



PSY 608 Adolescent Development Spring 2026

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Course Dates: May 11-15, 2026
Course Delivery Method: Online Modular

3 Credit Hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Adolescence represents a definable phase in human development. It is one of the most complex of the developmental phases because of the myriad of changes going on during these critical years. This course examines the pilgrimage through adolescence from a number of perspectives. Key developmental theories are examined in light of biblical truth. A historical look at adolescence forms the starting point for exploring adolescent emotional, relational, physiological, moral, and spiritual development.

COURSE INTEGRATION

This course seeks to fulfill Briercrest Seminary-wide Outcome (SO) # 2 by prompting students to think about their vocation of counselling as embodiment of their faith. This course invites students to consider the vocation of counselling as participating in God's work of bringing hope and healing and helping bring peace and connection in intimate relationships (SO #3).

This counselling skills course seeks to fulfill the Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy (MAMFT) Program Outcome (PO) #1 and Master of Arts in Couple and Family Therapy (MACFT) by providing a systemic understanding of adolescents considering the impact of family and developmental aspects based on major models and theories. This course equips students to consider legal and ethical issues in working with adolescents and their families (MAMFT PO#2 and MACFT PO #3). This course equips students with skills to help adolescents and their family relationships considering developmental issues (MACFT PO #5). This course also seeks to meet the CCPA requirement of training in counselling/communication skills and/or CACFT requirement of therapeutic skills (MAMFT PO #3 and MACFT PO #3).

COURSE TEXTS

Required Reading (all to be read before the first day of class):

Arnett, J. J. & Jensen, L. A. (2023). *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood: A Cultural Approach* (7th ed.). Pearson.

*E-text is available to rent or purchase at <https://www.vitalsource.com/en-ca/products/adolescence-amp-emerging-adulthood-a-cultural-jeffery-jensen-arnett-lene-v9780138063054>

**Note: Using the 5th or 6th edition for this text is also acceptable

Laser, J. A., & Nicotera, N. (2021). *Working With Adolescents: A Guide for Practitioners*. (2nd ed.). The Guilford Press.

Siegel, D. J. (2018). *Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain*. Tarcher Perigee.

Recommended Reading:

Geldard, K., Geldard, D., & Yin Foo, R. (2020). *Counselling Adolescents: The Proactive Approach to Young People* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.

Micucci, J. A. (2009). *The Adolescent in Family Therapy: Harnessing the Power of Relationships* (2nd ed.). The Guilford Press.

Articles (all to be read before the first day of class):

Abi-Jaoude, E., Naylor, K. T., & Pignatiello, A. (2020). Smartphones, social media use and youth mental health. *CMAJ: Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 192(6), E136–E141. **(Available on Canvas)**

Brokenleg, M. (2012). Transforming Cultural Trauma into Resilience. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 21(3), 9–13. **(Available on Canvas)**

Gajaria, A., Guzder, J., & Rasasingham, R., (2021). What's race got to do with it? A proposed framework to address racism's impacts on child and adolescent mental health in Canada. *Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry*, 30(2), 131–137. **(Available on Canvas)**

Haner, D. M., & Pepler, D. (2016). "Live Chat" Clients at Kids Help Phone: Individual Characteristics and Problem Topics. *Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 25(3), 138–144. **(Available on Canvas)**

Hatchel, T., Valido, A., de Pedro, K. T., Huang, Y., & Espelage, D. L. (2019). Minority Stress Among Transgender Adolescents: The Role of Peer Victimization, School Belonging, and Ethnicity. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 28(9), 2467–2476. **(Available on Canvas)**

Mehra, K., Hawke, L. D., Watson, P., Sheikhan, N. Y., Leroux, E., & Henderson, J. (2021). Youth Perspectives on Seeking Psychotherapy: A Concurrent Mixed Methods Study. *Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry*, 30(3), 165–176. **(Available on Canvas)**

Students are expected to refer to Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: <https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/seminary-life/documents>.

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <https://www.briercrestseminary.ca/seminary-life/bookstore>.

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

SEMINARY-WIDE OUTCOMES

Students will graduate:

1. Describing and demonstrating evangelical faith and values.
2. Preparing to serve God's kingdom in its diversity. Describe God, God's kingdom, and your calling (vocational sensitivity) within it, including the types of contexts and people you feel best prepared to serve.
3. Participating in the action of our Triune God through formation of the soul (i.e., virtue and spiritual integrity), mind (academic rigour), and strength (vocation).

COURSE OUTCOMES

- Students will gain an understanding of the various developmental tasks and developmental theories related to adolescence.
- Students will gain an understanding of the complex concerns, contextual factors, and pressures that adolescents regularly face today.
- Students will gain an understanding of how developmental factors impact the work we do as therapists working with adolescents and families.

