09PT6380 – Living the Christian Life in a Secular Culture
RTS New York Program – Spring 2020
Tim Keller
Residential
3 credit hours

Class schedule:
In the classroom with Tim Keller on these dates: Tue Feb 11 (2:30-5:30pm); Tue Feb 18 (2:30-5:30pm); Mon Mar 30 (6:00-9:00pm); Mon Apr 6 (6:00-9:00pm); Mon May 4 (2:00-9:00pm); Fri May 15 (12:00-7:00pm)

In the classroom with James Davison Hunter: Wed Feb 26 (6:00-9:00pm); Thu Feb 27(6:00-9:00pm); Fri Feb 28 (6:00-9:00pm)

In the classroom with Richard Lints: Mon Mar 2 (5:30-9:30pm)

Course description
This course consists of two parts. (1) First, it analyzes and critiques our secular, late modern western culture—largely through a survey of several key thinkers (2) and then lays a groundwork for a ‘missionary encounter’ with this culture—a way to both live and minister as Christians in such a society.

Course learning outcomes
(1) To make the underlying narratives of late modern western culture more visible to students, so that they can detect them in art, economics, politics, and public discourse.
(2) To identify ways to live and form distinctively Christian lives in such a society, and
(3) To identify and develop ways to speak to the world in ways that both challenge and attract, and therefore convert.

Course required reading
*James D. Hunter, To Change the World 275 pp.
Keller, Making Sense of God – 200pp
1202 pp. Total

Note: Strongly suggest reading James Hunter’s To Change the World before his lectures February 26, 27, and 28.

Course requirements (how grade will be determined)

1. Reading. At the end of the course, I want a simple statement that you did all the reading, and if not, how much you failed to read. (20% of grade)

2. Critical reviews of the four books marked by an asterisk. Summarize the book’s main points, its outline of topics, and its main arguments. Then analyze it, giving its strengths and weaknesses. 500 words each. (40% of grade)
3. Ministry application paper. In light of what you learned in this course about our culture: (1) Design a program or process for training lay people to evangelize in your local church and (2) Design a program or process for instructing new believers in your local church. In both cases explain how what you learned in the course has shaped your designs. 2500 words. (40% of grade)

All are due at the last day of lectures/classes.

Schedule of sessions

**Session 1: Feb 11 (2:30-5:30pm) (Have read Part 1 of handout)**
The challenge of mission in late modern western culture
What is a missionary encounter with western culture?
Mapping modernity

**Session 2: Feb 18 (2:30-5:30pm) (Have read Part 2 of handout)**
The thought of Philip Rieff
The thought of Robert Bellah

**Sessions 3, 4, and 5: Feb 26, 27, 28 (6:00-9:00pm) with James D. Hunter** *(Have read Hunter, To Change the World)*

**Session 6: Mar 2 (5:30-9:30pm) with Richard Lints**
The thought of Alasdair MacIntyre

**Session 7: Mar 30 (6:00-9:00pm) (Have read Part 3 of handout)**
The thought of Charles Taylor – Part I

**Session 8: Apr 6 (6:00-9:00pm) (Have read Parts 3 and 4 of handout)**
The thought of Charles Taylor – Part II
A critique of modernity (synthesis)

**Double Session 9: May 4 (2:00-9:00pm) (Have read Deneen, Butler, and Part 5 handout)**
Postmodernism and Neo-liberalism
Subversive fulfillment and baseline cultural narratives
A Missionary Encounter with western culture
  High theory
  Evangelistic dynamic
  Social project (5 aspects)
  Counter-catechesis
  Faithful presence
  Grace to the point

**Double Session 10: May 15 (12:00-7:00pm) (Have read Newbigin and Part 6 of handout)**
Evangelism
Social project: justice
Social project: sex
Faithful presence
CHRISTIANITY AND SECULAR CULTURE: BASIC RESOURCES

**Foundational Texts:**

**Philip Rieff**, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* (Viking, 1959);

__________, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* (Harper and Row, 1966)

__________, *Fellow Teachers: Of Culture and Its Second Death* (University of Chicago, 1972)

__________, *My Life Among the Deathworks* (UVA Press, 2006)


**Alasdair MacIntyre**, *After Virtue* 3rd Ed (Notre Dame, 1981/2007)


__________, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (Notre Dame, 1990)


Joseph Boyle, "On MacIntyre's 'After Virtue''


