



Postmodernity & Contemporary Theological Issues PHIL6328/THEO6328 at DEFEND 23

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Theological and Historical Studies Division
January 2–6, 2023

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About Dr. Lemke: <https://www.nobts.edu/about/institutional-effectiveness1/lemkes.html>

Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

This course exposes students to recent trends in philosophical and theological studies with an emphasis on the influence of postmodernity. Special attention will be given to theology's relationship to postmodern culture and how such a relationship influences the local church and its ministries.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Identify and define contemporary theological doctrines and movements;
2. Differentiate evangelical theology from deviant and heretical doctrines;
3. Intelligently discuss types of postmodern philosophies and theologies;
4. Analyze popular culture for theological and philosophical themes; and
5. Analyze theology for any influence postmodernity and postmodern culture has exerted upon it.

Required Textbooks

Allberry, Sam. *Why Does God Care Who I Sleep With?* Epsom, UK: The Good Book Company, 2020.

Kelly, Stewart E. and James K. Dew. *Understanding Postmodernism: A Christian Perspective*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017

Course Teaching Methodology

Students will attend the **Defend** conference January 2–6, 2023 on the campus of NOBTS and attend / or listen to recordings from all sessions related to postmodernity and contemporary theological issues. The remainder of the class will include reading and writing assignments.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and Conference Notes (25%) Due 2 weeks after end of conference -- (1/27/23)

Students are expected to attend all lectures related to the course at Defend 23. (In particular, attend Dr. Lemke's session addressing Apologetic Preaching to Postmodernists). Students should turn in notes from five sessions of 1-2 pp. each, typed single spaced. Lectures addressing Postmodernism are preferred (at least 3 are required), but notes can be submitted for any Defend sessions.

2. Book Reports (25%) Due 4 weeks after end of conference -- (2/3/23)

Every student will write a review of one of the following texts. These book reviews should be 4-6 single-spaced pages in length. Each review should include a bibliographic entry, brief biographical data about the author (including dates, degrees, theological tradition, academic positions held, research interests, and significant works), a brief summary of the book's argument and contents, and critical analysis. On a separate page, students should also report the percentage of the two required texts read by the student.

A few questions to consider while reading these monographs: What is the main purpose or thesis of this book? To whom is this book written? Did the author(s) fulfill his or her purpose? What are some of the author's working assumptions? Does the author provide strong biblical, philosophical, and historical support for his or her positions? Are there any points of contact between this book/writer and other texts read during the course of the semester? How might the content of this book affect ministry in the local church or ministry within your particular calling? Are there any ideas that changed your particular way of thinking on the subject matter at hand? Would you recommend this book to someone else?

- "A" papers (93-100) clearly state the book's thesis, successfully and succinctly outline its argument in its own terms, demonstrate advanced critical engagement with the argument and content of the book, make clear and well-structured arguments, and exhibit a proficient grasp of grammar, spelling, and style.
- "B" papers (85-92) clearly state the book's thesis, show an attempt to understand the book on its own terms and critically reflect on the issues at hand, make arguments, and show sufficiency in grammar, spelling, and style.
- "C" papers (77-84) state the book's thesis, present the content of the book, raise preliminary critical questions for further evaluation, limit evaluation to approval or disapproval of the author's arguments, and make repeated mistakes in grammar, spelling, and style.
- "D" (70-76) and "F" (0-69) papers lack evidence of grasping the book's thesis and content, limit evaluation to preformed judgments without serious consideration of the book's ideas, contain major grammatical, spelling, and stylistic errors, and demonstrate little or no attempt to proofread.

Students can choose either a primary or a secondary text. But be warned: the primary texts here are enormously challenging and cannot/should not be read through quickly. If students are planning to advance to further studies in theology or philosophy, these books would be helpful in understanding the intellectual climate of the late twentieth century, but some secondary sources may be needed to

supplement understanding of these works. ***If you do go the route of a primary text, you should start reading before the Defend Conference.***

