

TC500: THEOLOGY AND CULTURE (4 units).

John Drane, Visiting Professor of New Testament and Practical Theology.

DESCRIPTION:

This course is an introduction to contemporary culture and the challenges and opportunities it presents in relation to effective Christian ministry and mission.

COURSE OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will (a) understand the nature of cultural change in Western societies; (b) reflect on methodological issues raised by various Christian attitudes to culture; (c) develop appropriate apologetic tools for contextualizing faith in postmodern culture, with particular reference to the rise of New Spirituality.

RELEVANCE FOR MINISTRY:

Christians need to know how to contextualize the Gospel in new circumstances while remaining faithful to the inherited tradition. This course offers theological reflection on that task, together with practical tools for doing it.

COURSE FORMAT:

Conducted online, the ten weekly lessons align with Fuller's academic calendar. Each week, students and the instructor will interact with the material and each other through journaling, threaded discussions, web-based research, and presentations.

REQUIRED READING: Approximately 1,200 pages from the required texts:

- Anderson, Ray S. *An Emergent Theology of Emerging Churches*. InterVarsity Press, 2006. 236pp.
- Carter, Craig A. *Rethinking Christ & Culture: A Post-Christendom Perspective*. Brazos, 2006. 220pp.
- Drane, John. *Do Christians Know How to be Spiritual? The Rise of New Spirituality and the Mission of the Church*. Darton, Longman & Todd, 2005. 186pp.
- Murray, Stuart. *Church after Christendom*. Paternoster, 2005. 235pp.
- Ritzer, George. *McDonaldization: The Reader*. 2nd ed. Pine Forge, 2006. 274pp.
- Drane, John. *The McDonaldization of the Church*. Smyth & Helwys, 2001. 203pp.

RECOMMENDED READING:

- Chidester, David. *Authentic Fakes: Religion and American Popular Culture*. University of California Press, 2005. 294pp.
- Detweiler, Craig, and Barry Taylor. *A Matrix of Meanings*. Baker Academic, 2003. 351pp.
- Drane, John. *After McDonaldization: Mission, Ministry, and Christian Discipleship in an Age of Uncertainty*. Baker Academic, 2008. 166pp.
- Lynch, Gordon. *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*. Routledge, 2005. 236pp.
- Mazur, E., and K. McCarthy. *God in the Details: American Religion in Popular Culture*. Routledge, 2001. 326pp.
- Ostwalt, Conrad. *Secular Steeples: Popular Culture and the Religious Imagination*. Trinity Press International, 2003. 248pp.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Weekly threaded discussions (25%)
2. A personal course journal (15%)
3. Two 2-page book reviews (20%)
4. A project offering theological insights into an aspect of contemporary culture to be chosen by the student and given advance approval in writing by the professor. This may be in any medium (written – 15 pages, visual, dramatic, digital, etc.) (40%).

PREREQUISITES: None.

RELATIONSHIP TO CURRICULUM:

Elective. Required course for the MA in Theology (Theology and Arts format); may meet requirements in the Concentration in Worship, Theology, and the Arts in the MDiv and in the MA in Worship, Theology, and the Arts; meets the MACL in Integrative Studies requirement for an interdisciplinary course (IDPL). MA in Global Leadership Ministry Focus Elective.

FINAL EXAMINATION: None.

Updated October 2008