

COURSE SYLLABUS
The Church and the World in the Twentieth Century
OHT506, 2 hours
Andrew J. Hoffercker, Ph.D.
Reformed Theological Seminary, Virtual

Professor

Dr. W. Andrew Hoffercker, Professor of Church History at RTS/Jackson, brings extensive teaching experience to the RTS campus. As a Professor of Religion at Grove City College for 25 years, he taught a wide variety of classes: Church History, Apologetics, Systematic Theology, Missions, Medieval Philosophy, Introductions to the Old and New Testaments, and Christianity and Culture, to name a few.

He received his B.A. from Dickinson College, his M.Div. from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and his Ph.D. from Brown University. He also served as a Captain in the United States Army. Dr. Hoffercker is the author of *Piety and the Princeton Theologians*. Additionally, he is the editor of *Building a Christian World View*, a valuable resource used widely by students developing a distinctly Christian approach to life, learning, the arts, and vocation.

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to survey the history of the Christian church in the modern and contemporary eras - the thinkers, movements, and ideas which have dominated the Christian church. Of special concern is to understand:

- i. How Christian thinkers have related their systems of thought to past and present philosophical and theological ideas.
- ii. How their theologies have related to contemporary cultures and world views.
- iii. How various assumptions have determined the method, goal, and outcome of their systems of thought.

Thus the purpose will be more than simply to recapitulate church history or examine various parts of theological systems. The course will probe the interaction of the church and the culture in which it lives in the 20th century. What ideas guided theologians and church leaders? How does contemporary theology relate to the broader historical, intellectual, and cultural contexts? In what ways has the church been effective or ineffective in its witness? When has the church been primarily a reflection of the culture in which it found itself and thus become a captive of the culture? Under what circumstances has the church exercised cultural leadership?

This will be accomplished through lectures, recorded on cassettes, and this accompanying workbook which contains a study guide. This guide comprises outlines of the lectures to assist the student in listening to the lectures. Also included are study questions and activities to help integrate the course content into meaningful knowledge.

Required Textbooks

Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics: A Selection*. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1961. (CD)
Barth, Karl. *The Humanity of God* [s. l.]. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1960. (THG)
Clements, Keith W. *Friedrich Schleiermacher: Pioneer of Modern Theology*. London, San Francisco: Collins, 1987. (FS:PMT)

Heron, Alasdair I. C. *A Century of Protestant Theology*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980. (CPT)
Hunter, James Davison. *Culture Wars*. New York: Basic Books, HarperCollins, 1991. (CW)
Myers, Ken. *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes*. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989. (AGC)
Nash, Ronald. *The Word of God and the Mind of Man*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, 1992. (WGMM)
Wells, David. *No Place for Truth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1993. (NPT)

All required books are available through the RTS Online Bookstore at <www.rtsvirtual.org>.

Additional Readings

See the appendix of the course notebook for these additional required readings.

Bultmann, Rudolf. "New Testament and Mythology" and "Demythologizing in Outline" from *Kerygma and Myth*.
Gilkey, Langdon. "Cosmology, Ontology, and the Travail of Biblical Language."
Gutierrez, Gustavo. Excerpts from *A Theology of Liberation*. (ATL)
Kierkegaard, Soren. "Is There Such a Thing as a Teleological Suspension of the Ethical?"
Schleiermacher, Friedrich. Excerpts from *The Christian Faith*.

Course Requirements

Online Student Handbook

The Online Student Handbook is a guide that contains information for participation in this course. Needed forms may be downloaded and printed from this site. You will find it located on the RTS/Virtual website under Resources. Check here for all the latest updates.

Requirements in Brief

All work is to be completed within four months from the time that you enroll in this course.

Follow the Study Guide provided.

Listen to all recorded lectures.

Complete all readings.

Research paper

Final examination

Research Paper (45%)

You are to prepare a 7-10 page review of Ken Myers' *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes*. Evaluate Myers on the relation between Christian faith and popular culture. Assess Myers' book in the light of contemporary theology and the various ways in which the church has interacted with contemporary culture. Write your paper as if addressing informed members of your church. How would you address their present concerns about popular music, the arts, television, and the media? You may assume they know little about contemporary theology, but they are aware of the ineffectiveness of the church at the end of the 20th century. Avoid the temptation to preach. Focus your attention, instead, on helping them to understand popular culture as enabled by Myers' work.

The paper must not be over 10 typewritten pages (12-point type font size, New Times Roman font style or equivalent) and must use *The Chicago Manual of Style* or the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, Second Edition, for formatting, including Title Page; Table of Contents; headings and sub-headings; and a bibliography. One of the criteria for evaluating the paper will be style: Is the paper written in a clear, straightforward style of academic prose? Use the guidelines in Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*. This paper is to be submitted with the final examination at the end of the course. Your examination and other material will not be graded until the paper is in hand.

Examination (Final: 50%)

You will take one comprehensive exam. The exam will consist of identification questions as well as short and long essays that require summary and analysis of issues and figures studied in the course.

All exams are to be requested online (<http://virtual.rts.edu/>). All exams are proctored. Upon completion, please follow all instructions on the Exam Request page concerning how to submit your exam to RTS/Virtual.

Mentor Report/Course Application Paper (5%)

Each MA Distance student is required to have his mentor submit a report at the end of the course. This report will contribute to 5% of the student's grade. For students who are not registered in the MA program, you are asked to write a 200 word summary of how you perceive what you have learned in this course will fit into the objectives you have for your ministry, your educational goals, or other objectives you wish to achieve in life.

Assignments

All Assignments are due the last day of the course (See start letter), unless stipulated otherwise in this syllabus. Any student who needs an extension must get approval from the Virtual Campus before the deadline. Assignments are to be submitted as e-mail attachments . Please place course title in the subject heading (E-mail: vcstudentservices@rts.edu).

Time Limit

All course work, including exams, papers, reading requirements, is to be completed within four months from your course start date.

Contact Information

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COURSE OUTLINE
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Lesson One

- Lecture 1 Introduction and Perspective: Christianity and Culture
- Lecture 2 The Enlightenment Background: Immanuel Kant, the Philosopher of Protestantism

Lesson Two

- Lecture 3 Kant and Rational Religion
- Lecture 4 19th Century Protestantism: Friedrich Schleiermacher's Recasting of Religion

Lesson Three

- Lecture 5 Schleiermacher: A New Systematic I
- Lecture 6 Schleiermacher: A New Systematic II

Lesson Four

- Lecture 7 Schleiermacher: A New Systematic III
- Lecture 8 Soren Kierkegaard: Existentialism

Lesson Five

- Lecture 9 Nash: Case for Propositional Revelation
- Lecture 10 Gilkey: Neo Orthodoxy, View of Revelation

Lesson Six

- Lecture 11 Karl Barth I
- Lecture 12 Karl Barth II

Lesson Seven

- Lecture 13 Karl Barth III
- Lecture 14 Rudolf Bultmann and Myth

Lesson Eight

- Lecture 15 Rudolf Bultmann and Demythologization
- Lecture 16 Fundamentalism and the Response to Liberalism

Lesson Nine

- Lecture 17 Secularism and Secularization
- Lecture 18 Liberation Theology

Lesson Ten

- Lecture 19 Evangelicalism

Lesson Eleven

Lecture 20 Culture Wars I
Lecture 21 Culture Wars II

Lesson Twelve

Lecture 22 Culture Wars III

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY
The Church and the World in the Twentieth Century
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- Armerding, Carl E. *Evangelicals and Liberation*. Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1977.
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