

Mary Walker McCampbell
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Employment History:

2016-present	Lee University Associate Professor of Humanities
2010-2016	Lee University Assistant Professor of Humanities
2008-2010	Calvin College Visiting Assistant Professor of English
2007-2008	University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Lecturer in English
Spring 2007	Covenant College Visiting Assistant Professor of English
2002 – 2006	University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Instructor
1999-2001	University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Adjunct Instructor

Education:

2002 – 2006	Ph.D. in Literature University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne
2001 – 2002	M.A. in Modern and Contemporary Studies: Twentieth Century Literature and Film University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne
1997 - 1995	M.A. English Literature University of TN, Chattanooga
1994 – 1990	B.A. English Literature, History and Philosophy Minors Covenant College, Lookout MTN, GA

Academic/ Artistic Residencies:

Winter 2018: Scholar-in-Residence at Regent Theological College, Vancouver

Summer of 2014: Writer-in-Residence at L'Abri Fellowship in Greatham, England

Books:

Imagining Our Neighbors as Ourselves: How Art Shapes Empathy. Minneapolis, Fortress Press, April 19, 2022.

Books in progress:

Postmodern Prophetic: Contemporary Literature and the Religious Imagination. In conversation with David McNutt, editor of IVP Academic Theology & the Arts series. Proposal Requested.

Douglas Coupland: Academic Essays. Co-edited with Dr. Diletta DeCristofaro and Dr. Andrew Tate. Proposal Requested by Bloomsbury Academic.

Academic Book Chapters and Journal Articles:**In progress:**

- “A Prophetic Haunting: Bearing Witness Against Black Nihilism in Jesmyn Ward’s *Men We Reaped*.” *Jesmyn Ward: Academic Essays*, edited by Sheri-Marie Harrison, Arin Keeble, and Maria Tores-Quevedo, Edinburgh University Press, 2023.
- “Adam & Eve,” *The Routledge Handbook of the Hebrew Bible in Contemporary Fiction & Poetry*, edited by Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer, Routledge. I have been invited by the editor to write this chapter. We do not yet have a publication date.
- “Spirituality and the American Apocalypse” in the forthcoming *Bloomsbury Handbook of Contemporary Apocalyptic Fiction*. Editors Andrew Tate and Susan Watkins. I have been invited by the editors to write this chapter. The collection proposal was requested by Bloomsbury commissioning editor.
- “Critical Theory in the Christian Classroom” in the “W(h)ither the Christian Right?” Cluster. *Post45 Contemporaries*. Forthcoming.

Published:

“‘Isolated Little Cool Moments’: The Life/Death of Irony in *Generation X*,”

“Thirty Years of *Generation X*” cluster. *ASAP/ JOURNAL*. Nov. 15, 2020.

“New Irony & Old Sincerity: How the Metamodern and the Post-secular Meet in Indie Rock.” *Isn’t It Ironic: Receivership and Responsibility in Popular Culture*, edited by Ian Kinane and Elizabeth Parker, Routledge, 2021.

"GOD IS NOWHERE; GOD IS NOW HERE: The Co-existence of Hope and Evil in Douglas Coupland's *Hey Nostradamus!*" *Yearbook of English Studies* 39.1-2 (2009): 137-154. (YOES is the journal of the British Modern Humanities Research Association).

“‘Paradigms are Dissolving Left and Right’: Baudrillard’s Anti-Apocalypse and Chuck Palahniuk’s *Survivor*.” *Sacred and Immoral: on the Writings of Chuck Palahniuk*. Edited by Jeffrey A. Sartain, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009. 146-158.

“Consumer in a Coma: Postmodernism, Apocalypse and Transcendence in Douglas Coupland’s Fiction” in *Spiritual Identities: Literature and the Post-Secular Imagination*, editors Arthur Bradley, Jo Carruthers and Andrew Tate, Peter Lang Publishers, 2009.

Encyclopedia Entry:

"Douglas Coupland." *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Writers and Their Works*, Edited by Geoff Hamilton,,: Facts on File. 2010.

Public-Facing Publications:

“Reimagining Racial Justice: Shakespeare, Frederick Douglass, and the Subversive Calling of the Imago Dei in a Humanities Survey Course.” *The Other Journal: An Intersection of Theology & Culture*, Feb. 7, 2022.

“‘Stop Working Me:’ Jesse Pinkman as Child-Prophet in Vince Gilligan’s *Breaking Bad*.” *Transpositions: Theology, Imagination, and the Arts*, May 14, 2021.

“Waiting for the Lord: Visual Meditation on Douglas Coupland Painting.” *Artway*, Sept. 12, 2021.

“Narratives of Embodiment: How Ghost Stories Teach Us About Trauma.” *The Regent World*, March 31, 2020.

“Douglas Coupland’s *Vortex* Exhibit: Environmental Art in a Plastic Era.” *The Other Journal: An Intersection of Theology & Culture*, March 5, 2020.

“Toni Morrison Wrote the Novel that Will Help America Heal.” *Good Letters: Image Journal Online*, August 12, 2019.

“Eight Works of Contemporary Fiction Christians Should Read.” *The Gospel Coalition Online*, Feb. 8, 2019.

“How *The Handmaid’s Tale*’s Twisted Theology Reflects America’s Sins. *Relevant Magazine*, June 4, 2019.

“How *Children of Men* Hid a Hopeful Message Inside Its Apocalyptic Background.” *Relevant Magazine*, April 18, 2019.

“Twenty Year Later, *The Matrix* is Much More Than a Sermon Illustration.” *Relevant Magazine*, March 1, 2019.

