

09PT6380 – Christian Life in a Secular Culture
RTS New York Program – Spring 2021
Tim Keller
3 hour credits

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.

Class schedule:

Tim Keller

Each class - 10am -12 noon

Feb 9, 16, 23, Mar 2, 23, April 20, 27, May 4

Rick Lints

Each class – 6-8pm

Mar 10, April 7

James Hunter

Each class – 6-9pm

Feb 15, 22, and Mar 1

Note: This year Tim Keller and Rick Lints will produce 1 hr of video lecture to accompany each two hour in-class session. The lecture should be watched before the class time.

Course required reading

*Patrick Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed* 200 pp.

*James D. Hunter, *To Change the World* 275 pp.

*Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks* – 160pp.

*Keller, *Making Sense of God* – 200pp

Keller Handout “Christian Life and Ministry in a Secular Culture” – 240 pp.

1100 pp. Total

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.

Topics of sessions (Keller unless noted)

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| Feb 9 - | <i>(Have read Part 1 of Handbook and watched Lecture 1)</i>
Christian Mission and Western Culture |
| Feb 16 - | <i>(Have read Part 2 of Handbook and watched Lecture 2)</i>
A Critique of Modernity: Rieff, Bellah, MacIntyre, Deneen |
| Feb 23 - | <i>(Have read Part 3 of Handbook and watched Lecture 3)</i>
A Critique of Modernity: Taylor's genealogy |
| Mar 2 - | <i>(Have read Part 4 of Handbook and watched Lecture 4)</i>
A Critique of Modernity: Taylor' synthesis |
| Mar 10 - | Rick Lints – The Thought of Alaisdair MacIntyre |
| Mar 23- | <i>(Have read Part 5 of Handbook and watched Lecture 5)</i>
A Missionary Encounter with western culture |
| April 7 - | Rick Lints – John Rawls and Modern Liberalism |
| April 20 - | <i>(Have read Part 6 of Handbook and watched Lecture 6)</i>
Engaging the narratives |
| April 27 - | <i>(Have read Part 7 of Handbook and watched Lecture 7)</i>
Sex and gender |
| May 4 - | <i>(Have read Part 8 of Handbook and watched Lecture 8)</i>
Justice and politics |

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)
Antonius A.W. Zondervan, *Sociology and the Sacred: An Introduction to Philip Rieff's Theory of Culture* (University of Toronto Press, 2005)
Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* 3rd Ed (Notre Dame, 1981/2007)
_____, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality* (Notre Dame 1988)
_____, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (Notre Dame, 1990)
Nancey Murphy, Brad J. Kallenberg, *Virtues and Practices in the Christian Tradition: Christian Ethics after MacIntyre*, (University of Notre Dame, 2003) Part I, pp.1-84.
Christopher Stephen Lutz, *Reading Alasdair MacIntyre's After Virtue*, (Continuum, 2012).
Joseph Boyle, "On MacIntyre's 'After Virtue'"
Robert Bellah, et al, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (UCal Press, 1985; 2007 with a new preface)
_____, *The Good Society* (UCal Press, 1991)
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)

Guides to the foundational texts:

- James K.A. Smith, *How (Not) to be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor*, (Eerdmans, 2014)
Patrick Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed* (Yale Press, 2018)
Carl Trueman, *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to the Sexual Revolution*, Crossway, 2020

