



## ***New Geneva Theological Seminary***

### **RS 504 (Two Credit Hours) The Christian Worldview II**

#### **Course Syllabus Fall, 2017**

**Course Summary:** God has not only saved Christians *from* something (sin), He has also saved believers *to* something (Christ's lordship over all of life). The Christian faith is inexhaustible in its scope and reach as we understand that God's truth bears implication on every area of life in this world. There is a need to develop and understand a systematic and comprehensive biblical way to understand our world, to live in a Christian manner in the world, and to thoughtfully communicate a Christian way of life with those with whom we rub shoulders. The Christian faith gives relevant, solid answers to complex issues that our culture faces in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We must ask, does God have anything to say about economics, art, politics or work? He certainly does, and for God's people to be light and salt in our world, we must know, believe, and apply His truth to all areas of our world and life view.

In RS503 we built our Christian worldview by learning what the Bible teaches about theology, philosophy, ethics, anthropology, science and history. In RS504, we will examine the social order that God has designed and the worldview areas of sociology, economics, law, politics and the arts & media. We will examine these worldview areas by first understanding the Biblical Christian worldview then by comparing it with the predominant cultural understanding, with a focus on secular humanism and postmodernism. We will study the people and ideas that have most influenced the thinking in our culture.

**Professor:** Rev. Sean Whitenack, MDiv. New Geneva Theological Seminary; DMin Candidate Westminster Theological Seminary  
Contact Cell: 540-379-5385; E-mail: sean@nlicc.org

**Texts:**

1. Understanding the Times (UTT), Dr. David A. Noebel (Revised 2<sup>nd</sup> edition); ISBN 0936163003 (510 pp; 246 this semester)
2. Idols for Destruction (IFD), Herbert Schlossberg; ISBN 0891077383 (344 pp; 124 this semester)
3. Keller, Timothy J. Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012.
4. Other required readings listed below. These readings are available on the internet.
5. Selected readings will be handed out in class



## **Course Objectives**

### **Regarding Knowledge – to know ...**

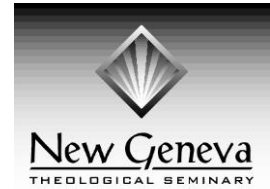
- both the biblical perspective and our culture's perspective on theology, anthropology, philosophy, science, history, and ethics.
- the consistent and logical nature of the biblical worldview.
- the consistent/inconsistent, logical/illogical nature of competing worldviews, especially secular humanism.
- the consequences of ideas and one's worldview.

### **Regarding Skills – to be able to ...**

- rightly articulate the biblical perspective and our culture's perspective on each worldview area.
- argue effectively and winsomely for the biblical worldview.
- reveal, in a winsome way, the inconsistencies and illogical of our culture's worldview.
- discern assumptions and worldview perspectives from current media productions.
- continually examine our personal thinking and actions to discern where we have been taken captive by the worldview of our culture.
- continually examine our actions to discern inconsistencies with our profession of a biblical worldview.
- take a stand for truth without wavering or overly regarding the consequences.

### **Regarding Character – to be ...**

- winsome – having an approach to everyone around us that is so attractive that even the most contrary individual would be drawn to give audience and to have sensed the winsome presence of God.
- compassionate – having a deep compassion for those who have been captured by the empty and vain philosophies of this world.
- zealous – having the zeal to see the lost reconciled with God and the wayward believer seeking God with all their heart.
- hopeful – having a strong sense of the power of God and His truth to transform the lives of men and our culture.
- honesty – ready to admit when personal thoughts, attitudes, and actions are contrary to a biblical worldview position.
- humility – devoid of any arrogance in my apologetic; considering others more highly than myself.
- steadfast – standing for biblical truth without wavering.



**Grading (See Due Dates in Chart Below):** Credit requirements are as follows:

**Class Participation:** Students will be expected to have their reading assignments and writing assignments completed prior to attending class. The schedule is included below. Significant time in class will be spent discussing matters related to the writing assignments. Additionally, students will be expected to have involved themselves in a study of the Scriptures such that they may be fully engaged in discussing the topic at hand. Class time will consist of lecture, video, discussion, and in-class worldview analysis.

