WORLDVIEW & GLOBAL RELIGIONS 340
(3 credits)
Quito, Ecuador

Class Hours: Intensive Seminar (24 hours) + 21 hours

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course attempts to develop an effective and God-honoring worldview. This will be done by examining Biblical texts as well as various cultural influences that shape one's worldview. There will also be an introduction to various worldviews, examining what they believe and the implications of their given belief system

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To honor the Lord
- To understand the philosophical and theological problems with apologetics
- To construct a Biblical worldview, and resulting Biblical Apologetic
- To evaluate various worldviews
- To have exposure to how other cultures think
- To have a more effective evangelistic ministry

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Goheen, M. & Bartholomew, C. (2008). *Living at the Crossroads*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Publishing Group. ISBN: 978-0801031403

Pearcey, N. (2005). *Total Truth.* Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway. ISBN: 978-1433502200

Keller, T. (2009). *The Reason for God.* New York, New York: Dutton. ISBN: 978-1594483493

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

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  All students are expected to be in class (on time) with any assignments completed. Engagement and participation are essential to learning in any environment. Active course participation is therefore considered mandatory. Therefore, it is required that students arrive ON TIME and attend each class session. If there is some extreme emergency for missing a class or arriving late, please contact the professor by phone or e-mail with as much advanced notice as possible (contact information on page 1). Absences, tardiness, and participation will impact the final grade (see grading information). Good preparation of the part of all members of the class will enhance the learning experience for everyone. Any student that misses 50% of the course sessions will not receive credit for the course.

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  Class hours will be focused on the class content and the community within the classroom. All cell phone use, social networking and e-mailing should be avoided. Cell phones should be turned off in consideration of others. Failure to do so could impact the final grade. Students may use laptop computers to take notes as long as the computer is used solely for class purposes.

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  All written assignments should be typed in 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, with properly formatted citations and References/Works Cited page.
  1. Whether students quote or paraphrase the ideas, concepts, or words of another author they are required to give credit to the author by citing the source (in-text & in works cited page). Wikipedia is not to be used a credible source. APA style will be expected.
  2. Written assignments are expected to have few, if any, grammatical, punctuation or spelling errors. Points will be deducted for such errors.
  3. Avoid long quotes and seek to put information into your own words.
  4. Any work that is plagiarized will be given a failing grade. For a clearer understanding of the types of plagiarism and how to avoid it, see: http://www.plagiarism.org/

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  Course assignments (e.g., homework, projects, exams) will generally not be accepted late. Late work, when accepted, will not be awarded full credit.

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  The syllabus is a guideline, not a contract, and is subject to change at the instructor's discretion as circumstances warrant. Changes will be communicated via email and/or in-class.

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  Evaluation of your work is based on many factors. These include but are not limited to: participation, written assignments, and examinations. A "C" grade indicates adequate performance, a "B" grade indicates good, competent and complete work, and an "A" grade indicates creative excellence that is integrative and exceeds requirements.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Projects/Papers

Over the course of the semester the following projects will be expected:

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Paper #1: **Personal worldview project:** A couple of suggestions to help you out: 1) Answer the "big" questions of worldview (: Where did we come from?   : Who are we?   : Why are we here?   : How should we live? What's wrong with the world? What's the solution/remedy?   : Where are we going?) 2) Use the questions on page 18 of   as a guide 3) Select and answer a few of the Cultural Discovery questions regarding worldview found at the end of the syllabus. This is an informal paper 6-8 pages in length double-spaced. References to outside reading is appreciated and encouraged. Scripture references are expected (and expected to be in context).

Paper #2. **Interviews**: You must interview 3 people from different cultures and write a 1-page summary per interview. The purpose of these interviews is to gain insight into each of these culture's stories/worldviews. At least 1 of the interviews has to be with a first generation resident of Ecuador, and one additional interview needs to be done with someone who does not believe in the biblical worldview (e.g., Buddhist, Muslim, Mormon, atheist, etc.)

Media Analyses: You will choose two different forms of media (music, film, television, book, etc.) and do an analysis of what story (i.e., worldview) is being communicated. A 1-page summary will be due for each form of media.

Book Reviews: Read the assigned portions of the textbooks and complete the following:

Book Review (sample format)

Respond to the following questions based upon the assigned reading. (Please be clear and detailed...but also concise.)

