

Postmodernity and Contemporary Theological Issues

THEO/PHIL 6328

Page Brooks

Assistant Professor of Theology and Culture

Dodd 108

504-282-4455, ext. 8011

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pbrooks@nobts.edu

Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission through the local church and its ministries.

Core Values Focus

Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, and Characteristic Excellence. The core value focus for the 2014-2015 academic year is Spiritual Vitality.

Curriculum Competencies Addressed

Christian Theological Heritage

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to expose 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.

Recommended Prerequisites

Systematic Theology I and II, and Philosophy of Religion.

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 Texts

1) Erickson, Millard. *Truth or Consequences: The Promise and Perils of Postmodernity*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 2001.

2) Students will read selected portions of works, which will be posted on the NOBTS Blackboard.

NOTE: ALL books and material MUST be read before class!

Course Methodology

This course will consist of group discussions, Power Point presentations (lecture), audio-visual presentations (movies and videos), student presentations, and student-attended pop culture events.

Course Requirements

1. **Absences:** School policies concerning absences and tardiness will be strictly enforced. Due to the workshop format of this class, no student absences may be granted.
2. **Exam:** One examination will be given at the end of the workshop as a take-home exam. The test will cover both materials covered in class and in the readings. The test will consist of objective sections (matching, true/false, and multiple answer questions) and subjective sections (identification and essay questions). The exam will count for 25% of the class average. The take-home exam is due 1 week after the last day of the workshop.
3. **Book Review:** Each student will write a 5-page, double-spaced (Times Roman 12 point font) book review and analysis covering the required Erickson textbook. This review will discuss the contents of the book as well as provide analysis of the arguments presented within the book. Half the paper should be a review of the contents of the book and the other half a personal critique and reflection of the contents of the book. This paper will be graded for both its content and its form, which is to follow the guidelines outlined in the most recent edition of Turabian and is to be produced on a computer. The grade will be counted off five points for every day that the paper is late. The book review and analysis will compose 20% of the final semester grade. The book review is due first day of class.
4. **Research paper:** Each student will write a 15-page position paper (in Turabian format) on the topics assigned. The topics for the paper will be discussed and assigned at the end of the workshop. Papers should be written in Turabian format. The due date is 3 weeks after the last day of the workshop. The position paper will count toward 25% of the final grade.
5. **Group Activity-“Cultural Currents in Everyday Life”:**
Groups will go to everyday places of life and observe cultural trends that relate to philosophy, theology, and biblical themes. Such trends may be taken from malls, gas stations, downtown sidewalks, movie theaters, etc. Should be 1 page, double-spaced, in formal writing format. Students should spend at least one hour observing the “culture” looking for the influence of postmodernity in light of biblical truth. Each group will give a 10-minute presentation of their observations during the workshop. Groups will be assigned on the first day of the workshop.
6. **Participation:** All students are responsible for being in the classroom on time, reading the assigned materials, and participating in the class discussions. Therefore, each student will receive a class participation grade. This grade will be based upon three criteria; class attendance and tardiness, contribution to class discussions, and reading quiz grades. This grade will compose 10% of the final class grade.

Grading

The final grade for the course will consist of the following:

Final Exam	30%
Position Paper	30%
Book Review	20%
Events Analysis	10%
Participation	10%
Final grade	100%

Miscellaneous notes:

- Cell phones must be turned off or to silent while in class. If a phone rings, the professor reserves the right to answer the phone or confiscate it until after class.
- No sleeping. The student may find themselves in an embarrassing situation with the professor if the student is caught!
- No playing games or surfing the internet while taking notes on a computer.
- Do not do other class work while in class. Your attention should be focused on the professor, class material, and class discussion.
- Late work will be penalized at the rate of 10 points per day.

ENROLLING ON BLACKBOARD:

- **Find course marked “Postmodernity and Contemporary Theological Issues” with Brooks as the instructor.**
- **Enroll in the course.**
- **The course IS NOT password protected. You should not have to enter in any code to enroll.**
- **Under the Blackboard course, you should find the syllabus and all relevant readings for the course.**
- **YOU MUST ENROLL ON BLACKBOARD. FAILURE TO ENROLL IN BLACKBOARD WILL CONSTITUTE GROUNDS FOR FAILING THE COURSE!**

Course Schedule

MONDAY:

Course Overview/Introduction to Culture

Postmodernism

Reading: Grenz, “Postmodernism Primer”
Drumm, “Postmodernism’s Progress”

TUESDAY:

Open Theism

Reading: Boyd, “God of the Possible.”
Reading: Ware, “ETS Paper”

Modern Views of Hell

Reading: “Plato’s Cave Allegory”
Reading: Use Drumm’s “Postmodernism’s Progress” to evaluate everyday culture.
Reading: Fudge, “The Final End of the Wicked.”

WEDNESDAY:

Missiology-What IS a Church

Reading: Norman, "Ecclesiological Guidelines."

Chapter presentations from Erickson-Will be assigned by professor before class

Pluralism and World Religions

Reading: Osburn, "Those Who Have Never Heard"

Smith, "Henry Smith SWBTS Journal Spr

1993.pdf"

Cultural observation

THURSDAY:

Homosexuality

Reading: "BiblicalJustHomosex." Pp. 4-7, 20-26, 46-50

Theology, Part III_ Scriptural Arguments.pdf"

Theology, Part II_ Scriptural Arguments.pdf"

"What Does the Bible Say About Homosexuality?.pdf"

Postmodernity and the Media: In-Class movie evaluation

Reports of Popular Culture

Reading: "Categories and Criteria for Critical Interaction with Media."

FRIDAY:

Islam and Christianity in Postmodernity

Reading: Brooks, "Nailing Jello to the Wall: A Comparison of Christian and Islamic Definitions of Postmodernity."

Wrap-up

Assign research topics

Final exam handout

Bibliography

Begbie, Jeremy. *Beholding the Glory: Incarnation Through the Arts*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000.

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Dyrness, William A. *Visual Faith: Art, Theology, and Worship in Dialogue*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.

Erickson, Millard. *Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985.

- Fudge, Edward. *The Fire that Consumes: The Biblical Case for Conditional Immortality*. Revised Edition. Carlisle, United Kingdom: Paternoster Press, 1994.
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- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- Harries, Richard. *Art and the Beauty of God*. London: Mowbray, 1993.
- McClendon, James. *Biography as Theology*, 2d. ed. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990.
- Neibuhr, H. Richard. *Christ and Culture*. New York: Harper and Row, 1951.
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- Pinnock, Clark H. *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of the Divine Openness, Scripture, Tradition, Reason, Experience*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.
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- Ryken, Philip Graham. *My Father's World: Meditations on Christianity and Culture*. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2002.
- Romanowski, William D. *Eyes Wide Open: Looking for God in Popular Culture*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2001.
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- Whitehead, John. *Grasping for the Wind*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.