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
*James D. Hunter, To Change the World 275 pp.
*Keller, Making Sense of God – 200pp
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)

Feb 9 - Christian Mission and Western Culture

Feb 16 - A Critique of Modernity: Rieff, Bellah, MacIntyre, Deneen

Feb 23 - A Critique of Modernity: Taylor’s genealogy

Mar 2 - A Critique of Modernity: Taylor’s synthesis

Mar 10 - Rick Lints – The Thought of Alaisdair MacIntyre

Mar 23 - A Missionary Encounter with western culture

April 7 - Rick Lints – John Rawls and Modern Liberalism

April 20 - Engaging the narratives

April 27 - Sex and gender

May 4 - 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**
- *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (Notre Dame, 1990)


Joseph Boyle, "On MacIntyre’s ‘After Virtue’"


**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);

**Guides to the foundational texts:**

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


**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
Levin, Yuval, The Fractured Republic: Renewing America’s Social Contract in the Age of Individualism (Basic Books, 2016)
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
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)
David Martin, On Secularization: Towards a Revised General Theory (Routledge, 2005)
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:
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:
Talal Assad, Formations of the Secular, Stanford University Press, 2003
Mark Lilla, The Once and Future Liberal: After Identity Politics, Harper, 2017

**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.)
Alan Kreider, The Patient Ferment of the Early Church: The Improbable Rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire, (Baker, 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*


Lesslie 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)
## MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>This course is about how to articulate biblical knowledge understandably to secular people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>This course largely assumes knowledge of Scripture as a pre-requisite for this course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>This course largely assumes knowledge of Reformed theology as a pre-requisite for this course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>This course only briefly addresses Christian formation at the end of the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>This course directly addresses objective and seeks this very outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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.

**Rubric**: Strong

**Mini-Justification**: 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.)

**Rubric**: Moderate

**Mini-Justification**: 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.

**Rubric**: Moderate

**Mini-Justification**: 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.

**Rubric**: Minimal

**Mini-Justification**: 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.

**Rubric**: Strong

**Mini-Justification**: 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.)

**Rubric**: Strong

**Mini-Justification**: 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 churched and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.

**Rubric**: Strong

**Mini-Justification**: This course directly addresses objective and seeks this very outcome.