Essential Information
Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available in the Essential Information section at http://support.nts.edu.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose Degree Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS textbook information
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- Handbook for Inclusive Language

Instructor Information
Professor: T. Scott Daniels, Ph.D.  
Email: sdaniels@apu.edu  
Office: (626) 351-9631

Catalog Description
PHL790/890 SEMINAR IN PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION (3 HRS)
From time to time important persons or problems will be chosen for intensive study. Repeat credit will be allowed for non-duplicated seminar subjects.

Course Narrative & Rationale
Over the last several decades technological shifts have brought significant changes to the way people work, communicate, think, imagine, and live. These changes have also brought significant changes to the way the worship and spiritual formation practices of the Church.

This course will explore through reading, lecture, research, and class interaction how technological changes are affecting the historic practices of local congregations. In these shifts many things have been both gained and lost. The purpose of the course is – with the input of
theological, philosophical, and sociological expertise – to properly assess what in a technological age can be embraced and what needs to be held in suspicion.

**Degree Objectives**

1. Mature knowledge of God and self, attained through practices of Christian formation and personal discipline, exhibited in the following outcomes; the student will: engage in ongoing Christian formation through practices grounded in the corporate life of the Church, draw broadly from the Christian tradition’s personal and communal formation practices, and renew continually into the image of Christ and participate as a vital part of the Body of Christ.

2. Articulation of the knowledge of this God through prayerful, scholarly study and a deepening understanding of the Christian Scripture of the Old and New Testaments, exhibited in the following outcomes; the student will: identify key theological themes as they arise from Scripture, identify and relate literary and theological emphases of Scripture, and understand the formative power of Scripture in shaping corporate and personal Christian life.

3. Development of wisdom and discernment through engagement with the literature of the Christian faith through critical, scholarly study of the history and theology of Christianity and the application of that heritage to personal and corporate Christian life, exhibited in the following outcomes; the student will: use scholarly methods for understanding the history and theology of Christianity, identify how key figures and movement from the history of Christianity shape theological discourse, appropriate the formative power of theology in shaping corporate and personal Christian life, and apply theological convictions to personal and corporate life both in and beyond the church.

4. Cultivation of gifts, practical skills, and vocational identity as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through engagement in and reflection on the pastoral arts, exhibited in the following outcomes; the student/graduate will: communicate effectively in written, spoken, artistic, and other forms, and engage in the holistic nature of the church in redemptive ministries of restoration.

5. Understanding of local and global diversity through the investigation of cultural contexts, to enable the Church to proclaim effectively and to embody the mission of God, exhibited in the following outcomes; the student/graduate will: exegete the congregation, exegete aspects of society including ethnicity and culture, and participate in the stewardship of creation.

**Course Outcomes**

1. Articulate the nature of spiritual formation as the holistic formation of people through communal narratives and practice, counter-shaping members of the Body of Christ to orient their desire toward the Kingdom of God. (Reading, writing, and lecture involving the Smith text).

2. To assess the challenges the shift from a literate to oral/media culture brought to the Church’s historic practices of spiritual formation. (Reading, writing, and lecture involving the Postman and Ellul texts).
3. To counter balance the concerns raised by the critics of a media or image oriented age with other voices that see in the shifts the potential recovery of lost aspects of an oral culture. (Reading, writing, and lecture involving the Ong text).

4. Exegesis of the current media, technological culture and its impact on views of ecclesiology and spiritual formation. (Reading, writing, and lecture involving the Laytham and Detweiler texts).

5. The ability to articulate an ecclesiology and plan for spiritual formation that operates within the current technological and media/oral culture but also serves the counter-formative aspects of proper Christian discipleship and formation. (Final paper assignment).

**Required Texts & Course Materials**


Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (Routledge, 2012). 978-0415538381

James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom* (Baker Academic, 2009). 978-0801035777


**Course Calendar and Outline**

Monday, May 19: Desiring the Kingdom and Cultural Liturgies (Smith Text)
Tuesday, May 20: Postman and Ellul: Death of a Literate Culture and Amusing Ourselves in Worship (Postman and Ellul Texts)
Wednesday, May 21: Are All of These Shifts Bad? – Is there Space for a Second Orality? (Ong Text)
Thursday, May 22: What’s Going on Right Now? (Laytham and Detweiler Texts)
Friday, May 23: Reflections and Wrap-up

