I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

We live in a post-Christian and religiously-ambiguous culture, which is now by consensus referred to as “Postmodernism”. Our culture expresses an open hostility towards traditional forms of Christian faith while also being open to many forms of radical religious movements and a renewed pagan spirituality. It is profoundly committed to a deep pluralism and yet is ambivalent about how wide that pluralism extends. Its central thinkers have trumpeted the death of the self and the irrelevance of God. It is increasingly wrestling with its global identity as well.

This course will begin by charting the origin of postmodernism in the thought of Frederick Neitzsche as well as in the ideological and social revolutions of the 1960s. These revolutions inevitably led to a loss of a “world out there” to be discerned and interpreted. Along the way both “God” and the “self” were reduced to mere imaginative constructs which could be socially manipulated for purposes of power and politics.

The course will also examine themes across a wide swath of contemporary concerns – from the impact of globalization upon the missionary identity of the church, to the clash of world cultures in postmodern times. The specific theological themes of anthropology will also be evaluated in the light of postmodern pressures. Finally the course shall sketch some strategies for faithfully thinking and living out the Christian faith in these postmodern times. The church has finally realized that it will ignore the postmodern world at its own peril.

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are required to complete the required reading list below. A list of the “extra reading” should be turned in as well. In addition the student shall prepare a brief reading report (Th.M students are to write five page reports, M.A. / M.Div students are to write two page reports) on four primary readings from the course. Students are encouraged to participate in one of the two in-class presentations (“Religion in the Public Square Debate”, or the “Emergent Church Movement” discussion). The final requirement shall consist of writing a theological paper, (Th.M students are to write 20-25 pages in length, M.A. / M.Div students are to write a 12-15 page paper) which shall interact seriously and reflectively with one of the figures and/or themes of the course.

The final paper shall count as 80 percent of the final grade. The reading reports (presentations) and reading requirement shall count as 20 percent (4 points for each report turned in on time, 2 points for reports turned in late, 4 points for completing the required reading) of the final grade. Participation in a student presentation is worth 5 extra points. Due dates for the reading reports are listed below and the final papers are due on Dec 21 – unless you are graduating. Due date for the final paper for January graduating seniors is Dec 10.
III. REQUIRED TEXTS
1. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*
3. Either:
4. Articles:
   Richard Rorty, “Religion in the Public Square” and Nicholas Wolterstorff, “An Engagement with Rorty” (On CAMS)
6. Leslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks* (Eerdmans)

IV. Due Dates for Reading Reports
1. Friedrich Nietzsche – Sept 21
2. Richard Lints – *Oct 26 (??)*
4. Michel Foucault – Oct 5
5. Richard Rorty and Nicholas Wolterstorff – Oct 19
6. Lamin Sanneh – Oct 26
7. Leslie Newbigin – Nov 16
8. John Franke – Nov 23

V. Presentation Panels
*Religion in the Public Square* (Oct 19)
   Rorty/Wolterstorff articles
   2 students describing/defending Rorty
   2 students describing/defending Wolterstorff

*Emergent Church Movement* (Nov 23)
   John Franke, Manifold Witness
   1 student describing Emergent Church
   1 student describing concept of “Manifold Witness”
   1 student taking issue with concept of “Manifold Witness”
   1 student answering, “How should the church deal with diversity?”

V. Recommended Background Texts
Penner, Myron, *Christianity and the Postmodern Turn: Six Views* (Baker, 2006)
VI. WARNING ON PLAGIARISM
Helpful guidelines on plagiarism can be found on the Indiana University website listed below. This document has the official recognition of the Gordon-Conwell faculty and provides very helpful tools to guide you as you prepare your papers/exams. In order to save paper, we’ve provided you with the website address: http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html. Please consider this carefully.

VII. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS
To protect the professor’s intellectual property rights with regard to classroom content, students are asked to refrain from audio and video recording of classes, as well as audio, video, and written publication (including internet posting and broadcasting) or live transmission of classroom proceedings.

