The CHRISTIAN MIND: A Covenant Perspective
Fall 2008
Course Syllabus

Course Description:
This course is designed to introduce newly enrolled students to the general scope and distinctive emphases of a Covenant College education. The first portion of the course focuses on our calling in Christ and some of its implications for the task of being a student. The second portion introduces students to the Reformed tradition; and the third portion invites students to join with the faculty in addressing challenges that the tradition currently faces. Two units.

Faculty
Course Coordinator: Dr. Richard R. Follett
Your Discussion Section Leader: Donald N. Petcher
Lecturers:

President Niel Nielson  Dr. Kelly Kapic
Dr. Dan MacDougall  Dr. Tim Morris
Mr. Steve Corbett  Prof. Ed Kellogg
Dr. William Davis  Dr. Mike Rulon
Dr. Jay Green  Dr. Brian Fikkert

Required texts:
The Christian Mind Course Reader Fall 2008/Spring 2009:
1. Questions for Sydney Greidanus's article, “Use of the Bible”

Handouts: TBA as necessary

I. Course Objectives: Students who successfully complete this course will have shown the ability to:
A. make the transition from previous learning environments to the academic culture and Christian community of Covenant College;
B. articulate a biblically-informed understanding of the nature and purposes of a Christian liberal arts college;
C. demonstrate an understanding of the Reformed tradition—both its strengths and its challenges—and the place of Covenant College within that tradition, and
D. verbalize a grasp of the creation-fall-redemption/consummation metanarrative and some of the practical implications of the place of their academic work in the unfolding of God's work in history;
E. continue the transition from being a covenant child to becoming a self-conscious and reflective covenant-keeper.

II. Instructional Method:
Pre-Campus (see separate assignment sheet)
Reading The Idea of a Christian College and responding through an essay, due at the first discussion meeting on Monday, August 25th.

On-campus
A. Assigned readings
B. Large group lecture/presentations
C. Discussion groups
D. Career Development Assignment – in conjunction with the Career Development Center (CDC). Instructions for this assignment are given on the last page of this syllabus.

III. Assessment:
A. Pre-campus written essay Objective A,B & E 20%
B. Mid Course Project Objectives A-E 25%
C. Course involvement Objectives A,B & E 25%
D. Career Development Assessment Objectives A-E 10%
E. Final Exam Objectives A-E 20%

TOTAL 100%
Dr. Petcher’s Section Policies and Schedule

I. Instructor’s Information: Dr. Donald N. Petcher, Professor of Physics
Office: Mills Hall 364
Office Hours: see website (http://www.covenant.edu/physics/ -> “Our Faculty”)
Phone: extension 1249
E-address: petcher@covenant.edu

II. Assignments and Assessment Details
Summary:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holmes Essay</td>
<td>A, B &amp; E</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid Course Project</td>
<td>A-E</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Involvement</td>
<td>A-E</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career Development Assessment</td>
<td>A, B &amp; E</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>A-E</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>A-E</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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ALL PAPERS AND EXAMINATIONS MUST BE COMPLETED AND HANDED IN FOR YOU TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THIS CLASS.

A. Holmes Essay (20%)
Students should have completed this by the start of the course, based on the assignment mailed to them during the summer. Please talk to the instructor if you received the book within the two weeks prior to courses starting, to make arrangements for a later due date. Students will have an opportunity to rewrite these papers for an improved grade, if they desire.

B. Mid Course Essay/Term “Paper” (25%)
The essay/project is DUE at the start of our discussion section on Oct. 2.

1. Global expectation:
The essay should be approximately 1000-1200 words (or only slightly longer), which amounts to 3-4 full pages of text, and maybe some run over onto a fifth.

2. Essay/Project Options:

a. Vocation Reflection Essay: a careful and insightful response to Chapters 4, 5 and the “Epilogue” of Engaging God's World that uses your understanding of your own calling(s) to illustrate your assessment of Plantinga's account of redemption, vocation, and the kingdom of God. The thesis of this essay should involve a claim about the adequacy (biblical, practical, etc.) of Chapters 4, 5 and the Epilogue. You should also draw from other readings or course lectures as needed.
b. **Tradition Essay:** Sketch EITHER your own theological tradition (prior to entering Covenant) OR the theological tradition the Covenant College faculty is working to extend. As appropriate, connect or contrast your ideas with those of the course lectures and readings. Then explain how you expect that your college education will equip you to be a responsible steward of the tradition you sketched and a first approximation of how you'd like to contribute to it.

