers*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.

Haidt, J. (2024). *The Anxious Generation*. New York, NY: Penguin Press.

Steinberg, L. (2014). *Age of Opportunity*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Brain Development Books

Armstrong, T. (2016). *The Power of the Adolescent Brain: Strategies for Teaching Middle and High School Students*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Jensen, F. E. (2015). *The Teenage Brain: A Neuroscientist's Survival Guide to Raising Adolescents and Young Adults*. New York, NY: Harper.

Siegel, D. J. (2013). *Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin.

Teen Spiritual Formation Books

Jones, T. (2003). *Soul Shaper*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

King, M. (2006). *Presence Centered Youth Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Yaconelli, M. (2006). *Contemplative Youth Ministry: Practicing the Presence of Jesus*. El Cajon, CA: Youth Specialties.

POLICIES

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend every class session. In the event that a student misses one class session, he/she must work with the instructor to determine what is needed to make up what was missed. If the student does not make up the work in a satisfactory manner, the student's final grade will be lowered one letter grade at the end of the course. If the student misses two class sessions, the student's final grade will be lowered one letter grade provided that he/she makes up work for both class sessions. If that make up work is not completed, then the final grade will be lowered by two letter grades. If the student misses three class sessions, he/she will be given an F for his/her final grade and not be allowed to finish the course.

At times students have legitimate extenuating circumstances for their absences from class. If this occurs and the student is doing well in class up to that point, the student can contact the professor of the class and the Dean of the appropriate MTS School and ask for a 30 day extension beyond the end of class to complete the work in the class. This request however must be made at least 2 weeks before the final class session. If a 30 day extension is approved beyond the end of class and the student fails to finish all the requirements of the class by the end of those 30 days, the student will be assigned an F for his/her final grade for that class. Appeals can be made to the MTS President.

LATE WORK POLICY

All work is due when listed in the course syllabus, unless otherwise stipulated by the instructor. Grading of any late work on any assignment during the semester will be done at the discretion of the Instructor. (Note that instructors are not under obligation to accept any assignment that is late but may do so and grade it if they wish according to their discretion). No work may be accepted later than one week after the course concludes, since ***final grades for all classes are due two weeks after the last class session***. The only exception to this policy is for students who request and are granted an official course extension as noted in the above paragraph. All such extensions are granted only for extreme circumstances (extended illness, death in family, etc.), and the extension may not exceed 30 days from the last day of class. Only the appropriate MTS Dean may grant such requests, which must be made in writing at least 2 weeks before the last class session. Otherwise, the grade earned at the end of the class is the one granted.

ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP INTEGRITY POLICY

It is the policy of MTS that its students and faculty exhibit a high standard of honesty and integrity and a commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Students are expected to be committed to a living standard depicted in the Bible both academically and relationally both inside and outside of school. Incidents of lack of integrity, including such things as plagiarism, cheating, treating others with lack of respect will be taken seriously and offenders held accountable up to and including probation, suspension and/or removal from their academic program and MTS. All infractions should be reported to the appropriate Dean of MTS.

INSTRUCTOR/STUDENT COVENANT

As instructor of this course, I covenant with each student that I will model Christ-like behavior, value and respect each student as a fellow disciple/learner, be prepared for each class session, make appropriate assignments, grade all assignments fairly, return all graded assignments promptly, and be available for consultation outside of class. In return, I expect each student to model Christ-like behavior, value and respect fellow students and me as the instructor, be prepared for each class session, and complete assignments in ways that demonstrate your integrity.

ONLINE ETIQUETTE

Most of the online or hybrid courses in the graduate programs require students to interact with each other and with the instructor on a regular basis (per syllabus instructions). Most of that interaction is done through online comments posted on Canvas. Due to the constraints and unique nature of online communication, students should be aware of the tone or insinuations of any comments they post. Comments can often be misinterpreted when non-verbal cues such as facial expression and voice intonation are not present. Excessive punctuation, such as repeated exclamation points, could be construed as overly emotional or angry. Students need to consider how remarks might be interpreted by someone who does not know them personally and can only take their words at face value. Students should compose their comments per instructions under the syllabus assignments, paying careful attention to proper grammar and spelling.

LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

While MTS does not have an official Physical library onsite. However, we do have an online library for all students. Students can access this library with the link and User ID and Password noted below:

MTS Library link and access codes:

<https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?authtype=ip,uid&custid=s9813984&profile=ehost&defaultdb=aph>

Username: rmsmt2016

Password: ICOC!YYYY (YYYY = Current Year)

There are also many theological school libraries which are available in the Denver area for students to use with the schools' permission. These include:

The Denver Seminary Library
6399 South Santa Fe Drive
Littleton, Colorado 80120

Colorado Christian University
8787 W. Alameda Ave.
Lakewood, CO 80226

Iliff School of Theology
2323 E. Iliff Ave.
Denver, CO 80021

In addition, there are several State University libraries in the Denver area which can be visited for research including the University of Colorado in Boulder, Regis University, University of Colorado in Colorado Springs, Colorado College in Colorado Springs, Naropa University in Boulder. The best search engine for biblical article research is EBSCO ATLA Religion with Serials data base which can be found at all of the above libraries.

Please also visit any theological or university library in your area of the world to see if they have access to ATLAS Religion data base or other religious/counseling search engines. In Colorado, you may also check with local libraries for the availability of EBSCO *Academic Search Premier* data base. It searches many well respected academic religious journals.