

Worldview and Culture – GS 5102
Providence Theological Seminary
Fall 2010
Instructor: Daryl R. Climenhaga

Syllabus

Course Description

An exploration of the relationship between divine revelation and human culture, with special reference to inter-cultural communications.

Objectives

If *Judaizing* was the first heresy of the early church, then *Westernizing* is its 20th century counterpart. This graduate seminar aims at achieving three objectives:

- 1) To provide students with an understanding of the profound influence of culture on both the giving and receiving of revelation in the Christian tradition;
- 2) To foster appreciation for the symbiotic link between culture and Christian faith; and
- 3) To nurture culturally appropriate and theologically trustworthy criteria for evaluating the mutual influence of faith and culture on each other.

Required Texts

Kraft, Charles H.

2005 *Christianity in Culture: A Study in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.

Livermore, David

2009 *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic..

Alternate Texts

Choose one of:

Burnett, David

2002 *Clash of Worlds*. Crowborough, UK: Monarch. (Available from the bookstore in photocopy.)

1996 *The Spirit of Buddhism: A Christian perspective on Buddhist thought*. Tunbridge Wells, UK: Monarch.

1992 *The Spirit of Hinduism: A Christian perspective on Hindu thought*. Tunbridge Wells, UK: Monarch.

Assignments

1. Interaction Papers. The student will read *Christianity in Culture* and write an interaction paper for each chapter. Each interaction paper follows a format that will be given in class, and should be one page long. Papers are due on the Tuesday before the class period in which they are discussed. Grading is as follows: Completed interactions on all 20 chapters = A; Completed interactions on 19 chapters = B; Completed interactions on 18 chapters = C; Completed interactions on 17 chapters = D.

2. Review of the Required Book. The student will do a brief report (1000 words) on *Cultural Intelligence*. The report will be in essay form, organized after the pattern of the interaction papers. The report is due at the end of October.

3. Review of one of the three Alternative Books. (Note that this review is required in addition to the review of Lingenfelter above.) The student will do a brief report (1000 words) on *Clash of Worlds*, or *The World of Hinduism*, or *the World of Buddhism*. The report will be in essay form, organized after the pattern of the interaction papers. The report is due at the end of October.

4. Case Studies. The class will divide into working/discussion groups for the case studies. Each group will organize by appointing a *chairperson*, a *secretary*, and a *presenter*. The chair will facilitate and focus discussion, the secretary will record the group's discussion and conclusions, and the presenter will articulate these for the rest of the class. We will use these groups as occasional discussion groups for case studies and issues that arise within the class. This discussion is not graded separately, but appears as part of the participation grade.

Each group will also be responsible to create one case study, which the group will present to the class for class consideration and deliberation. The case should be drawn from the experience of someone in the group. When the group presents, they should distribute a written description of the case to the other groups, similar to those used during earlier class sessions, for the other groups to work with. The class then discusses the case within their groups, and then the presenting group leads the whole class in a discussion of the case. The presentation and discussion will take place in the last three weeks of the course.

The group will conclude their work by constructing a visual representation of the case study and their suggested solution, which they will bring to the closing class period.

5. Research Paper. The student will write an essay of about 2500 words exploring the dynamics between faith and culture in a specific situation. The instructor is available to discuss the specific essay each student chooses to write. The student will include a one-page summary to distribute of the essay to the rest of the class. The research paper is due December 4. At the student's initiation, it is possible to negotiate an alternative assignment, such as a short play, with accompanying explanation of how the play fulfills the assignment.

6. Class participation. Participation in class through attendance, involvement in class activities, and doing the assignments is assumed. Failure to complete the assignments or to attend class regularly may lead to failing the course, even if other grades indicate a pass.

Grades

Interaction Papers	20%
Book Reviews	20%
Case Studies	25%
Major Paper	25%
Class Participation	10% (Note that one may fail the course for non-participation.)

Late assignments may receive a deduction of one grade – an A will become a B, a B+ will become a C+, and so on.

General Procedures

Assignments may be submitted by email or in hard copy. Email assignments should be sent to daryl[dot]climenhaga[at]prov[dot]ca and will be returned by email as well. The work groups used for case studies will function throughout the semester, for sample case studies and other activities. Although the sample case studies within various periods are not graded, they give us the chance to learn the whole process of constructing and presenting case studies.

Tentative Calendar

Sep 9	1) Introduction and Syllabus; Culture as Context	
16	Kraft discussion 2) Basic Culture Concepts; Case Studies – what they are and how to use them	Interaction Papers due Tuesday, 15 th : Kraft, Chapters One and Two
23	Kraft discussion 3) Basic Culture Concepts	Interaction Papers due Tuesday, 22 nd . Kraft, Chapters Three and Four
30	4) Culture and the Gospel – The meaning of syncretism	Interaction Papers due Tuesday, 29 th . Kraft, Chapters Five and Six
Oct 7	October Intrasession	Interaction Papers due Tuesday 6 th Kraft, Chapters Seven and Eight
14	5) Culture and the Church – The meaning of church	Interaction Papers due Tuesday, 13 th : Kraft, Chapters Nine and 10
21	6) Culture and the Scriptures – The meaning of translation Burnett and Lingenfelter	Interaction Papers due Tuesday, 20 th : Kraft, Chapters 11 and 12
28	7) Culture Change: Theory and Practice	Interaction Papers due Tuesday, 27 th . Kraft, Chapters 13 and 14 Book Reviews Due
Nov 4	8) Culture Change: Theory and Practice	Interaction Papers due Tuesday, 3 rd . Kraft, Chapters 15 and 16
11	9) Culture Change: continued	Interaction Papers due Tuesday, 10 th : Kraft, Chapters 17 and 18
18	November Intrasession	Interaction Papers due Tuesday, 17 th : Kraft, Chapters 19 and 20
25	10) Presenting Case Studies	
Dec 2	11) Theology of Culture	Major Paper Due
9	12) The role of the Western missionary: is our time up?	Case Study Visuals Due