

TH 5XC5 God and Culture

McMaster Divinity College

Winter 2022

Hybrid campus session Feb 28–29

Online synchronous sessions Fridays 2:00–3:00

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Hours: Zoom M 1:00–2:00pm; W 1:00–2:00pm

Delivery Format is Modified Hybrid

Intensive Hybrid courses start online, meet for 1.5 days in person, and then continue online for the remainder of the term. The class meeting times for the in person part of this hybrid class is Monday Feb 28 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. with one hour for lunch at 12:00- 1:00 p.m. and Tuesday March 1 9:00 a.m. – noon.

♦ Program students at a distance (more than 100 km) or anyone who is feeling unwell/unsafe (with permission from Registrar’s office) can join the in-person sessions through live-streaming. ♦

I. Description

The West and its church are in decline. How should Christians respond? This course explores ways to navigate the postmodern and post-Christian culture. It considers the different ways Christians negotiate the path of being ‘in,’ but not ‘of’ the world. It studies select historical examples such as the early church response to Jewish and Hellenistic cultures, the monastic reaction, medieval Christendom, the Protestant Reformation alternatives, the liberal, neo-orthodox, fundamentalist, and evangelical responses to modernism, as well as current responses to the contemporary postmodern and post-Christian culture of the West.

II. Course Objectives

A. Knowing:

1. Know a variety of biblical, historical, and contemporary ways Christians have understood the relationship between Christianity and culture.
2. Know the distinct historical-cultural contexts of Christianity and the variety of Christian responses to those cultural conditions.
3. Know the contemporary evangelical alternatives to postmodern and post-Christian culture.

B. Being:

1. Appreciate that theology is a dynamic and contextual effort to discern appropriate ways to embody the redemption revealed in Jesus Christ.

2. Embrace a deeper sense of your own Christian identity vis-à-vis contemporary culture.
3. Become a critical and constructive leader in practical/pastoral theology.

C. Doing:

1. Analyze contemporary culture from a Christian perspective.
2. Be able to develop responses to culture that are both credible within the culture and authentic to the Gospel.
3. Develop skills in academic analysis, writing, and presentation of research related to your doctoral research project.
4. Develop the ability to present informative presentations and facilitate student discussions.

III. Required Texts

1. James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
 2. Craig Detweiler, *Into the Dark: Seeing the Sacred in the Top Films of the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids: BakerAcademic, 2008).
- Additional readings may be assigned
 - See bibliographies according to specialization

IV. Course Performance Criteria

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Due</u>
A. Seminar on Missional Theology	45%	
1. Present seminar (Zoom)	15%	Feb 28, day 1 in-person session
2. Post interaction (Padlet)	10%	March 2
3. Final seminar & annotated bibliography (Avenue folder)	20%	March 4
B. Major Paper, Presentation, & Interaction	55%	
1. Paper Presentation (Zoom)	15%	March 25, April 1
2. Paper Interaction (Padlet)	10%	March 27, April 3
3. Paper (Avenue folder)	30%	April 1, April 8
C. Participation	X	

Total: 100%

V. Course Outline (tentative)

◆ Video content will be available on Mondays, synchronous sessions are Fridays 2:00pm–3:00pm (EST), which provides the week to review video content in preparation for Q & A in synchronous sessions. ◆

◆ NOTE: PhD and MA students do not complete the Culture Snapshot and Church and Culture Case Study assignments listed in the course outline. You should plan to join and contribute, however, to the scheduled synchronous sessions. Also, you should complete the Vanhoozer, Hunter, and Detweiler textbook readings. ◆

Part One: Online			
Week	Week of	Topic	Due Dates & Reading
1	Jan 10	I. Faith & Culture in the Bible A. Old Testament Case Studies (e.g., the creation accounts) 1) Videos for lecture and course overview 2) Synchronous session for introductions and syllabus Q & A (Friday Jan 14 2:00–3:00)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vanhoozer, <i>Everyday Theology</i>, Part 1, chapter 1 (available in DTL, will be helpful for Culture Snapshot assignment)
2	Jan 17	B. New Testament Case Studies (e.g., implications of the Incarnation for a theology of culture) 1) Video lecture 2) Synchronous session for Q & A on lectures and assignments (Friday Jan 21 2:00–3:00)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Vanhoozer, <i>Everyday Theology</i>, Part 1, chapter 1
3	Jan 24	II. Faith & Culture in the History of the Church A. The Emergence of Christendom B. Responses to Christendom 1. Monasticism 2. Protestant Reformers (Magisterial, Militant, and Anabaptist)	

