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### *The First Year Out: Understanding American Teens After High School.* Tim Clydesdale.

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admissions policies that remove discriminatory barriers and restore opportunities. However, as the author points out, corrective action is urgently needed not only on grounds of equity, but because the country's international economic competitiveness is being damaged by a system of public education that now reinforces rather than dismantles prevailing inequalities.

Tim Clydesdale. *The First Year Out: Understanding American Teens After High School*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. \$20.00 papercover.

Interest in young adulthood has been growing over the past several years among researchers, the press, and the general public. The consensus is that individuals currently in their late teens and early twenties have a unique experience of this period of the life course, distinct from the generations that preceded them. Differences include a more heterogeneous path to adulthood, an increasingly globalized society, and a need for higher levels of education to remain competitive in a post-industrial economy.

Tim Clydesdale gives readers an opportunity to see how young people respond to these social changes. The author outlines the book's three goals: first, to portray the "moral culture" teens inhabit; second, to explore the transition from the "relatively structured" life teens lead in high school to the "fairly autonomous" one they move into, whether or not they leave home to attend college; and third, to examine how family, faith, and community shape this transition.

The book begins with a brief introduction that orients the reader to the study, and presents some of the key themes and concepts that will be expounded upon throughout the text. The author describes these concepts using memorable, rich phrases like "identity lockbox," "life tent," and "daily life management" to describe, respectively, two commonly employed strategies for safely navigating the first year after high school, and teens' main preoccupation during this time. The next chapter explores these concepts in the context of four detailed case studies. The third chapter, "Starting Points," provides an overview of faith, family, and community, which are

carefully examined in the subsequent chapters. Youths' work and educational lives are also described in these later chapters. The book concludes with a discussion of youths' lack of engagement with larger social and political structures, as well as implications of the findings for researchers, educators, parents, and others.

*The First Year Out* is worthwhile reading for a number of different audiences. It is relevant to educators, as its vivid descriptions of youth culture will inform, and likely challenge, pedagogical practices. The depiction of youth culture will also be helpful to social work practitioners and others engaged in direct practice with young people in their late teens. Qualitative researchers in sociology, as well as other social science disciplines, will appreciate the balance of detailed narratives with explication of larger patterns and themes, highlighting the complexity of culture and individuals' places in it. Finally, scholars of American Culture will find it a fascinating reflection on mainstream culture.

This reviewer's primary critique of the text relates to the author's discussion of the discrepancy between his perspective on September 11th, 2001 and that of the teens he interviewed. The author says he "expected September 11, 2001 to be the signal event that affected how teens...viewed the world and chose to live in it" (p. 182). However, for the youth, the event served to "underscore the reality of random, inexplicable violence that teens had already come to expect" (p. 193). In inquiring about the interviewees' views of September 11th, and its impact, the author sounds like a teacher who appears to be asking an open-ended question, but in reality has one correct answer in mind. The author's disappointment with his research participants' different perspective clouds an otherwise highly sensitive portrayal of American youth culture in this socio-historical moment.

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