Choose one book from either of these lists --

<p style="text-align: center;">Primary Texts (very challenging; mostly non-Christian)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Secondary Texts (helpful overviews; most on this list are written by Christians)</p>
<p>Beaudrillard, Jean. <i>The Gulf War Did Not Take Place</i>. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995.</p>	<p>Erickson, Millard J. <i>Truth or Consequences: The Promises and Perils of Postmodernism</i>. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001.</p>
<p>Caputo, John. <i>Against Ethics</i>. Indiana University Press, 1993.</p>	<p>Grenz, Stanley. <i>A Primer on Postmodernism</i>. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.</p>
<p>Derrida, Jacques. <i>Writing and Difference</i>, trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.</p>	<p>Groothuis, Douglas. <i>Truth Decay: Defending Christianity against the Challenges of Postmodernism</i>. Downers Grove, IVP, 2000.</p>
<p>Derrida, Jacques. <i>On Grammatology</i>. New York: John Hopkins University Press, 2016.</p>	<p>Smith, James K. A. <i>How (Not) to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor</i>. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014.</p>
<p>Foucault, Michel. <i>Ethics</i>. New York: New Press, 1998.</p>	<p>Smith, James K. A. <i>Who's Afraid of Postmodernism: Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church</i>. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006.</p>
<p>Foucault, Michel. <i>Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason</i>. New York: Vintage, 2013.</p>	<p>Trueman, Carl. <i>The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution</i>. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020.</p>
<p>Gadamer, Hans-Georg. <i>Truth and Method</i>. New York: Continuum, 2004.</p>	<p>Vanhoozer, Kevin J., ed. <i>The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology</i>. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.</p>
<p>Hick, John. <i>God Has Many Names</i>. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1981.</p>	<p>Ward, Graham. <i>The Politics of Discipleship</i>. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009.</p>
<p>Lyotard, Jean-François. <i>The Postmodern Condition</i>. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.</p>	<p>Westphal, Merold. <i>Overcoming Onto-Theology: Toward a Postmodern Christian Faith</i>. New York: Fordham University Press, 2001.</p>
<p>Ricoeur, Paul. <i>The Conflict of Interpretations</i>. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974.</p>	<p>Westphal, Merold. <i>Whose Community? Which Interpretation? Philosophical Hermeneutics for the Church</i>. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009.</p>
<p>Rorty, Richard. <i>Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature</i>. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017.</p>	
<p>Rorty, Richard. <i>Pragmatism as Anti-Authoritarianism</i>. Boston: Belknap, 2021.</p>	

3. Encyclopedia Article (25%) Due 6 weeks after end of conference – (2/17/23)

Students will survey primary and secondary literature related to one (1) of the following **postmodern intellectuals**. Having a good “for dummies” guide (e.g., *Derrida for Beginners*, *A Visual Guide to Foucault*, etc.) to these figures will be EXTREMELY HELPFUL.

Write an 6–8-page double-spaced paper with the **following outline**.

- **Name:**
- **Date of Birth:**
- **Selected Publications:** List titles of selected publications followed by the original year.
--Example: *Of Grammatology* (1967); *Writing and Difference* (1978); *Margins of Philosophy* (1982); *Rights of Inspection* (1999).
- **Biography** (1–2 pages)
- **Major Ideas** (3–4 pages)
- **Christian Critique** (2–3 pages)

These papers must be submitted in Turabian style with footnotes and proper citations. Students can look at the sample encyclopedia article provided by the professor.

- Roland Barthes
- Jacques Derrida
- Michel Foucault
- Friedrich Nietzsche (precursor to postmodernism)
- Hans-Georg Gadamer
- Paul Ricoeur
- Jean-François Lyotard
- Richard Rorty
- Charles Taylor (critical of postmodernism)

4. Postmodern Issue Teaching Outline (25%) – due 8 weeks after end of conference (3/2/23)

Students will prepare a detailed teaching outline to be used in a church or ministry setting that offers a Christian apologetic response to one of the postmodern cultural issues listed below. These teaching outlines must be 4–6 pages in length, including an introduction, talking points, illustrations, applications, and a conclusion.

- Truth in a postmodern age
- Politics in a postmodern age
- Sexuality in a postmodern age
- Gender in a postmodern age
- The Bible in a postmodern age

- The Gospel in a postmodern age
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Evaluation of Grades

The student's grade will be computed as follows, according to the Seminary grading scale:

1. Attendance and Conference Notes	25%
2. Book Review	25%
3. Encyclopedia Article	25%
4. Postmodern Teaching Outline	25%
Total	100%

All assignments must be submitted to pass the course. Students who fail to complete an assignment will not receive a passing grade.

Submit all papers to slemke@nobts.edu.

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
2. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu or My.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, Faculty portal, etc.)
3. Canvas@nobts.edu - Click on the "Help" button for technical questions/support requests regarding the NOBTS Canvas System. You can also email questions to Canvas.nobts.edu / nobts.instructure.com.
4. [504.816.8180](tel:504.816.8180) - Call for any technical questions/support requests. (Currently available Mon-Thurs 7:00am-9:00pm & Fri 7:00-7:00pm Central Time).

Attendance Policy

Intensives Classes: Students are expected to attend and participate in the class sessions. Because of the nature of the intensive, students who miss any portion of the class may receive a grade of "F" for the course .

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer.

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Bibliography – see books listed above.