C. **Course Involvement (25%)**

Items to be included are attendance at both lectures and discussions (on time), quizzes on lectures and readings, meeting deadlines, verbal participation in discussion groups, and participation in other scheduled and announced activities (such as the Bafa Bafa Game and the Scavenger Hunt). *Half of the course involvement grade will be the average for the daily quizzes, which will also serve as a check on your attendance of the large group lectures. The other half will be from class attendance and participation. In addition, one absence from any event is "free." After the second, each absence will lower the maximum possible course involvement grade by one letter grade.*

D. **Career Development Assessment and Seminar (10%)**

A “pass/fail” requirement (meaning you get full credit for doing it, no credit if it is not done on time), this is split into two components – an online assessment worth 5% and a follow-up seminar worth 5%, both to be completed by **October 29th**. See description of the assignment at the end of these policy sheets for the details of this assignment.

E. **Final Exam (20%)**

The exam for this section will either be given in class on **Thursday, November 6th**. All students are expected to complete the exam at this time.

III. **Other Section Policies**

A. **Attendance:** Punctual arrival is expected for all sessions. Attendance will be taken via the quiz, and is counted toward your grade. Students should make sure that their presence is noted at the large group lectures. Every small group discussion will include a quiz over the readings, lectures, and discussions since the last quiz, so be prepared. (See item C under Assignments and Assessment Details: Course Involvement.)

B. **Written work:** All written work must be typed (in 12 pt. standard font) and double-spaced. Major errors in grammar, spelling, and basic English usage will be penalized (e.g., misuse of it’s and its; there and their; affect and effect; sentence fragments and run-ons; incoherent paragraph organization, etc.). Students who need help with their writing skills may be required to seek assistance from The Writing Center.
C. **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Carefully read the school policy in the *Covenant College Student Handbook*. Our expectation is that all students will turn in their own work in every assignment, as using that of others defeats the entire purpose of education. This does not mean students should only work alone; indeed, I would encourage you to discuss assignments with other students in the class whenever appropriate. But I also expect the final draft of a paper and the answers on examinations to be the work of the student whose name appears upon them. The faculty exists to assist and serve you in understanding the course material better, and your professor in this course is very willing to meet with you if you are having difficulties expressing your understanding. We also recommend using resources like the Writing Center whenever appropriate.

To be clear, we value students working through the difficult aspects of the material we teach. But on the flip side, neither cheating nor plagiarism will be given course credit. If you have questions about how to give proper credit to the source of an idea or quotation, please talk to the professor *before* handing in the paper. **Plagiarism is intellectual theft.** Plagiarism discovered anytime after a paper has been handed in will result in “0” points for the paper at the least, likely failure in the class, and might lead to discipline from the College as well.

D. **Polite and civil behavior is expected from all,** so please take care of all physical and social needs before or after class. Also, if you carry a mobile phone with you, turn it off before class, and never make phone calls during class; if you receive a call during class time, Dr. Petcher may ask you to leave for the remainder of the class period. Additionally, the use of laptops, PDAs, or other electronic information devices in class for taking notes or working on course related exercises is a privilege, not a “right.” Students are expected to use them for course related work while in a course meeting, and not for the pursuit of outside interests, emails, amusements, or any work unrelated to the material being presented in the course at the time. Abuse of electronic technology in the classroom will lead to its prohibition.

IV. **Career Development Center (CDC) Assessment and Orientation, Fall 2008**

At the start of your work at Covenant, we think it helpful to gain access to the tools that will help you better understand yourself and how to make plans for the future. This assignment is designed to increase your awareness of your strengths, interests and personality, and to obtain a better understanding of the Career Development Center and the services it can provide throughout your time at Covenant.

**At the beginning of September you will receive an email from the Career Development Center** that will contain the materials and complete instructions for this assignment. The assignment has three basic components. You will: 1) Self-administer the Career Direct web assessment with the link sent to you; 2) Save a copy of the results to your personal folder and send a PDF copy to the Career Development Center; 3) Attend a 30 minute seminar where the results of the Career Direct assessment
will be explained, and you will learn about the other services of the Career Development Center. All three of these components must be completed by October 29th.

This assignment will account for 10% of your final Christian Mind grade - 5% for completing and sending the assessment to the Career Center and 5% for attending one of the seminars. The staff of the Career Development Center will be sending regular updates to your Christian Mind instructor with the names of the students who have completed the assignment.