1. I have read _____% of the assignment.

2. Things that you thought were really good or thought provoking about the book. (be specific)

3. Areas you disagreed with (or was unsure of)

4. How has this book affected your life?

5. How has the content been implemented into your ministry?

<u>Global Religion Analysis</u>: Applying Pearcey's 5 Strategic Principles of Worldview Analysis, analyze a global religion or worldview of your choice and prepare a PowerPoint (or Prezi – I'm open to all kinds of ideas) that details your investigation. I will be teaching you these principles near the beginning of the course:

- Principle #1 – Identify the Idol
- Principle #2 – Identify the Idol's Reductionism
- Principle #3 – Test the Idol: Does It Contradict What We Know about the World?
- Principle #4 – Test the Idol: Does it Contradict Itself?
- Principle #5 – Replace the Idol: Make the Case for Christianity

<u>Presentation</u>: On the last day of class, you will present on a topic of your choice by answering this question: **How can the biblical story come to bear in this specific case?** In other words, how can the gospel redeem or be good news for your selected topic? You may either work alone or with one other person. Some suggested topics include: fashion, art, music, social media, environment, politics, movies, criminal justice system, scholarship, education, sports and competition. You will do this by applying the "Way of Wisdom":

- Grasp the Issue
- Study the Scriptures
- Consult other Sources
- Form a Response

- Discuss the Issue (we will be doing this all semester)
- Take Steps to Obey

COURSE EVALUATION:

Assignments	Percent
Personal Worldview	20
Interviews	15 (5 each)
Media Analyses	10 (5 each)
Book Reports	15 (5 each)
World Religion Presentation	20
Presentation of Topic	20
Total	**100**

Culture Discovery Questions

Social Values:

1) Do people acquire social positions of importance (achieved status) or do they have them by virtue of their privileged birth (ascribed status)? If both kinds of status attainment exist, explain which is used when.
2) How does a person gain a position of prestige? Can he/she lose that position? If so, how?
3) What are the defining symbols of one's status in the society? (ex. car, house, clothing, circle of friends, attitudes, etc....,)
4) Are there special rules of etiquette for the interacting with persons of higher status?
5) What is the system of leadership positions in churches or other religious institutions?
6) What kinds of persons does the society consider to be "good" people?
7) What kinds of persons does the society consider to be "bad" people? Can these people improve themselves?
8) What are the worst kinds of behavior and how does the society seek to control that behavior (what sanctions do they employ)? Which sanctions are the most feared?
9) What would be the common motives for suicide?

10) How do people show respect for one another in the society? What are the severest insults and the most painful kinds of ridicule?
11) What are the chief causes of arguments or litigation in the society?
12) How do people handle/resolve interpersonal conflicts?
13) What do people worry about the most in the society? What are the chief things/events that bring happiness? What are the main causes of anger?
14) Do the people value individual initiative or do they desire conformity to the group related roles?
15) What is the basis for belonging to social groups other than family?
16) What are the chief aspirations of the people? Are they often attained?
17) Who are the chief role models in the society?
18) Who or what are the ideological authorities in the society? How much influence do they have?
19) What are the different forms of wealth in the society?
20) What things or conditions provide the people with a feeling of security?
21) Are people willing to talk about problems among them, admit fault, and take responsibility for imperfections in their work?
22) Do people depend on themselves or on the groups for direction and choices in day to day life?
23) Do parents demand obedience from their children? What kinds of things do they scold them for and what kinds of things bring praise? Can children be expelled from the family for any reason?
24) What do people call you? How do they refer to you when speaking to someone else? What are the role expectations for the status you hold in their culture?
25) Do people feel a need for structure and extensive rules and regulations to order the society?
26) What would people be willing to fight for (go to war)?
27) What are the transitions points in people's lives? What are the rites of passage that mark these points? What is the meaning of each transition and the rite that celebrates or marks it? How important are these rites to the people?
28) Are men's and women's roles clearly defined in the culture? What are the main characteristics of each role? Do men and women have satisfaction in fulfilling their traditional roles?
29) Describe the marriage relationship in the society. What matters in the choice of a wife or a husband? Are marriages built on romantic feelings and physical beauty, commitment to a relationship, or a cooperative arrangement for social survival (money, food, child rearing, social alliances, etc.,)? Who is the head of the household?
30) Who can marry whom? What are the arrangements for getting a wife? What are the acceptable reasons for divorce?
31) Is equality between the sexes, compassion for the unfortunate, and service to others generally praised or looked down on in the society?
32) How do people care for the aged? What place do they have in the larger society?
33) What are the values attached to eating together?

