CHRISTIAN LIFE IN A SECULAR CULTURE

Fall 2014
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Time: Tuesday, 9-10
Class Hours: 1
Syllabus Revised: May 5, 2014

COURSE PURPOSE

This course assists the student in understanding and relating to secular culture.

COURSE TEXTS

Required Texts:

The Bible.

Calvin, John. Institutes of the Christian Religion.


Ryken, Leland. The Liberated Imagination: Thinking Christianly About the Arts.


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. ATTENDANCE — Class attendance is mandatory. Each unexcused absence will result in a full letter grade reduction for the course. Absences to fulfill requirements of other courses are unacceptable. If you plan to be absent from a class, request in advance and by e-mail an excused absence from my teaching assistant. You must state the reason for your absence. In the event of a
planned absence, written work and memory verses must be submitted to the teaching assistant electronically by the start time of the class missed.

2. **READING ASSIGNMENTS** — Textbook assignments must be read prior to class.

3. **PAPER FORMATTING** – All papers must be typed double-spaced using 12 pt. Times New Roman font, and include pagination and line numbering.

   Each assignment must included the following:
   a. Name(s)
   b. Course
   c. Date
   d. Assignment (e.g., Book Review 1)

   Improperly formatted work will result in a full letter grade reduction for the assignment.

   See the end of the next page for an example of what this formatting is to look like.

   For help on how to do line numbering, see the following websites:

   * For MS Word: [http://tinyurl.com/WordLineNumbering](http://tinyurl.com/WordLineNumbering)
   * For Apple Pages: [http://tinyurl.com/PagesLineNumbering](http://tinyurl.com/PagesLineNumbering)

   If you still have trouble with formatting, the teaching assistant is happy to help you (really)!

4. **EXAMINATIONS** — There are no examinations in this course.

5. **GRADES** –

   Book Reviews 75%
   Reading Report 25%

   You will submit three (3) book reviews for this course. Each review must be five (5) pages.

   You will find your Reading Report at the end of this syllabus. Your report is due December 5.

6. **GRADING SCALE** -

   97-100% A
   94-96% A-
   91-93% B+
   88-90% B
   86-87% B-
   83-85% C+
   80-82% C
   78-79% C-
   75-77% D+
   72-74% D
70-71%  D-
0-69%  F

7. READING WEEK  - There will be no class on October 7.

8. DEADLINES - All course materials must be submitted at the beginning of class on the date due. Hard copies only; only submit work electronically to the teaching assistant on dates when you will be absent from class. Late work will be penalized a full letter grade each day thereafter.

Response Paper #3
Intro to Sanctification
John Smith
2/25/14

Notes on Becket/Ferguson
The subject of perseverance and assurance are touched on in this section. Of particular note for the purposes of this class and its subject matter is that the Westminster Confession makes clear that those who are justified “may…fall under God’s fatherly displeasure” (119). This is very different from the type of preaching we often hear about how God sees only good in us, and doesn’t see our sin. In point of fact, Scripture does often speak of God’s displeasure with the behavior (one ponders in vain how Christ managed to address the churches in Revelation at all if he saw no sin in them). Now, of course this is true with reference to justification, but it is a misrepresentation to say that God, strictly speaking, sees no sin in his people. He is very much aware of our sin. Another important note in passing is that the WCF does not see attainment of assurance as essential to faith. The point, of course, being that not every Christian goes through life assured of their faith even though they did have true and saving faith (127).

Notes on Jones
The above readings deal with the question of whether God sees sin in the believer. Jones is addressing the same question in chapter 6 of his book. As Jones states it, the issue is not “whether, in justification, God declares us to be righteous as his own Son” (83). Rather, the real
9. **ELECTRONIC DEVICES** - Computers and tablets are not permitted in the classroom. Cell phones should be turned off and put away. Voice recorders are not permitted in class.

10. **DISCLAIMER** - The instructor reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus during the semester. Students are expected to keep up with syllabus revisions, which are posted online. Late work because an out of date syllabus was consulted will not be excused.

11. **OFFICE HOURS** – Monday through Friday, by appointment or whenever my office door is open. My office is upstairs in the Dean Center. I will also work in the MFT commons area and Library Room 10. Your conversations are most welcome.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**August 26:** Thinking Christianly about the Church’s Place in American Culture (1)  
Readings: Wells, chapters 1-2

**September 2:** Thinking Christianly about the Church’s Place in American Culture (2)  
Readings: Wells, chapters 3-4

**September 9:** Thinking Christianly about the Church’s Place in American Culture (3)  
Readings: Wells, chapters 5-6

**September 23:** Thinking Christianly about the Church’s Place in American Culture (4)  
A. Readings: Wells, chapter 7  
B. **Submit Book Review 1** (*The Courage to Be Protestant*)

**September 30:** Thinking Christianly about the Arts (1)  
Readings: Ryken, Introduction and chapters 1-2

**October 7:** **Fall Break.**

**October 14:** Thinking Christianly about the Arts (2)  
Readings: Ryken, chapters 3-4

**October 21:** Thinking Christianly about the Arts (3)  
Readings: Ryken, chapters 6-7

**October 28:** Thinking Christianly about the Arts (4)  
A. Readings: Ryken, chapter 8 and conclusion  
B. **Submit Book Review 2** (*The Liberated Imagination*)
November 4: Thinking Christianly about Government, Politics, and Economics (1)
Readings:
Calvin, Book IV, Chapter XX

Sean Michael Lucas “The Spirituality of the Church
(note the exchanges with D.G. Hart in the comment sections)

D.G. Hart and John Muether, “The Spirituality of the Church,”
http://www.opc.org/OS/html/V7/3d.html

November 11: Thinking Christianly about Government, Politics, and Economics (2)

November 18: Thinking Christianly about Media Ecology (1)
Readings: Postman, chapters 1-5

November 25: Thinking Christianly about Media Ecology (2)
Readings: Postman, chapters 6-9

December 2: Thinking Christianly about Media Ecology (3)
A. Readings: Postman, chapters 10-11
B. Submit Book Review 3 (Amusing Ourselves to Death)

December 5: Submit Reading Report
READING REPORT
(Due December 5.)

Name (Print):

I have read Amusing Ourselves to Death in its entirety. Yes____  No _____

I have read The Liberated Imagination in its entirety. Yes____  No _____

I have read The Courage to Be Protestant in its entirety. Yes____  No _____

I have read all readings assigned for the lecture “Thinking Christianly about Government, Politics, and Economics (1).” Yes_____  No ______

(No percentage; no partial credit.)

Signature: _________________________________

Date: ____________________________________