

CHRIST ABOVE ALL
BRYAN COLLEGE

**CT108 UNDERSTANDING THE CULTURE:
SURVEY OF SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT
Syllabus**

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Understanding the Culture is an introduction to social engagement from a Christian worldview. This course introduces student to various strategies that Christians have employed to engage culture, teaches critical thinking skills, and surveys current social challenges while offering a clear way forward for engaging culture. (This course is offered for credit only through participation in the *Understanding the Culture* curriculum available through Summit Ministries of Manitou Springs, Colorado.)

COURSE RATIONALE:

The course introduces students to the concept of culture, how Christians have engaged with culture in the past, and what it looks like for Christians to make a difference in today's culture. Students are taught how to engage in twelve social issues: technology, arts and entertainment, the value of human life, sexuality, marriage, creation care, politics, religious freedom, poverty care, force, justice, and community renewal.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: After completing this course, students should be able to:

1. **Articulate** a Christian theory of social engagement.
2. **Develop** basic skills of social activism.
3. **Understand** the various approaches Christians have articulated to engage culture and the various social issues at play in modern culture.
4. **Apply** a Christian theory of social engagement to the specific social issues listed with the goal of making a positive difference for Jesus Christ.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Attendance:** Attendance at all class periods is required. Unexcused absences or tardies will result in a lower final grade.
2. **Textbook readings:** Each unit has corresponding textbook reading assignments. These assignments are found within the book *Understanding the Faith*.
3. **Primary source readings and videos:** Each unit has corresponding essay reading assignments and/or videos.
4. **Classroom discussion:** Participate in all classroom discussions.
5. **Writing assignments:** Each unit has corresponding writing assignments. These essays will be 1–2 page written responses to questions relating to each unit.
6. **Quizzes:** Be prepared for quizzes following any supplemental reading or video assignment.
7. **Unit tests:** On the last day of each unit, you must pass an exam covering material discussed in each unit.

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

The course includes in-class lectures, textbook readings, primary source readings, video presentations, classroom activities, quizzes, writing assignments, and unit tests. The course necessitates that *all* participants come to class prepared and ready to engage in class activities.

TEXTBOOK:

Myers, Jeff. *Understanding the Culture: A Survey of Social Engagement*. Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook Publishing, 2017.

PRIMARY SOURCE READINGS (IN ORDER):

1. "What Is Culture?" by Roger Scruton
2. "Cultural Issues in the Coming Years" by Ed Stetzer
3. Selection from *Discipleship of the Mind* by James W. Sire
4. Connectivity and Its Disconnects by Sherry Turkle
5. Selection from *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* by Nicholas Carr
6. "A Christian Environmental Ethic" by John C. Bergstrom
7. Selection from *If You Can Keep It: The Forgotten Promise of American Liberty* by Eric Metaxas
8. "A World Split Apart" by Alexandr I. Solzhenitsyn
9. "Living as if People Mattered" by George Grant
10. "Just War Tradition" by Michael Mckenzie
11. "Letter from Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King, Jr.
12. "A Theology of Cities" by Tim Keller

SUPPLEMENTAL VIDEOS (IN ORDER):

1. "Culture Making" Part 1 by Andy Crouch
2. "Culture Making" Part 2 by Andy Crouch
3. "A Christian Perspective of Art" by Steve Griesen and Charles Denler
4. "J-Shaped Cultures" by Paul Copan
5. "How to Move Ideas" by Warren Smith
6. "Engaging the Culture" by Jeff Myers
7. "Critical Thinking" by Mary Jo Sharp
8. "Bioethics" by Scott Klusendorf
9. "Amusing Ourselves to Death" by John Stonestreet
10. "The Case for the Pro-Life Position" Part 1 by Scott Klusendorf
11. "The Case for the Pro-Life Position" Part 2 by Scott Klusendorf
12. "The Hermeneutics of Sexuality" by Christopher Yuan
13. "The Worldview behind Porn" by Sean McDowell
14. "Same Sex Marriage" by John Stonestreet
15. "Why Marriage Matters" by John Stonestreet
16. "Energy and the Environment" by Craig Hazen, Garry DeWeese, John Bloom, Brent Ridley, and David Pelser
17. "Political Animal" by Jeff Myers
18. "Religious Liberty" by Jeffery Ventrella
19. "Effective Compassion" by Jennifer Marshall
20. "The Rules of the Game" by William McLenna, Daniel Lapin, and Robert Sirico
21. "The Struggle for Equality" by Michael Sherrard
22. "Christianity in Community" by Dustin Jizmejian

