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 your 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

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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, debate, videos, and discussion. 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. Due to time constraints, I will not be able to cover all the material in each chapter of the textbook. 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. If needed, I encourage you to contact me via email or make appointments with me before or after class.

**Critical Thinking**

Critical Thinking Assignments are designed to expand knowledge and bring interactive experiences into
Exercises  move you this process. Each critical thinking paper is designed to beyond the textbook and examine a critical issue facing adolescents today. Critical Thinking Assignments are to be submitted on the due dates listed or be at risk for 50% grade deduction. If there are extenuating circumstances, students must contact me prior to the assignment due date.

The three critical thinking assignments are due:

**Wednesday, February 11**  CT Exercise  #1
due
**Friday, March 26**  CT Exercise  #2 due
**Friday, April 23**  CT Exercise  #3 due

**Exams:** There will be 3 multiple choice and short essay format exams given during this semester. Each exam will include reading assignments from the text and any supplementary articles. The three exam dates are:
- **Exam #1:** Friday, February 20  (Chapters 1-4)
- **Exam #2:** Friday, April 9  (Chapter 5-9)
- **Exam #3:** Wednesday, May 5  (Chapters 10-13)

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 are averaged as 50% of your grade. The 3 Critical Thinking Assignments are averaged as 50% of your grade.

**Attendance:** Attendance is necessary for completing course work. Up to two absences are permitted before grade is affected. If for any reason a student is unable to attend upcoming classes, it is necessary to contact me as soon as possible.
Weather: Classes may be cancelled due to inclement weather. Please call 978.542.6000 to find out if classes are scheduled. If an exam has been scheduled, please prepare to take the exam at the next class.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Wednesday, January 21
Orientation to Course

Friday, January 23
Chapter 1: Biological Transitions

Wednesday, January 28
Chapter 1: Biological Transitions
Documentary Film: Period

Friday, January 30
Chapter 2: Cognitive Transitions

Wednesday, February 4
Chapter 2: Cognitive Transitions

Friday, February 6
Chapter 3: Social Transitions

Wednesday, February 11
Chapter 3: Social Transitions
Critical Thinking Exercise #1 due

Friday, February 13
Chapter 4: Families

Wednesday, February 18
Chapter 4: Families

Friday, February 20
Exam #1
Chapter 5: Peer Groups
Wednesday, February 25
Chapter 5: Peer Groups

Friday, February 27
Chapter 6: Schools

Wednesday, March 3
Chapter 6: Schools

Friday, March 5
Chapter 7: Work and Leisure

Wednesday, March 10
Chapter 7: Work and Leisure

Friday, March 12
Chapter 8: Identity

Wednesday, March 17
SPRING RECESS

Friday, March 19
SPRING RECESS

Wednesday, March 24
Chapter 8: Identity

Friday, March 26
Chapter 9: Autonomy
Critical Thinking Exercise #2 due

Wednesday, March 31
Chapter 9: Autonomy

Friday, April 2
Debate

Wednesday, April 7
Chapter 10: Intimacy

Friday, April 9
Chapter 10: Intimacy
Exam #2

**Wednesday, April 14**  
Chapter 11: Sexuality

**Friday, April 16**  
Chapter 11: Sexuality

**Wednesday, April 21**  
Chapter 12: Achievement

**Friday, April 23**  
Chapter 12: Achievement  
Critical Thinking Exercise #3 due

**Wednesday, April 28**  
Chapter 13: Psychosocial Problems in Adolescence

**Friday, April 30**  
Chapter 13: Psychosocial Problems in Adolescence

**Wednesday, May 5**  
Exam #3  
**Last class**

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**  
**Obesity and Type II Diabetes and Increases During Adolescence**  
(February 11th)

In the last twenty years, there has been a steady increase of obesity and Type II diabetes among adolescents. In this essay, you need to examine various factors that have created this national epidemic. Questions to include in your critical thinking paper are:
1. What is the medical definition of obesity?
2. What is Type II diabetes?
3. What is the interrelationship between these two conditions and what impact does it have on adolescence?
4. Why is there such a sudden increase in this disease?
5. Describe the psychological and social forces affecting this situation.
6. What percentage of adolescence suffers from these conditions?
7. What are the implications for the future?
8. What strategies would ameliorate these two problems?

Paper should integrate critical thinking and knowledge about the complexity of Type II diabetes and obesity during adolescence. Be sure to document all reference sources through footnotes and bibliography in APA format (American Psychological Association). If you use the internet for research, remember to cite the URLs and the title of the Web sites you have consulted in APA format. Use only scientific journals for research. Paper is to be a typed 2-3 page essay.

**Should Teenagers Who Are at Risk for Abuse Remain with Their Families?**

**Critical Thinking Exercise #2**

(March 26)

We have read about many accounts in the news concerning parents who neglect, abuse, or even kill their teenagers. Parents who suffer from drug and alcohol addictions, mental illness, traumatized childhood, or poor parenting skills may be unable to cope with the demands of raising a family. Some parents are the ones least able to meet the needs of their adolescents.

“In the past, children who did not have parents or family members to care for them were sent to orphanages, but presently these children are placed in foster homes, residential treatment centers, or small group care homes. In addition to these types of placements, another alternative, family preservation, has emerged. In the 1980s the large numbers of children who needed foster care exceeded the number of foster homes available. Thus, the idea of family preservation became a popular alternative to out-of-home placement for needy children... When faced with being removed from their home, no matter

Questions to consider:
1. Is the Family Preservation Model an effective modality?
2. What type of treatment is provided in the Family Preservation Model?
3. With psychological intervention, can dysfunctional parents become functional, nurturing parents? Is there research that indicates that parents who physically and emotionally abuse their children can be treated and improve?
4. Should adolescents living in abusive family situations be removed against their will? Are teenagers further damaged when they are removed from their families during a crisis?
5. Families vary in their ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural values. Should the moral values of the dominant culture be imposed on minority families in reference to traditional practices and disciplinary measures?
6. How can society best care for adolescents who are at risk for abuse or worse? Does foster care work?

Research the underlying psychological and social causes of this issue using the course text book, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV, scientific/psychology journals (hard copy or on-line) at the SSC Library. 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 (American Psychological Association) 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 in APA format. Paper is to be a typed 2-3 page essay.

Teens in the News
Critical Thinking Exercise #3
(April 23rd)

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 text book, (on-line and hard copy) scientific/psychology journals at the SSC Library. Be sure to footnote using APA guidelines for parenthetical documentation. Paper should integrate “real world” information, critical thinking, research, and your awareness of the multifaceted issues of such a situation. The news story you select needs to be copied and included with your critical thinking paper. Paper is to be 2-3 typed pages.