**Homework: (25 points each)**

1. For **each worldview area in Understanding the Times** (sociology, law, politics, economics), students will be required to fill out a one-page Worldview Overview Page (format provided), listing key verses of an applicable attribute of God, key verses of an applicable attribute of man, relevant passages from Genesis 1-11 demonstrating how God intended us to think about this aspect of our understanding, and key points contrasting the positions of the biblical worldview and the secularist worldview. The Overview should demonstrate that the student understands and can apply the material from the Understanding the Times book. Topics due are listed on the Schedule (below).
2. For **each chapter of Idols for Destruction**, students will complete a one-page summary of the main points of the chapter.

**Five Writing Assignments:**

Each of these assignments are intended to help students develop their Christian worldview in social areas within our culture. Each assignment should be between 1200-1500 words in length (except as noted), double-spaced, and standard paper format. Each should use at least one additional resource (class textbooks are permitted). Footnotes are required but not a bibliography. A quality paper will have a thoughtful, if brief, Biblical reflection on the topic and answers to the prevailing humanist beliefs. The papers will be discussed in class. They may be adjusted based on classroom discussion, but must be resubmitted within a week of their original due date. Late assignments will be subject to an immediate point reduction of 10%. Papers more than a month late will face a 20% point reduction. Papers will not be accepted past the due date for the final exam.

1. (60 points) Family: Read booklet *Marriage and the Public Good: Ten Principles* available through the Witherspoon Institute at [http://protectmarriage.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/WI\\_Marriage.pdf](http://protectmarriage.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/WI_Marriage.pdf) Write a paper that discusses the following topics: What constitutes marriage? Discuss the current efforts to redefine marriage and compare and contrast these definitions to the Biblical view of marriage. What are the consequences of these definitions of marriage? What is the church's responsibility in addressing this issue?
2. (25 points) Politics: Select a *current events* article that reveals a humanist perspective (Secular Humanist, Marxist, or Postmodern) of politics and write a short (500 word) summary describing



how the article assumes or advocates the humanist belief or denies God’s design for politics. Include a brief description of God’s design for politics to contrast the humanist position. Be prepared to present your finding in class prior to handing it in.

3. (50 points) Law: Report on Abortion: What are the key issues when it comes to discussing the legality of abortion in our nation? How does a person’s belief about abortion grow out of a comprehensive worldview (including theology, philosophy, anthropology, ethics, science and sociology)? What is the churches role in addressing this matter? Be sure to include a Biblical perspective on abortion.
4. (25 points) Economics: Select a *current events article* that reveals a humanist perspective (Secular Humanist, Marxist, or Postmodern) of economics and write a short (500 word) paragraph describing how the article assumes or advocates the humanist belief or denies God’s design for economics. Include a brief description of God’s design for politics to contrast the humanist position. Be prepared to present your finding in class prior to handing it in.
5. (50 points) Community and Engaging the Culture: Read Tim Keller’s book *Center Church*, pages 186-244. Relate our worldview studies to Keller’s summary of the different ways to engage with culture. What role do we as Christians have in engaging the culture in these important worldview areas? Considering your own particular background and gifting, what place does engaging others in a Christian worldview have in your personal ministry?

Final Exam

The final will be a take-home, closed book, three-hour exam consisting of essay and objective questions, covering reading and lecture material. The Final will be distributed by email no later than 11/25/17 and is due to be turned into via email or physically to the NLIC office by 4:30 pm on 12/16/17.

