I. **Course Description**

This course introduces students to the theological study of popular culture. It covers key theories and debates concerning various historical and current postures of Christian communities toward popular culture. Using a combination of cases studies and theoretical approaches, the course provides knowledge and tools for applying theological perspectives to popular culture within a variety of ministry contexts.

II. **Rationale**

The word “culture” refers not only to the productions of a civilization but also to the conditions which cultivate the assumptions, beliefs, and actions of a people. Popular culture has never been more powerful or so formative in the lives of believers and non-believers alike. Thus the task of cultural exegesis—reading and interpreting cultural artifacts and trends—has never been more crucial to equipping the church leader or lay person in reaching, serving, and discipling within a faith community and beyond.

III. **Prerequisites**

None

IV. **Required Resource Purchase(s)**


V. **ADDITIONAL MATERIALS FOR LEARNING**
   A. Computer
   B. Internet access (broadband recommended)
   C. Microsoft Word
   
   (Microsoft Office is available at a special discount to LU students.)

VI. **MEASURABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:
   A. Identify various positions taken within the historical and contemporary church toward popular culture
   B. Explain the theological bases for various positions taken within the historical and contemporary church toward popular culture
   C. Evaluate various applications of theology to pop culture
   D. Analyze and evaluate pop culture artifacts according to an identifiable theological framework

VII. **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS (NUMBER OF ASSIGNMENTS MAY VARY)**

   A. Pre-class Reading: all of the assigned texts must be read before the course begins.
   B. Tests on Reading: a short test on the reading (covering major concepts) will be given each day; the test will require review of each text read before the class discussion of the text.
   C. Reflection Papers: a short reflection paper (2-3 pp.) will be due each day at the start of class, reflecting thoughtfully on the assigned reading for that day.
   D. Small Group Project: a small group project will be assigned on the first day of class for presentation on the second day. Some time will be built into the first day’s class to work on this, but students may need to take some additional time after class.
   E. Individual Presentation: this will be on a pop culture artifact to be determined during the course (format and length will depend in part on the number of
students enrolled). This will require some work outside of class, particularly after the next-to-last class so plan time accordingly.

F. Seminar Paper: a case study (10-15 pp.) offering theological examination of an aspect or artifact of pop culture; detailed instructions and a grading rubric will be provided on the first day of class.

VIII. COURSE GRADING AND POLICIES

A. Points

Tests on Reading (A) .................................................. 100 pts.
Reflection Papers (A, B, C) ................................. 200 pts.
Small Group Project (B, C, D) ...................... 150 pts.
Individual Presentation (D) ......................... 200 pts.
Seminar Paper (D) .................................................. 350 pts.

**Total Points** ............................................. 1000

B. Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>940-1000</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>920-939</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>900-929</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>BELOW 679</td>
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C. Assignment Policies

Late work is not accepted except in the case of properly documented emergency.

D. Attendance Policies

The student is obliged to follow the attendance policies identified in the graduate catalog.
E. Academic Misconduct Policies

Academic misconduct is strictly prohibited. See the graduate catalog for specific definitions, penalties, and processes for reporting.

F. Drop/Add Policies

The student is obliged to follow the drop/add policies identified in the graduate catalog.

G. Dress Code

The student is expected to maintain a neat, professional appearance while in class. The code is described in the graduate catalog and may be amended with guidelines by the school of study.

H. Classroom Policies

The use of cell phones will not be permitted. The use of computers is provisional. The student will only be allowed to use a computer if he/she is taking notes during class. Surfing of the web, social networking, or any other activity on a computer that distracts the student from the lecture (in the opinion of the professor) will result in the forfeiture of the privilege of the use of the computer in class. Should one student’s behavior result in the forfeiture of the use of a computer for that student, the entire class may lose the privilege of the use of computers.

I. Disability Assistance

Students with a documented disability may contact the Office of Disability Academic Support (ODAS) in Green Hall 2668 to make arrangements for academic accommodations. For all disability testing accommodation requests (i.e. quieter environment, extended time, oral testing, etc.) the Tutoring/Testing Center in Green Hall 2700 is the officially designated place for all tests administered outside of the regular classroom.

J. Student Conduct Policy

The student is expected to conduct himself/herself in a Godly and civil manner when addressing the professor or other students. While good healthy discussion will be expected and encouraged, at no time will personal attacks be tolerated.

IX. CALENDAR

Semester: The following calendar is a general representation of the course material and is subject to date adjustment if necessary

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading Due</th>
<th>Assignment (LO)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>Niebuhr</td>
<td>Reflection Paper (A, B, C)</td>
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<td>March 11</td>
<td>Myers, Romanowski</td>
<td>Reflection Paper (A, B, C)</td>
<td>Group Project (A, B)</td>
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<td>March 12</td>
<td>Detweiler and Taylor, Vanhoozer</td>
<td>Reflection Paper (A, B, C)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 13</td>
<td>Turnau, Smith</td>
<td>Reflection Paper (A, B, C)</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Presentations (D)</td>
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<td>April 13</td>
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<td>Seminar Paper (D) submitted through Safe Assign on Blackboard</td>
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**X. BIBLIOGRAPHY**


