



THTH8304: The Christian Worldview

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Professional Doctoral Seminar / T&H Division
March 21-23, 2023

James K. Dew Jr., Ph.D., Ph.D.

President
Professor of Christian Philosophy
Frost Building
jdew@nobts.edu

Chris Shaffer, Ph.D.

Associate Vice President, Institutional Strategy
Assistant Professor of Theology
Frost Building
cshaffer@nobts.edu

Note 1: Any time you email the professor make sure to copy both professors and Jordan Faison (jfaison@nobts.edu) in on the email and make sure you include the course number.

Note 2: You are certainly able to take this seminar remotely, but if at all possible, students are encouraged to come to campus for each session.

Seminary Mission Statement

NOBTS prepares servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

This seminar is designed to involve students in researching, understanding, and communicating the Christian worldview and its implications for ministry. Issues addressed include the nature of worldviews, the uniqueness of the Christian worldview in comparison to other worldviews, and the reasonableness of the Christian worldview. Special attention is given to issues related to communicating and defending the Christian worldview in the context of contemporary ministry. The seminar also prepares students to engage in worldview reflection in other professional doctoral seminars, the final project proposal, and the final project report.

Statement on Biblical Authority

In order to develop competent ministry leaders for the twenty-first century church and academy, students in this course will be exposed to various works related to worldview. Discussions and research will be focused on a variety of perspectives and worldviews from Christian and non-Christian views. Students are expected to become familiar with and demonstrate advanced, biblically guided critical engagement with the works of these thinkers.

The course instructors operate under the assumption that the Bible is the inspired, totally true and trustworthy Word of God which is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). The Baptist Faith and Message (2000) provides the confessional framework in which the instructors lead the course.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate foundational knowledge of the methods and tasks of Christian worldview.
2. Students will explore the practical significance of this topic for pastoral ministry, apologetics, and evangelism.
3. Students will apply what they learn to specific ministry tasks and reflect on the value of this kind of study for everyday ministry.

Teaching Methodology

Students will approach issues related to the Christian Worldview through assigned readings in, seminar lectures, group discussion, class presentations, and the completion of a ministry project related to the course content.

Course Texts (Required)

Anderson, Tawa J., W. Michael Clark, and David K Naugle eds., *An Introduction to Christian Worldview*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017.

Bertrand, J. Mark. *(Re)Thinking Worldview*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007.

Kelly, Stewart E. & James K. Dew, Jr., *Understanding Postmodernism*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017.

Poythress, Vern Sheridan. *Inerrancy and Worldview*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

Sire, James W. *The Universe Next Door*, 6th Ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020.

_____. *Naming the Elephant, Worldview as a Concept*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004.

Ministry Assignment Text Books (Required)

Copan, Paul. *True for You, But Not for Me*. Minneapolis, MA: Bethany House, 2009.

Eswine, Zack. *Preaching to a Post-Everything World*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008.

Schaeffer, Francis A. *How Should We Then Live?* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005.

Reference Text Books (Recommended)

Dockery, David & Trevin K. Wax eds., *A Christian Worldview Handbook*. Nashville: Holman Reference, 2019.

Course Schedule and Assignments

Pre-seminar Assignments (Due March 6, 2023)

1. **Text Book Review.** Each student will read Anderson's *An Introduction to Christian Worldview* and Kelly/Dew's *Understanding Postmodernism* and write two-page (single-spaced) summaries of each book.
2. **Practical Ministry Assignment.** Each student will read Sire's *The Universe Next Door* and select a worldview to study more in depth. Students will indicate their preferred choice for a worldview by January 20, 2023 via Google Docs. The professor will inform the student of the approved worldview by January 25, 2023. Students will write a five-page (single-spaced) summary and critique of the worldview (outside sources are encouraged and expected). Two pages of the five should include how the student would address and minister to, in their ministry context, an individual who held that particular worldview. The two pages of ministry assignment can use first person.
3. **Critical Book Review.** Each student will read and review a one of the following:
 - a. *(Re)Thinking Worldview* – Bertrand
 - b. *Inerrancy and Worldview* – Poythress
 - c. *Naming the Elephant* – Sire

The review should include (1) a bibliography entry, (2) a brief biographical data about the author(s) (e.g., his or her position, degrees, research interests, and books), (3) an assessment of the main purpose and/or thesis of the book, (4) a concise summary of the book's contents, (5) a thorough critical analysis of the book, and (6) a conclusion with a recommendation or dismissal. The reviews should be between **4-6 single-spaced pages** and should conform to **Turabian** style. Because book reviews are primarily about one source, use **parenthetical citations** for the primary text and footnotes only for external sources.

In-seminar Assignments

1. Students will develop and deliver presentations based on the worldview they reviewed from the *Universe Next Door*. They will (1) summarize the worldview, (2) address points of practical concern for ministry in the local church, (3) develop discussion questions, and (4) lead a 20-30 minute discussion on the selected worldview. **The professor will e-mail a schedule to students prior to the seminar meeting.**
2. Students are expected to participate in classroom discussion and to read **all required materials** prior to class attendance.

Post-seminar Assignments (Due May 1, 2023)

1. Each student will write a 5-7 page **personal reflection paper** (double-spaced) summarizing his or her views on the concept of worldview and how it impacts their particular ministry context.

2. Each student will have an **evangelistic encounter** with an individual that holds to a different worldview and write a 2-3 page **reflection of their experience**.
3. Each student will prepare *and* preach/teach a **sermon manuscript/ Bible-study manuscript** (5-6 pages) related to the topic of worldview broadly. Use the texts assigned under the “ministry assignment text books” heading to aid in the project. The sermon/lesson should also include at least two specific worldview concepts studied in class. The specific worldviews discussion should include a summary, critique, and discussion on how to address the worldview from a Christian worldview. The two worldviews selected can not have been used by the student in their practical ministry assignment or class presentation. The manuscript and recording of the teaching/preaching time should be submitted by the due date.

Course Evaluation

Attendance and Participation	5%
Anderson & Kelly/Dew Summaries	10%
Practical Ministry Assignment	20%
Critical Book Review	10%
In-class Presentation	15%
Personal Reflection Paper	10%
Evangelistic Encounter Reflection	10%
Sermon Manuscript and Reflection	20%