

MP 520: CONTEMPORARY CULTURE IN MISSIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE (4 units).

Wilbert R. Shenk, Professor of Mission History and Contemporary Culture;

Online Facilitation by Dr. Elaine Vaden, Adjunct Professor in History and Religions

DESCRIPTION:

Modern culture has marginalized all religion; mainline church membership has declined. Although the primary focus in the course is on the church in the West, modernity is a universal phenomenon. This course proposes a new paradigm: missionary engagement as basic stance of church toward modern/postmodern culture. This requires that key questions be examined:

- Why has the church largely failed to challenge modern culture?
- How can we step outside our culture in order to see ourselves through "mission" eyes?
- How is a missionary approach different from conventional evangelism?

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- "Read" modern/postmodern culture using missionary criteria rather than the conventional assumption that this is a Christian culture.
- Discern those values and characteristics in this culture that can be affirmed and promoted, as well as awareness of cultural forces that bring spiritual death.
- Think constructively in order to design culturally aware missional responses in which the full resources of the gospel are brought to bear in their ministries and churches.

COURSE FORMAT:

The class will be conducted on the Internet using a 10-week lesson program aligned with Fuller's academic calendar. Each week students and the instructor will interact with the material examining key themes and characteristics of modern/postmodern culture through journaling, threaded discussions, and web-based research.

REQUIRED READING: A minimum of 1,300 pages of reading from the following books:

- Beaudoin, Tom. 1998. *Virtual Faith*. Jossey-Bass.
- Bosch, David J. 1995 *Believing in the Future*. Trinity.
- Guder, Darrell, ed. 1998. *Missional Church*. Eerdmans.
- Hall, Douglas John. 1997 *The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity*. Trinity.
- Hunsberger G. R. & C. Van Gelder, eds. 1996 *The Church Between Gospel and Culture*. Eerdmans.
- Middleton J. R. & B. J. Walsh. 1995. *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be*. IVP.
- Newbigin, Lesslie. 1989 *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Eerdmans.
- Shenk, Wilbert R. 1995. *Write the Vision: The Church Renewed*. (Trinity) Wipf and Stock repr.
- Toulmin, S. 1990 *Cosmopolis*. Free Press.

RECOMMENDED READING:

- Bellah, Robert, et al. 1986 *Habits of the Heart*. Harper & Row.
- Bibby, Reginald. 1993, *Unknown Gods*. Stoddart.
- Hoffman, Shirl J., ed. 1992 *Sport and Religion*. Human Kinetics Books.
- Marty, Martin. 1969 *The Modern Schism*. Harper.
- Montefiore, H., ed. 1992 *The Gospel and Contemporary Culture*. Mowbray.
- Putnam, R. D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Touchstone.
- Roxburgh, Alan J. 1997 *The Missionary Congregation, Leadership, and Liminality*. Trinity.
- Schultze, Quentin J. 1991 *Televangelism and American Culture*. Baker.
- Schultze, Quentin J., ed. 1991 *Dancing in the Dark*. Eerdmans.
- Webster, Douglas D. 1992 *Selling Jesus*. IVP.
- Wuthnow, Robert. 1988. *The Restructuring of American Religion*. Princeton

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Weekly Threaded Discussions, Journaling, and Web research (36.5%)
2. A report about course reading (2.5%)
3. A 2,000-word collaborative Culture Watch assignment (11%)
4. A contemporary novel to be read (a list provided in the syllabus), and film watched, writing a 1,000-word review on each (10%)
5. A 3,000-word Case Study paper which treats a cultural theme identified in the course in light of the Christian mission mandate (40%)

PREREQUISITES: This course is only available to those who are accepted into the MA in Global Leadership.

RELATIONSHIP TO CURRICULUM: A required course for the Cohort portion of the MA in Global Leadership.

NO AUDITORS.

FINAL EXAMINATION: None.

GETTING A HEAD START

For Week One

Texts:

- Bosch, D. *Believing in the Future*.
- Newbigin, L. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Ch 1-6.
- Shenk, W. *Write the Vision*
- Van Gelder (ed) *The Church Between Gospel and Culture*. pp. 53-79

For Week Two

Texts:

- Guder, D. *Missional Church*, Ch1
- Newbigin, L. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Ch 17.
- Toulmin, S. *Cosmopolis*. Ch 1-3.