**Course Assignments & Requirements**

1. **Reading**: The student is expected to complete all of the required course reading.
Pre-module Reading: Smith, Desiring the Kingdom (All)
                Postman, Amusing Ourselves to Death (All)
                Ellul, The Humiliation of the Word (Preface – Chapter 1)
                Ong, Orality and Literacy (Chapter 3)
                Laytham iPod, YouTube, Wii Play (Chapters 1-2)
                Detweiler, iGods (Introduction – Chapter 1)

Post-module Reading: Remaining unread sections of the required texts

2. Reflection Papers: Students are required to write 3-5 page reflection papers over each of the required reading texts. The papers should be the students critical reflections and additional ministry reflections based on the texts. The reflections given on the syllabus are intended to stimulate the student’s thinking and are not required to be dealt with by the student.

Pre-module Papers (due on the first day of class (May 19):

- Smith: What do you think about Smith’s view of humankind as “homo liturgicus”? If you were to do cultural exegesis on the technological or media aspects of the contemporary culture, what would you say are some of its built-in views of the good life? What spiritual disciplines that Smith deals with do you view as important for counter-formation in a technological age?
- Postman: What does Postman value most about a literate age? What does he sense that the culture is losing in the shift to entertainment technologies? Postman is most interested in the effects of media on education and political discourse. What do you think Postman’s concerns would be if he were speaking to the modern church?

Post-module Papers:

- Ellul: Why is Ellul concerned about the humiliation of the Word? What does that even mean for him? What is “technique” for Ellul and how does that impact the current church culture? How do you think Ellul would prescribe a way forward for the church?
- Ong: What is a “second orality” and what good things are recovered in the shift back to a culture of orality? What do you think Ong’s word of advice would be for the contemporary church culture?
- Laytham: What is Laytham’s primary concern(s) regarding the impact of entertainment on the church? What aspects of Laytham’s critique/wisdom were most helpful for you?
- Detweiler: What does Detweiler see as the blessing and curses that come with a technological age? What aspects of Detweiler’s critique/wisdom were most helpful for you?

3. Final Paper: Students will write a research paper, of at least 3000, reflecting on issues raised in the course but extending these reflections into external research. This paper must relate to some issue or theme within the broader field of Ecclesiology and Spiritual Formation. Topics
should be specific and narrow. Students should have their topics approved by the professor before beginning research. Research and writing will occur after the module in the post-module period, building on knowledge and topics that have been discussed in the course. Significant grading deductions will be incurred for spelling/grammar errors, improper documentation, etc. Papers will be graded according to the following rubric:

- Grammar, spelling, sentence structure, readability, consistency of notations/spacing/pagination (20 points)
- Quality of research, accuracy of citations, connection of thesis to the scholarly field, use of primary sources (20 points)
- Logical connectedness of the paragraphs/points, visibility of a structure/outline, transitions between points/paragraphs (20 points)
- Thesis development, quality of argument, appropriate length/word count (20 points)
- Strength of conclusions, scope of argument (whether or not the paper accounts for the range of opinions on the topic), overall presentation of thesis (20 points)
- Total Points: 100

**Distribution of Student Learning Hours**

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<th>pre-module hours</th>
<th>module hours</th>
<th>post-module hours</th>
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<tr>
<td>Face-to-face Class Sessions</td>
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<td>Reading</td>
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**Method for Submitting Assignments**

Papers should be submitted electronically as Word attachments and emailed to the professor at sdaniels@apu.edu

**Inclusive Language**

NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.

**Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams**

Late work will be deducted one letter grade per week that it is late.
**Course Grading**
Reflection Papers are worth 50 points each.
Term Paper is worth 200 points.

In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly, NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies that have been beneficial for the student in the past.

**Class Attendance**
Attendance at classes is essential for realizing the maximum benefit of your education. Since the professor in each course is best acquainted with the importance of consistent attendance, he or she will determine the rules for attendance.

If you must be absent because of extenuating circumstances, contact the professor as soon as possible to discuss the situation.

If a student is absent for 8 hrs of a one week, the professor may automatically fail the student.

Daily attendance records must be reported for those obtaining V.A. and Department of Education benefits. Students must make the professor aware if their attendance must be recorded.

**Audio and Video Recordings**
In order to foster a safe learning environment in which various viewpoints are respected, audio or video recordings or transcripts thereof by students is prohibited without the permission of the faculty member in charge of the course. If permission is granted, redistribution of these recordings or transcripts thereof outside the scope of the course is prohibited.