VIII. INTERNET USAGE
Students are asked to refrain from accessing the internet at any point during class sessions, unless otherwise instructed by the professor. “Surfing the web,” checking email, and other internet-based activities are distracting to other students and to the professor, and prevent the student from fully participating in the class session.
Outline of the Course

Week One
  Naming Ourselves
  Modernity/Postmodernity; Modernism/Postmodernism

Week Two – The Beginnings of the Revolution
  The Legacy of Nietzsche
  The End of Ideology??
  (Nietzsche – The Anti-Christ)

Week Three – Early Movements of Postmodern Protest
  The Civil Rights Movement and Black Theology
  The Sexual Revolution and Feminist Theology
  The Death of God and the rebirth of Spirituality
  Vietnam and the Birth of the New Left
  (Lints-Progressive and Conservative Ideologies)

Week Four – Postmodernism in the Academy
  Rorty and the Death of Foundationalism
  Foucault and the Archaeology of (Post)Modernity
  Derrida and Deconstruction
  Postmodernism and Postmodernity
  (Rorty, Objectivity and Foucault, Power Knowledge)

Week Five – Religion in the Postmodern Public Square
  Student Presentation - Religion in the Public Square Debate
  (Richard Rorty and Nicholas Wolterstorff articles)

Week Six – Postmodernity and Hypermodernity
  Globalization and Pluralism
  Global Church Realities
  Postcolonial Christianity
  (Sanneh-Whose Christianity)

Week Seven – Postmodernity and Hypermodernity
  The Self in the Age of Images
  Commodification and Consumerism

Week Eight – Ecclesiology in Postmodern Perspective
  Missional Church Movements
  (Newbigin, Gospel to the Gentiles)

Week Nine – Ecclesiology in Postmodern Perspective
  Student Presentation - The Emergent Church Movement
  (Franke, Manifold Witness)

Week Ten – Concluding Comments
Bibliography on Postmodernism

Aichele, George, The Postmodern Bible / the Bible and Culture Collective. Yale University Press, 1995


Beckwith, Francis J. and Gregory Koukl, Relativism: Feet Firmly Planted in Mid-Air (Baker 2000).

Benhabib, Seyla, Situating the self : gender, community and postmodernism in contemporary ethics, Routledge, 1992.


Derrida, Jacques and Geoffrey Bennington, Religion and Postmodernism, University of Chicago Press, 1993


Erickson, Millard, Postmodernizing the Faith: Evangelical Responses to the Challenge of Postmodernism. (Baker, 1998)


Ferre, Frederick, Being and Value: Toward Constructive Postmodern Metaphysics (Suny Series in Constructive Postmodern Thought) SUNY Press, 1998


Grenz, Stanley, Primer on Postmodernism (Eerdmans, 1998)

Grenz, Stanley, Renewing the Center: Evangelical Theology in a Post-Theological Era (Baker, 2000)

Groothuis, Douglas, Truth decay: defending Christianity against the challenges of postmodernism. InterVarsity Press, 2000

Growing up postmodern : imitating Christ in the age of 'whatever'. (Princeton lectures on youth, church, and culture – with essays by William Willimon, Martin Marty, Nancy Ammerman) ; Institute for Youth Ministry, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1999


Hassan, I. "The Culture of Postmodernism," in Theory Culture and Society 2 (1985), 119-131,


Henderson, David, Culture Shift: Communicating God’s Truth to Our Changing World (Baker, 1998)


Lash, Scott and Jonathan Friedman, eds., Modernity and identity (essays by Blackwell, 1992


Lash, Scott, Sociology of postmodernism. Routledge, 1990


Mayers, Ronald B., Apologetic to postmodernism [microform]: general revelation and the fifth gospel ETS Papers (1997)


Middleton, J. Richard & Brian J. Walsh, Truth is stranger than it used to be: biblical faith in a postmodern age. IVP 1995


Nash, Robert N., Jr, Loren Mead, An 8-Track Church in a Cd World: The Modern Church in a Postmodern World (Smith and Helwys Pub., 1997)


Neville, Robert Cummings, The highroad around modernism.


Oden, Tom, Requiem


Rorty, Richard, Contingency, Irony and Solidarity.


Schrag, Calvin O., The self after postmodernity. Yale University Press, 1997


Stiver, Dan, The uneasy alliance between evangelicalism and postmodernism [microform]: a reply to Thiselton. ETS Papers. 1994

Sweet, Leonard, AquaChurch: Essential Leadership Arts for Piloting Your Church in Today's Fluid Culture (Group Publ. 1999)


van Huysteen, J. Wentzel, "Is the Postmodernist Always a Postfoundationalist?" Theology Today 50 (October 1993): 373-386.


Wells, David, God in the Wasteland, Eerdmans, 1996.


Woods, Tim, Beginning Postmodernism (Beginnings) Manchester Univ Press, 1999;