

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

| | |
|--|---|
| Course | SPIRITUALITY FOR GENERATIONS Z & ALPHA SPIR / YMIN 0553 1S |
| Date, Time, and Delivery Format | JANUARY 13 – APRIL 11, 2025 THURSDAYS 11:15 AM – 2:05 PM SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE |
| Instructor | JENN ASPILLA, MDiv, Certified Spiritual Director, CSDS(Qualifying) Email: jaspilla@tyndale.ca |
| Class Information | The classes will be livestreamed on Thursdays from 11:15 AM – 2:05PM. This course contains both livestreamed and pre-recorded portions. Office Hours: By Appointment |
| Course Material | Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only. |

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the spirituality and discipleship models which coincide with the unique connectivity of Generation Z (born 1997 to 2010) and Generation Alpha (born 2011 to present), who grew up in a secular world. The intersectionality of technology and spirituality will be examined, discovering ways in which digital space can be effectively utilized for faith formation. Students will discover and learn theoretical guiding principles and practical hands-on strategies designed to nurture the spiritual life of younger generations as Christ-followers within the context of local church ministry, everyday life, and spiritual direction.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the specific and unique markers of both Generation Z and Generation Alpha.
2. Formulate practical means by which spiritual formation practices can be utilized with children, youth and young adults.
3. Compare various models of discipleship and their applicability to younger generations 4
4. Identify how the role of technology may hinder and help intergenerational connections with Gen Z & Alphas
5. Examine how their journey of faith formation may impact their perspective and understanding of faith formation in others.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Kinnaman, David, and Mark Matlock. [*Faith for Exiles: 5 Proven Ways to Help a New Generation Follow Jesus and Thrive in Digital Babylon*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2019.

McCordle, Mark. *Generation Alpha: Understanding Our Children and Helping Them Thrive*. London: Headline Home, 2021.

White, James Emery. [*Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World*](#). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2017.

Zirschky, Andrew. [*Beyond the Screen: Youth Ministry for the Connected but Alone Generation*](#). Nashville, TN: Youth Ministry Partners and Abingdon Press, 2015.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Tyndale recommends www.stepbible.org – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

C. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR BLENDED COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera

- Well-lit and quiet room
 - Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
 - Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
 - A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*
- *exceptions with permission from the professor

D. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

E. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Attendance, Participation and Required Readings, Monthly Questions - 25% of Final Grade (This is related to learning outcomes 1 & 5).

Each student is required to attend all live stream lectures, read required texts, and participate in class discussions.

Monthly Questions:

Students will submit five follow-up questions related to class lectures and/or readings at the end of each month on the designated due date.

Discussion Questions Grading Rubric:

If there is “no post” after 11:59 pm for that day, the student will receive a “zero” for that forum. If there are specific reasons for late posts (as stated in “Late Papers and Extension Policy,” Seminary Academic Calendar), the student is to email the instructor directly.

FORUM DISCUSSION GRADING RUBRIC

| | A | B | C | D |
|-----------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Completeness of post | Addresses all parts of assignment meets and did not exceed limit; comprehensive response | Addresses all parts of assignment; respectable length & did not exceed limit; somewhat comprehensive | Addresses some parts of assignment; shorter length; incomplete post | Rarely addresses assignment; far too short or far too long; incomplete post |

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| Clarity of post | Clear and concise posts; grammatically correct with rare misspellings | Clear, but can be more concise; a few grammatical or spelling errors | Somewhat clear, but with significant number of errors in spelling and grammar | Unclear, poor spelling and grammar in most posts |
| Critical engagement with class material (lectures, readings) | Thoughtful; opinions and ideas are substantiated with class material and additional resources; active reflection & questioning; obvious integration with one's ministry context | Thoughtful; opinions and ideas are occasionally substantiated with class material; some reflection & questioning; some integration with one's ministry context | Less thoughtful; opinions and ideas are sometimes substantiated with class material; insufficient reflection & questioning; less integration with one's ministry context | Opinions and ideas are not substantiated with class material; no reflection & questioning; no integration with one's ministry context |
| Promptness & quality of responses | Posting on time; in timely manner; thoughtful responses | Posting on time; responds to most postings in timely manner; somewhat thoughtful responses | Posting mostly on time. | Late posting; |

2. Critical Book Review – 20% of final grade

(This is related to learning outcomes 2, 3 & 4).

This will be a four pages double spaced paper. Utilizing the course text *Beyond the Screen*, reflect on:

- a. Your understanding of the Christian community (Koinia)
- b. What role do you think technology can play in maintaining and building community connections for Gen Z OR Gen Alpha generations?
- c. In what areas do you agree or disagree with Andrew Zirschky's understanding of technology's role in the Gen Z community? Why or why not?

3. Interview Integration Portfolio – 55% of final grade (Presentation: 15%; Interview Integration Paper: 40%)

(This is related to learning outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5).

