

Christ Culture and Contextualization

Reformed Theological Seminary — Atlanta, GA

Fall Term, 2019

Instructor: Carl F. Ellis, Jr.

Course Description An analysis of cultural responses to the realities of God and His revelation. This course also explores today's competing value systems and world views including an examination of various social visions. It also examines the hidden forces behind cultural conflict and suggests biblical ways to address these conflicts. The emphasis is on the universal influences which give rise to inequality using the African American experience as a case study. Included in this course are suggested new biblically based categories and concepts which can facilitate the emergence of new movements to address today's cultural confusion. **Students who have completed the Urban Apologetics course will receive alternate required readings and assignments as determined by the professor.**

Objectives

At the end of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Identify the nature and basic components and dynamics of culture.
2. Articulate how culture effects the consciousness and behavior of individuals and corporate bodies of people.
3. Explain the role of God's grace and man's sin in the life of a culture.
4. Recognize the basic approaches to public policy and the views of humanity on which they rest.
5. Distinguish between *empowerment* and *enablement* approaches to ministries in a sub-dominant cultural context.
6. Assess the value systems that drive various sub-cultures.

Required Reading

1. Niebuhr, H. Richard: *CHRIST AND CULTURE*
2. Brooks, Christopher: *URBAN APOLOGETICS*
3. Douglass, Fredrick: *What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?*
4. Ellis, Carl F.: *FREE AT LAST?: The Gospel in the African-American Experience*
5. King, Dr. Martin Luther, Jr.: *Letter from Birmingham Jail*
6. Sanneh, Lamin: *WHOSE RELIGION IS CHRISTIANITY? The Gospel Beyond the West*

Supplemental Readings

1. Anderson, Elijah: *CODE OF THE STREET*
2. Edgar, William: *THE FACE OF TRUTH: Lifting the Veil*
3. Dalrymple, Theodore: *LIFE AT THE BOTTOM*
4. Guinness, Os: *UNSPEAKABLE: Facing up to Evil in an Age of Genocide and Terror*
5. Naugle, David K.: *WORLDVIEW: The History of a Concept*
6. Newbigin, Lesslie: *THE GOSPEL IN A PLURALIST SOCIETY*
7. Pratt, Richard: *EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE*
8. Walsh, Brian J. & Middleton, Richard: *THE TRANSFORMING VISION*

Course Requirements

1. **Complete all reading assignments by October 31, 2019.**
2. Consistent class attendance and participation in class discussions.
3. **A response paper due on December 9, 2019** — 15-20 pages (all papers are to be approved by the instructor in advance).
4. Complete a final exam during the Examination period — **December 3-9, 2019**
5. **Guidelines for Response Papers**
 - a. CREATIVITY: Evidence of personal insight into the content.
 - b. CLARITY: Thinking and expression of thought clearly communicated.
 - c. CONCEPTUALIZATION: Analytical skills evident.
 - d. CONTRIBUTION: Practical and usable in ministry.
6. **Format Guidelines for Response Papers**

All papers must be in *Word Perfect 7* or higher; *MS Word 95 for Windows* or higher; or *MS Word for Mac 2008* or higher.

Email the paper as an attachment to: **cellis@rts.edu**

Please be sure to identify your email as “**RTS - CCC**” (all caps)

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR NAME IS ON THE DOCUMENT ITSELF.

If you run into difficulty meeting the deadline, please call me at:

(423) 280-4183 (cell)

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Christ Culture and Contextualization

Professor: Carl F. Ellis, Jr.

Campus: Atlanta

Date: Fall 2019

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<p><i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None 	
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong 	This course covers the core concerns of people in various cultural contexts and how biblical wisdom addresses them. This includes contexts that are sub-dominate.
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong 	Scripture is examined through the lens of hermeneutical tools appropriate to the cultural context. The use of paradigms common to the biblical and contemporary context are employed.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Moderate 	Reformed theology is strongly affirmed as being true to Scripture, yet theology is seen as subject to the critique of Scripture.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong 	An aim of this course is to show how God is not limited by our finite concepts or culture, etc.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong 	The Lordship of God is the foundation of this course. There is a stress on a biblical worldview.
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Moderate 	A focus in this course is in learning how to express the robustness of Reformed theology without its traditional cultural package.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading, and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Xns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Moderate 	Discipleship of Xns and non-Xns is key to applying the principles taught in this course. Much of the application will apply outside the context of the institutional church.