

Christ Culture and Contextualization

Reformed Theological Seminary — Atlanta, GA

Fall Term, 2020

Instructor: Carl F. Ellis, Jr.

Course Description

An analysis of cultural responses to the realities of God and His revelation. This course also explores today's competing value systems and world views including an examination of various social visions. It also examines the hidden forces behind cultural conflict and suggests biblical ways to address these conflicts. The emphasis is on the universal influences which give rise to inequality using the African American experience as a case study. Included in this course are suggested new biblically based categories and concepts which can facilitate the emergence of new movements to address today's cultural confusion.

Objectives

At the end of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Identify the nature and basic components and dynamics of culture.
2. Articulate how culture effects the consciousness and behavior of individuals and corporate bodies of people.
3. Explain the role of God's grace and man's sin in the life of a culture.
4. Recognize the basic approaches to public policy and the views of humanity on which they rest.
5. Distinguish between *empowerment* and *enablement* approaches to ministries in a sub-dominant cultural context.
6. Assess the value systems that drive various sub-cultures.

Required Reading

1. Anderson, Elijah: *CODE OF THE STREET*
2. Brooks, Christopher: *URBAN APOLOGETICS*
3. Douglass, Fredrick: *What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?*
4. Ellis, Carl F.: *FREE AT LAST?: The Gospel in the African-American Experience*
5. King, Dr. Martin Luther, Jr.: *Letter from Birmingham Jail*
6. Sanneh, Lamin: *WHOSE RELIGION IS CHRISTIANITY? The Gospel Beyond the West*

Supplemental Readings

1. Edgar, William: *THE FACE OF TRUTH: Lifting the Veil*
2. Dalrymple, Theodore: *LIFE AT THE BOTTOM*
3. Guinness, Os: *UNSPEAKABLE: Facing up to Evil in an Age of Genocide and Terror*
4. Naugle, David K.: *WORLDVIEW: The History of a Concept*
5. Newbigin, Lesslie: *THE GOSPEL IN A PLURALIST SOCIETY*
6. Pratt, Richard: *EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE*
7. Walsh, Brian J. & Middleton, Richard: *THE TRANSFORMING VISION*

Course Requirements

1. **Complete all reading assignments by October 15, 2020.**
2. Consistent class attendance and participation in class discussions.
3. **An integration paper due on December 1, 2020** — 15-20 pages (double-space).
 - The paper must be loaded into Canvas.
4. Complete a final exam during the Examination period — **December 1-7, 2020**

Student Evaluation

1. **Reading accounts for 20% of the final grade.**
 - a. Students will report on the percentage of reading they have completed over the course of the semester on the final exam.
 - b. If the student does not report the percentage of the reading they have completed, it will be assumed that they have not completed any of it.
2. **Final exam accounts for 40% of the final grade.**
 - Students will submit the final exam via Canvas by **August 21, 2020**. **Please make sure your name is on the document itself.**

3. **The integration paper accounts for 40% of the final grade.**
 - a. **Guidelines for integration papers**
 - (1) CREATIVITY: Evidence of personal insight into the content.
 - (2) CLARITY: Thinking and expression of thought clearly communicated.
 - (3) CONCEPTUALIZATION: Analytical skills evident.
 - (4) CONTRIBUTION: Practical and usable in ministry.
 - b. **Format Guidelines for Integration Papers**
 - All papers must be in *Word Perfect 7* or higher; *MS Word 95 for Windows* or higher; or *MS Word for Mac* 2008 or higher.
4. If you run into difficulty meeting the deadline, please call me at:

(423) 280-4183 (cell)