This assignment involves the following four components:

- a) *Interviews* (to be conducted well in advance of Presentation and Paper due dates)

- b) *Meeting with a Spiritual Director* for one hour of focused conversation around the consolations and desolations that arise from the interview conversations and your prayerful reflection on it. (A spiritual director intern currently enrolled in Tyndale's spiritual direction program may be utilized for this purpose free of charge pending availability).
- c) *Presentation*: 5-7 minute presentation to the class (further details provided in class).
- d) *Interview Integration Paper*

Interviews: The purpose of these interviews is twofold:

- a) To integrate theory with experiential learning. How do the ideas presented in class and required readings directly relate to the lived experience of Gen Z's in your context.
- b) To pay attention to the movements of consolation and desolation that occur in you as you speak to others about their faith formation.

Consent is needed from each interviewee and the consent form is provided at the end of the syllabus. Further details concerning consent and confidentiality of the interview will be discussed in class. You may utilize virtual engagement.

Step One: Interview

Interview 3 to 5 Gen Z's (over 18) that you identify as being resilient in your context (If you are unable to do so, please speak to your professor about alternative interview options - such as parents or youth/child workers. Other options must have approval from your professor well in advance).

- 1 Tell them that you are there to listen and to learn from them. Assure them that they will not be specifically identified to others. If they share an idea or opinion that is different from yours, resist the urge to react or share your own opinion at this time. Focus on being an attentive, loving listener.
- 2 Be aware of any consolation or desolation that arises in you during the course of the interview, make note of it. (Exploration of consolation and desolation will be discussed in class.)
- 3 Ask questions that address the 5 spiritual markers (from the text, Faith for Exiles) without being explicit about them. You may use the following as a sample guide, feel free to come up with your own questions under each category.

- i Intimacy with Jesus
 - a What do you think of Christianity? What do you think of Jesus?
 - b How would you describe your connection to Jesus?
 - c What are some things that you do that you find helpful in your spiritual life?

 - ii Cultural discernment
 - a What do you think about what's going on in the world today?
 - b Are there any issues that are particularly important to you? Why or why not?

 - iii Intergenerational relationships
 - a Are there any people who aren't your peers, in your life who have been particularly important in your faith development? Can you tell me about a time where that person helped you in your faith?
 - b If there are no relationships like this in your life, is this something you would want to have? Why or why not?

 - iv Vocational discipleship
 - a Are you currently working? If so, how do you see your work fitting into your faith or is it separate?
 - b What do you hope to be doing 3-5 years from now in relation to work?

 - v Countercultural mission
 - a Do you think you are more or less different than your peers in regards to i) faith, ii) values, iii) life direction?
 - b How would you say you are most similar? Most different?
 - c Do you have faith conversations with your peers? What do these look like?
- 4 Ask them one final question: Do you have any questions for me?
For this assignment's purposes keep track of what questions (if any) you are asked, not your potential answers to them.
I would like you to end your interview by thanking them for their time, and reiterating the confidentiality of their identity.

Take note of any and all commonalities and how these relate to your readings and class lectures.

Step Two: Personal Reflection

- 1 At some point soon after each interview, take an extended period of time to prayerfully reflect and journal.

- 2 Employ the style of Prayer of Examen. Sit in the presence of God and reflect.
 - i What were the gifts of this interview? Is there anything I am particularly grateful for having heard? Is there anything that was shared with me or asked of me that resonated with a spiritual theme I have been focused on?
 - ii Pay attention to the inner movements inside of you during this interview time. Pay close attention to a) consolation b) desolation.
 - iii Was there anything particularly difficult about your conversation? Awkward? Frustrating?
 - iv What emotions were present in you during the course of the interview?

Step Three: Reflect with a Spiritual Director

After you have done your personal reflection, bring these movements of consolation and desolation to a spiritual director. Spend one hour in focused conversation. Take notes. (For a list of Spiritual Directors, visit the [Tyndale website for Spiritual Directors](#))

Step Four: Interview Integration Paper (10 pages)

Part A: Exploring Markers (4 pages)

- Choose one of the five markers of resilient discipleship from Faith for Exiles. Was this marker present in your own faith journey? Why or Why not? (2 pages)
- Utilizing course lectures and solid textual support, explore how and why this Marker is important in that generation's faith formation. (2 pages)

Part B: Interview Analysis (3 pages)

- Did your findings in any way match the Faith for Exile's Study? In what ways did it differ?
- What stood out to you most during the interview process?
- Were there any answers that surprised you? Part C: Personal Reflection on the Interviews (3 pages)
- What did the interviews and your reflections on them reveal to you about your relationship with a) God, b) yourself, c) the community of faith?
- What were the consolations and desolations you took note of? When did you become most aware of them? During the interview process? During your personal reflection or during your Spiritual Direction Session?
- How can you utilize these reflections in your relationships to Gen Z's and Alphas and/or ministry context going forward?

F. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at

the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

G. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

| | |
|---|-------|
| Attendance, Participation and Required Readings | 25% |
| Critical Book Review | 20 % |
| <i>Interview Portfolio</i> | |
| - Presentation | 15% |
| - Interview Integration Paper | 40 % |
| Total Grade | 100 % |

H. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

For proper citation style, consult the [tip sheet, “Documenting Chicago Style”](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially ch. 14. For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.44 to 10.48 and 14.238 to 14.241 from the Chicago Manual of Style or reference the [tip sheet, “Citing Sources in Theology”](#).

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity website](#) for further details.

Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#). Citation and other [tip sheets](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean’s Office (aa@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

I. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

January 16: Introduction & Overview:

- Review of Class Framework
- Syllabus, discuss requirements for class work, participation and readings.

January 23: Meet Generation Z/Alpha - Part One

- Related Readings: *Meet Generation Z* Chapters 1 and 2

January 30: Meet Generation Z/Alpha- Part Two

- Related Readings: *Generation Alpha* Chapters 1 and 2
- *Due Date*: 5 Questions due 11:59 p.m. Friday, January 31

February 6: Technology: Internet, social media, metaverse

- Related Readings: *Beyond the Screen*, Chapters 1 and 2 *Faith for Exiles*

February 13: Community and Connection

- Related Readings: *Beyond the Screen*, Chapters 6 and 7, *Faith for Exiles* (continuing reading).

February 20: READING WEEK

February 27 – Religion, Spirituality and Discipleship

- Related Readings: Faith for Exiles
- *Due Date*: Critical Book Review due by 11:59 p.m. Friday, February 28

March 6 - Spiritual Disciplines and Discernment for Gen Z and Alpha

- Related Readings: *Faith for Exiles*

March 13 - Class Presentations

March 20 - Mental Health and Personal Wellbeing

- Related Readings: *Generation Alpha* Chapter 3

March 27 - Spiritual Direction and Gen Z/Alpha

- Related Readings: Faith for Exiles

April 3- Parenting and Family Formation of Generation Z and Alpha

- Related Readings: Generation Alpha

April 10- Leading Gen Z/Alpha through life stages.

- Related Readings:
- *Due Date*: Interview Integration Paper Due 11:59 p.m. Friday April 11

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

([Tyndale Library](#) supports this course with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).)

Choung, James. *Real Life: A Christianity Worth Living Out*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2012.

Elmore, Tim, and Andrew McPeak. *Generation Z Unfiltered: Facing Nine Hidden Challenges of the Most Anxious Population*. Atlanta, GA: Poet Gardener Publishing in Association with Growing Leaders, NC, 2019.

Elmore, Tim, and Andrew McPeak. *Generation Z Unfiltered: Facing Nine Hidden Challenges of the Most Anxious Population*. Atlanta, GA: Poet Gardener Publishing in Association with Growing Leaders, NC, 2019.

McCrinkle, Mark, and Emily Wolfinger. *The ABC OF XYZ: Understanding the Global Generations*. Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009.

McCrinkle, Mark. *Generation Alpha: Understanding Our Children and Helping Them Thrive*. London: Headline Home, 2021.

McDowell, Sean, and J. Warner Wallace. *So the Next Generation Will Know: Preparing Young Christians for a Challenging World*. Colorado Springs: David C Cook, 2019.

McKee, Jonathan R. *Parenting Generation Screen*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2021.

Quiroz, Heather. *First-Century Youth Ministry: Exploring our Jewish Roots to Reclaim Discipleship*. San Diego, CA: Youth Cartel, 2020.

Roberto, John, et al. *Faith Formation with a New Generation*. Cheshire, CT: Lifelong Faith Publications, 2018.

Seemiller, Corey, and Meghan Grace. *Generation Z: A Century in the Making*. New York: Routledge, 2019.

Stonestreet, John, and Brett Kunkle. *A Practical Guide to Culture: Helping the next Generation Navigate Today's World*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2020.

Twenge, Jean M. *iGen*. New York: Atria Books, 2017.

White, James Emery. *Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2017.

TYNDALE SEMINARY

**SPIRITUALITY FOR GENERATIONS Z & ALPHA
SPIR / YMIN 0553**

INSTRUCTOR: Rev. Jennifer Aspilla, MDiv, CSD

**STATEMENT OF CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERVIEW AS PART OF COURSE
REQUIREMENTS**

I/We, _____ hereby give my/our
consent to participate in the interview carried out by

_____ as part of an assignment fulfilling
the course requirements for skill development purposes only. I/we understand that anonymity
and confidentiality will be respected. Names will not be used. I also understand that all
information gathered will solely be used for the reflection paper and the integration paper.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Interviewer Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____