



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: on-line synchronous delivery
Class time: winter term, Thursdays, 7:00 to 9:30 pm (last half hour is a seminar)

Instructor Information

Instructor: Judith Paulsen Teaching Assistant:
judy.paulsen@wycliffe.utoronto.ca
Office Hours: Monday through Thursday, meetings via Zoom

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 culture and will 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 synchronous-remote lecture and a ½-hour synchronous-remote seminar. It will include lectures, readings, Discussion Forum posts and responses on the readings, a class presentation, two impact summaries (short papers), 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, Discussion Forum posts and responses	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 	Class 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; 	Class presentation, impact summaries	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, impact summaries, Discussion Forum posts and responses, oral presentation	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, impact summaries, 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, impact summaries, Discussion Forum posts and responses, 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, impact summaries, Discussion Forum posts and responses, 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)

Required Participation Level

Missing 2 or more classes without prior authorization and medical documentation will be cause for a failing grade in the course as per 11.4.3 in the Basic Degree handbook.

Participation in any on-line synchronous course requires that students have access to the internet at a level that allows them to have their cameras on and be visibly present throughout all classes.

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 12th) Gospel, Church & Culture: form and function in human society.

- **Prior to 9 am on the day of the first class please post a short bio to the first Discussion Forum on Quercus. Share with the other students who you are, where you are from, and one instance in your own life when you experienced a 'cultural pinch' (i.e. when you became aware of some unknown, competing, or changing cultural norm).**

Week 2 (January 19th) A theology of mission: four key doctrines that inform the Church's understanding of gospel and culture.

Week 3 (January 26th) A historical perspective of cross-cultural mission: the tension between coherence & contextualization.

- Discussion of *Christianity Rediscovered* (Donovan).
- **Impact summary due on Christianity Rediscovered & Class presentations begin during the seminar.**

Week 4 (February 2nd) 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 9th) 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 16th) A case study of mission in a particular North American context.

- Discussion of *Breathing Space: A Spiritual Journey in the South Bronx* (Neumark)
- **Impact summary due on Breathing Space**

Reading Week

Week 7 (March 2nd) Reading a culture: an introduction to worldview.

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

Week 8 (March 9th) From Modern to Postmodern and beyond: a Cultural Paradigm Shift

Week 9 (March 16th) Discussion of: Linda Mercadante's qualitative research on current trends in North American spirituality, and recent quantitative 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)**
- **Required reading:** 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/> .

Week 10 (March 23rd) Not of the world but into the world: the apostolic Church.

Week 11 (March 30th) 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 12 (April 6th) Discussion of Integrative projects.

- **Integrative project due prior to class.**

Evaluation

Requirements

ASSIGNMENTS

Accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling are essential for clear communication. Upload assignments to Quercus, complete with title page and, where needed, proper citations.

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).

1. **Discussion Forum interactions:**

- **Prior to 12 noon on the day of the first class, post to the first Discussion Forum, a short bio of who you are, where you are from, and a 'cultural pinch' you have experienced**
- **post a short summary of each assigned reading (wk. 4, 8, 10 & 12) and a substantive response to at least one other student's post, prior to 2 pm on the day of class. You will need to post your summary prior to responding to other students' posts.**

The summary of each assigned reading should include: (1) the primary thesis (one sentence), (2) two to four key ideas in bullet form, and (3) your response and possible application (2 or 3 bullets or short sentences). **These posts and responses will be read by the instructor between 2 and 6 pm on the day they are due.**

Engagement = preparation + participation

Weight: 20%

2. **A 10 to 15-minute class presentation** on one artifact of contemporary Canadian culture. This could be a physical object, service, relational norm, artistic expression, advertisement, or document. It should be something recognized as normative and/or ubiquitous within Canadian culture.

- Describe the artifact you have chosen, explaining 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.
- Presentations should include Powerpoint slides. These should be uploaded to Quercus following the class presentation.

Length: 10 to 15 minute class presentation (followed by a short Q & A period)

Weight: 20%

Due date: On the day assigned (week 3 through 11, during the seminar). Students may switch dates but should let the instructor know about changes to the schedule.

3. Read Vincent Donovan's *Christianity Rediscovered*. Write **an impact summary** on what you consider to be the five most important ideas in the book, and 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. Upload this summary in a Word document on Quercus.

Length: 1000 words (4 pages)
Weight: 15%
Due date: January 26th

4. Read Heidi Neumark's *Breathing Space: A Spiritual Journey in the South Bronx*. Write **an impact summary** 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. Upload this summary in a Word document on Quercus.

Length: 1000 words (4 pages)
Weight: 15%
Due date: February 16th

5. 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 Iranian immigrants, small town Newfoundlanders, 2nd generation Korean Canadians, migrant agricultural workers.) 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 Christian community might take shape within this group.

Option 2: Conduct a study of a **particular geographic neighbourhood**. What are the demographics of this neighbourhood (Re. StatsCan and other sources of demographic info)? What are the particular sub-cultures that are represented in this neighbourhood? What are the specific cultural issues that are of primary importance? (E.g. Poverty/wealth, age & gender, ethnicity, commuting, parenting, access to technology, isolation, & other social issues.) 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 Christian community might take shape.

Remember that the focus of this project is on sharing the gospel with non-Christians. Credit will be given for making connections between the course readings and the topic of your paper.

Weight: 30%
Length: 2500 words (10 pages)
Due date: April 6th, upload a copy to Quercus prior to the start 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 *late assignments* if an extension has not been requested by the stated deadline for that assignment.

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).

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool 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 tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

The University of Toronto's current plagiarism tool is Ouriginal. Assignments uploaded to Quercus will, at the professor's discretion, be automatically submitted for plagiarism detection.

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).

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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).