Grading Criteria

Requirement	Points
Class Participation	40 points
Homework	150 points
Writing Assignments	210 points
Final Exam	100 points



**Schedule:**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>Worldview Area</b>	<b>UTT<sup>(1)</sup> Reading Due</b>	<b>IFD<sup>(2)</sup> Reading Due</b>	<b>Homework Due</b>
10/27/17 6-10 PM	Social Order & the Family  God & Man	Sociology Chapter 6		<i>Overview: Sociology</i>  <i>Writing Assignment #1</i>
10/28/17 9AM -5 PM	The Sphere of the Church  The Sphere of the State  The American Experiment	Politics Chapter 8	Idols of Power Chap 5	<i>Overviews: Politics</i>  <i>Summary: Idols of Power</i>  <i>Writing Assignment #2</i>
11/17/17 6-10 PM	Law  The Sphere of Labor	Law Chapter 7  Economics Chapter 9	Idols of Mammon Chap 3 & pp 241-250	<i>Overview: Law , Economics</i>  <i>Summary: Idols of Mammon</i>  <i>Writing Assignment #3, 4</i>
11/18/17 9AM -5 PM	The Sphere of Community  Involvement			<i>Writing Assignment #5</i>
12/16/17				<b>Final Exam Due</b>

(1) UTT--Understanding the Times; (2) IFD-- Idols for Destruction



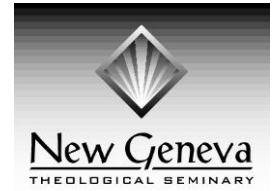
### **Recommended Works**

- Baker, Hunter. *The End of Secularism*. Crossway Books, 2009.
- Colson, Charles, and Nancy Pearcey. *How Now Shall We Live?* Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2004.
- Davis, Percival, and Dean H. Kenyon. *Of Pandas and People: The Central Question of Biological Origins*. 2nd ed. Houghton Pub Co, 1993.
- Frame, John M. *The Doctrine of the Christian Life*. P & R Publishing, 2008.
- Hiebert, Paul G. *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Hunter, James Davison. *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Keller, Timothy J. *The Reason for God : Belief in an Age of Skepticism*. New York: Dutton, 2008.
- Kuyper, Abraham. *Lectures on Calvinism, The Stone Lectures of 1898*. Cosimo Classics, 2009.
- MacArthur, John, Richard L. Mayhue, and John A. Hughes. *Think Biblically!: Recovering a Christian Worldview*. Crossway Books, 2003.
- Mathison, Keith. *A Reformed Approach to Science and Scripture*. Ligonier Ministries, 2013.
- Mohler Jr., R. Albert. 2008. *Atheism Remix: A Christian Confronts the New Atheists*. Crossway Books.
- Meeter, H. Henry. *The Basic Ideas of Calvinism*. 6th ed. Baker Pub Group, 1990.
- Noebel, David. *Understanding the Times*. Harvest House Publishers, 1994.
- Pearcey, Nancy. *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity*. Stg. Crossway Books, 2008.
- Poythress, Vern. *Redeeming Science : A God-Centered Approach*. Wheaton Ill.: Crossway Books, 2006.
- Schaeffer, Francis A. *The God Who Is There*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1998.
- Schaeffer, Francis A. *How Should We Then Live?: The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture*. 50 Anv. Crossway Books, 2005.
- Schlossberg, Herbert. *Idols for Destruction: The Conflict of Christian Faith and American Culture*. Crossway Books, 1993.
- Sire, James W. *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept*. IVP Academic, 2004.
- . *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*. 3rd ed. InterVarsity Press, 1997.
- Smith, James K. A. *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2009.
- Sproul, R. C. *Lifeworlds: Understanding the Ideas That Shape Society Today*. Old Tappan, N.J.: F.H. Revell, 1986.
- . *The Consequences of Ideas: Understanding the Concepts That Shaped Our World*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2009.
- Veith, Gene Edward. *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*. Turning Point Christian Worldview Series. Wheaton, Ill: Crossway Books, 1994.
- Wolters, Albert M. *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*. 2nd ed. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005.



