

APPENDIX 2
Proposed Syllabus for BIBT 342: Christianity in Culture
BIBH, BIBP, & BIBT—Document 14

Abilene Christian University
[Semester/Year]

BIBT 342.01
CHRISTIANITY IN CULTURE
(3 credit hours; lecture)

[instructor Name]
[Instructor Email]

SCHEDULING MATTERS

- [Class Meeting Time and Location]
- [Office Hours Time and Location]

COURSE GOAL, DESCRIPTION, AND AUDIENCE

The goal of this course is to stimulate theological reflection on contemporary cultural issues. The course helps students to examine the relationship of basic Christian values with some of the realities and challenges of contemporary culture(s). The course grows out of and deepens students' understanding of Scripture, as they examine the intersections of Christianity with culture(s). The primary audience consists of students who have completed nine hours of ACU's introductory Bible sequence.

ASSOCIATED MISSIONS

The mission of Abilene Christian University is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world. The College of Biblical Studies partners with this mission by seeking to provide leadership preparation and resources for effective worldwide ministry in the cause of Christ. In concert with these goals, the mission of the Department of Bible, Missions, and Ministry is to provide preparation for congregational leadership through biblical and theological studies and Christian spiritual formation for effective worldwide ministry in the cause of Christ.

REQUIRED TEXTS

In addition to a Bible, three primary texts are required for this course:

- Yann Martel, *Life of Pi* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2001);
- Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Charles A. Anderson, and Michael J. Sleasman, eds., *Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007); and
- Steve Wilkens and Mark L. Sanford, *Hidden Worldviews: Eight Cultural Stories That Shape Our Lives* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009).

COURSE COMPETENCIES AND MEASUREMENTS

This course will help students grow in their abilities to:

- Identify and reflect upon their own lives, including a primary theological orientation
 - o *by participating in quizzes and class activities and*
 - o *by completing the Theological Worlds inventory and reflective paper;*
- Examine ideological undercurrents that shape American culture, determine its values, and challenge Christian faith
 - o *by participating in quizzes and class activities and*
 - o *by completing the Hidden Worldviews project and reflective paper;*
- Understand and interpret the Bible as a primary resource for theological formulation and reflection
 - o *by participating in quizzes and class activities and*
 - o *by completing the final examination project;*
- Engage contemporary cultural expressions of music, film, literature, and other media as a life skill necessary for living out their vocation as Christians
 - o *by participating in quizzes and class activities,*
 - o *by completing the Hidden Worldviews project and reflective paper,*
 - o *by completing the Life of Pi paper; and*
- Integrate theological reflection, biblical knowledge and cultural experience into a coherent framework from which they can live out their vocation as Christians
 - o *by participating in quizzes and class activities and*
 - o *by completing the final examination project.*

EVALUATIONS*Reading Quizzes*

In order to help students prepare for class sessions and contribute meaningfully to them, class activities will include quizzes over class reading and will use a variety of formats. These quizzes will count for 10% of the semester grade.

Theological Worlds Reflection

In order to help students consider their personal theological context and how it may affect their future life and work as Christians, students will take an instrument entitled "Theological Worlds Inventory." Students will then prepare a five-page reflection paper concerning their reactions to their theological world as determined by the Inventory ("does it fit me?"), reflections upon how their theological world was shaped ("why am I this way?"), and how this orientation may affect their Christian life and work in the future ("what will this mean?"). Papers will be graded on thoroughness in completing the assignment, demonstrated understanding of the Theological World in question, depth of insight exhibited regarding students' own lives, and proper use of grammar and writing mechanics. The papers will be due week 4 and will count for 20% of the semester grade.

Hidden Worldviews Paper

In order to help students discover challenges to their faith and how these affect their lives, students will examine the "hidden worldview(s)" most evident in their lives. Students will construct a multi-media project through which they will examine these hidden worldviews.