34) How do people view/use generosity and hospitality? How do people ask for help or favors in the community? Who can a person ask for help? Do these things create social obligations (rules for reciprocity favor bank)?
35) Are assertiveness, performance, achievement, ambition, and acquisition of wealth praised or criticized in general by the society?
36) How much of a person's time is spent making a living and how much time is allowed for leisure and personal activities?

Communication and Decision-making:

37) How are informal and formal decisions reached in the local community? In the larger society (government, judicial system etc.,)? Who has real power in the society?
38) Are judgments "black and white," "right and wrong," or are they more open-ended and given in terms of "more or less?"
39) Are the smallest details give consideration in decisions and judgments, or is the situation considered in a more holistic fashion, taking the general circumstances into consideration?
40) Is information systematically organized and details given importance for decision-making, or can generalities be the basis for decisions?
41) Is logical reasoning more important or are history and experience more important in decision-making?
42) What role do "facts" play and what role do social or family relationships play in decision-making?
43) Does decision-making involve the inductive analysis of individual aspects of a problem, or are deductions made from a thorough understanding of the whole problem?
44) How important is tradition to the people in their decision-making?
45) How important is consensus in the decision-making process? Is voting used to decide things?
46) Do some people have more authority in decision-making than others?
47) In communication, do people feel they have to say everything they want the other person to know, or do they assume that other person already knows a great deal about the subject?
48) Is the communication wordy and continuous, or do people use short sentences with long pauses? Do they use silence as part of the communication process?
49) How soon do people get to the point of a conversation? Are there some subjects that should never be mentioned in certain situations?
50) Is the speaker or the listener more responsible for accuracy in understanding?
51) What are noticeable aspects of the non-verbal behavior of the people? Are there some gestures or behaviors that are disrespectful, rude or obscene to be avoided?
52) At what distance do people normally stand from each other while in conversation?

53) What are the locations and times when news and gossip are normally exchanged among the people? Are there clear person-to-person links for this kind of communication?
54) Can you determine any networks of relationships that play a role in communication? How does a person's status affect with whom he/she can speak? How does a person's status affect when they may speak in a social group?
55) Are the people comfortable with ambiguity or do they seek resolution and set up structures and rules to avoid it?

Achievement/Accomplishment Orientation:

56) Are the people more focused on accomplishing the tasks at hand or on relating to the people who are participating with him/her in the project?
57) Are the people concerned about how much they accomplished in a set period of time or are they more concerned about the quality of the interaction between people as they work together?
58) Do people prefer to work alone or do they find it difficult to work alone?
59) Do people seek to evaluate the process and progress of the activities or do they avoid evaluation?
60) Are measurable results important to people involved in a process or project?
61) Do people prefer direct supervision that maintains authority in the workplace or do they prefer less direction and more freedom to do their work the way they see fit?
62) Are people willing to take risks to achieve personal goals or do they prefer to do things the way they have always been done?
63) Are the people highly competitive in sports and the workplace?

Orientation to Time:

64) Are people concerned about doing things "on time" or is the schedule organized loosely around situations, circumstances, or matters of convenience?
65) Do the people prefer to do one thing at a time or do they expect multiple interactions most of the time?
66) What time should a person show up to meet another person at a planned 7:00PM meeting? Does it depend on the importance of the status of the person being met? How late can a person be to an appointment before it is considered rude?
67) Are people rewarded for completing tasks on time?
68) Does there seem to be an emphasis on history and tradition, present experience, or future goals among the people?
69) Can scheduled events be changed at the last minute?

70) Do the people anticipate possible problems of crises and plan for possible solutions or protection, survival?
71) Do people seek expert advice about matters in their lives and communities? Do they read authoritative books on procedure for their activities and projects?
72) Are people generally positive or pessimistic about the future?

