

Cultural Apologetics and Christian Endurance

Syllabus

Reformed Theological Seminary — Atlanta, GA

PT6225-A1 & PT6225-A2

2 Credit Hours

Spring Term: 2026

Instructor: Carl F. Ellis, Jr.

Tuesday | 3/3/2026 - 3/31/2026 | 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Tuesday | 4/14/2026 - 5/5/2026 | 2:00 PM - 5:00 PM

This course equips students with the tools to analyze competing value systems and world views. It includes examination of global social visions and value systems, with primary consideration given to the Church's Gospel presence in their midst. Students will explore the hidden forces behind cultural conflict and suggest biblical ways to address tensions. The course emphasizes the universal influences which give rise to anti-Christian hostility and marginalization. Students will apply biblical frameworks to contemporary case studies that directly address cultural confusion in major global contexts, like those facing China's contemporary house church network, as well as church planting efforts in North America's overlooked urban areas.

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. Assess the value systems that drive various sub-cultures.
5. Explain the role of God's grace and man's sin in the life of a culture.
6. Assess the value systems that drive various sub-cultures.

Required Reading

1. Nation, Hanna & Liu, Simon: *FAITH IN THE WILDERNESS*
2. Anderson, Elijah: *CODE OF THE STREET*
3. Walsh, Brian J. & Middleton, Richard: *THE TRANSFORMING VISION*
4. Carson, D. A.: *HOW LONG, O LORD: Reflections on Suffering and Evil*
5. Logan, Douglass, *ON THE BLOCK: Developing a Biblical Picture for Missional Engagement*

6. Downloadable Essays from the Center for House Church Theology
<https://housechurchtheology.com/resource-library>
 - Xu, Ximian (Simeon): *The Theology and Ethics of Artificial Intelligence Technologies*
 - Xiangheng, Wang: *The Way of the Cross and the Choices That We Made*
 - Muyun, Guo: *The Primary Colors of Sin*
 - Hang, Gao: *The Political Dimension of the Gospel*
 - Peng, Paul: *Church in the Wilderness: A Message to the Global Church from a House Church Pastor*

Supplemental Readings

1. Edgar, William: *THE FACE OF TRUTH: Lifting the Veil*
2. Guinness, Os: *UNSPEAKABLE: Facing up to Evil in an Age of Genocide and Terror*
3. Sanneh, Lamin: *WHOSE RELIGION IS CHRISTIANITY? The Gospel Beyond the West*
4. Pratt, Richard: *EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE*
5. Walsh, Brian J. & Middleton, Richard: *THE TRANSFORMING VISION*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Complete all reading assignments by May 8, 2026**
2. Complete the final exam by **May 15, 2026**
3. Integration paper due on **May 8, 2026** — 10-15 pages
4. **Guidelines for integration papers**
 - a. **CREATIVITY**; Evidence of personal insight into the content — 25%
 - b. **CLARITY**: Thinking and expression of thought clearly communicated — 25%
 - c. **CONCEPTUALIZATION**; Analytical skills evident — 25%
 - d. **CONTRIBUTION**; Practical and usable in ministry — 25%
5. **Interactions**

All participants will complete one professor-to-student interaction and two student to student interactions. These discussion questions will be posted on Canvas.

STUDENT EVALUATION

1. **Reading accounts for 20% of the final grade.**

Students will report on the percentage of reading they have completed over the course of the semester on the final exam. 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. **The final exam accounts for 40% of the final grade.**

3. **The integration paper accounts for 40% of the final grade.**

4. **Format guidelines for integration papers**

It must be in *MS Word 95* or higher, *MS Word for Mac 2008* or higher, *WordPerfect X4* or higher, or *Pages*.

Please load the papers into **Canvas**.

MAKE SURE YOUR NAME ON THE DOCUMENT ITSELF.

If you send it by email, please make sure that the subject is **CA-XE-26**

If you run into difficulty meeting the deadline, please email or call:

cellis@rts.edu

(423) 280-4183 (cell)

EXTENSION POLICY

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 42 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 14)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 42)