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT

Date	Topic	Supporting Resources
May 11	• Introduction to Adolescent Development • Cognitive Development • Physical Development & Puberty	Arnett, J. J. & Jensen, L. A. (2023). <i>Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood: A Cultural Approach</i> (7th ed.). Laser, J. A., & Nicotera, N. (2021). <i>Working With Adolescents A Guide For Practitioners</i> . (2nd ed). Siegel, Daniel (2018). <i>Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain</i>
May 12	• Sexuality • Gender • Self-Esteem, Identity & Emotions	Arnett, J. J. & Jensen, L. A. (2023). <i>Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood: A Cultural Approach</i> (7th ed.). Laser, J. A., & Nicotera, N. (2021). <i>Working With Adolescents A Guide For Practitioners</i> . (2nd ed). Siegel, Daniel (2018). <i>Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain</i> . Hatchel, T., Valido, A., de Pedro, K. T., Huang, Y., & Espelage, D. L. (2019). Minority Stress Among Transgender Adolescents: The Role of Peer Victimization, School Belonging, and Ethnicity.
May 13	• Moral Development & Religion • Family • Social Development	Arnett, J. J. & Jensen, L. A. (2023). <i>Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood: A Cultural Approach</i> (7th ed.). Micucci, J. A. (2009). <i>The Adolescent in Family Therapy : Harnessing the Power of Relationships</i> (2nd ed.).
May 14	• Work & School • Media • Problems & Resiliency	Arnett, J. J. & Jensen, L. A. (2023). <i>Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood: A Cultural Approach</i> (7th ed.). Gajaria, A., Guzder, J., & Rasasingham, R., (2021). What's race got to do with it? A proposed framework to address

		racism's impacts on child and adolescent mental health in Canada. Brokenleg, M. (2012). Transforming Cultural Trauma into Resilience.
May 15	- Adolescents in Therapy - Conclusion	Laser, J. A., & Nicotera, N. (2021). <i>Working With Adolescents A Guide For Practitioners</i> . (2nd ed). Geldard, K., Geldard, D., & Yin Foo, R. (2020). <i>Counselling Adolescents: The Proactive Approach to Young People</i> (5th ed.). Micucci, J. A. (2009). <i>The Adolescent in Family Therapy : Harnessing the Power of Relationships</i> (2nd ed.). Haner, D. M., & Pepler, D. (2016). "Live Chat" Clients at Kids Help Phone: Individual Characteristics and Problem Topics.

ASSIGNMENTS

Please submit all written assignments to Canvas using APA formatting.

Pre-Course Assignments:

1. **Read all of Laser & Nicotera's (2021) *Working with Adolescents*.** Write a 2-3-page paper engaging with a concept (one chapter) from Part III of the text. Please summarize key ideas from the chapter that would be helpful in working with adolescents, engage with this chapter by linking it with adolescent development themes found throughout the text, and include a brief biblical or theological integration to support the relevance of working with this issue with adolescents.
Value: 10% Due: May 11, 2026
2. **Read Arnett & Jensen's (2023) *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood* and Siegel's (2018) *Brainstorm*.** Write a 3-4 page paper summarizing 1-2 central ideas or themes from each text. Connect these key learnings with each other by highlighting the ways Siegel's neuroscience perspective enriches or challenges the ideas or themes you identified from *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*. Consider the ways Siegel and Arnett & Jensen's ideas and themes complement one another. Reflect on how these learnings might shape your approach to working with adolescents or families/caregivers with adolescents as a therapist.
Value: 20% Due: May 11, 2026

Post-Course Assignments:

1. **Personal Adolescent Development Paper — 6 pages**
Choose one developmental theory listed below and apply it to your own story as an adolescent from the ages of 12-21. Please address:
 - A brief overview or summary of the theory (~1 page)
 - How do you understand and make sense of your own development in light of this theory?
 - Application of this theory related to your own journey as an adolescent. Please include a reflection of how this theory illuminates and makes sense of 2-3 of the following aspects of development:
 - Cognitive

- Physical
- Social
- Emotional, or
- Spiritual Development

****Please note that while this paper requires personal reflection, you must engage with academic resources including a minimum of 3 peer reviewed journal articles published since 2010 and cite sources following APA formatting.**

Developmental theories to choose from for paper:

- Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Theory
- Skinner's Theory of Operant Conditioning
- Bandura's Social Learning Theory
- Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory
- Freud's Psychosexual Theory
- Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Development
- Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development
- Fowler's Theory of Faith Development

***If you would like to use a theory not listed here, please contact the professor for permission prior to starting the assignment.*

Value: 30% Due: July 10, 2026

2. **Research Paper** — 7-8 pages

Pick a population from the list of special populations below. Write a 7-8 page paper engaging with the developmental factors that should inform your work with this population.

