

**Reformed Theological Seminary – Washington DC**

**Church and the World (6HT506)**

**2 credits**

**Summer 2011**

Instructor: Geoffrey M. Sackett

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Class meets at McLean Presbyterian Church (McLean, VA)

June 13, 14, 15 (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday)

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**I. Office Hours**

By appointment. I'm delighted to meet with you – please feel free to contact me.

**II. Course Description**

This course will explore the chief cultural and intellectual currents that have shaped and are shaping the world today, as we seek to grasp what it means to be the church, and to live attentively, today. The schedule of lectures below gives more details on the topics, and readings, we will pursue.

**III. Expectations and Objectives**

Since we will spend a portion of class time analyzing and discussing our texts, along with the ramifications of their ideas for life and ministry, it is important that we have read our texts by the assigned date. Please bring the assigned reading with you to class each day.

**IV. Required Texts**

Richard Mouw, *He Shines in All That's Fair*

Craig Gay, *The Way of the (Modern) World*

H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*

Herman Bavinck, *The Certainty of Faith*

*Church and the World* Reader – available soon on Self Service.

**V. Evaluation and Assignments**

1. Four reading reports. (15% each=60%). Due on **June 23, July 1, July 9** and **July 18**.

Reports will cover each of the required books (Mouw, Gay, Niebuhr, Bavinck) and should be 3-5 pages. **Analyze** the texts carefully, addressing the following points in your reports<sup>1</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Jose E. Idler, *History of Philosophy and Christian Thought* syllabus, 2005.

- Summarize the text's main point(s) or thesis (theses).
  - Explain why you think the author wrote this book.
  - Name one aspect of the author's thesis you agree with. **Argue your point.**
  - Name one aspect you disagree with. **Argue your point.**
  - As a Christian, how could this book help you?
2. Exam (40%). Due on **July 26**. The exam will be essay and will cover lectures and readings.

N. B. More details concerning the assignments will be discussed in class.

## **VI. Readings and Schedule**

Try to read as much of the assigned reading as you can before the course begins. Some of our time together will be devoted to discussion of our texts.

### Day 1: June 13 (Monday)

Lectures (morning):

- Course introduction
- Calling, culture, church, and kingdom

Readings (morning): none.

Lectures (afternoon):

- Common grace
- The making of the modern mind: the Enlightenment
- The making of the modern church: modern theology

Readings (afternoon): Readings: Mouw, *He Shines in All That's Fair*; article(s) from *Church and the World Reader*

### Day 2: June 14 (Tuesday)

Lectures (morning):

- Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Confessionalism
- Christ and culture, "the enduring problem"

Readings (morning): Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*

Lectures (afternoon):

- The making of the modern world: industrialization, globalization, capitalism; secularization; pluralism
- The church responds: evangelical options, church growth, etc.

Readings (afternoon): Gay, *The Way of the (Modern) World*; article(s) from *Church and the World Reader*

Day 3: June 15 (Wednesday)

Lectures (morning):

- Cultural change, culture wars
- Issues *du jour*: global Christianity, contextualization, etc.

Readings (morning): article(s) from *Church and the World Reader*

Lectures (afternoon):

- The certainty of faith in an uncertain age

Readings (afternoon): Bavinck, *The Certainty of Faith*; article(s) from *Church and the World Reader*

**VII. Grading Policy**

The standard RTS grading scale will be used.

A	(97-100)	4.00
A-	(94-96)	3.66
B+	(91-93)	3.33
B	(88-90)	3.00
B-	(86-87)	2.66
C+	(83-85)	2.33
C	(80-82)	2.00
C-	(78-79)	1.66
D+	(75-77)	1.33
D	(72-74)	1.00
D-	(70-71)	.66
F	(below 70)	0.00