

## Course Syllabus Spring 2010

**TITLE:** *PHL 426: Christian Worldview Studies*

**SUBJECT AREA:** Philosophy, Theology, Religious Worldviews

**GUIDING**

**PRINCIPLE:** *The Preeminence of Evangelism*

**PROFESSOR:** **Dr. Chris Leland**

Vice President of College Student Ministries  
& Senior Fellow, Christian Worldview Studies

**CREDITS:** 3.0 semester hours; 4.5 quarter hours

**DESCRIPTION:**

The purpose of this course is to provide academic instruction on the importance of and ability to communicate Truth to others in love. In this course, that means exploring the issues of truth, how we arrive at truth, and what we do with truth. In order to accomplish this, one must (1) believe what it is to have an “ultimate purpose in living,” (2) be able to “know” God, and (3) be willing and able to impact the individuals, families and communities around us. A significant part of this perspective is better understanding what we believe and why, as well as knowing what the other, prevailing worldviews in society propose and why. Ultimately, we must be fully prepared to give the world *an answer* to questions about life and death and truth and love and God, or as the Scriptures say, to “know how you should respond to each person” who asks us about such things (Col. 4:6, NAS trans.).

The Christian Worldview Studies course is designed, therefore, to deepen and broaden the student’s understanding of the core presuppositions of the Christian worldview, and to equip them to evaluate those presuppositions in contrast with other worldviews. The goal is to enable students to think more clearly and critically about the ultimate issues of human existence, so that they may live more purposeful lives and participate more constructively in the larger socio-cultural debate.

The study of worldview constitutes a window through which we can view the nature of man and the nature of his conduct. To that extent, it’s as close as we can get to the core reality or truth of who we are and what we do in life. Knowledge of worldviews is commensurate with acquiring a powerful form of *wisdom*. Thus are we also charged with the privilege of understanding *our* times, that we might instruct the world, in both love and truth.

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES:

1. To further enhance students' awareness of the ideological presuppositions of each worldview.
2. To further enhance the students' understanding of the Christian worldview, especially as it contrasts with the other predominant worldviews of today.
3. To empower the student to effectively communicate with those whose worldview differs from the Christian perspective, especially regarding one's understanding of Jesus Christ and the meaning of truth in today's world.
4. To further enhance the students' link between spirituality and intellect.

## TOPICS:

- Worldviews in Conflict
- The Christian Mind
- Christian Theism
- Atheistic Naturalism
- Pagan Mysticism
- Living in a Postmodern (or Post-postmodern) world
- Counterfeit Gods
- Understanding the Islamic Worldview
- Communicating Effectively
- Mass Media Influences
- Contemporary Strategies

## READINGS:

Readings in **bold print** are to be purchased by the student. Other readings are available in the student apartments.

**Beckwith, F, Craig, W.L. & Moreland, J.P. (2004) To everyone an answer; A case for the Christian Worldview. Downer's Grove, IL: Intersity Press.**

Boa, K. D. (2001). Faith has its reasons: An integrative approach to defending Christianity. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

Chapman, C. (2007). Cross and crescent: Responding to the challenge of Islam. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Downers Grove, IL: Intersity Press.

Geivett, R.D. & Speigel, J.S. (2007). Faith, film, and philosophy; Big ideas on the big screen. Downer's Grove, IL: Intersity Press.

**Hazen, C. (2008). Five sacred crossings; A novel approach to a reasonable faith. Eugene, OR; Harvest House Publishers.**

Kreeft, P. & Tacelli, R. K. (1994). Handbook of Christian Apologetics. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

**Lewis, C.S. (2001). The Abolition of Man. San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc.**

**Lewis, C.S. (2001). Mere Christianity. San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc.**

**Micklethwait, J. & Woolridge, A. (2009). God is Back: How the global revival of faith is changing the world. New York: Penguin Press.**

Moreland, J. P. (1997). Love your God with all your mind. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress Publishing Group.

**Moreland, J. P. & Muehlhoff, T. (2007). The God Conversation: Using stories and illustrations to explain your faith. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.**

Romanowski, W. D. (2007). Updated Edition. Eyes wide open. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press.

Schaeffer, F. A. (1984). The great evangelical disaster. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

**Sire, J. W. (2004). The universe next door. A basic worldview catalog (4th ed.). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.**

White, H. (2006). Postmodernism 101: A first course for the curious Christian. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press.

