

Understanding and Engaging Culture



Faculty Contact

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

Course Description

Understanding and Engaging Culture is a foundational course for life-long growth in our knowledge of God as the Author of life and culture and our knowledge of global cultures historically and their impacts today. We will examine the many cultures in the world, including the world of the Bible, and how a greater awareness of cultures can increase our knowledge of people's backgrounds and influences to build bridges of understanding and enhance communication of the gospel.

We will study how God's creation of all people in His image with heart, mind, soul and strength is manifest in culture. As Canadians perceive their country as multi-cultural, the course will examine global cultures to heighten our knowledge and understanding of where people are coming from to Canada and the beliefs, values and practices they bring with them. Specific topics include the culture of heaven, dimensions of culture (globally, nationally, in groups and personally), Israel in Biblical and modern times, the Near East, the Mediterranean Basin, Eastern Europe and Russia, Western & Northern Europe, Africa, Asia, South America and North America (USA and Canada), pop culture, media and engaging people with God and the gospel. The course aims to further inform our Biblical worldviews and enhance our skills in all aspect of ministry and outreach to people all around us in our circles of life.

Course Objectives

Bible

1. Know God, the Author of life and culture's many dimensions.
2. Increase awareness, appreciation and understanding of the culture of heaven and its relationship to culture on earth, particularly for the people of God.
3. Expand our knowledge of the diverse cultural backgrounds of the Old and New Testament and how these inform God's actions in His world throughout history as He moves forward His work of redemption, reconciliation and restoration.
4. Consider the relationship of God, Father, Christ and Spirit, to culture in ancient and contemporary eras.

5. Develop balanced theological and anthropological Biblical perspectives on all the dimensions of culture as God would have us live in alignment with His will.

Bible and Ministry

6. Gain skills in identifying dimensions of culture globally and locally that will guide us in understanding people in the “multi-cultural” context of Canada.
7. Examine and articulate dimensions of culture in concise terms that facilitate the goal of understanding in point 6 above:
 1. Spirit (Faith, Religion)
 2. Language
 3. Family, Health
 4. Race
 5. Environment: Natural and Built
 6. Food
 7. Clothing
 8. Education
 9. Work, Economy, Poverty/Disparity
 10. Governance, Justice
 11. Arts, Entertainment, Sports (AES)
 12. Communication
8. Articulate practical applications of your knowledge of culture into ministry: preaching, teaching, evangelism, apologetics, discipleship, congregational health and growth, member care, missions, local outreach, counselling, etc.

Worldviews

9. Assess and understand cultures in relation to the dimensions of worldviews dominant in them as well as subcultures within them:
 1. Who is God?
 2. What is the nature of external reality, the world around us? (i.e. real or 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?

10. Deepen your own Biblical worldview by understanding how God has interacted with cultures in Bible times, historically and in contemporary times within His world.