There is a feeling that I had Friday night after the homecoming game that I don’t know if I will ever be able to describe except to say that it is warm. Sam and Patrick drove me to the party that night, and I sat in the middle of Sam’s pickup truck. Sam loves her pickup truck because I think it reminds her of her dad. The feeling I had happened when Sam told Patrick to find a station on the radio. And he kept getting commercials. And commercials. And a really bad song about love that had the word baby in it. And then more commercials. And finally he found this really amazing song about this boy, and we all got quiet.

Sam tapped her hand on the steering wheel. Patrick held his hand outside the car and made air waves. And I just sat between them. After the song finished, I said something.

I feel infinite.

And Sam and Patrick looked at me like I said the greatest thing they ever heard. Because the song was that great and because we all really paid attention to it. Five minutes of a lifetime were truly spent, and we felt young in a good way. I have since bought the record, and I would tell you what it was, but truthfully, it’s not the same unless you driving to your first real party, and your sitting in the middle of pickup with two nice people when it starts to rain.

Perks of Being a Wallflower, Stephen Chbosky, 1999

Name: Pamela Braverman Schmidt, M.Ed., LCSW, LMHC
Office Hours: Appointments arranged as needed
Phone: 978-741-7878 x20 (off campus voice mail)
Email: pbschmidt@earthlink.net
**Catalog Description:** This course provides the student with a broad theoretical and practical basis for the understanding of this dynamic period of development. Theoretical models are reviewed within the context of important issues of the adolescent experience.

**Course Objectives:** It is my hope and intent that upon completion of this course you will have developed
1. insight into the biological and cognitive transitions affecting adolescence
2. awareness about the social and the cultural context of adolescence
3. tools to recognize parenting styles and their effects on behavior
4. knowledge about the characteristics of good schools
5. perspectives about use of leisure time and extracurricular activities.
6. awareness regarding sex, class, and ethnic differences in self esteem
7. theoretical information about moral and psychosocial development.
8. understanding about intimacy including friendships and dating
9. awareness about trends in sexual activity during adolescence
10. knowledge about achievement motives and beliefs

**Method:** This is a dynamic, interactive three credit course that will be taught using lectures, videos, and discussion. There will be guest speakers. Due to time constraints, I will not be able to cover all the material in each chapter of the text book. *It will be up to you to complete a careful understanding of all assigned reading material.* Lectures will relate theoretical information to real life application. I encourage your active participation, questions, and comments. I encourage you to contact me via email or make appointments with me before or after class.

**Critical Thinking Assignments** are designed to expand knowledge and bring interactive experiences into this process. Each critical thinking paper is designed to move you beyond the textbook and examine a critical issue facing adolescents today.

- **Thursday, September 25**  
  CT Exercise #1 due
- **Tuesday, November 4**  
  CT Exercise #2 due
- **Tuesday, November 20**  
  CT Exercise #3 due
- **Thursday, December 2**  
  CT Exercise #4 due
Exams: There will be 3 multiple choice and short essay format exams given during this semester.
Exam #1: Tuesday, October 7 (Chapters 1-4)
Exam #2: Tuesday, November 13 (Chapter 5-9)
Exam #3: May 1 (Chapters 10-13 & Annual Editions)

In the event of a missed exam, students must contact me prior to the exam date. It is the responsibility of the student to make up the exam before the next class. Make up exams are constructed in an essay format.

Grading: The 3 exams average as 50% of your grade. The 4 Critical Thinking are averaged as 50% of your grade.

Critical Thinking Assignments are to be submitted on the due dates outlined in this syllabus or be at risk for 50% grade deduction. If there are extenuating circumstances, students must contact me prior to the assignment due date.

Attendance: Attendance is necessary for completing course work. Students are responsible for completing all reading assignments before class and should be prepared to be called on in class to answer questions relating to the current reading assignment.

Weather: Classes may be cancelled due to inclement weather. Please call 978.542.6000 to find out if classes are scheduled. If an exam is scheduled when a class is cancelled, the exam will be given at the next class session.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Thursday, September 4
Orientation to Course

Tuesday, September 9
Chapter 1: Biological Transitions

Thursday, September 11
Chapter 1: Biological Transitions
Documentary Film: Period
Tuesday, September 16
Chapter 2: Cognitive Transitions

Thursday, September 18
Chapter 2: Cognitive Transitions

Tuesday, September 23
Chapter 3: Social Transitions

Thursday, September 25
Chapter 3: Social Transitions
*Critical Thinking Exercise #1 due*

Tuesday, September 30
Chapter 4: Families

Thursday, October 2
Chapter 4: Families

Tuesday, October 7
Exam #1
Chapter 5: Peer Groups

Thursday, October 9
Chapter 5: Peer Groups

Tuesday, October 14
Chapter 6: Schools

Thursday, October 16
Chapter 6: Schools

Tuesday, October 21
Chapter 7: Work and Leisure

Thursday, October 23
Chapter 7: Work and Leisure

Tuesday, October 28
Chapter 8: Identity

Thursday, October 30
Chapter 8: Identity
Tuesday, November 4
Chapter 9: Autonomy
*Critical Thinking Exercise #2 due*