Assignment overview:

1. Discuss 3-4 of the following developmental domains most relevant to your chosen population:
 - Physical
 - Cognitive
 - Behavioural
 - Social
 - Spiritual, or
 - Environmental factors
2. For each domain you choose, discuss how these domains may be impacted or face unique differences within your chosen population.
3. Biblical/theological integration
 - Briefly reflect (~1 page) on what it means to be a follower of Christ and a counsellor in this context. Consider how a Christian worldview could inform your work with this population.

***You must include a minimum of 6 peer reviewed articles published since 2010 in this paper.**

Special populations to choose from for paper:

- Youth in foster care
- Youth who have experienced trauma
- Youth substance use and dependence
- 2SLGBTQ+ Youth
- Youth experiencing suicidal thoughts
- Youth engaging in high-risk sexual activity
- Youth involved with the justice system
- Indigenous Youth

***If you would like to focus on an adolescent population not listed here, please contact your professor for permission prior to starting the assignment.*

Value: 40% Due: July 10, 2026

SEMINARY CALENDAR

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current [Seminary Calendar](#).

Attendance Policy

In order to benefit fully from a seminary education, to be good stewards of time and finances, and to be considerate of their classmates and faculty members, students must be in class at every opportunity.

Modular Courses

Students are expected to attend 100 per cent of each modular for which they register. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, arrangements must be made with the course professor before the first day of class. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending class, a maximum of one (1) full day of class can be foregone. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Online Courses

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending scheduled meeting times, then up to 20% of meeting time can be foregone. Students missing scheduled meeting times should make every effort to inform the course professor prior to any time missed. If additional time is missed, the student will fail the course unless they first request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit.

Semester-Based Courses

All students missing more than two full weeks of a particular course from registration to the last day of classes will receive an automatic fail (0%). A student may appeal a course failure due to excessive absences. Successful appeals will be granted only in rare cases where all absences are clearly beyond the student's control. Appeals must be made through the Academic Appeal Process.

Modular Course Schedules

Modular classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the

syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

Assignment Submission

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the [academic calendar](#).

Return of Graded Assignments

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the [Seminary](#). If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

Academic Honesty

As members of the Briercrest learning community, students have a responsibility to conduct themselves with integrity and honour. Students who cheat on exams, plagiarize, inappropriately collaborate, or use generative AI without instructor authorization violate the trust placed in them by their instructors, fellow students, and the seminary. Any such actions constitute a breach of academic honesty and will result in serious consequences, such as failure of an assignment, failure of a course, or expulsion from the seminary.

Plagiarism, whether intentional or involuntary, is the submission of the work of others, published or unpublished, in whole or in part without acknowledgment or proper documentation. All information, ideas and/or direct quotations taken from other primary or secondary sources must be documented appropriately.

Generative AI is an umbrella term for a type of machine learning and a group of algorithms that can create new content, such as text, code, images, videos, music, or a combination of all these formats. Generative AI produces output in response to a query or prompt using generative models such as Large Language Models (LLMs) that rely on large datasets. Generative AI features are also often embedded within tools such as Grammarly, allowing these tools to generate new content, such as the rewriting, paraphrasing, or summarizing of existing text. The generated responses of these tools are probabilistic, which can result in errors and biases in responses.

The use of generative AI to create audio or visual media, to produce outlines, to generate partial or complete drafts of assignments, to answer questions on quizzes or exams, or to edit the grammar of assignment drafts is considered unauthorized unless it is explicitly permitted by the course instructor in writing. All use of generative AI tools must be properly documented.

Students are responsible for ensuring they are using their sources and completing their assignments with transparency and honesty. For more details, consult the [Seminary Calendar](#) and the Briercrest Format Guide. In addition to being familiar with these pages, instructors assume that you have completed the Briercrest Academic Integrity course on [Canvas](#) and understand the information contained in it.

Academic Accommodations

Any student with a disability, injury, or health condition (mental or physical) who may need academic accommodations (permanent or temporary) should contact the ARC Coordinator in person (L234 in the Library), by phone (1-306-801-6159), or by email (arc@briercrest.ca). Documentation from a qualified practitioner will be required (i.e., medical doctor, psychologist, etc.). It is recommended that students meet with their professors to discuss the requirements of their accommodations (i.e., how the student will receive lecture notes, or how the professor wants to receive extension requests).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abi-Jaoude, E., Naylor, K. T., & Pignatiello, A. (2020). Smartphones, social media use and youth mental health. *CMAJ: Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 192(6), E136–E141

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Mehra, K., Hawke, L. D., Watson, P., Sheikhan, N. Y., Leroux, E., & Henderson, J. (2021). Youth Perspectives on Seeking Psychotherapy: A Concurrent Mixed Methods Study. *Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry*, 30(3), 165–176.

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Siegel, D. J. (2018). *Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of the Teenage Brain*. Tarcher Perigee.

Steinberg, L. (2020). *Adolescence* (12th ed.). McGraw Hill.