Examples of such projects are: a scrapbook of images and materials representing students' lives, a PowerPoint presentation, a YouTube video, or a series of blog posts including both text and images. Raw materials for this project might include students' iTunes libraries, dorm room décor, choices/possessions/downloads of television and/or films, lists of recent purchases, etc. A five-page written summary will accompany the multi-media project and will treat what students have learned about their hidden worldviews and their thoughts about the effects these worldviews may have on their future Christian life and work. Students will bring a rough draft of the paper to class on the first meeting of week 8; they will then share their insights with and note feedback from their peers. Students will then incorporate that feedback into a final draft to be due on the second class meeting of week 8 along with the multi-media portion of the project. The projects as a whole will be graded on creativity in construction, understanding regarding the hidden worldview(s) and their impact on contemporary culture, depth of insight regarding students' own lives, thoroughness in treating the subject, and proper use of grammar and writing mechanics. The projects will count for 20% of the final grade.

Life of Pi Analytical Paper

In order to facilitate students' processing of Yann Martel's novel *Life of Pi*, and in order to give students practice conducting theological reflection on works of literature, students will write a five-page essay engaging Martel's novel. Prompts for the essay will be made available closer to the due date. The essays will be graded on depth of insight regarding the novel, depth of insight regarding students' own lives and contemporary culture, thoroughness in treating the chosen essay prompt, and proper use of grammar and writing mechanics. The essays will be due week 12 and will count for 20% of the final grade.

Final Examination Paper

In order to help students integrate their learning from the entire semester and apply it in practical contexts, students will prepare a ten- to twelve-page final examination paper based upon the reading in the book *Everyday Theology*. Students will select a genre, cultural text, or cultural trend of their choice and consider it using the tools they have gained through the semester. The papers will be graded using the criteria common to the other semester evaluations. The papers will be due at the final exam session and will count for 30% of the final grade.

GRADING STRUCTURE

All projects will be evaluated with letters that correspond to a ten-point grading scale (90-100%= A; 80-89%= B; 70-79%= C; 60-69%= D; 0-59%= F). The breakdown of the total semester grade is as follows:

Reading Quizzes	10%
Theological Worlds Reflection	20%
Hidden Worldviews Project	20%
Life of Pi Analytical Paper	20%
Final Examination Paper	30%

Important notes concerning grading procedures:

- The mid-term report will reflect the work completed up to the deadline for the instructor to submit mid-term grades.
- Class participation, both in- and out-of-class, will be considered in assigning the semester grade, especially in cases of marginal grades.

COURSE POLICIES*Papers*

The following instructions apply for all written work submitted for the class:

- Papers should be composed using a standard and professional set of margins, font, and size (e.g., 11- or 12-point; Arial, TimesNewRoman, etc.);
- Papers should be double-spaced to enable an effective feedback loop;
- Papers of more than one page should be stapled in the upper-left-hand corner.

Technology

The following policies will obtain concerning matters of technology:

- Electronic aids (including laptops, iDevices, etc.) are permitted for the purposes of note-taking and research. Internet usage (including Facebook), email, and instant messaging) should be avoided during class, except when it may be part of class research activities. Electronic devices are wonderful tools for those who use them in class with self-discipline. If, in the opinion of the instructor, a student's activity is a distraction to certain member(s) of the class, such distraction will affect the student's class participation grade.
- Voice recording devices may be used; however, such recordings may only be employed for class purposes and are not to be shared outside the class.
- If students possess cell phones in addition to their iDevices, they should turn them off before the beginning of class.
- Technology problems are not suitable excuses for late or missed work. All projects are due at the beginning of the class session for that day; consequently, students should allow time to print papers ahead of deadlines.
- During the semester, some students may discover that the instructor has a Facebook profile. He will accept friend requests from students, should they be made; however, he does ask that students treat the information, photos, etc., available on Facebook with the same respect he will accord their own personal information.

Late Work

Assignments not submitted by the beginning of class on the due date are considered late and will result in a reduced grade, as follows:

- Up to one week late = one letter grade reduction
- One to two weeks late = two letter grades reduction
- Two to three weeks late = three letter grades reduction
- Beyond three weeks late = no credit whatsoever.