History of secularism and western thought

- Christopher Butler, *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford U Press, 2002)
Stephen Bronner, *Critical Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford U Press, 2011)
Catherine Belsey, *Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford U Press, 2002)
Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. G. Bennington B. Massumi (University of Minnesota Press, 1984)
Maurizio Ferraris, trans Sarah De Sanctis, *Manifesto of New Realism*, (SUNY Press, 2012)
Andrew Delbanco, *The Real American Dream: A Meditation on Hope* (Harvard U Press, 2000)
_____, *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).
_____, *The Illusions of Postmodernism*, (Wiley Blackwell, 1996)
_____, *Ideology: An Introduction*, New and updated edition, (Verso, 2007)
_____, *After Theory*, (Basic Books, 2003).
Edward Docx, "Postmodernism is Dead" *Prospect*, August 2011. <http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/postmodernism-is-dead-va-exhibition-age-of-authenticism>
Luc Ferry, *A Brief History of Thought: A Philosophical Guide to Living* (Harper, 2010)
John Gray, *Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007)
George Marsden, *The Twilight of the American Enlightenment*, (Basic Books, 2014)
Daniel T. Rogers, *The Age of Fracture*, (Harvard University Press, 2011)
Christopher Watkin, *Jacques Derrida*, (Presbyterian and Reformed, 2017)
Christopher Watkin, *Michel Foucault*, (Presbyterian and Reformed, 2018)

Contemporary cultural analysis

Christian Smith *et al*, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, (Oxford, 2005)

_____, *Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood*. (Oxford, 2011).

Nancy Jo Sales, *American Girls: Social Media and the Secret Lives of Teenagers*, (Alfred A. Knopf, 2016)

Marc J. Dunkelman, *The Vanishing Neighbor: The Transformation of American Community* (W.W. Norton, 2014)

Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (Alfred A. Knopf/Vintage, 1964)

Levin, Yuval, *The Fractured Republic: Renewing America's Social Contract in the Age of Individualism* (Basic Books, 2016)

Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* (2012, Vintage reprint, 2013)

Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in An Age of Diminishing Expectations*, W.W. Norton, 1979

_____, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and Its Critics*, W.W. Norton, 1991.

Michael Sandel, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2009)

Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* (Basic, 2012)

_____, *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age* (Penguin, 2015)

Joseph E. Davis, "The Young, the Uneasy", *The Hedgehog Review*, Summer, 2016, vol 18, no. 2

Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism: 20th Anniv edition*, (Basic, 1996)

C.S.Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (HarperOne, 2015)

Religion and secularization

Peter Berger, *A Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural* (Anchor, 1970)

_____, *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)

_____, Grace Davie, *Religious America, Secular Europe? A Theme and Variations*, (Routledge, 2008)

Eric Kaufmann, *Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth? Demography and Politics in the Twenty-first Century* (Profile Books, 2010)

David Martin, *On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory* (Routledge, 2005)

Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, (University of Chicago Press, 1994)

Rodney Stark, *The Triumph of Faith: Why the World is More Religious than Ever* (Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2015)

Mid-20th century immanent critiques of modernity:

Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* Stanford U. Press, 2007.

Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed, U of Chicago Press, 1998.

Jurgen Habermas, *An Awareness of What is Missing: Faith and Reason in a Post-secular Age*, Polity, 2010

Stuart Jeffries, *Grand Hotel Abyss: The Lives of the Frankfurt School*, Verso, 2016

Post-modern critiques:

Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, Vintage, 1994 and *Power/Knowledge*, Vintage, 1980 and "Truth and Power" in *From Modernism to Postmodernism: An Anthology*, Lawrence Cahoone, Ed. 2nd ed Blackwell, 2003)

Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Bloomsbury, 2013.

Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, Duquesne University, 1969.

Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, U of Minnesota, 1984.

Recent critiques:

Jeffrey C. Alexander, *The Dark Side of Modernity*, Polity Press, 2013.
 Talal Assad, *Formations of the Secular*, Stanford University Press, 2003
 Zigmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Polity Press, 2000.
 Peter Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, Eerdmans, 1997 and *The Many Alters of Modernity*, De Kruyter, 2014.
 Augusto Del Noce, *The Crisis of Modernity* McGill-Queens University Press, 2014
 Terry Eagleton, *After Theory*, Basic Books, 2003 and *The Illusions of Postmodernism*, Blackwell, 1998; *Ideology: An Introduction*, Verso, 2007; *Culture and the Death of God*, Yale, 2015. *Culture and the Death of God*, Yale, 2015.
 Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Stanford University Press, 1991.
 Ryszard Legutko, *The Demon in Democracy: Totalitarian Temptations in Free Society*, Encounter Books, 2016.
 Mark Lilla, *The Once and Future Liberal: After Identity Politics*, Harper, 2017
 Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False*, Oxford, 2012.