__________, *The Good Society* (UCal Press, 1991)

Tim Keller, *Philip Rieff, Alasdair MacIntyre, Robert Bellah: A syllabus*

**Charles Taylor**, *A Secular Age*, (Harvard U Press, 2007)

__________, *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Harvard U Press, 1989);

__________, *Dilemmas and Connections: Selected Essays* (Harvard U Press, 2011);

__________, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, (Harvard Press, 1992)

**James K.A. Smith**, *How (Not) to be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor*, (Eerdmans, 2014)

Tim Keller, *Charles Taylor's A Secular Age: A syllabus*


**History of secularism and western thought**


__________, *The Death of Satan: How Americans Have Lost the Sense of Evil* (Noonday Press, 1996)

Terry Eagleton, *Culture and the Death of God* (Yale U Press, 2014)

__________, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (University of Minnesota Press, 1983).


Edward Docx, "Postmodernism is Dead" *Prospect*, August 2011 [http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/postmodernism-is-dead-va-exhibition-age-of-authenticism](http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/postmodernism-is-dead-va-exhibition-age-of-authenticism)


Christopher Watkin, *Michel Foucault*, (Presbyterian and Reformed, 2018)

**Contemporary cultural analysis**


Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (Basic, 2012)
Joseph E. Davis, “The Young, the Uneasy”, *The Hedgehog Review,* Summer, 2016, vol 18, no. 2
C.S.Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (HarperOne, 2015)

**Religion and secularization**
________________, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics,* (Eerdmans, 1999)
________________, *The Many Altars of Modernity: Toward a Paradigm for Religion in a Pluralist Age,* (De Gruyter Mouton, 2014)

**Mid-20th century immanent critiques of modernity:**
Jurgen Habermas, *An Awareness of What is Missing: Faith and Reason in a Post-secular Age,* Polity, 2010

**Post-modern critiques:**
Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity,* Duquesne University, 1969.

**Recent critiques:**


*Genealogy of modern institutions:*


*Christian critiques*


**CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER WITH NON-CHRISTIAN CULTURES: BASIC RESOURCES**

I. On Christianity’s first missionary encounter with a non-Christian culture


__________, *Why On Earth Did Anyone Become a Christian in the First Three Centuries?* (Marquette University Press, 2016.)


II. On Christianity’s missionary encounters with non-Christian cultures and religions

*Contemporary, global Christianity*


Douglas Jacobsen, *Global Gospel: An Introduction*

Encounter with other religions


Daniel Strange, *For Their Rock Is Not As Our Rock: An Evangelical Theology of Religions*, (IVP, 2014)

III. On Christianity’s missionary encounter with late modern western culture

**Christianity’s encounter with early modern culture**


**Critiques of secular culture /countering secular narratives (see also part I above)**


Miroslav Volf, *Flourishing: Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World* (Yale University, 2015)


**The Church and witness in late modern culture**


Lessie Newbigin, * Foolishness to the Greeks* (Eerdmans, 1988)


Mark Sayer, *Disappearing Church: From Cultural Relevance to Gospel Resilience*, (Moody, 2016)


__________, *Center Church*, (Zondervan, 2012)


**Political engagement and pluralism in secular society**

Amy Black, *et al, Five Views on The Church and Politics*, (Zondervan, 2015)


Tremper Longman, *The Bible and the Ballot*, (Eerdmans, 2020)
George Marsden, *Religion and American Culture: A Brief History*, (Eerdmans, 2019)

**Justice and community organizing**

**Culture-making and cultural engagement**
Andy Crouch, *Culture Making: Recovering our Creative Calling*, (IVP, 2013)
___________, *Playing God: Redeeming the Gift of Power*, (IVP, 2013)
___________, Ryan McAnnally-Linz, *Public Faith in Action: How to Think Carefully, Engage Wisely, and Vote with Integrity* (Brazos, 2016)
Timothy Keller, Katherine Leary Alsdorf, *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God’s Work*, (Dutton, 2014)

**Racial reconciliation/multi-ethnic ministry**
Brenda Salter McNeil, *Roadmap to Reconciliation: Moving Communities into Unity, Wholeness, and Justice* (IVP Books, 2016)
___________, *Leading a Healthy Multi-ethnic Church: Seven Common Challenges and How to Overcome Them* (Zondervan, 2013)

**Christian formation in secular society**
James K.A. Smith, *You are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Brazos, 2016)
___________, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Baker, 2009)
# Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

**Course:** 09PT6380 – Living the Christian Life in a Secular Culture  
**Professor:** Tim Keller  
**Campus:** New York City  
**Date:** Spring, 2020

*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.*

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<tr>
<th>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</strong></td>
<td>Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<td><strong>Scripture</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td><strong>Reformed Theology</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td><strong>Sanctification</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification.</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
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<td><strong>Worldview</strong></td>
<td>Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<td><strong>Winsomely Reformed</strong></td>
<td>Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<td><strong>Pastoral Ministry</strong></td>
<td>Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both churched and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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