Tuesday, November 6
Chapter 9: Autonomy

Thursday, November 11
Veteran's Day

Tuesday, November 13
Chapter 10: Intimacy
Exam #2

Thursday, November 18
Chapter 10: Intimacy

Tuesday, November 20
Chapter 11: Sexuality
*Critical Thinking Exercise #3 due*

Tuesday, November 25
Chapter 11: Sexuality

Thursday, November 27
Thanksgiving Recess

Thursday, December 2
Chapter 12: Achievement
*Critical Thinking Exercise #4 due*

Tuesday, December 4
Chapter 13: Psychosocial Problems in Adolescence

Thursday, December 9
Chapter 13: Psychosocial Problems in Adolescence
Exam #3

*Salem State College is committed to non-discrimination of handicapped persons as specified in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Students who qualify as handicapped persons under definition of this Act should notify me at the beginning of the course so that reasonable modifications in course requirements may be made if possible. If you are unsure whether you qualify, please contact the Office of Students with Disabilities at 978-542-6217, located in the Learning Center on the 4th floor of the Library.*
Critical Thinking Exercise #1
Type II Diabetes Increases During Adolescence

In the last twenty years, there has been a steady increase of Type II diabetes among adolescents. What is Type II diabetes and what impact does it have on adolescence? Why is there such a sudden increase in this disease? What are the symptoms? Why is this significant? Describe the psychological and social forces affecting this situation and any other critical factors that increase this prevalence of this disease. What specific suggestions do you have to reverse this problem?

Paper should demonstrate critical thinking and knowledge about the complexity of Type II diabetes during adolescence.

Be sure to document all reference sources through footnotes and bibliography. If you use the internet for research, remember to cite the URLs and the title of the Web sites you have consulted. Research should include a survey of psychology journals and scientific/medical websites. Paper is to be a typed 2-3 page essay.

Adolescence and Conformity
Critical Thinking Exercise #2

Adolescence is a period marked by conformity. Conformity begins to be directed away from parents, but steers instead toward peers. How does popular culture (e.g. music, clothing, vocabulary, and body language) affect adolescents? How and why do subcultures begin? Which subcultures are you familiar with either as a participant or observer? What issues do you see as central to teenagers in these subcultures? What products are marketed to teenagers in specific subcultures?

Using theoretical information from Chapter 5 and website research that provides perspectives about adolescence and conformity, type a 2-3 page essay concerning this issue.

Be sure to document all reference sources through footnotes and bibliography. If you use the internet for research, remember to cite the URLs and the title of the Web site you have consulted.
Teens in the News
Critical Thinking Exercise #3

Find a story in the newspaper (Boston Globe or New York Times) or in a national news magazine (Time, Newsweek, or U.S. World Report) about teenagers with problems concerning peer groups, cults, families, sexuality, achievement, or school. From the details provided in the news story, explain what psychological and social factors contributed to the adolescents’ reaction and behavior. *Dig deep into the psychological and social causes of why this behavior happened.*

Using your knowledge of **psychological theories**, explain your understanding of this situation. What did you learn about their lives, their families, their school situation, their peer groups etc. that contributed to this story being newsworthy?

Research the underlying psychological and social causes of your news story using the course textbook, scientific/psychology journals at the SSC Library, and on-line psychology journal articles that are relevant to the themes in the story. *Paper should integrate real world information, critical thinking, and your awareness of the multifaceted issues of such a situation.*

Be sure to document all reference sources through footnotes and bibliography. If you use the internet for research, remember to cite the URLs and the title of the websites you have consulted. The news story you select needs to be copied and included with your critical thinking paper.

Depression and Suicide
Critical Thinking Exercise #4

Excerpts from Eric Harris’ Suicide Note

*By now it’s over. If you are reading this, my mission is complete. I have finished revolutionizing the neoeuphoric infliction of my internal terror. Your children who have ridiculed me, who have chosen not to accept me, who have treated me like I am not worth their time are dead. THEY ARE XXXX DEAD. Surely you will try to blame it on the clothes I wear, the music I listen to, or the way I choose to present myself -- but no. Do not hide behind my choices. You need to face the fact that this comes as a result of YOUR CHOICES. Parents and Teachers, YOU xxxx UP. You have taught these kids to be gears and sheep. To think and act like those who came before them, to not accept what is different. YOU ARE IN THE WRONG. I may have taken their lives and my own -- but it was your doing. Teachers, Parents, LET THIS MASSACRE BE ON YOUR SHOULDERS UNTIL THE DAY YOU DIE. Am I insane? Maybe. Is it my fault? No. I did not choose this life, but I have indeed chosen to exit it. You may think the horror ends with the bullet in my head -- but you wouldn’t be so lucky. All that I can leave you with to*
decipher what more extensive death is to come is "12Skizto." You have until April 26th. Goodbye. Eric Harris, April 19th  

Although most adolescents experience the teenage years without major difficulties, some encounter serious psychological and behavioral problems that disrupt not only their own lives, but also the lives of those around them. Problems such as substance abuse, depression, and suicide affect a significant number of teenagers. This critical thinking exercise provides an opportunity to examine the causes of depression, suicide, and other internalizing problems of adolescence.

**Questions to answer:**
What is the nature and prevalence of adolescent depression?
How common are suicidal attempts among teenagers?
How common is suicide among teenagers?
Do certain cultural groups have higher suicide rates?
Are there gender differences in suicidal behavior?
What is the diathesis-stress model and how does it relate to causal factors concerning depression?
What are the major causes of adolescent depression?
What are two clinical treatments for adolescent depression (be very specific) and what are some pros and cons in such treatment.

*Research the underlying psychological and social causes of this issue using the course text book, scientific/psychology journals at the SSC Library, and on-line psychology journal articles that are relevant to the themes in the story. Paper should demonstrate your abilities in synthesizing research material with clinical information, and showcase your excellent critical thinking skills. Paper is to be 2-3 pages typed and footnoted in APA format.*

*Be sure to document all reference sources through footnotes and bibliography. If you use the internet for research, remember to cite the URLs and the title of the Web site you have consulted.*

---

1 www.ReligiousTolerance.org