		<p>1) Video lecture</p> <p>2) DPT & PhD: Synchronous session to discuss seminar topic/lecture and syllabus (Friday Jan 21 2:00–3:00)</p>	
4	Jan 31	<p>C. Models of Faith & Culture</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Augustine’s Two Cities 2. Luther’s Two Kingdoms 3. Niebuhr’s Five Models <p>* These models can be used as interpretive lens for the Church and Culture paper</p> <p>1) Video lecture</p> <p>2) Synchronous session for group discussion of Culture Snapshot and Q & A on lectures (Friday Feb 4 2:00–3:00)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture Snapshot due Feb 4
5	Feb 7	<p>III. Faith & Culture in the Evangelical Tradition</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Modernism & Evangelicalism B. Postmodernism & Evangelicalism <p>1) Video lecture</p> <p>2) DPT & PhD: Synchronous session to discuss major paper (Friday Feb 4 2:00–3:00)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Hunter, <i>To Change the World</i> for weeks 5–7, Lecture III material
6	Feb 14	<p>C. Postmodernism & Post-Christendom</p> <p>1) Video lecture</p> <p>2) Synchronous session Q & A on lectures (Friday Feb 18 2:00–3:00)</p>	
7	Feb 21	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contemporary Church & Culture (e.g., emergent church) 	

		One-on-one with Studebaker to discuss your major paper/project (20-30 minutes per meeting). This meeting is not required, but a built-in opportunity to meet and discuss your paper/project topic.	
Part Two: Hybrid Intensive Week (in-person)			
Week 8	Schedule		
Day 1 Feb 28	9:00-Noon	<p>2. Servants of Christ, Servants of Caesar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group discussions of Church Case Study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will take regular breaks during these in-person time blocs • Church and Culture paper due Friday Feb 28
	12:00-1:00	Lunch	
	1:00-4:00	<p>IV. Grace & Culture: A Proposal for a Theology of Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DPT seminar/blog series & PhD lecture presentations (all class members participate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Detweiler for lectures IV and V
Day 2 March 1	9:00-12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of Hunter <i>To Change the World</i> 	
Part Three: Online			
9	March 7	<p>Reading Week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No video lectures or synchronous/live sessions • I am available throughout the week to discuss your major paper/project 	
10	March 14	<p>IV. Grace & Culture <i>continued</i></p> <p>1) Video lecture</p> <p>2) No synchronous session</p>	

11	March 21	<p>Paper Presentation & Interaction: <i>Week one</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="477 275 1050 554"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Paper</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>6.</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Paper	1.		2.		3.		4.		5.		6.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 1 paper/projects presentations March 25 2:00–3:00 (Note: sessions for paper presentations may be longer than 1 hour, depending on class size) • Post interactions on Padlet for week 1 paper/project presentations March 27
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12	March 28	<p>Paper Presentation & Interaction: <i>Week two</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="477 720 1062 1016"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Paper</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>8.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>9.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>10.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>11.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>12.</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		Paper	7.		8.		9.		10.		11.		12.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 2 paper/projects presentations April 1 2:00–3:00 • Post interactions on Padlet for week 2 paper/project presentations April 3 • Week 1 paper/projects due to Avenue April 1
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13	April 4	<p>V. The Spirit & Popular Culture</p> <p>1) Zoom lecture and conclusion April 8 2:00–3:00</p>	<p>Week 2 paper/projects due to Avenue April 8</p>														

VI. Assignment Descriptions

General Guidelines:

- Submit papers to the assignment folder on Avenue to Learn. Use the following format for file names: your last name.assignment name.docx [Studebaker.InterpretingCulture.docx]. PDF files may not receive electronic comments.
- Papers and assignments may be submitted early for feedback from the professor and resubmitted on the due date for grading.
- All assignments marked according to the Grading Criteria Form attached to the syllabus