Genealogy of modern institutions:

Philip S. Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution*, U. of Chicago, 2003; *The Protestant Ethic Revisited*, Temple U. Press, 2011; *American Covenant*, Princeton, 2017, Gorski, et al, ed; *The Post-Secular in Question*, NYU Press, 2012.
 Eric Nelson, *The Hebrew Republic*, Harvard U. Press, 2010.
 Larry Siedentop, *Inventing the Individual*, Penguin, 2014.

Christian critiques

John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason*, 2nd ed. Wiley-Blackwell, 2006.

CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTER WITH NON-CHRISTIAN CULTURES: BASIC RESOURCES

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

Jan N. Bremmer, *The Rise of Christianity: through the eyes of Gibbon, Harnack, and Rodney Stark*, (Barknuis: Groningen, 2010)
 Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (Princeton University Press, 1996).
 ———, "Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model", *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 11 (1996): 133-46.
 Larry Hurtado, *Destroyer of the gods: Early Christian Distinctiveness in the Roman World*, (Baylor University Press, 2016).
 ———, *Why On Earth Did Anyone Become a Christian in the First Three Centuries?* (Marquette University Press, 2016.)
 Alan Kreider, *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church: The Improbable Rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire*, (Baker, 2016)
 Mark Noll, *Turning Points, Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*, 3rd edition, (Baker, 2012) Chapters 1-6 pp.1-142.

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

Contemporary, global Christianity

Noll, Mark, *From Every Tribe and Nation*, Baker, 2014.
 Noll, Mark, "A Faith for all the World" and "Mobilizing for the Future" in *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*, 3rd edition, Baker, 2012, pp.161-328.
 Andrew Walls, "The Gospel as Prisoner and Liberator of Culture," "Culture and Coherence in Christian History", "The Translation Principle in Christian History," "Culture and Conversion in Christian History", all in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, Orbis, 1996 and "The Ephesian Moment" in *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, Orbis, 2002
 Scott Sunquist, *The Unexpected Christian Century: The Reversal and Transformation of Global Christianity, 1900-2000*, Baker, 2015.

Douglas Jacobsen, *Global Gospel: An Introduction*

Encounter with other religions

John Dickson, *A Spectator's Guide to World Religions*, (Lion, 2008)

J.H. Bavinck, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions*, (P&R Publishing, 1993)

_____, "Religious Consciousness and Christian Faith" in John Bolt, ed. *The J.H. Bavinck Reader*, (Eerdmans, 2013), pp.145-299.

Paul J. Visser, *Heart for the Gospel, Heart for the World: The Life and Thought of a Reformed Pioneer Missiologist Johan Herman Bavinck*, (Wipf and Stock, 2003)

Hendrick Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, (Kregel, 1956)

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

Mark Noll, *Turning Points*, Chapters 7-11, pp.143-260.

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

Tom Wright, *Creation, Power, and Truth: The Gospel in a World of Cultural Confusion* (SPCK, 2013)

Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Eerdmans, 1989), pp.1-65.

Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice: Rights and Wrongs* (Princeton U) pp. 19-64 on narratives of justice; pp.324-362 on theistic beliefs and human Rights

Steven D. Smith, *The Disenchantment of Secular Discourse*, (Harvard U Press, 2010)

Jonathan Sacks, *Not In God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence* (Schocken, 2015)

T.Shah and A.Hertzke, *Christianity and Freedom: Historical Perspectives Volume 1* (Cambridge University Press, 2016) especially Kyle Harper, "Christianity and the Roots of Human Dignity in Late Antiquity", pp.123-148

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

James Hunter and Paul Nedelisky, "Where the New Science of Morality Goes Wrong" in *The Hedgehog Review*, Fall 2016, vol 18, no 3, pp.48-62.

C.Smith, "Does Naturalism Warrant Moral Belief?" in J.Schloss, M.Murray, *The Believing Primate*, pp 292-318.