Attendance

Attendance and punctuality at all class sessions is expected; in fact, the nature of the course and its readings renders attendance necessary to receive the full benefit of the course meetings. The following constitute the course policies regarding attendance and punctuality:

- Two tardies will constitute an absence.
- Absences may be excused in the event of acute illness, a death in the family, school-sponsored activities, etc.; in these cases students should provide the instructor advance notice when at all possible, and they must provide appropriate documentation either before or after the fact.

- Further, students are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty; however, written assignments are due in class, and because students will not be allowed to turn in or make up work (including quizzes) missed during such classes, students are advised to weigh their options carefully. Each unexcused absence beyond the first three will result in the loss of 1/3 of a final grade unit (i.e., there are three 1/3's between an A and a B, a B and a C, etc.).
- Whether an absence is excused or unexcused, all students are responsible for the material covered and any assignments made. Ignorance of an assignment will not excuse late work.
- Eight absences of any kind will result in automatic failure of the course.

Academic Honesty

Every member of the faculty, staff and student body is responsible for protecting the integrity of learning, scholarship, and research. Violations of academic integrity and other forms of cheating are defined in ACU's academic integrity policy as the intention to deceive, mislead, or misrepresent, and therefore they are a form of lying and thus represent actions contrary to the behavioral norms that flow from the nature of God. Violations will be addressed as described in the policy. While the University enforces the policy, the most powerful motive for integrity and truthfulness comes from one's desire to imitate God's nature in one's life. Every member of the faculty, staff, and student body is responsible for protecting the integrity of learning, scholarship, and research. The full policy is available for review at the Provost's office's website (<http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/provost>) and at the following offices: provost, college deans, dean of campus life, director of student judicial affairs, director of residential life education, and academic departments.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating and will be treated as a violation of academic integrity. Students should avoid all kinds of plagiarism; like all cheating, it is sinful and robs students of the educational gain they should have had. Plagiarism occurs whenever a person offers someone else's writing, research or ideas as their own. Some common cases of plagiarism are:

- Lifting a paper off the internet, or from a fellow student, even if it is slightly altered;
- Lifting sentences or whole paragraphs from another's work (including Internet sources such as Wikipedia) without clearly putting the material in quotation form and giving full credit in proper citation form;
- Using another's research results without giving them credit; and
- Putting someone else's ideas in one's own words without giving them credit.

Students with Disabilities

Students who have a diagnosed disability should notify Alpha Academic Services (674-2667) before or immediately after the first scheduled class meeting. After the disability has been verified, the instructor will work with students and Alpha Services to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure that they have a fair opportunity to perform in the course.

Incompletes

An incomplete ("I") may be granted if a student has not met the requirements of the course due to illness, an emergency, or some cause deemed reasonable by the instructor; however, an incomplete is not given when a student has simply been negligent regarding class requirements. An "I" is removed by the completion of the necessary work within the next long term or time approved in writing by the instructor; otherwise, the "I" will become an "F" on the student's record.

COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1	
Why “Christianity in Culture”?	R: Read syllabus carefully
Week 2	
What is Christianity? What is “culture”? What is theological reflection?	
Week 3	
T: What are “Theological Worlds”? R: What is My Theological World?	T: Complete Theological Worlds Inventory R: Read Theological Worlds handout
Week 4	
T: What are “Hidden Worldviews”? R: What are Consumerism and Individualism?	T: Read <i>Hidden Worldviews (HW)</i> , pp. 11-26 R: Read <i>HW</i> , pp. 27-60; Theological World Reflection Due
Week 5	
T: NO CLASS: SUMMIT R: What is Nationalism?	Attend a Summit presentation Read <i>HW</i> , pp. 61-78
Week 6	
T: What are Moral Relativism and Scientific Naturalism? R: What is “New Age”?	Read <i>HW</i> , pp. 79-119 Read <i>HW</i> , pp. 120-138
Week 7	
T: What are Postmodern Tribalism and Salvation by Therapy? R: What Does Theological Reflection Look Like in This World?	T: Read <i>HW</i> 139-182 R: Read <i>Everyday Theology (ET)</i> , pp. 15-60
Week 8	
How Might We Think about Music?	T: Read <i>ET</i> , pp. 81-97; Rough Draft of <i>HW</i> Project Due R: Final Version of <i>HW</i> Project Due