#### **ONLINE:**

Christopher Hitchens & Dinesh D'Souza Debate (<http://www.tkc.edu/debate>)

Articles from Probe.org as well as other websites.

## **GRADED REQUIREMENTS:**

The final grade for this course will be broken into two halves; 50% is for participation and 50% based on the final exam.

### **Participation (200 Points)**

Participation in this course will be determined by four components.

#### In Class Interaction:

During the class sessions you will be graded on both quality and quantity of your interactions. A midterm report will be given to you regarding progress in this area. This will account for 40 points.

#### Small Group Interaction:

There will be a number of opportunities for you to operate in small groups and these interactions will be peer evaluated and self evaluated throughout the semester. This will account for 40 points.

#### Reflection Papers:

There will be four reflection papers assigned throughout the semester. Each of them will ask you to reflect upon a current media example of a worldview in action and the necessary application of course materials. These will each be one page of text in length (double spaced; 12 point font; proofread) and a standard APA title page, as well as a page for sources used (quoted, paraphrased, and noted). These will each account for 20 points each for a total of 80 points.

**NOTE:** Reflection #4 is based on reading - Hazen, C. Five Sacred Crossings. (2008 pp. 15-169). You will want to begin reading this (and it is a quick read – it is short novel) before the day it is due.... ☺

#### Readings:

At the beginning of each class, I will ask you to estimate to the best of your ability how many pages you read during the week. This will account for 40 points.

NOTE: Do not fill out the reading form for others! Listening to recordings, watching necessary videos and reading the on-line articles, as assigned, also constitute required reading. Evaluation of this assignment will be based on the following point distribution:

100% of readings	=	1016 pages	=	40 points
95% of readings	=	965 pages	=	38 points
90% of readings	=	914 pages	=	36 points
85% of readings	=	867 pages	=	34 points
80% of readings	=	813 pages	=	32 points
75% of readings	=	771 pages	=	30 points
70% of readings	=	711 pages	=	28 points
65% of readings	=	660 pages	=	26 points
60% of readings	=	610 pages	=	24 points
55% of readings	=	559 pages	=	22 points
50% of readings	=	508 pages	=	20 points

NO POINTS AWARDED FOR READINGS BELOW 50% OF READINGS.

### **Final Exam (200 points)**

During the final class period students will take a comprehensive exam covering all the material covered during the semester in this class. It will be comprised of 200 objective questions.

### **Final Grade Distribution**

At the end of the semester, the number of points you have accumulated for all the assignments will determine your final grade. According to the *Focus Leadership Institute Catalog*, the following distribution will be used in calculating your final course grade. A equals 94-100%; A- equals 90-93%; B+ equals 88-89%; B equals 84-87%; B- equals 80-83%; C+ equals 78-79%; C equals 74-77%; C- equals 70-73%; D equals 60-69%; and F equals 0-59%.

**Christian Worldview Studies**  
**LESSON PLAN & READINGS – Spring 2010**

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

**By the end of the course, students should be able to:**

- Identify their own Christian worldview and its epistemic and biblical foundations.
- Assess claims of “truth” in the surrounding culture.
- Distinguish the foundations of Christian Theism.
- Summarize the principles, assumptions, and consequences of Atheistic Naturalism.
- Summarize the principles, assumptions, and consequences of Pagan Mysticism.
- Critically evaluate Postmodernism and its impact on leading cultural institutions.
- Analyze the role of the mass media in cultural influence and transformation.
- Explain the role of the intellect in faith-based worldviews.
- More effectively communicate their Christian worldview with those who hold differing worldviews.
- Sense a deeper relationship with God and others.
- Further develop heads that think deeply about issues of truth, hearts that recognize and empathize with the pain of the world, and hands that lovingly serve others.

**Lesson 1 (January 25 - MONDAY)**

***THE CURRENT CRISIS: WORLDVIEWS IN CONFLICT***

Reading: Sire, The universe next door (2004 , pp. 9-22); Micklethwait & Woolridge, God is back (2009, pp. 1-27); Lewis, The abolition of man. (2001, pp. 1-26). LAST ONE READ ALOUD IN A GROUP.

