

SCHOOL OF MINISTRY PROGRAM: Theology and Church Leadership Certificate

Course Syllabus: TCL107: Christ and Culture

Class Times: Friday, Sept. 22 5-9pm & Saturday, Sept. 23 9am- 12pm, 1pm - 5pm

Location: Grace Leadership Institute

Instructor: Dr. Duffy Robbins, Professor of Christian Ministry, Grove City College, Grove City, PA

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OVERVIEW:

This course will survey the landscape of everyday culture, as well as how these cultural realities impact the way we "live and move and have our being..." (borrowed from Acts 17:28), and how we do ministry in that culture. Aside from exploring the cultural landscape, this course will focus on three essential questions:

- what is the nature of our engagement as Christians with a culture that is not-Christian?;
- how are we to think about and respond to products and artifacts produced by the culture?
- how do we communicate the gospel into the language and context of another culture not our own?

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The objectives of the course (and corresponding assessments) are to:

- Engage students in a *distinctly Christian* conversation about culture
- Help students develop the ability to see the culture through the lens of a Christian worldview.
- Invite students to consider how the church can faithfully engage with culture.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Strange, Dan, [Plugged in : Connecting Your Faith With What You Watch, Read and Pray](#), Good Book, 2019 (181 pages) ISBN: 9781909919419

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Web Site/Podcast Review. [10% of the grade] **DUE: October 13, 2023** (4-pages single spaced).

Each student will provide a critique of two web sites and one podcast designed specifically to help people think about faith and culture.

WEB SITES (pick cpyu.org, plus one)	
Looking Closer www.lookingcloser.org	AVClub.com http://www.avclub.com/
Media Talk 101 http://www.mediatalk101.org/	Plugged in http://www.pluggedin.com/
Christ and Pop Culture Christandpopculture.com	Ransom Fellowship www.ransomfellowship.org
Mockingbird https://mbird.com/	Theology of Home https://theologyofhome.com/
Two Handed Warriors http://garydavidstratton.com/	Center for Parent and Youth Understanding cpyu.org
PODCASTS WEB SITES (pick one)	
Youth Culture Matters cpyu.org	The Bully Pulpit Podcast https://soundcloud.com/collegecommons
Think Biblically: Conversations on Faith & Culture https://www.biola.edu/blogs/think-biblically	BreakPoint https://www.breakpoint.org/
Cultivated: a podcast about faith and work https://www.cultivatedpodcast.com/	The Word on Fire wordonfireshow.com/
The Rabbit Room https://rabbitroom.com/	This Cultural Moment https://thisculturalmoment.podbean.com/
The White Horse Inn https://www.whitehorseinn.org/	Dissect https://dissectpodcast.com/
The Holy Post http://thephilvischerpodcast.libsyn.com/	Thinking in Public https://albertmohler.com/thinking-in-public

What follows are the kinds of questions you might consider in your website critique.

- How helpful is the site for someone interested in doing culturally relevant,

- biblically-sound ministry?
- In what ways could it be helpful to someone who just wants to be a thoughtful disciple of Christ?
- How would you evaluate the site from an aesthetic standpoint (cool factor, ease of use, etc.)?
- **One of the web sites everyone will review will be <http://www.cpyu.org>** (Center for Parent and Youth Understanding). Again, everyone will review this site. See below for a list of other website and podcast options.
- **For the podcast critique**, listen to a minimum of two episodes of your chosen podcast, and give a maximum 400-word critique of each episode.
 - OIn most of the podcasts, there will a guest interviewed. Your summary should include your assessment of the main idea communicated by the guest.
 - OBeyond that, what did you hear that was helpful, intriguing, troubling, provocative, confusing, maddening?

VERY IMPORTANT:

Submit your work as a WORD doc with this file name: [yourlastname]Critique.doc

EXAMPLE: RobbinsCritique.doc

DUE: October 13, 2023

2. Strange Assignment. [20% of the grade] **DUE: October 13, 2023** (5-pages single-spaced)

Students will read Dan Strange's book, Plugged in : Connecting Your Faith With What You Watch, Read and Pray. Then, **use his "subversive fulfillment" methodology** to demonstrate the connection between some cultural artifact (of your choice) and the gospel message. In other words, **do what Strange describes in chapters 5-6, and what he demonstrates in chp 7 and beyond.**

The cultural artifact could be a place, an object, a work of art (music, movie, visual art), a book or an event. Students of culture have done topics like: make-overs, masculinity, femininity, magazines for teenagers, internet dating, fantasy sports, sexting, extreme sports, cell phones, Instagram, rap, hip-hop, the Proud Boys, literary genres (e.g., cyberpunk) artwork (Anime'), television shows, films, video games (i.e. Fortnite), Twitter "tribes", SoulCycle, Wellness culture, the alt-right, Black Lives Matter, fandom, The McKittrick Hotel, popular apps (WeHeartIt, Snapchat, Tinder, TikTok), even a single TV commercial, or a figure from pop culture (Antonio Brown, Twenty One Pilots, Kanye, Kim Kardashian, Lil Nas X, Don Shepson), etc.

VERY IMPORTANT:

.Submit your work as a WORD doc with this file name: [yourlastname]Strange.docx

EXAMPLE: RobbinsStrange.docx

.You are expected to read the book in its entirety! At the very end of your written document (Step Two), please indicate what percentage of the book you completed

(e.g., if you only read 180 pages and there are 200 pages of text in the book, state that you read 90%, etc. *Glossary/index/footnotes don't count*).

DUE: October 13, 2023

3. Class Participation and Engagement: [20%]

We all know, it's one thing to be *present in the room* and quite another to be *fully engaged with what's happening in that room*. **While the course grading structure is Pass/Fail, a portion of your grade for this course will be based on your participation and engagement with the class.** This involvement will be evaluated as Excellent, Above average, Average, etc.

Obviously, this is a subjective assessment, so be intentional about how you might communicate "participation and engagement" to your assessor (the professor). **Common marks of "participation and engagement" are:**

- consistent attendance,
- engagement with classroom discussion,
- asking thoughtful questions which relate to the topic at hand,
- abstaining from using digital devices in a way that might distract you.

SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS/WEIGHTING:

Web Site/Podcast Critique	40%
Strange Assignment	40%
Class Participation	20%

4. Honesty in learning

The Grace Leadership Institute is deeply invested in upholding academic integrity and honesty. That means we're going to expect each student to demonstrate faithfulness, excellence, and community in this class. Any violation of academic integrity is a form of theft and deceit that affects the one stolen from, as well as the community of students and faculty at the Institute. In addition, cheating is a violation of three of the Ten Commandments: the prohibitions against stealing, lying, and coveting.

5. Accessibility and accommodations

We want to make your learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on a disability, please let me know immediately so that we may discuss options.