

Christ, Culture, and Contextualization (ST 5600)

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The course explores a biblical theology of culture, evaluates alternative approaches to culture, and develops a holistic approach toward cultural engagement and contextualization. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the religious underpinnings of culture, and develop a theological understanding of diversity, secularization, and pluralism.

Course Readings:

1. Cory Brock and N. Gray Sutanto, *Neo-Calvinism: A Theological Introduction* (Lexham Press, 2023): chps. 3, 7, 8, 9.
2. Larry Hurtado, *Destroyer of the Gods: Early Christian Distinctiveness in the Roman World* (Baylor University Press, 2017). Entirety.
3. David Koyzis, *Political Visions and Illusions: A Survey and Christian Critique of Contemporary Ideologies* (2nd ed. IVP, 2019). Read introduction and select five chapters to read.
4. Esau McCaulley, *Reading While Black* (IVP, 2020), Entirety.
5. Joshua Chatraw, *Telling a Better Story: Talking about God in a Skeptical Age* (Zondervan, 2020). Entirety.
6. David Livermore's *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World* (Baker Academic, 2009). Entirety.
7. Tim Keller, *How to Reach the West Again* (Redeemer CTC, 2020) [60 pages], Entirety.
8. Daniel Strange, *Plugged In* (Good Books, 2019). Entirety.

Course Requirements:

1. Final Exam (40%) – Final Week of August
 - a. Students will choose from a few short essay and long essay prompts based on the class lectures and readings.
 - b. A study guide will be provided.
2. Reading Pledge (10%)
 - a. Students will indicate how much of the reading they have completed.
3. Contextualization Project (50%) – Word limit: 3000 words.
 - a. Students will have multiple options on what subject to write about most suitable to their interests. Students may write
 - (a) a normal research paper on the subject of culture and contextualization that argues for a clear thesis – this option means engaging with at least 8 scholarly sources, following the Turabian/SBL style.
 - (b) write a field-report, where you would perhaps interview members of your church, or multiple church leaders, on the current cultural issues they are facing and how they are responding to them, while offering your own critical evaluations of your interviews;
 - (c) write a field-report about Christian members of a different culture outside of the United States
 - (d) write a critically engaged book-review of a currently influential and substantial book of your choice.

For example, students may write on these kinds of topics:

- a. What are some challenges faced by churches that minister to first and second generation immigrant families? How should we respond to these challenges pastorally and theologically?
- b. What are the merits and theological rationale for the pursuit of planting and nurturing multi-ethnic churches?
- c. How should Christians respond to the two-party system in the United States? What are some theological tools needed to navigate through the political options of our day?
- d. How are Christians responding differently to issues concerning justice? What are some fault lines and theological (or nontheological) patterns of reasoning that seem to inform the various sides of the debate?
- e. What are some issues faced by the house churches in China? How might we learn from their context?
- f. Write a review of Matthew Kaemingk and Cory Wilson's *Work and Worship* – how might we learn from, critically engage with, and apply the lessons they offered in this book on supporting professionals in their respective vocations?
- g. Write a review of David VanDrunen's *Living in God's Two Kingdoms* – what are some differences between the contemporary Two-Kingdom approaches and a neo-Calvinistic approach to the relationship between Christ and culture?

Further Bibliography:

