

# Intro to Worldviews



## Faculty Contact

October 7, 2025

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Please contact me when you have comments, suggestions, questions or you would like to talk about this course or your overall learning and ministry goals.

## Course Description

Intro to Worldviews is a foundational course developing knowledge and skills for life-long growth in our understanding of God, His view of His world and the worldviews of people locally and globally.

The course reviews the formation, content and cultural perspectives of worldviews historically and geographically and the development the modern discipline of inquiry in worldviews. Studies of the interrelationships of worldviews, world religions, philosophy, science, and the social disciplines are extremely valuable in understanding history and the contemporary world.

Further to this, knowledge of worldviews as a bridge to understanding others. It is vital to the growth and health of God's kingdom in an increasingly multi-cultural world. It is a catalyst for vibrant congregational life. It equips us to communicate God's truth and transforming power of the gospel through evangelism, apologetics and missions. Importantly, the course aims to help students deepen their relationship with God and articulate and strengthen their Biblical Christian worldview for a meaningful and rewarding life of faith and service in His presence.

## Course Objectives

### Bible

1. To know God, His view of His world and their transforming power through the gospel.
2. Deepen our knowledge and appreciation of Scripture and Creation through which God reveals Himself and His eternal truths about the heavens, the earth and especially human beings made in His image (Genesis 1-2; Psalm 19; Romans 1:20).

### Ministry

3. Gain skills in identifying dimensions of worldviews that will guide us in understanding people and "where they are coming from."
4. Objectively and critically analyze worldviews in light of Scripture noting similarities and significant differences and their implications.
5. Review significant historical and geographical factors shaping worldviews throughout the history of civilization observing differences and similarities globally between east

and west, north and south.

6. Examine the important and intrinsic relationships between worldviews and world religions and those who claim no religious affiliation.
7. Examine briefly the development of the modern discipline of worldviews studies, its relationship with other disciplines and resources available for further study.
8. Be better informed about local and global issues that affect people internationally, people in your circles of life and you personally. To recognize ways you can think globally and act locally to make a positive difference in God's world through the gospel.
9. Examine how an excellent knowledge of worldviews can inform the lives and work of Christians in God's work of evangelism, apologetics, missions. The ultimate purpose of all missions, local and global is the communicate the gospel (the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection for our forgiveness and eternal life) to people and give them a new worldview; in short, to enable people to see themselves and the world as God sees them.
10. Reflect weekly on our class content and discussions and identify areas of worldview studies that you would like to pursue further.
11. Do two research projects that will explore God's view of His world, the Biblical Christian worldview, and one other significant worldview that is of particular interest to you.
12. Synthesize the knowledge you have gained in this course into a summary that will be valuable to you in your study of God's Word, your personal spiritual growth, your awareness of others and your work with God in His kingdom.
13. Reaching people who identify themselves as "spiritual not religious."

## **Worldviews**

14. Enhance our Biblical worldviews by articulating how God's revelations Psalms and Song of Songs of Solomon answer these twelve vital questions:
  1. Who is God?
  2. What is the nature of external reality, the world around us? (i.e. real or an illusion)
  3. What is a human being?
  4. Where do we come from?
  5. What happens to a person at death?
  6. Why is it possible to know anything at all?
  7. How do we know what is right and wrong?
  8. What is the meaning of human history?

9. How do we perceive time? (i.e. linear, circular cycles, etc.)
  10. Is the worldview/culture open or closed?
  11. Is the centre of this worldview/culture its groups or individuals?
  12. Where are we going, how does the world end?
15. Articulate ways that we by our thoughts, actions and words can graciously communicate God’s worldview to others and fulfil His purpose for Psalms and Song of Songs of Solomon.

## **Primary Source**

**The Bible.** Scripture is our primary source for knowing God and His view of His world which defines our worldview as believers in Him.

## **Secondary Literature**

Birston, Paul. *Worldviews and World Religions in Light of Scripture*. Waterloo, ON: Great Lakes Bible College, 2020.

Additional resources will be added to your online folders on GLBC’s Populi Learning Management System (LMS) and at the link below. A bibliography of secondary literature is included below on pages 5–7.

## **Online Class Resources Folders**

On Populi Learning Management System and here:  
<https://app.box.com/s/drkp6ulr6uivlfzlbjnrwqs8grltzri>

## **Weekly Subject & Assignment Schedule**

See Course Assignments on Pages 4–5.