Humanity and Nature:

73) Does the host culture believe man is basically good, basically bad, basically neutral, or are some good and some bad? Can a bad person improve himself?
74) Do the people feel that the events of life are largely determined by forces outside themselves such as nature or ancestral spirits, fate, or genetics?
75) Are people supposed to control nature and use its resources to their advantage or are they supposed to be in harmony with nature?

Culture Change:

76) What is the general attitude toward development?
77) What changes is the society facing today and how stressful does this seem to be for them?
78) How do they see you or other missionaries in regard to social change? Do they see missionaries as those who support tradition and maintain stability in the society or as those who encourage change? If seen as change agents, do the nationals see their activity as disruptive and creating social instability, or do they see their activity as helpful and encouraging?
79) What are some felt needs of the people that their worldview does not address adequately for them?
80) What is the educational style? How do children learn?
81) Can you determine how the people generally respond to outsiders who try to be insiders (part of their group)?

Religious Beliefs:

The Religion Itself:

83)	What is the main religion(s) among the people of the host culture?
84)	How committed are the people to this religion?
85)	Is this religion exclusive or are there other religions that are equally valid in their eyes?
86)	Do different social groups have different religions?

<u>Major Beliefs</u>

87) What are the five or ten major beliefs of their religion?
88) Are these written down or are they simply oral tradition?
89) How binding are these beliefs on the people?
90) Are there myths that are important to know concerning the creation of the world, the origin of man, or the origin of evil, etc.,
91) Are there taboos that must be observed?
92) Do beliefs vary among different social groups?
93) What do they believe about personal sin? Who is sin against? How do they deal with sin?
94) What do they believe about the afterlife? If they believe in a heaven or paradise after death, how do people get there?
95) What are considered the worst possible sins? What behavior and attitudes are called sin but are condoned by the religious people?
96) What behavior and attitudes that are considered immoral or unethical in your culture or religion are not considered as such in this culture?
97) Are there religious explanations for why people get sick or die? For how people get well?
98) What do the people believe about the soul or spirit of a human being?
99) How many souls or spirits does a person have? When do they receive a soul?
100) Can the soul or spirit leave the body and return to it?
101) Do other things or objects have souls or spirits?
102) Can the spirit of one man eat the spirit of another?
103) Can vital power be transferred from one man's spirit to another man's spirit?
104) Where does the spirit or soul of a man reside in his body?
105) What happens to the soul(s) or spirit(s) of a man at death? Of a woman?
106) What must be done to ensure the soul's welfare during life and after death?

<u>What do they believe about the spirit world?</u>

107) What kinds of spirits exist in the world? Where do they live? What are their activities? How do they affect humans?
108) What must be done to ensure the spirits do not harm the people? What must be done to engage the spirits' help or blessing?
109) What might make a spirit angry and want to harm people?
110) Is there only one all-powerful God? What is he like? What are his activities? What does he do for mankind?
111) What is the nature of ancestors? If ancestors continue to exist, are they still active in the world? What are their powers? How might one please them? Where do they live? How do they get there?

<u>Sorcery and Magic:</u>

112) What kinds of sorcery are practiced in the society?
113) Where do people believe the power for sorcery or magic comes from?
114) What are the main functions for sorcery and/or magic for the society?
115) Can witches or magicians be discovered? By who or what means? 116) Who can use magic and for what purpose?

<u>Religious Leaders:</u>

117) What is the nature of religious leaders? Do they have special powers?
118) How do they become religious leaders?
119) What are their duties or how do they help the people?
120) Where do they perform their duties?
121) Are there sacred places and objects used in worship?
122) Are there religious signs and symbols that must be recognized?

<u>Religious Activities or Rituals:</u>

123) Is the religion institutionalized?
124) How do people view religious leaders?
125) Where do the people meet to worship or perform religious duties?
126) What are things that must be done by members of the religion to worship?
127) What are prayers like? To whom do they pray? Do they have confidence in their prayers?
128) What are the offerings like? If sacrifices, what animals? To whom? For what reason? If money, how is it used?
129) Do people perform religious duties at home? Where? When? Why? Who leads them?
130) How do religious leaders make a living?
131) What are some observable folk beliefs/practices of the people (remedies, luck, superstitions)?