Arthur Leff, "Unspeakable Ethics; Unnatural Law", *Duke Law Journal*, 1229-1249 (1979)

The Church and witness in late modern culture

Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Abingdon, 1996)

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

Richard Bauckham, *Bible and Mission: Christian Witness in a Postmodern World*, (Baker, 2003)

Richard Bauckham, "Reading the Scripture as a Coherent Story" in Ellen F. Davis, Richard B. Hays, *The Art of Reading Scripture*, (Eerdmans, 2003)

David Kinnaman, Gabe Lyons, *Good Faith: Being a Christian When Society Thinks You're Irrelevant and Extreme*, Baker, 2016

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

Timothy Keller, *Making Sense of God: An Invitation to the Skeptical* (Viking, 2016)

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

Ross Douthat, *Bad Religion: How We Became A Nation of Heretics* (Simon and Schuster, 2012)

Political engagement and pluralism in secular society

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

James K.A. Smith, "Reforming Public Theology: Neocalvinism and Pluralism" Herm Bavinck lecture, <https://www.tukampen.nl/informatiepagina/smith-bavinck-lecture>

Luke Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics*, (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010)

P.Berger and R.Neuhaus, *To Empower People: From State to Civil Society*, (American Enterprise Institute, 1996)

Michael Wear, *Reclaiming Hope: Lessons Learned in the Obama White House About the Future of Faith in America*, (Thomas Nelson, 2017)

John D. Inazu, *Confident Pluralism: Surviving and Thriving through Deep Difference*, (University of Chicago Press, 2016)

R.R.Reno, *Resurrecting the Idea of a Christian Society*, (Regnery Faith, 2016)

Russell Moore, *Onward: Engaging the Cultures Without Losing the Gospel*, (B&H Publishing, 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

Timothy Keller, *Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just*, (Dutton, 2012)

Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* (Spiegel and Grau, 2015)

William J. Stuntz, *The Collapse of American Criminal Justice* (Belknap, 2013)

Jeffrey Stout, *Blessed are the Organized: Grassroots Democracy in America*, (Princeton University Press, 2010)

Luke Bretherton, *Resurrecting Democracy: Faith, Citizenship, and the Politics of a Common Life* (Cambridge University Press, 2015)

Culture-making and cultural engagement

James D. Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (Oxford University Press, 2010)

Andy Crouch, *Culture Making: Recovering our Creative Calling*, (IVP, 2013)

_____, *Playing God: Redeeming the Gift of Power*, (IVP, 2013)

Miroslav Volf, *A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good*, (Brazos, 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)

_____, *Center Church*, Part 5 "Cultural Engagement", pp.181-250.

Racial reconciliation/multi-ethnic ministry

Brenda Salter McNeil, *Roadmap to Reconciliation: Moving Communities into Unity, Wholeness, and Justice* (IVP Books, 2016)

Mark DeYmaz, *Building a Healthy Multi-ethnic Church: Mandate, Commitments, and Practices of a Diverse Congregation* (Josey-Bass, 2007)

_____, *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)

M.Allen and S.Swain, *Reformed Catholicity: The Promise of Retrieval for Theology and Biblical Interpretation* (Baker, 2015)

Timothy Keller, *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (Viking, 2015)

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: **PT 514 – Living the Christian Life in a Secular Culture**

Professor: **Tim Keller**

Campus: **New York City**

Date: **Spring, 2020**

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u> <i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<u>Rubric</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None 	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
Articulation (oral & written)	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.	Strong	This course is about how to articulate biblical knowledge understandably to secular people.
Scripture	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.)	Moderate	This course largely assumes knowledge of Scripture as a pre-requisite for this course.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	This course largely assumes knowledge of Reformed theology as a pre-requisite for this course
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	This course only addresses Christian formation rather briefly at the end of the course.
Worldview	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.	Strong	This course directly addresses objective and seeks this very outcome.
Winsomely Reformed	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.)	Strong	This course directly addresses objective and seeks this very outcome.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Strong	This course directly addresses objective and seeks this very outcome.