Lessons for the 15 week course are indicated in grey numbers

Week 1	<b>Course Introduction, God’s View of His World Part 1:</b> Creator of Heaven and Earth and the New Heavens and New Earth, Sovereign, Ever-Present, All-Knowing, All-Mighty (His Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence)
Week 2 2	<b>God’s View of His World, Part 2:</b> God’s Image in Humans, Spirit, Faith, Sin, Death, Redemption, Truth, History, Will, Heaven, Hell, Eternal Life
3	<b>12 Dimensions of Worldviews, Part 1:</b> 1) God & Prime Reality (Ontology), 2) External Reality, 3) Human Beings (Anthropology), 4) Origins (Etiology, Cosmology), 5) What Happens at Death, 6) Knowing (Epistemology)
Week 3 4	<b>12 Dimensions of Worldviews, Part 2:</b> 7) Morality (Right and Wrong, Ethics), 8) Meaning of Human History, 9) Time, 10) Culture: Open and Closed, 11) Culture: Group and Individual, 12) Destiny (Eschatology)

5	<b>Worldview Formation through Millennia:</b> Historically, Geographically and as a Discipline of Study, Continuing Impacts in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century
Week 4 6	<b>Worldview Formation by World Religions 1:</b> Others in Scripture, Ancient Mythologies and Pantheons, Monotheism, Judaism, Islam, Polytheism
7	<b>Worldview Formation by World Religions 2:</b> Animism, Monism, Pantheism, Panentheism, Syncretism, <b><u>Research Project 1 Due</u></b>
Week 5 8	<b>Worldview Formation by Human Thought:</b> East, West, Philosophy, Dualism, Emergence of Scientific Inquiry from Antiquity
9	<b>Worldviews and Scientific Revolutions:</b> History and Philosophy of Science, Empiricism, Materialistic Naturalism (Metaphysical Naturalism), Evolution, Marxism, <b><u>Research Project 2 Topic Selection Due</u></b>
Week 6 10	<b>Worldviews in Conflict and Harmony:</b> God and Science, Faith and Reason, Presuppositionalism, Atheism: Ancient and New, Resolution
11	<b>New World:</b> Manifest Destiny, Utopianism, Personality Cultism, Novel Religions, Individualism, New Thought, Entitlement, Prosperity Gospel
Week 7 12	<b>Western Worldviews in Culture and Globalization:</b> Modernism, Postmodernism, Liquid Modernity, New Age, Entertainment, Hermeneutics
13	<b>Worldviews Impacting Contemporary Global Issues:</b> Political Ideologies, Economic Imperialism, Poverty, Environment, Minority Selective Theologies
Week 8 14	<b>Worldviews in Service of God's Kingdom:</b> Congregational Life, Youth, Evangelism, Missions, Apologetics, <b><u>Research Project 2 Due</u></b>
15	<b>Course Summary, The Integrity and Comprehensiveness of God's View of His World, Moving Forward</b> <b><u>Course Overview Synthesis Due</u></b>

## **Course Assignments & Evaluation**

Weekly Feedback and Questions for Further Inquiry	15%
Research Project 1: God's View of His World	35%
Research Project 2: A Worldview of Interest to You	35%
Course Summary and Synthesis	15%
Bonus: voluntary student journal notebook review	5%

**Weekly Feedback and Questions for Further Inquiry** 15%

Each week at least one day before our next class: 1) write a brief reflection on what you found most helpful in the previous class and 2) identify one aspect of worldviews that you would like to explore further. Minimum 150 words.

By 5:00 p.m. on the *day before class* send your feedback to me by email in a file that you update each week. Your file with your weekly feedback can form part of your class journal notebook and your course summary and synthesis.

### **Research Project 1: God's View of His World**

35%

1. The goal of your first paper or visual presentation project is to thoroughly research and express God's view of His world (Biblical worldview, Christian worldview) as the foundation and core of your own worldview as a believer in God: Father, Son and Spirit.
2. Papers will be 8 to 10 pages, plus bibliography. Use Society of Biblical Literature format (SBL), double spaced 12 point Times New Roman font for the body of your paper (footnotes and bibliography entries are single spaced with a blank space between entries). Use the handbook student supplement available in your online folder and Populi with the exception of the abbreviation of Bible books which you may write out in full.
3. Visual presentations will include twenty-five to thirty-five high quality slides with text, pictures, maps, charts, etc., including bibliography and picture credits. Suitable for viewing in church Bible classes and one-on-one discussions. Format may be PowerPoint, Apple Keynote, LibreOffice (<http://www.libreoffice.org/download/libreoffice-fresh/>), Prezi or a Word to pdf document in landscape orientation.
4. In your paper or visual presentation conclusion discuss how a fuller understanding of God's view of His world can help us in our personal spiritual growth and in our ministry with God and His church. Your concluding applications should be 20% of the length of your paper or visual presentation (i.e. 2 pages for a paper, 5 slides for a visual presentation).
5. Research at least 10 high quality primary and secondary sources of relevant literature. Cite all sources you use in your bibliography. Focus on high quality peer-reviewed resources. Do not use internet sites except where they provide pdf's or e-books of high quality peer-reviewed sources. I am available to help you find high quality scholarly sources.

