



Course Syllabus

Wycliffe College

Toronto School of Theology

This description is intended to assist in the course approval process and to assist students in determining whether this course will help them achieve their educational objectives and the learning goals of their program. It is not a learning contract. The details of the description are subject to change before the course begins. The course syllabus will be available to the class at the beginning of the course.

Course Identification

Course Number : WYP2618HS
Course Name: Gospel, Church, and Culture
Campus: St. George

Instructor Information

Instructor: Judy Paulsen Teaching Assistant: Charles Meeks
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Office Hours: Monday through Thursday

Course Prerequisites or Requisites

WYP1610H: The Church, The Faith, and Our World is a *recommended* pre-requisite for this course.

Course Description

This course will explore the interaction between the gospel, church and culture, and what this means for transmission of the gospel in North American contexts today. Building on concepts introduced in the recommended prerequisite course, we will begin by examining the form and function of the gospel, church, and culture, in human society. A theology of mission will then be explored, through the lens of four key doctrines that inform a Christian understanding of culture. We will consider worldview as a tool for understanding cultures, and look specifically at how several shifts in the broader culture are affecting the Church's mission in western society. The course will include Biblical material, reference the experience of cross-cultural missionaries, and consider bridges for the gospel within contemporary Canadian and American cultures.

Course Methodology

This course will require a weekly 2-hour class and will include lectures, readings, student presentations, book reviews, and an integrative project

Course Outcomes

COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAM OUTCOMES
By the end of this course, students	This outcome will be demonstrated through these course elements:	This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will discuss definitions of the gospel, church and culture; 	In-class exercises, oral presentation	MTS: 1.3, 1.6, 2.3 MDiv: 1.3, 1.6, 2.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will identify and describe an artifact of contemporary Canadian culture, and explain how the gospel relates both ideologically and practically to the cultural frameworks reflected in the artifact 	Oral presentation	MTS: 1.6, 2.1, 2.3 MDiv: 1.6, 2.1, 2.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will recognize and discuss how key doctrines inform an understanding of culture; 	Oral presentation, book reports, integrative project	MTS: 1.6, 2.1, 2.3 MDiv: 1.6, 2.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will identify and interpret how the gospel, church and culture relate (and have related throughout Church history) as dynamic forces; 	In-class exercises, book review	MTS: 1.4, 1.6, 2.3 MDiv: 1.4, 1.6, 2.2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will describe and analyze some of the complexities and challenges of translating & transmitting the gospel cross-culturally; 	Oral presentation, book reviews, integrative project	MTS: 1.6, 2.1, 2.2 MDiv: 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will recognize and apply the relevancy of worldview to the discussion and practice of cross-cultural mission; 	Oral presentation, book reviews, integrative project	MTS: 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 MDiv: 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will identify the shift in worldview that has developed during the transition from modernity to postmodernity, and will analyze what this 	In-class exercises, integrative project	MTS: 1.6, 2.1, 2.3 MDiv: 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4, 3.1

shift means for the western church and its mission;		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • will design strategies for effective transmission of the gospel in North American contexts, based on analysis of context and contextually appropriate translation. 	Oral presentation, book review, integrative project	MTS: 1.6, 2.1, 3.3 MDiv: 1.6, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1

Course Resources

Required Course Texts

- Vincent Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered* (Orbis, 1978/2003)
- Heidi Neumark, *Breathing Space: A Spiritual Journey in the South Bronx*, (Beacon Press, 2003)

Course Website(s)

- Quercus: <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the U of T Quercus login page at <https://q.utoronto.ca/> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701>.

Class Schedule

Week 1 (January 9th) Gospel, Church & Culture: form and function in human society.

Week 2 (January 16th) A theology of mission: four key doctrines that inform the Church's understanding of gospel and culture.

Week 3 (January 23rd) A historical perspective of cross-cultural mission: coherence & contextualization.

- Discussion of *Christianity Rediscovered* (Donovan).
- **Book report due on *Christianity Rediscovered* & Oral presentations begin.**

Week 4 (January 30th) The relationships between gospel, church and culture. How they interact as dynamic forces. A narrative example: Pat Patten's story. Discussion of Insider Movements.

- **Required reading:** Talmin H. & Travis, J. (ed.) *Understanding Insider Movements: Disciples of Jesus Within Diverse Religious Communities*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2015. **pages 7-39, 489-499, and 537-543 (pdf posted to Quercus)**

Week 5 (February 6th) Translating and transmitting the gospel: grasping the complexities that arise due to cultural frameworks. A Biblical Case Study in Translating the Gospel: Acts 17.

Week 6 (February 13th) A case study of mission in a particular North American context.

- Discussion of *Breathing Space: A Spiritual Journey in the South Bronx* (Neumark)
- **Book report due: *Breathing Space***

Week 7 (February 20th) Reading Week.

Week 8 (February 27th) Reading a culture: an introduction to worldview.

- **Required reading:** “The Newbigin Gauntlet: Developing a Domestic Missiology for North America” (Hunsberger). **(pdf posted to Quercus)**

Week 9 (March 6th) From Modern to Postmodern and beyond: a Cultural Paradigm Shift

Week 10 (March 13th) Discussion of Linda Mercadante’s qualitative research on current trends in North American spirituality, and presentation of recent research on Canadian spirituality conducted by Angus Reid.

- **Required reading:** Mercadante, Linda. *Belief Without Borders: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual but not Religious*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014. **pages 227-258 (pdf posted to Quercus)**

Week 11 (March 20th) Not of the world but into the world: the Apostolic Church.

