

# INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

**COURSE TITLE:** Introduction to Christian Worldview

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** An introduction to the two stories and worldviews in which the believing community in the West must carry out its calling. The course will consist of five parts. First, we will briefly survey the Biblical story in its progressive unfolding of God's work of redemption. Emphasis will be placed on the unity of Scripture as it reaches its fulfillment and fullness in Jesus Christ and its final authority for life. Second, we will articulate a Biblical worldview in its significance for public life. Attention will be given to the implications of the creation, fall, restoration/consummation narrative structure of the Bible as normative for our callings in public life. Third, we will examine Western story as the cultural context in which we live. Consideration will be given to the religious nature and comprehensive scope of the western worldview as it affects public life. Fourth, we will probe the complex issue of living in the Biblical story in the context of contemporary western culture. Attention will be given to the comprehensive demands of both stories and the resulting conflict. We will explore a Biblical resolution to this antithesis.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Survey the unfolding story of God's mighty acts of redemption revealed in Scripture as foundation for use of the Bible in the classroom.
  - a. Discern the profoundly coherent unity of the Biblical story as it narrates God's progressively unfolding work of redemption.
  - b. Understand comprehensive scope of Scriptural message.
  - c. Sense deeply our place in that Biblical story.
2. Articulate a Biblical worldview in its significance for Christian education.
  - a. Discern the way the Bible functions as a comprehensive narrative framework for the public witness of the church
  - b. Investigate the relationship between the Biblical story and an elaborated worldview.
  - c. Comprehend the nature of a worldview.
  - d. Articulate a Biblical worldview in the way of creation, fall and redemption/consummation.
3. Examine the modern/postmodern worldview that grips western culture.
  - a. Discern the historical development of the Western story.
  - b. Understand the fundamental features and contours of the contemporary western worldview and its coherent unity.
  - c. Deepen awareness of the religious direction of our cultural story as it is rooted in faith.
  - d. Expose the myth of neutrality propagated by the secular faith.
  - e. Critique the pervasive secular/religious, public/private dichotomies of Western culture that vitiates a Christian witness in public life.
4. Probe the 'unbearable tension' of living at the crossroads between two stories.
  - a. Discern the religious nature, comprehensive demand, and social embodiment of both the Biblical and the western story.
  - b. Understand the fundamental conflict and antithesis that exists between these two

worldviews.

c. Investigate various Christian proposals to the unbearable tension of living in the world but not being part of it.

5. Investigate what life at the crossroads might look like in various dimensions of life.

## **COURSE TEXTS**

Michael Goheen and Craig Bartholomew, *Living at the Crossroads: An Introduction to Christian Worldview* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008)

Michael Goheen and Craig Bartholomew, *The Story Line of the Bible*

[http://www.biblicaltheology.ca/blue\\_files/The%20Story-Line%20of%20the%20Bible.pdf](http://www.biblicaltheology.ca/blue_files/The%20Story-Line%20of%20the%20Bible.pdf)

OR

Lesslie Newbigin, *A Walk Through the Bible* (Vancouver: Regent College Press, 1999)

## **COURSE EVALUATION**

1. Class attendance and participation - 20%

Participants are expected to attend all classes and participate.

2. Mid-term exam – 40%

3. Final exam – 40%

## **COURSE OVERVIEW**

I. Scriptural Story: The Unfolding Story of Redemption

A. Creation: God Builds His Kingdom

B. Sin: Rebellion in the Kingdom

C. Redemption: God Restores His Kingdom

1. Old Testament Expectation

2. New Testament Fulfillment

D. New Creation: God Consummates His Kingdom Restoration

II. Articulation of a Biblical Worldview

A. What is a worldview?

B. Creation

C. Sin

D. Redemption

III. Western Story

A. Western Story

B. Contemporary Situation

- IV. Living at the Crossroads: The Clash Between the Two Stories
  - A. Contextualization
  - B. Life at the Crossroads

## **LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE**

Week 1: Lecture Topic: 1) The Comprehensive Scope of the Gospel and the Church's Mission; 2) What is a worldview? Reading: Goheen and Bartholomew, Preface, chapters 1-2.

Week 2: Lecture Topic: The Biblical Story; Reading: Goheen and Bartholomew, Story-Line OR Newbigin, Walk Through the Bible

Week 3: Lecture Topic: Articulating a Biblical Worldview: Creation; Reading: Goheen and Bartholomew, chapter 3.

Week 4: Lecture Topic: Articulating a Biblical Worldview: Sin and Redemption; Reading: Goheen and Bartholomew, chapter 4 (first half).

Week 5: Lecture Topic: Articulating a Biblical Worldview: Redemption; Goheen and Bartholomew, chapter 4 (second half)

MIDTERM EXAM: Topic: Biblical Worldview

Week 6: Lecture Topic: Western Story: Roots of Modernity; Reading: Goheen and Bartholomew, chapter 5.

Week 7: Lecture Topic: Western Story: Growth of Modernity; Reading: Goheen and Bartholomew, chapter 6.

Week 8: Lecture Topic: Contemporary Situation: Globalization, Postmodernity, Consumerism; Reading: Goheen and Bartholomew, chapter 7 (first half).

Week 9: Lecture Topic: Contemporary Situation: Globalization, Postmodernity, Consumerism; Reading: Goheen and Bartholomew, chapter 7 (second half)

Week 10: Lecture Topic: Living at the Crossroads: A Faithful, Relevant Witness; Reading: Goheen and Bartholomew, chapter 8

Week 11: Lecture Topics: 1) Living at the Crossroads: A Faithful Relevant Witness; 2) Life at the Crossroads: Politics and Business; Reading: Goheen and Bartholomew, chapter 9 (first half)

Week 12: Lecture Topics: Life at the Crossroads: Art and Sports; Scholarship and Education; Reading: Goheen and Bartholomew, chapter 9 (second half), Pastoral postscript.

FINAL EXAM: Topics: Western Story, Contextualization, Life at the Crossroads.