

Ambrose University College

Course Syllabus Winter 2010

IND 110: Cultural Perspectives

Time: Mondays 1:00 PM – 3:45 PM

Instructor: Timothy Harvie, PhD.

Room: A2210

Description

This course investigates contemporary political, cultural, legal, and moral issues using insights from a variety of academic disciplines. This historical development of various socio-cultural issues will be examined alongside philosophical considerations. These disciplines will be brought to bear on various disciplines such as economics, political theory, social and gender studies. Students will be encouraged to develop an awareness of how their own opinions, attitudes, and perspectives are shaped and how this process influences their understanding of the world around them.

Objectives

1. To gain knowledge of the key issues pertinent to the global community in the early portions of the 21st century and place them within their historical, geographical and cultural context.
2. To understand the contextual processes impacting cultural motifs from a variety of perspectives.
3. To become better equipped to think openly, critically and Christianly about pertinent global and cultural issues.
4. To study and better comprehend economic, political, legal and moral issues from varying cultural perspectives.
5. To be introduced to major thinkers who have influenced the study of culture from varying perspectives such as Claude Levi-Strauss, Theodor Adorno, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Ellul among others.
5. To become conversant with issues involved in the scholarly study of at least one pertinent cultural issue.

Required Texts

Vinoth Ramachandra, *Subverting Global Myths: Theology and the Public Issues Shaping Our World* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2008)

Jim Wallis, *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It* (San Francisco: Harper One, 2005)

Evaluation

1. **Class Participation:** Students are expected to punctually attend each class, to have completed the weekly assigned reading prior to the relevant lecture, and to constructively contribute to class discussions based on the assigned reading. Mere attendance does not constitute participation.

Value: 5%

2. **Major Paper:** a 6 – 8 page (min. 6 *complete* pages) analysis of one major issue facing culture in the twenty first century. The major issue could be related to: politics, religion, culture, economics, globalization, terrorism, or any topic relevant to the content of the course. The paper will analyze the topic in historical perspective and therefore must move beyond the cursory discussions found in media sources (though these may also be included). The paper will examine historical antecedents and reasons for the contemporary issue, popular perspectives on the issue, divergent viewpoints assessing the issue and examine how one's own context affects the interpretation of the issue. The student must utilize a minimum of 5 resources and must discuss the topic with the professor and have approval for the topic prior to research beginning.

Value: **35%**

Due Date: **March 15, 2010**

3. **Group Debates:** Students will be arranged into groups (amount and size of groups will be contingent on class size) which will then be paired around an cultural issue assigned by the professor and assigned pro/con stances in relation to the topic. Each group is to develop an argument either pro or con (depending on the assignment of to the group) in relation to the topic. The opposing groups will present their arguments and engage in a structured format of debate with each group being given opportunity for rebuttal and open dialogue. The professor will moderate the debates. Each student in the group must equally participate in both research and spoken portions of the debate. The group will also self-evaluate the contribution of each member according to a standard the professor will provide. These group self-evaluations will contribute to (though not dictate or guarantee) the professor's final evaluation of the student and/or group. Presentations will be conducted during the final class(es) of the semester (depending on the number of groups). The precise date(s) of the specific debates will be assigned by the professor a minimum of 4 weeks prior to the presentation.

Value: **20%**

4. **Book Review:** Students will write a short book review of the required text book written by Jim Wallis entitled *God's Politics*. The book review will be 4 – 5 whole pages in length (minimum 4 *complete* pages).

Value: **20%**

Due Date: **February 22, 2010**

5. **Final Examination:** There will be a final examination which covers all lecture materials covered in class sessions in addition to the required readings from the texts. The examination will consist of 25 multiple choice questions and two essay questions. The choice of essay questions will be decided by the student from 4 possible options given on the examination. The content of the 4 possible questions (from which two must be chosen) will be unknown to the student prior to the examination.

Value: **20%**

Date: **To be announced by the registrar.**

Guidelines for written assignments

1. Submitted assignments must conform to the style approved by the student handbook.
2. Papers must be double-spaced, with one-inch margins and 12 pt Times New Roman font.
3. Papers must be submitted to the instructor *prior to the start of the lecture* on the due date of the assignment. The written assignments may be submitted as a hard copy in person or via email attachment in a Word document format, along with any special fonts or instructions necessary to open the file. Graded papers will be returned to the student in the format it was submitted.
4. Late papers will be penalized 2% each day they remain outstanding. All assignments must be submitted in order to become eligible for course credit.
5. Ambrose University College uses inclusive language in student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV Bible Translation is a good example of the use of inclusive language. It is expected that all students will use inclusive language in all course assignments.

Statement on academic honesty

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence in the academic world and to one's personal integrity that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on the transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the University-College. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

Harassment

Harassment is a violation of the integrity of persons in the form of unsolicited, unwelcome, verbal or physical behaviour, which discriminates on the basis of sex, a person's body, attire, gender, marital status or economic status. Among faculty, staff, and students, harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

Class Lecture Units (Dates Subject to Change by Professor)

Unit 1: Studying Culture and Being Christian. (January 11, 2010)

Unit 2: Religion and Culture: Its Impact and its Import. (January 18, 2010)

Unit 3: Political Theory: Philosophy and Theology (January 25 & February 1, 2010)

Unit 4: International Politics: Understanding History to Understand the Present
(February 8, Family Day February 15 [no classes] 2010)

Unit 5: Sex and Gender: Sex, Patriarchy, Matriarchy and Religion
(February 22, 2010)

Unit 6: Economics: Global, Domestic, and Local (March 1 2010; no class March 8 to recover from YC)

Unit 7: Science and Medicine: “Progress” and “Virtue”/Group Debates (March 15, 2010)

Unit 8: Understanding Canada, Understanding the World/Group Debates (March 22, 2010)

Unit 9: Examining Our Local Community/Group Debates (March 29, 2010)

Unit 10: Pop Culture I/Group Debates (April 5, 2010)

Unit 11: Pop Culture II/Review (April 12, 2010)