



NEW ORLEANS

BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Theological and Historical Studies Division
THEO 6305 Issues in Contemporary Theology
Spring 2020

Page Brooks, PhD
Associate Professor of Theology and Culture
Email: pbrooks@nobts.edu
Phone: 504-282-4455, ext 8011

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

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.

Core Value

The seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. The core value focus for this academic year is ***spiritual vitality***. We want everything we do to be characterized by offering the utmost of our abilities and resources as a testimony to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Curriculum Competencies Addressed

Christian Theological Heritage

Recommended Prerequisites

Systematic Theology I and II, and Philosophy of Religion.

Student Objectives

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.

Course Methodology

This course consists of Blackboard work (discussions, etc.), writing papers, and attending lectures during the Institute of Christian Apologetics.

Course Requirements

1. **Absences:** School policies concerning absences and tardiness will be strictly enforced. Due to the format of this class, students are encouraged to select carefully days they will be absent
2. **Exam:** One examination will be given at the end of the class 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.
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.
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 start of the semester. Papers should be written in Turabian format. 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 for each day of cultural observation.
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 | 20% |
| Position Paper | 30% |
| Book Review | 25% |
| Events Analysis | 15% |
| Participation | 10% |
| Final grade | 100% |

Course Schedule:

1/21- Intro to class
1/23- Lecture on Introduction to Culture
1/28- Lecture on the Church and Homosexuality
1/30- Cultural Observation: The Marigny/Bywater
2/4- Reading Seminar- Grenz "Postmodern Primer"
2/6-Reading Seminar- Drumm "Postmodern's Progress"
2/11- Mardi Gras break
2/13-Reading Seminar- Erickson (Book Reviews DUE)
2/18- Reading Seminar- Erickson
2/20- Reading Seminar- Erickson
2/25- Reading Seminar- Erickson
2/27- Open Theism- Boyd "God of the Possible"
3/3- Open Theism- Ware "ETS Paper"
3/5- Modern Views of Hell- Fudge "The End of the Wicked"
3/10- Modern Views of Hell
3/12- Homosexuality
3/17- Spring Break
3/19- Spring Break
3/24- Homosexuality- Brooks "Biblical Basis on Sexuality"
3/27- Homosexuality- Other Readings on Blackboard
3/31- World Religions- Osborne "Those Who Have Never Heard"
4/2- Cultural Observation Day-Metairie
4/7- Reports from Cultural Observation Day
4/9- Islam and Christianity in Postmodernity
4/14- World Conflict in Postmodernity/Research Papers DUE
4/16- Research Paper presentations
4/21- Research Paper presentations
4/23- Research Paper presentations
4/28- Research Paper presentations
4/30- Research Paper presentations
5/5- Research Paper presentations
5/7- Wrap up (Final Exam Due)

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:

Please see the ICA schedule for times and places of the lectures and seminars.

Bibliography

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

Boyd, Gregory. *The God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.

Crockett, William, ed. *Four Views on Hell*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.

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.

Fudge, Edward, and Robert Peterson. *Two Views of Hell: A Biblical and Theological Dialogue*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2000.

Geisler, Norman L. *Creating God in the Image of Man: The New "Open" View of God*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1997.

Grenz, Stanley J. *A Primer on Post-Modernism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

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.

Okholm, Dennis, and Timothy Phillips, eds. *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

Pinnock, Clark H. *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of the Divine Openness, Scripture, Tradition, Reason, Experience*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.

_____. *The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1994.

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.

Sanders, John. *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1998.

Ware, Bruce. *God's Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2001.

Whitehead, John. *Grasping for the Wind*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.