



THTH 8303 The Christian Worldview
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Professional Doctoral Seminar / T&H Division
February 17–19, 2025 (M 1–9 p.m., T/W 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.)

Rhyne Putman, PhD
Professor of Theology
rputman@williamsbu.edu

Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

This seminar is designed to involve students in researching, understanding, and communicating the Christian worldview and its implications for ministry. Issues addressed include the nature of worldviews, the uniqueness of the Christian worldview in comparison to other worldviews, and the reasonableness of the Christian worldview. Special attention is given to issues related to communicating and defending the Christian worldview in the context of contemporary ministry. The seminar also prepares students to engage in worldview reflection in other professional doctoral seminars, the final project proposal, and the final project report.

Statement on Biblical Authority

In order to develop competent ministry leaders for the twenty-first century church and academy, students in this course will be exposed to various works related to worldview. Discussions and research will be focused on a variety of perspectives and worldviews from Christian and non-Christian views. Students are expected to become familiar with and demonstrate advanced, biblically guided critical engagement with the works of these thinkers.

The course instructors operate under the assumption that the Bible is the inspired, totally true and trustworthy Word of God which is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). The Baptist Faith and Message (2000) provides the confessional framework in which the instructors lead the course.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate foundational knowledge of the methods and tasks of Christian worldview.
2. Students will explore the practical significance of this topic for pastoral ministry, apologetics, and evangelism.
3. Students will apply what they learn to specific ministry tasks and reflect on the value of this kind of study for everyday ministry.

Teaching Methodology

Students will approach issues related to the Christian Worldview through assigned readings in, seminar lectures, group discussion, class presentations, and the completion of a ministry project related to the course content.

Course Texts (Required)

Ryken, Philip G. *Christian Worldview: A Student's Guide*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013.

Sire, James W. *The Universe Next Door*, 6th Ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020.

_____. *Naming the Elephant, Worldview as a Concept*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2004.

Review Texts (only one required)

Anderson, Tawa J., W. Michael Clark, and David K Naugle eds., *An Introduction to Christian Worldview*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017.

Bertrand, J. Mark. *(Re)Thinking Worldview*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007.

Dockery, David & Trevin K. Wax eds., *A Christian Worldview Handbook*. Nashville: Holman Reference, 2019.

Kelly, Stewart E. & James K. Dew, Jr., *Understanding Postmodernism*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017.

Kennedy, Simon P. *Against Worldview: Reimagining Christian Formation as Growth in Wisdom*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2024.

Nash, Ronald H. *Worldviews in Conflict: Choosing Christianity in a World of Ideas*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.

Naugle, David. *Worldview: The History of a Concept*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002.

Poythress, Vern Sheridan. *Inerrancy and Worldview*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

Smith, James K. A. *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009.

Course Schedule and Assignments

In-Seminar Assignments (Due First Day of the Seminar)

1. **Book Discussion / Talking Points (20%)**. Each student will read Ryken's *Christian Worldview* and Sire's *Naming the Elephant*, second edition, and come prepared to discuss its contents.
2. **Critical Book Review (20%)**. Students will select a review text from the list of review texts above and write a critical review. The student will also present this review during the seminar. *Students may sign up for the review on the Google Docs form.*

The review should include (1) a bibliography entry, (2) a brief biographical data about the author(s) (e.g., his or her position, degrees, research interests, and books), (3) an assessment of the main purpose and/or thesis of the book, (4) a concise summary of the book's contents, (5) a thorough critical analysis of the book, and (6) a conclusion with a recommendation or dismissal. The reviews should be between **4-6 single-spaced pages** and should conform to **Turabian** style. Because book reviews are primarily about one source, use **parenthetical citations** for the primary text and footnotes only for external sources.

Post-seminar Assignments (Due May 1, 2025)

1. **Worldview Critique (20%)**. Each student will read Sire's *The Universe Next Door* and select a worldview to study more in depth. Students will write a five- page (single-spaced) summary and critique of the worldview (outside sources are encouraged and expected). Two pages of the five should include how the student would address and minister to, in their ministry context, an individual who held that particular worldview.
2. **Sermon Manuscript (20%)**. Each student will prepare *and* preach/teach a **sermon manuscript/ Bible-study manuscript** (5-6 pages) related to the topic of worldview broadly. The sermon/lesson should also include at least two specific worldview concepts studied in class. The specific worldviews discussion should include a summary, critique, and discussion on how to address the worldview from a Christian worldview. The two worldviews selected cannot have been used by the student in their practical ministry assignment or class presentation. The manuscript and recording of the teaching/preaching time should be submitted by the due date.
3. **Worldview Integration Ministry Strategy (20%)**. Write a worldview integration strategy for your ministry context that takes into account how you plan to equip people in your context with (1) the biblical story, (2) Christian truth, (3) Christian practice and (4) Christian affections. These will be detailed during the seminar meeting time.

Course Evaluation

Book Discussion (20%)

Critical Book Review (20%)
Worldview Critique (20%)
Sermon Manuscript (20%)
Ministry Strategy (20%)