- All papers and assignments should conform to (and will be marked according to) the MacDiv Style Guide (<https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide/>)
- A. Seminar, Presentation, and Annotated Bibliography:
1. Purpose:
This assignment provides experience *preparing a seminar* for a church OR ministry leadership group. The preparation of the seminar also helps fulfill one of the requirements of the DPT Mastery Checklist.
 2. Description:
You will prepare a seminar on a topic related to Protestant theology and, if desirable, your DPT research topic. The seminar should be geared to address either a church lay leadership OR a professional ministry leadership group. The content and its development should reflect the target audience. You can also use this assignment to investigate an area that will promote your research program. Consequently, the seminar can address the practice led topic that is the focus of your DPT studies. Thus, this assignment can provide the opportunity to investigate an area of Protestant theology and to apply it to your area of practice led research.
 - Zoom discussion of Seminar (week 3)
 3. Guidelines:
 - a. Research:
 - 1) Research for the seminar will account for part of the supplemental reading for DPT students.
 - 2) Documentation of reading:
Please provide an annotated bibliography of the reading consulted in the preparation of the seminar. The annotations for the texts should be about one paragraph that identifies the key thesis and contributions of the text to your seminar. 10 sources is a good start for the annotated bibliography.
 - b. Seminar content:
 - 1) The seminar material should present and describe the primary content points of the topic (or sub-topic).
 - 2) Handouts/outlines and PowerPoint are helpful, but not required.
 - 3) Length:
Develop the seminar content for a thirty- to forty-minute presentation.
 4. Presentation and Interaction:

The collaborative nature of this assignment has two parts:

- a. Present a summary and overview of your seminar in a Zoom session March 14.
 - 1) The presentation should introduce the . . .
 - Target audience,
 - Topic,
 - Why you chose it, and . . .
 - Outline the topic's development in the seminar. You do not need to present the entire seminar. The presentation is an overview of the seminar.
 - 2) Length of presentation is approx. 10 minutes.
 - b. Post a one paragraph interaction with your class colleagues. You can post directly on Padlet (audio, audio-visual or text). Due March 16.
5. Final written Seminar and annotated bibliography due March 18.
This delayed due date gives you the opportunity to revise your seminar in light of your class colleagues' feedback on your presentation of your missional seminar.
- a. The final written seminar should be a **detailed annotated outline** that you could/would use for an actual seminar presentation.
 - b. If you prepare a PowerPoint (Keynote, or other audio-visuals), submit it with your detailed outline in the A2L assignment folder.
 - c. Submit the annotated bibliography of resources used to develop the content for the seminar.

B. Paper, Presentation, and Interaction:

1. Purpose:
This assignment gives you experience writing and presenting article, essay, and chapter length papers.
 - Zoom workshop discussion of paper topics & approaches (week 5)
2. Description:
You will *write* and *present* a thesis paper on a topic related to Protestant theology and your area of DPT practice led research. I encourage you to investigate the issue from the

perspective of your discipline and area(s) of research interest. You are encouraged to use the class as an opportunity to work on papers to:

- 1) Present at academic and/or professional society meetings and/or submit to journals for publication,
- 2) Develop material for presentation to and/or application in your professional world,
- 3) Pursue dissertation research.

3. Guidelines for the **Paper**:

The paper should include (description categories below correspond to those of the grading rubric) . . .

a. Content and argument:

- 1) Detail a clear thesis (the view that your paper supports).
 - Example of a thesis statement: The missional church movement, especially its emphasis on incarnational ministry, provides valuable insight for Christian leadership in a postmodern and post-Christian culture.

Note: The DPT PLR topic in this thesis statement is “Christian leadership in a postmodern and post-Christian culture.”

- 2) Describe your topic.
- 3) Write an essay that coherently demonstrates your view.
- 4) Detail major alternatives and/or criticisms and interact with them vis-à-vis your view, where and when appropriate.

b. Form and Style:

- 1) Write a stylistically clean and academic paper—e.g., avoid excessive first-person discourse, colloquialisms (academic differs from conversational voice), and passive voice (use active).
- 2) Use and document a *minimum* of fifteen scholarly resources. Given the limitations on accessing libraries, you may need to rely more on journal articles than other normal circumstances.
- 3) Accurately document sources according to the [MDC Style Guide](#).
- 4) Paper length: 20–25 pages. Not to exceed 7,000 words.

