

**WYT 3855HF**  
**Fall 2016**  
**Theology of Culture:**  
**In Conversation ...**

**Instructor:** Brian J. Walsh,  
Adjunct Professor of Theology of Culture  
**Tuesdays, 7.00-9.00pm**

**Description:**

This is a seminar course engaging in a theological reflection on and response to the shifting cultural realities of the twenty-first century. Rooted in biblical reflection the course takes a “worldview approach” to cultural analysis and theology. Employing popular cultural products, especially the music of Bruce Cockburn, this course will discuss topics such as the war on terrorism, globalization, home and homelessness, a post-welfare state society, the end of modernity, the mall as sacred space, and postmodern faith. And the course will take the format of a conversation – between the instructor and participants, between the participants, and with various important dialogue partners.

**Course Learning Objectives:**

1. to engage biblical literature in a way that will engender wisdom and prophetic insight
2. to develop theological discernment of shifting cultural realities
3. to learn and practice critical and sympathetic reading skills

**Course Texts:**

Wendell Berry, *Citizenship Papers* (Washington, DC: Shoemaker and Hord, 2003).  
Andy Crouch, *Culture Making* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2008).  
James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation* (Baker, 2009)  
Brian J. Walsh, *Subversive Christianity* (Seattle: Alta Vista College Press, 1994).  
Brian J. Walsh and the Wine Before Breakfast Community, *Habakkuk Before Breakfast: Liturgy, Lament and Hope* (Toronto: Books Before Breakfast, 2016). [Available from the instructor]

**Requirements:**

1. Class Participation (which could include class presentations on assigned readings): 20%
2. Two Reflection Papers (5 to 6 pages): 30%
  - one biblical reflection addressing a biblical text to our cultural context
  - one reflection paper in response to at least two of the required readings. These papers can come in any order, but they are due on **Oct 18 and Nov. 15**.
3. Communal Oral Exam – During the last class (**Dec 6**) we will have a ‘celebration of learning’ (aka, a communal oral exam) in which we will write questions for each other and celebrate what we have learned together through communal conversation. Sounds scary, but it will really be fun. (20%)
3. Essay (12 to 15 pages): 30% due on **Dec 13**. I would like a proposal for the paper, indicating the topic and the beginning bibliography submitted by **Nov. 22**.

**Please Note: Wycliffe College Policy on Assignment Extensions:**

Basic Degree students are expected to complete all course work by the end of the term in which they are registered. Under **exceptional circumstances**, with the written permission of the instructor, students may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An extension, when offered, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. An SDF must be requested no later than two weeks before the completion of the term in which the course is taken. The request form is available on the college website or from the Registrar’s office.

**Also please note:** all papers are to be submitted in hard copy, double sided or printed on the back of scrap paper. Electronic submissions are discouraged.

### **Class Schedule**

Sept 13 **Setting the stage:** “culture,” “discernment,” “theology,” and the Bible.

Sept 20 **Worldviews, Biblical Faith and Cultural Discernment I**

Reading: Walsh, *Subversive Christianity*, chs 1, 2.

Sept 27 **Worldviews, Biblical Faith and Cultural Discernment II**

Reading: Walsh, *Subversive Christianity*, chs. 3, 4 and Postscript

Oct 4 **“Lament, Culture and the Land”** A guest lecture with Dr. Sylvia Keesmaat

Reading: tba

Oct 11 ***Culture Making: In Conversation with Andy Crouch I***

Reading: Crouch, *Culture Making*, Parts I and II

Oct 18 ***Culture Making: In Conversation with Andy Crouch II***

Reading: Crouch, *Culture Making*, Part III, Postscript

**{first reflection paper due today}**

Oct 25 **TST Reading Week, no class.**

Nov 1 **In Conversation with Wendell Berry I**

Reading: Berry, *Citizenship Papers*, pp. 1-32, 53-56, 85-106

Nov 8 **In Conversation with Wendell Berry II**

Reading: Berry, *Citizenship Papers*, pp. 33-41, 63-71, 113-125, 126-133, 143-157, 181-189

Nov 15 **From Worldview to Worship: In conversation with James K. A. Smith I**

Reading: *Desiring the Kingdom*, Introduction, Parts 1.

**{second reflection paper due today}**

Nov 22 **From Worldview to Worship: In conversation with James K. A. Smith II**

Reading: *Desiring the Kingdom*, Introduction, Part 2.

**{Paper proposals due today}**

Nov 20 **From Worship to Imagination: In conversation with Wine Before Breakfast**

Reading: *Habakkuk Before Breakfast*

Dec 6 **In conversation ... a celebration of learning**