Week 9	
How Might We Think about Literature?	T: Read <i>Life of Pi</i> , pp. vi-93 R: Read <i>Life of Pi</i> , pp. 97-189
Week 10	
How Might We Think about Literature? (cont'd)	T: Read <i>Life of Pi</i> , pp. 189-286 R: Read <i>Life of Pi</i> , pp. 289-319
Week 11	
How Might We Think about Film?	Read <i>ET</i> , pp. 133-151
Week 12	
T: How Might We Think about Death?	T: Read <i>ET</i> , pp. 209-226; <i>Life of Pi</i> Essay due
R: How Might We Think about "The Good Life"?	R: Read <i>ET</i> , pp. 63-79
Week 13	
T: How Might We Think about Busyness?	T: Read <i>ET</i> , pp. 155-171
R: How Might We Think about Blogging?	R: Read <i>ET</i> , pp. 173-189
Week 14	
T: How Might We Think about Other Things?	T: Read <i>ET</i> , pp. 229-245
R: NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING	
Week 15	
T: How Might We Develop a "Christian Worldview"?	T: Read <i>HW</i> , pp. 183-218
R: Final Examination Paper Workshop	
Week 16	
FINAL EXAM	Final Examination Paper due

Appendix: Grading Criteria

The criteria listed below will serve as basic criteria for all evaluations this semester. Each specific assignment will be accompanied by a re-articulation of criteria by which it will be evaluated, and all such assignments and criteria will be made available in an e-copy in the Class Files prior to each the execution of each assignment.

A Excellent, Outstanding, Fluent, Thought-Provoking, Original

“A” work is a superior and carefully organized response to the assigned topic, each paragraph or component having a controlling idea and excellent supporting detail, the style fluent and the content thought-provoking. It addresses all aspects of the prompt and follows all directions indicated by the prompt. There are few if any major mechanical errors. The presentation shows thought and original insights by the writer, independent of the teacher and/or text.

B Good, Above Average, Clear, Well-Organized

“B” work is a good response to the assigned topic, in which each paragraph or component has a controlling idea that is adequately supported by detail. The sentences are clear and show some variety. Mechanical errors are not overly distracting to the reader. The writer has mastered the material presented by the text and the teacher.

C Average, Adequate, Competent, Fair, Unoriginal

“C” work is an adequate, routine response to the assigned topic. A central idea is stated, perhaps too generally, but it is more or less held to and supported in token fashion. The style is moderately clear and the mechanics are reasonably competent. Errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and organization may be distracting but do not seriously interfere with a reader’s understanding of the paper.

D Below Average, Inadequate, Ineffective, Unclear, Under-Developed

“D” work is an inadequate response to the assigned topic, by virtue of significant mechanical errors that make the communication ineffective, weaknesses of word choice, insufficient support or understanding of the topic. There may be a stated controlling idea, but the relation of details to it is unclear. The writer followed the assignment directions only marginally.

F Failure for one or more of the following reasons: Blocked Communication, Plagiarism-Cheating, Major Errors, Illiteracy, Directions Not Followed, Badly Under-Developed

“F” work is an altogether unacceptable response to the assigned topic whether by failure of the writing, the thought, or both. The voice of the writer fails to appear because someone else’s language was appropriated or because gross errors have blocked communication. A controlling idea is not stated or, if so, it is incoherent or undeveloped. Errors in diction may suggest illiteracy. The writer did not follow the directions for the assignment at all.