The seminars will be in Mills 180 at the following dates and times. Please look now at your schedule and within the next couple of weeks pick a seminar date that you plan on attending. Then contact the Career Development Center at careerdevelopment@covenant.edu to reserve your seat at that seminar. If none of these dates and times work with your schedule, talk to your Christian Mind instructor about the conflicts and he or she will contact the Career Development staff to work with you to find an alternative time.

Tuesday, September 16th at 1 pm
Thursday, September 18th at 4pm
Monday, September 22nd at 5pm
Thursday, September 25th at 5pm

Monday, October 6th at 3pm
Wednesday, October 8th at 4pm
Tuesday, October 14th at 5pm
Thursday, October 16th at 5pm
Friday, October 24th at 3pm
SCHEDULE FOR LECTURES & DISCUSSIONS

This schedule is set with the best of intentions, but is subject to change if unforeseen events force an alteration. Please follow this schedule unless you receive an announcement of a change from the course coordinator. Students should complete the assigned readings before the meeting time on the date indicated.

Orientation Week

Fri 22-Aug  Lecture #1: Calling & Covenant
Speaker: Dr. Niel Nielson

Mon 25-Aug  Small Group Discussion #1 — HOLMES PAPER DUE

Tue 26-Aug  9:30-10:45 AM  Lecture #2: God's Word
Speaker: Dr. Dan MacDougall
Reading: 1) Sydney Greidanus, "The Use of the Bible in Christian Scholarship." (CM Reader)

11:00-12:00  Small Group Discussion #2
1:00-4:00 PM  Bafa Bafa Game

Wed 27-Aug  Lecture #3: Culture, the Church, and the Reformed Tradition
Speaker: Prof. Steve Corbett
Reading: Rebekah Nathan (Cathy Small), "As Others See Us," in My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student (New York: Penguin, 2006), 67-89. (CM Reader)

Regular Class Schedule

Thur 28-Aug  Small Group Discussion #3 – Immediately Following Convocation

Tue 2-Sep  Lecture #4: Worldview, Common Grace and Antithesis
Speaker: Dr. William Davis
Reading: Plantinga, Engaging God's World, Chapters 2 and 3: “Creation,” and “The Fall” pp. 17-68.

Thur 4-Sep  Small Group Discussion #4
Last Day to make schedule changes without incurring a fee

Tue 9-Sep  Lecture #5: Tradition & Stewardship
Speaker: Dr. Jay Green
Thur 11-Sep  Small Group Discussion #5

Tue 16-Sep  Lecture #6: Being "Reformed"
Speaker: Dr. Kelly Kapic
Reading: 1) B.B. Warfield, A Brief and Untechnical Statement of the Reformed Faith (CM Reader)
2) Plantinga, Engaging God's World, Chapter 4, "Redemption"

Thu 18-Sep  Small Group Discussion #6 — TRADITION WORKSHEET DUE

Tue 23-Sep  Lecture #7: Science and Reformed Tradition
Speaker: Dr. Tim Morris

Thu 25-Sep  Small Group Discussion #7

Tue 30-Sep  Lecture #8: Art and Reformed Tradition
Speaker: Prof. Ed Kellogg

Thu 2-Oct  Small Group Discussion #8 — MID COURSE PROJECT DUE
Campus Preview Weekend

Tue 7-Oct  Lecture #9: Gender Differences, Roles & Expectations
Speaker: Dr. Mike Rulon
2) Carolyn Custis James, “Women Theologians: a Spiritual Goldmine for the Church,” from byFaith Magazine, November-December 2005 (CM Reader), and
3) Kenneth Stewart, “Additional ‘Orders’ of Ministry are Needed in the P.C.A. and Other Like-Minded Churches,” from February 2006 (CM Reader)

Thu 9-Oct  Small Group Discussion #9
Board of Trustees meetings and Homecoming

Tue 14-Oct  Lecture #10: Social Justice in the Reformed Tradition
Speaker: Dr. Brian Fikkert
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<tr>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>16-Oct</td>
<td>Small Group Discussion #10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>21-Oct</td>
<td>FALL BREAK - No Classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>23-Oct</td>
<td>Small Group Discussion #10</td>
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| Tue   | 28-Oct    | Lecture #11: Calling, Success and the End Times<br>
**Speaker:** Dr. William Davis<br>
**Reading:** View Movie: *Chariots of Fire* – On Reserve In the Library<br>
**CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER ASSESSMENT AND SEMINAR SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY OCTOBER 29TH**|
| Thur  | 30-Oct    | Small Group Discussion #11     |
| Tue   | 4-Nov     | Preparation Time for Final Exam|
| Thur  | 6-Nov     | FINAL EXAMINATION              |