

# ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

## *PTH/THE 622 Communicating Christian Faith in a Pluralistic Society*

Dr. Steve Lim

Fall 2002

### COURSE SYLLABUS

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course develops a comprehensive understanding of the individual and societal relevance of the gospel in order to enhance its proclamation to the contemporary world. It supports the validity of Christian faith through evaluation of experiential, scientific, sociological, historical, and biblical evidences. It also helps leaders to meaningfully engage contemporary religious and secular worldviews and to respond to major challenges to Christianity.

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

1. Understand and communicate the relevance of the gospel to individuals and society.
2. Support the validity of Christian faith through experiential, scientific, sociological, historical, and biblical evidences.
3. Develop a basic understanding of contemporary religions and worldviews in order to enhance communication and witness.
4. Respond to major challenges to Christian faith.
5. Collect pertinent material to enhance witness, spiritual discussions, and seeker messages.

#### **TEXTBOOKS**

##### ***Required:***

James W. Sire. *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.

Alvin J. Schmidt. *Under the Influence: How Christianity Transformed Civilization*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001.

D. A. Carson, ed. *Telling the Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns*. Zondervan Publishing House. 2000 (Read **selected chapters**, as assigned in class)

***Recommended:***

Peter Kreeft & Ronald K. Tacelli. *Handbook of Christian Apologetics: Hundreds of Answers to Crucial Questions*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994.

Jimmy H. Davis & Harry L. Poe. *Designer Universe: Intelligent Design and the Existence of God*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2002.

John P. Newport. *The New Age Movement and the Biblical Worldview: Conflict and Dialogue*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998

Christopher Partridge, ed. *Dictionary of Contemporary Religion in the Western World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

I. RELEVANCE OF THE GOSPEL FOR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

1. Anxiety to Peace
2. Brokenness to Wholeness
3. Conditional love to Unconditional love
4. Death to Eternal life
5. Emptiness to Fulfillment
6. Falsehood to Truth
7. Guilt to Forgiveness
8. Hopelessness to Hope
9. Illness to Health
10. Insignificance to Significance

II. RELEVANCE OF THE GOSPEL FOR SOCIETAL NEEDS

1. Alienation to Community
2. Bondage to Deliverance
3. Corruption to Renewal
4. Discrimination to Equality
5. Environmental degradation to Stewardship of the earth
6. Futility to Hope
7. Greed to Compassion
8. Hostility to Reconciliation
9. Injustice to Justice

III. VALIDITY OF THE GOSPEL: EXPERIENTIAL EVIDENCE

1. Spiritual desire
2. Moral sense
3. Greatness and evil in human beings
4. Beauty and wonder
5. Personal experience of truth
6. Interventions of grace

#### IV. VALIDITY OF THE GOSPEL: OBSERVABLE EVIDENCE

1. Transformed lives
2. History and sociology: Values of Christian faith
3. Medicine: Physical and emotional health
4. Physics: A beginning to the universe
5. Physics: Fine-tuning in the universe
6. Biochemistry: Intelligent design

#### V. VALIDITY OF THE GOSPEL: BIBLICAL EVIDENCE

1. Reliability of the Gospels and the Bible
2. The person, teachings, and claims of Jesus
3. The resurrection of Jesus

#### VI. RESPONSES TO CONTEMPORARY WORLDVIEWS

1. Modernism
2. Postmodernism
3. Eastern religions
4. New Age
5. Islam

#### VII. MAJOR CHALLENGES TO CHRISTIAN FAITH

1. Suffering and evil
2. Hell
3. Fate of those who haven't heard
4. Evolution
5. Science and faith

### **METHODOLOGY**

Class and small group discussions, student presentations, supplementary readings, lectures, and guest speakers will be used to facilitate learning. Papers and an exam will be assigned to develop and reinforce insights.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**



Reading Analyses	10%
Class participation, including presentation	10%
Collection of materials	5%
Paper #1	25%
Paper #2	25%
Final exam	25%

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

This will be distributed on the first day of class.

**SPECIFIC DATA**

Prepared by Dr. Steve Lim, July 25, 2002