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS:

There are 18 unit tests worth 100 points each. As time permits, primary source readings and videos (above) will be assigned with corresponding quizzes. These quizzes will comprise 20% of the student's final grade.

GRADING SCALE:

93–100% = A	87–89% = B+	80–82% = B–	73–76% = C	69% or below = NC
90–92% = A–	83–86% = B	77–79% = C+	70–72% = C–	

MULTICULTURAL OBJECTIVES:

To be aware of considerations necessary to address societal, ethnic, and cultural needs of peers

TECHNOLOGY STATEMENT:

Students will be expected to exhibit skills in electronic communication, word processing, document development, internet use, and electronic library research and will receive access to training through the Academic Support Center, located in the Bryan College Library.

HONOR CODE & PLAGIARISM:

Honor Code: All students are to abide by the Bryan College honor code included in your Student Handbook or College Catalog. All assignments, quizzes and exams will be so pledged.

Plagiarism & Cheating: Given the Honor Code above, students are expected to submit their own work. All cheating is absolutely prohibited. Students caught cheating will be reported to the Vice President of Academics, resulting in disciplinary action up to and including failing the course and academic dismissal. The *Chicago Manual of Style* (2003) states “with all reuse of others’ materials, it is important to identify the original as the source” (p. 136). Even when you use other people’s thoughts or concepts without crediting them as the source you have stolen their intellectual work. It is not plagiarism to quote material from a book, article, or website as long as the author or source of the material is properly cited. Similarly, it is not plagiarism to copy a chart or a diagram from such a source, as long as the source is clearly credited. It is plagiarism to copy verbatim or closely paraphrase a chart or illustration, or material from any book, article, or website without clearly identifying the source from which it was obtained.

The penalties for cheating are outlined in the Bryan College *Catalog* and incidents of plagiarism will be reported to the Office of the Vice President of Academics and will include the following:

The Academic Office will place students who willingly violate the academic honor code on Academic Caution in addition to receiving their classroom discipline. Being placed on Academic Caution will cause the Academic Office to notify those who oversee students that publicly represent the college (see list below) of this status.

Notifications for Academic Cautions will be sent to the following positions:

- Assistant Dean of Students
- Campus Visit Coordinator
- Chair, Department of Fine & Performing Arts
- Coordinator of Athletic Operations
- Dean of Students
- Director of Admissions
- Director of Advancement
- Director of Athletics
- Director of Campus Worship
- Director of Outreach Ministries
- Director of Theatre Program
- Executive Assistant to the President
- Vice President of Student Services & Ministries
- World View Coordinator

Failure to abide by the Honor Code/Plagiarism Guidelines may result in loss of participation in the above mentioned departmental events or activities.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STATEMENT:

All requests for accommodations for this course or any school event are welcome from both students and parents. The campus ADA Coordinator is Mrs. Kristi Strode, located in the Library (Academic Success Center). She can be reached at kstrode5346@bryan.edu or 423.775.7173. Accommodations are to be requested within the first ten days of classes and will not be considered after, unless a diagnosis is given after that date. Accommodations must be requested per semester.

ACCREDITATION:

Bryan College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award the associate and baccalaureate degrees, the Tennessee State Board of Education for teacher education and licensure, the Association of Christian Schools International for teacher education and certification, the Immigration and Naturalization Service for the education of foreign students, and various public laws which have been passed by Congress for the education of veterans and the children of veterans, PL 16, PL 634, PL 361.