Week 12 (March 27th) Cultivating Missional communities: Faithful Leadership.

- **Required reading:** Van Gelder, Craig and Dwight Zscheile. *The Missional Church in Perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011. **Pages 147 – 166 (pdf posted to Quercus)**

Week 13 (April 3rd) Discussion of Integrative projects.

- **Integrative project due at the start of class.**

Evaluation

Requirements

ASSIGNMENTS

See the document “Wycliffe style guide” on the course website for instructions about formatting your papers. Accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling are essential for clear communication. Submit a hard copy of your papers to me in class on the day they are due (distance students excepted), complete with title page.

1. Sign up to do a **ten minute oral presentation** on one artifact of contemporary Canadian culture. This could be a physical object, service, relational norm, artistic exhibit or expression, advertisement, or document.

- Describe the artifact you have chosen, and explain why you consider it significant as an artifact of contemporary Canadian culture. Give something of the history and worldview that is implicit or explicit in the artifact itself, and what this artifact says about the surrounding culture.
- Explain how the Gospel relates to this artifact, both ideologically and practically
- Explore what forms of Church, evangelism, and discipleship, might be most helpful in engaging with and addressing the issues reflected in this artifact.

Length: 10 minute oral presentation (followed by a short Q & A period)

Weight: 10%

Due date: On the day for which you signed up (week 3 through 12).

2. Read Vincent Donovan's *Christianity Rediscovered*. Write a **report** on the five most important ideas that you come across in the book, and discuss how these might shape your own approach to evangelism, catechesis and worship. Please write also about any points on which you find yourself disagreeing with or questioning him. (You do not need to footnote every reference to the book. Simply give the page number in brackets.) Avoid long quotations.

Length: 1250 words (5 pages)

Weight: 20%

Due date: **January 23rd**

3. Read Heidi Neumark's *Breathing Space: A Spiritual Journey in the South Bronx*. Write a **report** on the five most important things you learned from this book about contextualized mission. Discuss how these ideas might influence your own approach to such things as worship, pastoral ministry, and cultivating organizational change. (You do not need to footnote every reference to the book. Simply give the page number in brackets.) Avoid long quotations.

Length: 1250 words (5 pages)

Weight: 20%

Due date: **February 13th**

4. Integrative Paper:

Option 1: Consider a **distinct sociological group** within contemporary Canadian culture, e.g. suburban Baby Boomers, urban Generation X or Millennials, urban Indigenous, low-income rural single parents, recent Muslim immigrants, rural Quebecers, 2nd generation Korean Canadians. Identify and document several of the cultural distinctives of the group you have chosen. Explain how the Gospel is likely to best connect with this group, both ideologically and practically, how evangelism might happen among this group, and what forms Christian discipleship and church might take within this group.

Option 2: Conduct a study of a **particular geographic neighbourhood**. What particular sub-cultures are represented in this neighbourhood? What are the specific cultural issues that are of primary importance? (eg. Poverty/wealth, age & gender, ethnicity, commuting, parenting, isolation & other social issues, technology) Explain how the Christian Gospel addresses such issues and how it could be

framed to do so. How might evangelism happen among those living in this neighbourhood?, Consider what forms Christian discipleship and church might take.

Credit will be given for making connections between the course readings, and the topic of your paper.

Weight: 50%
 Length: 2500 words (10 pages)
 Due date: April 3rd, at the *beginning* of class.

Grading System

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalents	Grade Point	Grasp of Subject Matter
A+	90–100%	4.0	Profound & Creative
A	85–89%	4.0	Outstanding
A-	80–84%	3.7	Excellent
B+	77–79%	3.3	Very Good
B	73–76%	3.0	Good
B-	70–72%	2.7	Satisfactory
FZ	0–69%	0	Failure

Grades without numerical equivalent:

- CR Designates credit; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value
- NCR Designates failure; has no numerical equivalent, but has a grade point value of 0 and is included in the GPA calculation
- SDF Standing deferred (a temporary extension)
- INC Permanent incomplete; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value
- WDR Withdrawal without academic penalty
- AEG May be given to a final year student who, because of illness, has completed at least 60% of the course, but not the whole course, and who would not otherwise be able to convocate; has no numerical equivalent and no grade point value

Policy on Assignment Extensions

Basic Degree students are expected to complete all course work by the end of the term in which they are registered. Under **exceptional circumstances**, with the written permission of the instructor, students may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An extension, when offered, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. An SDF must be requested no later than the last day of classes of the term in which the course is taken. The request form is available on the college website or from the Registrar’s office.

One percentage point per day will be deducted on the course grade if an extension has not been requested by the stated deadline.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>) or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>), a student who plagiarizes in this course. Students will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges (http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm).

Turnitin.com. Students may be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

Writing Style. The writing standard for the Toronto School of Theology is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 7th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Bibliography

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- Cray, Graham, ed. *Mission Shaped Church: Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church in a Changing Context*. London: Church House Publishing 2003.
- Crouch, Andy. *Culture Making: Recovering our Creative Calling*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 2008.
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- Frost, Michael and Alan Hirsch. *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21 Century Church*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003.
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- Hunter, George G. III *The Celtic Way of Evangelism: How Christianity can reach the West . . . Again*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000.
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Vanhooser, Kevin. *Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007.

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On-line public document:

Angus Reid Institute Public Interest Research, Canadian Public Opinion Poll, 2017. A Spectrum of Spirituality. published April 13th, 2017, at <http://angusreid.org/religion-in-canada-150/> (accessed May 10th, 2017).