- J.H. Bavinck, *An Introduction to the Science of Missions*, (P&R Publishing, 1993),
 J.H. Bavinck, "Religious Consciousness and Christian Faith" in John Bolt, ed. *The J.H. Bavinck Reader*, (Eerdmans, 2013), pp.145-299
 Bruce Baugus, *China's Reforming Churches: Mission, Polity, and Ministry in the Next Christendom* (*Reformation Heritage Books*, 2014)
 Benested, et al. *Five Views on the Church and Politics* (Zondervan, 2015)
 J. Kameron Carter, *Race: A Theological Account* (Oxford: 2008)
 Alexander Chow, *Chinese Public Theology* (Oxford University Press, 2018)
 William Edgar, *Created and Creating* (IVP, 2017)
 Korie L. Edwards' *The Elusive Dream*. (Oxford University Press, 2008)
 James Eglinton, *Bavinck: A Critical Biography* (Baker Academic, 2020)
 James Eglinton and George Harinck (eds.), *Neocalvinism and the French Revolution* (Bloomsbury, 2014)
 John Frame, *Doctrine of the Christian Life* (P&R, 2008)
 Os Guinness, *Fool's Talk* (IVP, 2015)
 James Hunter, *To Change the World* (Oxford, 2010)
 John Inazu, *Confident Pluralism*, (U. Chicago Press, 2016)
 Irwyn Ince, *Beautiful Community* (IVP, 2020).
 William Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (Yale, 2011)
 Matthew Kaemingk, *Muslim Immigration and Christian Hospitality* (Eerdmans, 2018)
 Matthew Kaemingk (ed.), *Reforming Public Theology* (Baker Academic, 2020)
 Matthew Kaemingk and Cory Wilson, *Work and Worship* (Baker Academic, 2020)
 Ryan McIlhenny (ed.), *Kingdoms Apart: Engaging the Two-Kingdoms Perspective* (P&R, 2012)
 Tim Keller, *Center Church* (Zondervan, 2012)
 Tim Keller, *Every Good Endeavor* (Dutton, 2014)
 Tim Keller, *Preaching* (Penguin, 2015)
 Sharon Kim, *A Faith of Our Own* (Rutgers University Press, 1969)
 Matthew Kim, *Preaching with Cultural Intelligence* (Baker Academic, 2017)
 Brian Mattson, *Cultural Amnesia: Three Essays on Two Kingdoms Theology* (Swinging Bridge, 2018)
 George Marsden, *Religion and American Culture* (Eerdmans, 2019)

Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: Gospel and Western Culture* (Eerdmans, 1988)
 Lesslie Newbigin, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Eerdmans, 1989)
 Marvin J. Newell, *Crossing Cultures in Scripture: Biblical Principles for Mission Practice* (IVP, 2016)
 Randolph Richard, Brandon O'Brien, *Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes* (IVP, 2012)
 James K.A. Smith, *Cultural Liturgies Trilogy* (Baker, 2008, 2014, 2017).
 James K.A. Smith, *On the Road With St. Augustine* (Brazos, 2019)
 Christopher Watkin, *Cultural Engagement* (Zondervan, forthcoming)
 Christopher Watkin, *Thinking Through Creation* (P&R, 2017)
 Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice: Rights and Wrongs* (Princeton, 2008)

Grading System

A	(97-100)	4.00
A-	(94-96)	3.66
B+	(91-93)	3.33
B	(88-90)	3.00
B-	(86-87)	2.66
C+	(83-85)	2.33
C	(80-82)	2.00
C-	(78-79)	1.66
D+	(75-77)	1.33
D	(72-74)	1.00
D-	(70-71)	0.66
F	(below 70)	0.00
I	(incomplete)	–
W	(withdraw)	–

The grade “I” indicates that the work required for the course was not completed. It is given only when special, extenuating circumstances (such as illness) prevent the student from completing the work or taking the examination.

A written request for an extension must be submitted prior to the due date of the work concerned. If the request is granted, it remains the responsibility of the student to complete all work for the course as soon as possible. In any case, an “I” grade must be removed within the extension time granted; otherwise it will be changed to “F.”

The grade “W” indicates that a student has withdrawn from a course after the drop deadline. This grade is granted by the academic dean only in extenuating circumstances.

If a course is retaken, the original grade remains on the transcript and is included in the GPA.

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Christ Culture and Contextualization (ST 5600)

Professor: Sutanto, Ince, Park

Campus: Washington, D.C.

Date: Fall 2022

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</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>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None 	
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	Reading, lectures, and writing, focus on content, clarity, persuasive argumentation, and logical analysis.
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	Lectures and reading will emphasize that Scripture shapes our understanding of culture.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Lectures and reading will show how Reformed theology impacts our understanding of culture and contextualization.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Lectures and reading focus on understanding our theology better and

			the world better so that we might grow in confidence and patience.
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 is a specific focus of this course.
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	The course will focus on applying the Christian faith for the good of the city.
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	Ministers should be able to aid their congregants through the challenges of the contemporary times.