

“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.”

Semester, Year	WINTER, 2026
Course Title	SPIRITUALITY FOR GENERATIONS Z & ALPHA
Course Code	SPIR/YMIN 0553 1S
Date	From January 15, 2026 to April 9, 2026 THURSDAYS
Time	From 11:15AM to 2:05PM
Delivery Format	SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
Class information	The classes will be LIVESTREAMED on Thursdays from 11:15 -2:05PM This course contains both livestreamed and pre-recorded portions.
Instructor	JENN ASPILLA, MDiv, CSD, CSDS Email: jaspilla@tyndale.ca
Office Hours	By appointment only.
Course Materials	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

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 grow up in a secular world. 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. 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.

Maddox, Tanita Tualla. *What Gen Z Really Wants to Know About God: Seven Questions About Life and Faith*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2025.

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

Rainer, Thom S. *The Anxious Generation Goes to Church: What the Research Says about What Younger Generations Need (and Want) from Your Church*. Downers Grove, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2025.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Tyndale recommends [STEPBible](#) – 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. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Attendance, Participation and Required Readings, Monthly Questions - 20% 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.

2. Critical Book Review – 25% of final grade. Due: Feb 27.

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

This will be a five pages double spaced paper. Consider how the Maddox presents the spiritual formation of younger generations in *What Gen Z Really Wants to Know About God: Seven Questions About Life and Faith* contrast this with the Rainer’s approach in *The Anxious Generation Goes to Church: What the Research Says about What Younger Generations Need (and Want) from Your Church*.

Reflect on:

- A. The role of Christian community for Gen Z’s spiritual formation
- B. An area of alignment between the two texts core spiritual concerns
- C. An area of divergence
- D. What is a main takeaway you can directly apply to your context with Gen Z.

3. Interview Integration Portfolio – 55% of final grade (Presentation: 15% Due Mar 12; Interview Integration Paper: 40%. Due: Apr 17.)

(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.

A. 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?

B. 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?

C. 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?

D. 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?

E. Countercultural mission

- a) Do you think you are different than your peers in regard 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.
 - a. 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?
 - b. Pay attention to the inner movements inside of you during this interview time. Pay close attention to a) consolation b) desolation.
 - c. Was there anything particularly difficult about your conversation? Awkward? Frustrating?
 - d. 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?

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Assignment	Due	%
Attendance, Participation and Required Readings	Various	20%
Critical Book Review	Feb 27	20%
Interview Portfolio		
1. Presentation	Mar 12	15%
2. Interview Integration Paper	Apr 17	40%
Total Grade		100%

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

January 15: Introduction & Overview:

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

January 22: Meet Generation Z/Alpha - Part One

- Related Readings: *What Gen Z really wants to know about God* (Intro. & Chapter One)

January 29: Meet Generation Z/Alpha- Part Two

- Related Readings: Generation Alpha (Chapters One and Two)
What Gen Z really wants to know about God (Chapters Three & Four)
Due Date: 5 Questions due 11:59 p.m. Friday, January 30

February 5: Technology: Internet, social media, metaverse

- Related Readings: *Faith for Exiles* (Start here: Digital Babylon and Resilient Exiles)

February 12: Community and Connection

- Related Readings: *The Anxious Generation goes to Church* (Chapters Four & Five)
What Gen Z really wants to know about God (Chapters Five & Six)

February 19: READING DAYS – NO CLASS

February 26 – Religion, Spirituality and Discipleship

- Related Readings: *The Anxious Generation goes to Church* (Chapters Nine & Ten)
What Gen Z really wants to know about God (Chapter Two)
Due Date: Critical Book Review due by 11:59 p.m. Friday, February 27

March 5 - Spiritual Disciplines and Discernment for Gen Z and Alpha

- Related Readings: Faith for Exiles

March 12 - Class Presentations

March 19 - Mental Health and Personal Wellbeing

- Related Readings: Generation Alpha Chapter 3

March 26 - Spiritual Direction and Gen Z/Alpha

- Related Readings: Faith for Exiles

April 2- Parenting and Family Formation of Generation Z and Alpha

- Related Readings: Generation Alpha

April 9- Leading Gen Z/Alpha through life stages.

Due Date: Interview Integration Paper Due 11:59 p.m. Friday April 17

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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.

Maddox, Tanita Tualla. *What Gen Z Really Wants to Know About God: Seven Questions About Life and Faith*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2025.

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

McCrindle, 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.
- Rainer, Thom S. *The Anxious Generation Goes to Church: What the Research Says about What Younger Generations Need (and Want) from Your Church*. Downers Grove, IL: Tyndale Momentum, 2025.
- 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.
- Zirschky, Andrew. *Beyond the Screen: Youth Ministry for the Connected but Alone Generation*. Nashville, TN: Youth Ministry Partners and Abingdon Press, 2015.

VI. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COURSES

A. 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.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVESTREAM INTERACTION (*SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE COURSE ONLY*)

- 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 professor*

C. 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.

D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Grading Rubric

Please consult the rubric provided for each assignment on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

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 must review the policies and procedures regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI) outlined in [Academic Calendar](#) and consult guidance from their course instructors.

For proper citation style, consult [Citation Guides](#) for different styles. Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#).

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

Turnitin Text-Matching Software

Tyndale has a subscription to Turnitin, a text-matching software that ensures the originality of academic writing and verifies the proper citation of all sources. The instructor for this course will use Turnitin for assignments submitted through your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca. Upon submission, you will receive a summary that includes your submitted files along with a similarity report generated by Turnitin. Please be aware that Turnitin can also detect AI-generated content from tools like Grammarly, so students should be mindful of when using such software. It's advisable to confirm with your instructor before using any AI tools into your assignments. Below are some useful resources:

- [Student](#) Guides for Turnitin via classes.tyndale.ca course resource page
- Interpreting Similarity ([Guide](#), [Video](#), [Spectrum](#))

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 (seminaryoffice@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

Late Papers and Extensions Policy

All papers and course assignments must be submitted by the due dates indicated in the course syllabus. Unless the instructor already has a policy on grading late papers in the course syllabus, grades for papers submitted late without an approved extension will be lowered at the rate of two-thirds of a grade per week or part thereof (e.g., from "A+" to "A-," from "B" to "C+"). Please note that some programs, such as cohort-based or intensive courses, may follow a different policy due to the nature of the program.

Faculty may not grant an extension beyond the last day of exams for the semester. Requests for extensions beyond this date must be addressed in writing to the Registrar by filling out the [Extension Request Form](#). The application will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, medical emergency, hospitalization of oneself or immediate family member or prolonged illness requiring treatment by a physician. Factors such as assignments for other courses, holidays, and technology-related difficulties are insufficient grounds for requesting an extension.

A temporary grade of incomplete ("I") may be granted by the Registrar. Once an extension is granted, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and make satisfactory arrangements to complete the outstanding work. A grade of "F" will be recorded for students who do not complete the outstanding work by the deadline.

E. 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.

F. LIBRARY RESOURCES

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

G. GRADING SYSTEM & SCALE

For each course's grading rubric, please refer to your course syllabus or classes.tyndale.ca. For general grading guidelines, refer to Seminary [Grading System & Scale](#).

TYNDALE UNIVERSITY – 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: _____