

TC509: THEOLOGY AND POP CULTURE (4 units). Craig Detweiler, Adjunct Associate Professor of Theology and Culture, and Co-Director of Reel Spirituality, Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts.

DESCRIPTION:

This multi-disciplinary course will engage students in a two-way dialogue between pop culture and theology, with emphasis upon music, movies, TV, art, fashion, and sports. Students will develop a biblical, theological, and sociological understanding of these art forms and a critical understanding of the advertising, consumerism, and globalization that drives pop culture.

PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY:

Ministry in a postmodern context must contend with the rising impact of technology and entertainment. This course will equip students to think critically and theologically about pop culture. Special attention will be given to finding God in and through pop cultural art forms.

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

- Understand the power and possibilities inherent in general revelation
- Sort through the avalanche of pop culture forms to identify major shifts/trends/opportunities
- Find points of contact for spiritual dialogue with current pop cultural expressions
- Craft a pop cultural apologetic (a public theology), bridging the gap between the Bible and culture

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 pop cultural forms and theological issues through journaling, threaded discussions, and web-based research.

REQUIRED READING/VIEWING: approximately 1,200 pages from the following:

- Barth, Karl, and Emil Brunner. *Natural Theology*. Wipf and Stock reprint (ISBN 1592441122).
- Detweiler, Craig, and Barry Taylor, *A Matrix of Meanings*. Baker Academic, 2003.
- During, Simon. *The Cultural Studies Reader*. Routledge, 1993.
- Lynch, Gordon. *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*, Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
- Articles from *The Cultural Studies Reader* include:
 - o Adorno, Theodor and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception"
 - o Appadurai, Arjun, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy"
 - o Bourdieu, Pierre. "How can one be a sports fan?"
 - o Clifford, James. "On Collecting Art and Culture"
 - o hooks, bell. "A Revolution of Values: The Promise of Multicultural Change."
 - o Morris, Meaghan. "Things to do with Shopping Centres"
- Film to be acquired and viewed by students: *The Lives of Others*
- One book tied to the art form/discipline chosen for students' research project.
- Selected recordings and events including movies, art exhibit and/or fashion show, a sporting event.

ASSIGNMENTS: This class will emphasize practical theology. Course grade will be based upon:

1. Weekly Posts and Threaded Discussions (30%) and Web research (5%)
2. Two 2-page book reviews. (20%)
3. A 12 to 15 page research paper that concentrates upon one particular postmodern trend and one pop cultural form. Special emphasis will be placed upon the practical ministry application of the research (a sermon series, a Bible study guide, a Young Life talk, an outreach event). (45%)

PREREQUISITES: None

RELATIONSHIP TO CURRICULUM: Fulfills requirement for M.A. Theology & Arts; M.A. Worship, Theology & Arts; M.Div. Worship, Theology and the Arts. M.Div., M.A. in Theology elective. M.A. in Global Leadership Ministry Focus Elective.

FINAL EXAMINATION: None.

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