

MP520: TRANSFORMING CONTEMPORARY CULTURE (4 units).

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DESCRIPTION:

Modern culture has marginalized all religion. Mainline church membership has declined in many areas of the Western world while increasing phenomenally in the non-Western world. Although the primary focus in the course is on the changing context of the church in the West, issues of modernity, post-modernity, pluralism and globalization touch our lives worldwide. This course will examine the following key questions from both a Western and global perspective:

- Why has the church largely failed to challenge the effects of the modernist cultural paradigm?
- How do modernism, post-modernism, pluralism and globalization interact to bring new challenges to the contemporary church?
- How can we step outside our culture in order to see ourselves through "missional" eyes?
- How does a missionary approach to outreach differ from conventional evangelistic approaches?

This course proposes the paradigm that missionary engagement should be the basic stance of church toward the cultural context in which it is situated.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will have:

- Demonstrated the ability to "read" modern/postmodern culture using missionary criteria
- Discerned those values and characteristics in their cultural contexts that can be affirmed and promoted, as well as the cultural values and forces that bring spiritual death.
- Designed strategies of missional engagement with contemporary culture that show cultural awareness and engagement, and 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 1,400 pages of reading from the following materials.

- Davey, Andrew. *Urban Christianity and Global Order*. Hendrickson, 2002.
- Frost, Michael, and Alan Hirsch. *The Shaping of Things to Come*. Hendrickson, 2003.
- Guder, Darrell L. and Lois Barrett. *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. Eerdmans, 1998.
- Hunsberger, G. R., and C. Van Gelder. *The Church between Gospel and Culture*. Eerdmans, 1996.
- Linthicum, Robert C. *Transforming Power*. InterVarsity, 2003.
- Newbiggin, Leslie. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Eerdmans, 1989.
- Smith, James K. A. *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism?* Baker Academic, 2006.
- Volf, Miroslav. *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.
- Supplemental readings in the course shell include required and recommended readings. The recommended readings are for the students' own self-study, enrichment, and resourcing – particularly to help students prepare for writing the paper, and for greater understanding of the course material. The required readings should be treated like required texts.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Weekly Threaded Discussions, Journaling, and occasional Web research
2. A Course Reading Record
3. A 2,000-word collaborative Culture Watch assignment
4. A 1,000-word Cultural Analysis through Film comparing and contrasting two movies (selected from a list in the course shell) with regard to the films' portrayal of prevailing themes in contemporary culture.
5. A 3,000-word Case Study paper which addresses a cultural theme identified in the course in light of the Christian mission mandate and its practical outworking in a student's particular ministry context.

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.

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