Other Resources:

- World Magazine
- I highly recommend the daily broadcast on cultural issues from a Christian worldview, provided by Albert Mohler, available through iTunes and [www.almohler.com](http://www.almohler.com).
- The Truth Project (<http://www.thetruthproject.org/>) – my RS503 course is built upon the things I learned from Dr. Del Tackett who created The Truth Project with Focus on the Family. I can't think of a more compelling resource for bringing worldview studies into the church. Additionally, I like this library of video clips covering a number of worldview issues: <http://www.thetruthproject.org/en/about/culturefocus.aspx>.
- Omnibus I, II, III, IV, V, VI (published by Veritas Press) – As a homeschooling parent, I have really enjoyed working through this Middle and High School material with my children. It takes the student through many well-known theological, historical, and literary works and helps the student discover the worldview elements of each book. Because my own background is from a science and math oriented public education, I have found (as an adult) that this reading has been transformative in the development of my own worldview. I think the material here would be excellent for all Christians to work through in building a Christian worldview.



## Christian Worldview Research Worksheet

**Worldview Area:** \_\_\_\_\_

- Attribute of God that is critical to this area: \_\_\_\_\_
- Key Verses revealing this attribute (Include relevant passages from Genesis 1-11):
  
- Attribute of man that is critical to understanding this area: \_\_\_\_\_
- Key verses revealing this attribute (Include relevant passages from Genesis 1-11):
  
- Other primary truth revealed in the Scriptures regarding this area (principles, observations, examples, etc.) :
  
  
- The Biblical Christian worldview in this area:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- The secular humanist worldview in this area:





## Christian Worldview Research Worksheet

### Worldview Area: Theology

- Attribute of God that is critical to this area: **God's existence**
- Key Verses revealing this attribute:  
**Genesis 1:1** - God was in the beginning  
**Exodus 3:13-14** - The very nature of God is that of existence  
**Romans 1:18-21** - God is visible in everything
- Attribute of man that is critical to understanding this area: **Man's dependence**
- Key verses revealing this attribute:  
**Psalms 14:1** - All things are impossible without God, man is dependent upon providence.  
**John 3:16** - Without God redemption is impossible, man is dependent on God's redemption  
**John 17:3** - Life has no meaning without God, dependency upon God giving meaning to life  
**Psalms 119:89** - Without God ethics are impossible, dependency on God's ethical standards.
- Other primary truth revealed in the Scriptures regarding this area (principles, observations, examples, etc.) :  
*Special Revelation: Not only is God's existence is set forth in the Bible, but it is assumed. Even more than that the characteristics of His existence are set forth by the Scriptures. God is personal, holy (Is 6), sovereign, humble (Matt 11:28-30, as discussed in class), just (Ex 34:7), loving (1 Jo 4:8), triune (Matt 28:19-20), and so on. We are at no loss in specific attributes of the God of the universe.*  
*General Revelation: God clearly demonstrates Himself in nature, though the wholeness of His character is not obvious in nature. Were it not for sin, one should be able to deduce God from nature, it is so clear to mankind.*
- The Biblical Christian worldview in this area:  
*God exists, therefore man is dependent upon God for all things. Man cannot have a meaningful (truthful, actual) existence without God.*  
*Christian Theism (Trinitarian) – Absolute Personality; Lordship – Control, Authority, Presence*  
*Therefore, we need God to make sense of this world and depend upon Him for understanding in all areas of our worldviews. We must go to Him for understanding of*



*our universe(Gen 1), our place in the universe(Ps 8), and mostly for redemption as we have fallen short of His perfect standard (Ps 3:23,6:23).*

*Ultimately, there is One to whom we are accountable for our actions and to Whom we must answer to for our lives, which are a gift from Him.*

- Our culture's worldview in this area:

*God does not exist, or he is impersonal (and non-trinitarian), distant, or irrelevant to understanding and living in this world. The atheism of secular humanism a theological statement as it makes a metaphysical statement about the universe. Even in the supposed 96% of America that believes that God exists, most of it is a practical atheism. Most of our culture does not act as though their life is a gift from the Most High God. Most of our culture does not act as though they are held accountable for actions upon this earth.*

*All this to say that even though many say that they believe in God, the Secular Humanist has won the hearts of most people in practical matters. We are here by chance (naturalistic evolution), we are not accountable (naturalism), there is no ethic to appeal to (naturalism), and he who dies with the most toys wins (materialism). These are the tenants of secular humanism that are in our schools, our newspapers, our workplaces, and everywhere around us.*