***CREDITED PAGES: 64***

**Lesson 2 (February 1 - MONDAY)**

***THE BATTLEGROUND: THE CHRISTIAN MIND***

Reading: Moreland,...All your mind (1997, pp. 19-62); Schaeffer, Great evangelical disaster (1984, pp. 19-65); Lewis, The abolition of Man (2001, pp. 27-52). AGAIN, LAST ONE READ ALOUD IN A GROUP.

***CREDITED PAGES: 114***

**Lesson 3 (February 8, MONDAY)**

***VOICES OF REASON & FAITH: APOLOGETICS, EVANGELISM & EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION***

Reading: Kreeft & Tacelli, Handbook of Christian Apologetics (1994, 50 pages of your choosing); Moreland & Muehlhoff, The God Conversation, (2007, 50 pages of your choosing).

***CREDITED PAGES: 100.***

**Optional Reading:** (This is if you want more detailed info on apologetics)

Boa, Faith has its reasons (2001, pp. 17-22; 25-46; 55-66; 535-552)

**Lesson 4 (February 15, MONDAY)**

***WORLDVIEW I: CHRISTIAN THEISM – PART ONE***

Reading: Sire, The universe next door (2004, pp. 23-44); Beckwith, Craig, Moreland, To Everyone an Answer, (2004; pp. 23-36; 180-198); Micklethwait & Woolridge, God is Back (2009, pp. 31-54).

***CREDITED PAGES: 75***

**Lesson 5 (February 22 - MONDAY)**

***WORLDVIEW I: CHRISTIAN THEISM – PART TWO***

Reading: Lewis, Mere Christianity (2001 – ALL READ Books 1 & 2; Ladies also read Book 3, chapters 1-6; Gentlemen also read Book 3, chapters 7-12).

***CREDITED PAGES: 100***

**Lesson 6 (March 1 - MONDAY)**

***WORLDVIEW II: ATHEISTIC NATURALISM***

Reading: Sire, The universe next door (2004, pp. 59-86); Beckwith, Craig, Moreland, To Everyone an Answer (2004, pp. 61-76; 224-237; 266-286); Watch Hichens vs. D'Souza debate online – counts as 20 pages.

***CREDITED PAGES: 95***

**Lesson 7 (March 8 - MONDAY)**

***WORLDVIEW III: PAGAN MYSTICISM***

Reading: Sire, The universe next door (2004, pp. 162-210); Beckwith, Craig, Moreland, To Everyone an Answer (2004, pp. 308-323) Micklethwait & Woolridge, God is Back. (2009, pp. 55-78)

***CREDITED PAGES: 86***

**Lesson 8 (March 15 - MONDAY)**

***WORLDVIEW IV: THE POSTMODERN CRISIS: THE NATURE OF OUR TIMES***

Reading: White, Postmodernism 101 (2006, pp. 9-85); Beckwith, Craig, Moreland, To Everyone an Answer (2004, pp. 238-253)

***CREDITED PAGES: 91***



**NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK – March 22-26**

**Lesson 9 (March 29 - MONDAY)**

***WORLDVIEW V: UNDERSTANDING (REALLY) ISLAM***

Reading: Chapman, C., Cross and Crescent (2007) Choose 2 chapters from each of the 5 Parts –

***CREDITED PAGES: 100***

**Lesson 10 (April 5 - MONDAY)**

***COUNTERFEIT GODS & FAITHS: AND KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE***

Reading: Beckwith, Craig, Moreland, To Everyone an Answer (2004, pp. 324-375)

Choose 3 articles cults and other religions from Probe.org, (counts as 40 pages).

**CREDITED PAGES: 91.**

**Lesson 11 (April 7 – WEDNESDAY!!)**

***MASS COMMUNICATION: THE MEDIATION OF CULTURE***

Reading: Choose 50 page from Geivett & Spiegel, Faith, Film & Philosophy (2007) &

choose 50 pages from Romanowski, Eyes wide open (2007)

**CREDITED PAGES: 100**

**Lesson 12 (April 19 - MONDAY)**

***FINAL EXAM TAKEN IN CLASS***

**Required Readings - Total Pages Possible: 1016**

Lesson 1: 64 pages

Lesson 2: 114 pages

Lesson 3: 100 pages

Lesson 4: 75 pages

Lesson 5: 100 pages

Lesson 6: 95 pages

Lesson 7: 86 pages

Lesson 8: 91 pages

Lesson 9: 100 pages

Lesson 10: 91 pages

Lesson 11: 100 pages

Lesson 12: 0