- 5) Provide a bibliography (list only the books cited in the footnotes of the paper).
 - 6) Use footnotes.
- c. Due Date: Week 1 papers due April 1, week 2 papers due April 8.
4. Guidelines for the **Presentation**:
Depending on course numbers, you will present your paper to the class in a Zoom live meeting or post a video of your presentation on the Paper Padlet. Determination of mode of presentation will be based on schedules and internet connectivity of students in the class. I prefer live presentation but will make a decision based on what works best for everyone in the class.
- a. The presentation of your paper should be approx. 15 minutes.
 - b. Presentations will be by Zoom on March 25 and April 1.
5. Guidelines for the **Interaction**:
- a. Purpose:
Provides experience in responding to and contributing to your class colleagues' projects. It provides the opportunity to develop professional skills in academic interaction that takes place at professional and academic conferences.
 - b. Description:
Each student prepares a critical evaluation of the papers presented by their class colleagues.
 - 1) The critique:
 - a) Remember to be charitable; not only Christian, but since academia is a small guild, it is self-preservation.
 - b) Critical (includes highlighting and discussing problems *and* strengths):

The critique should explore the following sorts of issues:
 - Does the paper have a thesis?
 - Does the content develop and support the thesis?
 - Does it use appropriate sources?
 - Does it interact with the relevant secondary literature?
 - Does it bring the fields of the PLR topic and the missional theology into conversation?

2) Post your critical evaluation for each student in the Paper Padlet—see A2L outline, Paper Padlet. Evaluations can be written, audio, or audio-visual.

- Post collaboration by March 27 or April 3.

VII. Policies:

A. Textbook Purchase:

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstores, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1: phone 416-620-2934; fax 416-622-2308; e-mail books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

B. Academic Honesty:

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

<https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty.

C. Gender Inclusive Language:

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), TNIV (2005), and the Common English Bible (CEB 2011).

D. Style:

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses <https://mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf>

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

VIII. Late-Assignment and Exam Policy:

- A. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified in the syllabus.
- B. Students take exams on the date and at the time scheduled in the syllabus.
- C. Late assignments are reduced five percentage points for each day late (e.g., if the grade is 90 and it is one day late, the grade will be reduced to 85).
- D. Assignments and exams will be accepted without penalty after the specified date in the syllabus **only** in the case of an excused absence. If a student misses an exam or assignment submission due to a reason that he/she believes is excusable, then he/she must notify the instructor and schedule an exam date and/or late-assignment submission date within twenty-four hours of the beginning of the missed class session.
- E. Assignments and exams will not be accepted late on the basis of the student's involvement with school-approved activities. If you are not able to be in class for an exam or assignment submission, then you must pre-arrange with the instructor to take the exam and/or submit the assignment before the scheduled date in the syllabus.

Please Note: This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.

IX. Web Resources and Bibliographies for Christianity and Culture

Web Resources

Restoring Eden: Christians for Environmental Stewardship (http://www.restoringeden.org/index_html)

Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and Arts (<http://www.brehmcenter.com>)

The Journal of Religion and Film (<http://www.unomaha.edu/jrf>)

Sojourners: Faith, Politics, Culture (<http://www.sojo.net>)

The Gospel and Our Culture Network (<http://www.gocn.org/main.cfm>)

The Journal of Religion and Popular Culture (<http://www.usask.ca/relst/jrpc/index.html>)

The Ooze: Conversation for the Journey (<http://www.spencerburke.com/TheOOZE/>)

Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity (<http://www.touchstonemag.com/>)

The Wittenburg Door (<http://www.wittenburgdoor.com>)

Yale Center for Faith & Culture (<http://www.yale.edu/faith>)

The John Ray Initiative: Connecting Environment, Science, and Christianity (<http://www.jri.org.uk>)

Evangelical Environmental Network and Creation Care Magazine (<http://www.creationcare.org>)

Allelon: A Movement of Missional Leaders (www.allelon.org)

The Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture
(http://www.virginia.edu/iasc/publications_hedgehog_review.php)

The Center for Law and Culture (http://www.lawandculture.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1)

The John Ray Initiative: Connecting Environment, Science, and Christianity (<http://www.jri.org.uk/>)

Emergent Village (<http://www.emergentvillage.com/>)

Reginald Bibby: <http://www.reginaldbibby.com/>

Bibliography

Bibliography: Theology of Culture

• Note: the following sources are grouped according to specializations, but many of these sources will apply to more than one specialization—so be sure to review the sources in each list.

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