### **Research Project 2: A Worldview of Interest to You**

35%

1. The goal of your second project is to research a worldview of interest to you that will be helpful in understanding people and your service with God. Follow the same guidelines as for Project 1, points 2–5 above.

### **Course Summary and Synthesis.**

15%

Create a week-by-week summary of the course for future reference and ongoing development

over time. My *Worldviews and World Religions in Light of Scripture* is an example of a series of 30 studies that grew over many years in response to questions from people and my efforts to research and present objective and useful answers.

**Bonus: voluntary student journal / notebook review** 5%

Submit your journal notebook computer file for review the last week of class.

### **Bibliography of Secondary Literature**

While the following books have some value in understanding worldviews they are not necessarily in harmony with God's Word as many worldviews are not either. As secondary literature these books are not inspired by God but may have helpful observations about how people perceive God's world. You are encouraged to read critically with discernment examining everything carefully in light of Scripture as the Bereans did:

**“Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11).**

Anderson, James N. *What's Your Worldview?: An Interactive Approach to Life's Big Questions*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.

Anderson, Tawa J., W. Michael Clark and David K. Naugle. *An Introduction to Christian Worldview: Pursuing God's Perspective in a Pluralistic World*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2017.

Barna, George. *Generation Next: What You Need to Know About Today's Youth*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1995.

Bauman, Zygmunt. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2000.

Birston, Paul. *Worldviews and World Religions in Light of Scripture*. Waterloo, ON: Great Lakes Bible College, 2020.

Canada Census Mapper. Statistics Canada. Available at <https://censumapper.ca/maps/726#11/43.2425/-79.9470>.

Dockery, David S. and Trevin K. Wax. *Christian Worldview Handbook*. Nashville, TN: Holman, 2019.

Hesselgrave, David J. *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication*. Second edition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991.

- Hiebert, Paul G. *Transforming Worldview: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change*. Bakers Academic, 2008.
- Holmes, Arthur F. *Contours of a World View*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983.
- Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Fourth edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.
- Myers, Jeff and David A. Noebel. *Understanding the Times: A Survey of Competing Worldviews*. Manitou Springs, CO: Summit, 2015.
- Naugle, David K. *Worldview: The History of a Concept*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Nash, Ronald N. *Worldviews in Conflict: Choosing Christianity in a World of Ideas*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- Phillips, W. Gary, William E. Brown and John Stonestreet. *Making Sense of Your World: A Biblical Worldview*. Second edition. Salem, WI: Sheffield, 2008.
- Ramsey, Chad. *In God's Image: A Study of the Nature of Man*. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate, 2012.
- . *Reasons to Believe: A Survey of Christian Evidences*. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate, 2008.
- Ryken, Philip Graham and David S. Dockery. *Christian Worldview: A Student's Guide (Reclaiming the Christian Intellectual Tradition)*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013.
- Schroeder, Gerald and Zola Levitt. *Genesis One: A Physicist Looks at Creation*. Dallas, TX: Zola Levitt, 1998.
- . *The Hidden Face of God: How Science Reveals the Ultimate Truth*. New York: Touchstone, 2001.
- Sire, James W. *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept*. Second edition. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015.
- . *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*. Third edition. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.
- Smart, Ninian. *Worldviews: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Beliefs*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983. (Third edition, 1999.)
- Smith, C Fred. *Developing a Biblical Worldview: Seeing Things God's Way*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2015.

*Status of Global Christianity, 2025, in the Context of 1900–2050*. Hamilton, MA: Centre for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2025.  
Available at <https://www.gordonconwell.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2025/01/Status-of-Global-Christianity-2025.pdf>

Van Rheenen Gailyn and Bob Waldron. *The Status of Missions: A Nationwide Survey of Churches of Christ*. Abilene, TX: A.C.U. Press, 2002.

Walsh, Brian J. and J. Richard Middleton. *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian World View*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984.

De Witt, Richard. *Worldviews: An Introduction to the History and Philosophy of Science*. Third edition. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018.

Wilkins, Steve and Mark L. Sanford. *Hidden Worldviews: Eight Cultural Stories That Shape Our Lives*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009.

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