Taylor Seminary

TH 543 Christian Worldview

Winter 2015
Tuesdays: 1:30-4:30 pm

Anchor yourself to the foundation of everything you are.

INSTRUCTOR: Randal D. Rauser, PhD
Phone: 780-431-4428
Email: randal.rauser@taylor-edu.ca

DESCRIPTION:

An introduction to the concept of worldview and the lineaments of the Christian worldview and Christian mind. The course will include both an introduction to the way that Christian belief impacts all Christian thinking as well as a critical analysis of major challenges to the Christian worldview such as atheistic naturalism, postmodernism and consumerism. (Three Credits)

OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should

1. understand the intellectual coherence and force of a Christian worldview.
2. understand how a truly Christian mind affects one’s total life-experience.
3. value the power of thinking Christianly in all things.
4. serve by modeling a Christian mind integrated with action in the church and society.

TEXTBOOKS:


Halteman, Matthew. Compassionate Eating as Care of Creation. HSUS Faith Outreach Booklet Series. HSUS, 2008.

Available in the moodle component of the course at http://online.taylor-edu.ca/


**REQUIREMENTS:**

1. **Class Participation**

   It is important to attend regularly, arrive *on time*, appear to be sentient, and to be actively engaged in the discussion of topics.

2. **Text Readings (800 pp.)**

3. **Four Book Reviews**

   A book review is required for each of the assigned texts (Cavanaugh, Moreland, Nicholi and Rauser). Each review should summarize the book in about 750 words, and then spend about 250 words engaging in critical interaction. (What did you agree with? Where did you disagree? Which questions has this book raised? Which questions did it answer?)

   All citations from the book or references to specific points therein should be parenthetical: e.g. Moreland argues that postmodernism is a loose coalition of thinkers (77). *Do not* use footnotes for this assignment.

   *(1000-1250 words × 4 = 4000-5000 words)*

   **Due Dates:**
   - Feb 10: Rauser, *You’re not as Crazy as I Think*
   - Feb 24: Nicholi, *The Question of God*
   - Mar 10: Moreland, *Kingdom Triangle*
   - Mar 24: Cavanaugh, *Being Consumed*

4. **Online Book Discussion Forums**

   The course has a Moodle site with forums for the discussion of each of the books. It is expected that students will participate in each of the forums by making at least one original substantive comment/question and one response to another student. Each forum opens on the day the review is due and will remain open for the duration of the semester. You will be graded for your participation.

   **Due Dates:**
   - Feb 11 (forum opens): Rauser, *You’re not as Crazy as I Think*
   - Feb 25 (forum opens): Nicholi, *The Question of God*
   - Mar 11 (forum opens): Moreland, *Kingdom Triangle*
   - Mar 25 (forum opens): Cavanaugh, *Being Consumed*
5. **Worldview Term Paper Bibliography and Outline** 3 hours

The paper is to be written as an enquiry into a particular topic from a Christian perspective. *Topics must be chosen in consultation with the professor.* The paper should reflect a thoughtful engagement with the topic in question, highlighting how a Christian perspective informs reflection on the topic. Keep in mind that in many cases there are a range of possible perspectives a Christian might take. The key is to offer one informed Christian perspective rather than the *only possible* Christian perspective.

Possible topics include:

- genocide; credit; factory farms; heavy metal music; cosmetic surgery; eco-tourism; sexual ethics; time; vacations; the slow food movement; animal rights activism; U2’s music; privatized health care; military industrial complex; nationalism; other religions; cancer; super heroes; circumcision; marriage; beauty; homosexuality; torture...

Submit a thesis or enquiry statement, along with a one page outline of the paper and a bibliography with a minimum of 10 academic sources (peer-reviewed journals and books). Assigned course readings may be included on your bibliography but do not count toward the ten source requirement. Follow this structure for the outline:

I. Main Point
   A. Sub Point
      1. sub point
   B. Sub Point

II. Main Point

**Due Date: Feb 17**

6. **Worldview Term Paper** 16 hours

This paper can be structured in the form of a thesis defense (e.g. “I will argue that Christians should be pacifists”) or as an enquiry (e.g. “I will explore how Christian conviction might shape the practice of biology.”). The paper should highlight how this Christian perspective differs from a non-Christian perspective on the same subject matter. As a research paper it should demonstrate a thoughtful engagement with the relevant literature. It is *not* simply a “reflection paper”.

In writing your paper, follow the guidelines of the Taylor Research and Writing Guide including title page, footnotes or endnotes, and bibliography. The Guide is available on the Moodle site.

**(3000-3500 words)**

**Due Date: Apr 7, 14 or 21**
7. **Worldview class presentation**

After completing the paper you will present your results to the class. Presentations should take 25-30 minutes including student-led class discussion and questions. Presenters can use PowerPoint, Prezi, Emaze, other software platforms, short video clips, dramatic reenactments and props, or other pedagogical tools to make the presentation memorable and effective.

**Due Date:** Apr 7, 14 or 21  
**9 hours**  
**Total:** 90 hours

**HOW TO SUBMIT AN ASSIGNMENT:** Assignments should be emailed to [randal.rauser@taylor-edu.ca](mailto:randal.rauser@taylor-edu.ca) before 11:59 pm on the day they are due to ensure you do not receive a late penalty. Do not submit a hard copy. When you email your assignment it is recommended that you request a read receipt to ensure that your assignment has been received. *You are responsible to ensure that the assignment is received.*

**TITLING YOUR ASSIGNMENT:** Please follow this template for naming assignment documents:

- Book Review: Last name-Book Review (e.g. Jones-Book Review)
- Term Paper: Last name-Term Paper

**LATE PENALTIES:** Assignments automatically receive a 5% penalty for every day that they are late. Assignments late more than one week will receive 0%. (Weekends count as one day.) Extensions will not be granted except in the case of a specific personal or medical crisis.

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:** Cheating and plagiarism are serious academic offenses and will not be tolerated.

*If plagiarism you are tempted to do, be warned it fits ill with a Christian worldview.*

**EVALUATION:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Reviews (4×10%)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forum Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worldview Outline and Bibliography</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worldview Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worldview Presentation</td>
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COURSE OUTLINE:

INTRODUCING CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 20</td>
<td>Worldview: A brief introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 27</td>
<td>Christian Worldview: conceptions and misconceptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb  3</td>
<td>The Question of God (online Moodle component)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>*There is no class onsite this week.</td>
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<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>A brief history of (Christian) worldview; Models of Christ and culture</td>
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<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>Pluralism and engagement: How to listen to and learn from others</td>
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CHRISTIANITY MEETS NATURALISM AND POSTMODERNISM

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<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 24</td>
<td>Naturalism as a worldview project</td>
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<td>Mar  3</td>
<td>Postmodernism and truth</td>
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BUILDING A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar 10</td>
<td>A theology of vocation</td>
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<td>Mar 17</td>
<td>Consumerism and Christianity</td>
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<td>Mar 24</td>
<td>A case study: Bible translation and the marketplace</td>
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<td>Film: TBA</td>
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<td>Mar 31</td>
<td>Reading Week (no class)</td>
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<td>Apr  7</td>
<td>The ethics of food; A discussion of Matthew Halteman, Compassionate Eating as Care of Creation Presentations</td>
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<td>Apr 14</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<td>Apr 21</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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BIBLIOGRAPHY