“A New We: Christian Colleges and Universities Implement Changes to Support Students of Color.” *Christianity Today*, Nov. 2018.

“*The Hate U Give* Invites Us to Be Witnesses, Not Voyeurs, of the Black Experience.” *Relevant Magazine*, Oct. 24, 2018.

“We Wear the Mask.” *The Witness: A Black Christian Collective*, Sept. 9, 2018.

“A Conversation with The Welcome Wagon’s Vito Aiuto, Parts I, II, III.” *Good Letters: Image Journal Online*, August 8-10, 2018.

“Meet the Shoe Designer Who Puts His Faith in Every Sole: An Interview with John Fluevog.” *Relevant Magazine*, Aug. 9, 2018.

“Becoming Inhuman: *Heart of Darkness* and *American Psycho*.” *The Curator*, Sept. 12, 2016.

“Search Results: The Real-Life Douglas Coupland.” *Image Journal*, November 2017.

“Policing with Embrace: How Officer Norman Loves His Community.” *Christ & Pop Culture*, Aug. 18, 2015.

“Not That There’s Anything Wrong With That: *Seinfeld*, Satire, and Self-deprecation.” *Christ & Pop Culture*, March 30, 2015.

“Revisiting *The Age of Adz*: Dysfunctional Relationships in a Noisy Age.” *The Curator*, Feb. 13, 2015.

“A Part of The Divine Project.” *Relief Journal Online*, Feb. 9, 2015.

“Coleridge, Lecrae, and #BlackLivesMatter.” *Relief Journal Online*, Jan. 13, 2015.

“Federico Fellini’s *8 ½*: Child’s Play.” *Relief Journal Online*, Oct. 7, 2014.

“Punk Rock’s Prophetic and Profane Outsider Community.” *Christ & Pop Culture*, Sept. 29, 2014.

“Monday Sunday Lunch: Learning How to Taste and See the Real.” *Relief Journal Online*, Sept. 5, 2014.

“Richard Linklater’s *Boyhood*: A Primer on Detachment.” *Christ & Pop Culture*, Sept. 4, 2014.

“*The Unforgettable Fire*: Human Destruction, God’s judgement, and Our Refuge.” *Relief Journal Online*, Aug. 5, 2014.

“*The Tree of Life* and Our Collective Cultural Discomfort with Recognizing ‘The Glory’.” *Relief Journal Online*, July 4, 2014.

“L’Abri Fellowship: A Vulnerable but Secure Shelter.” *Relief Journal Online*, May 29, 2014.

“Douglas Coupland’s *Hey Nostradamus!*: A Call to Christian Supermen.” *Relief Journal Online*, May 2, 2014.

“Isolation in a Virtual Wasteland” (TS Eliot). *Relief Journal Online*, Feb. 9, 2014.

“Buffing the Façade Before It’s Gone: *Friday Night Lights* Peeks Below the Surface.” *Relief Journal Online*, March 5, 2014.

Academic Conference Presentations/ Guest Lectures:

"A Clash of Kingdoms: Secondary Trauma and Spiritual Formation in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Transcendent Kingdom*." MLA National Convention. San Francisco, Jan. 2023 (forthcoming).

"Heaven Help Us Seminar." Invited Respondent for Seminar with Dr. Terry Eagleton. Lancaster University. May 16, 2022 (forthcoming).

"Empathy for Enemies: Art that Helps Us to Love." Regent College Summer Lecture Series. August 1, 2022.

"Guns, Grit, and Grace: Flannery O'Connor and the Sin of Sentimentality." Regent College Summer Lecture Series. June 29, 2020.

"An Invisible Crisis: Jordan Peele's Exploration of Racialized Trauma." Presented at "Crisis in Contemporary Writing," British Association for Contemporary Literary Studies Virtual Conference. June 26, 2020.

"New Irony & Old Sincerity: How the Metamodern and the Post-secular Meet in the Music of Sufjan Stevens, John Darnielle, and Craig Finn." South Atlantic Modern Language Society Conference. Atlanta. Nov. 2019.

"TRANSFORM: Creating a Space for Secular/Sacred Worship in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Douglas Coupland's *Generation X*." International Meeting of the Conference on Christianity and Literature. Harvard Divinity School. March 2019.

"This is the Way the World Ends: The Apocalypse in Contemporary Film & Literature" Regent College. Public Lecture. March 2019.

"Imagining Our Neighbors as Ourselves: Empathy, Art, and the Christian Imagination." Regent College. Public Lecture. July 2018.

"'We are Changed Souls:' Prophetic Critique & Post-Secular Hope in the Fiction of Douglas Coupland." Regent College. Public Lecture. February 2018.

"Introduction to Postmodernism." Baylor University Film & Communications Semester in New York. *I have been invited to give this lecture for the Baylor NYC Film/Communication Arts program on three different occasions: Nov. 2017, Nov. 2014, and Nov. 2013.

"The Weariness of Taking off the Mask: A Response to Dr. Alicia Jackson." Maryville-Lee Symposium. Lee University. Oct. 2017

"A Post-Secular Sacred Space: Longing for Home and Transcendence in Douglas Coupland's *Life After God*." The Southeast Conference of Christianity and Literature. Covenant College. Spring 2017.

"Abel Ferrera's *The Addiction* and Terence Malick's *The Tree of Life*: Subverting our Constructed Notions of the Real." Baylor University Symposium on Faith and Culture. October 2014.

“Loving the City (Not the World?): Three Contemporary Approaches to Urban Christianity.” Religion in Urban Spaces Conference. University of Gottingen, Germany. April 2014.

“With a Bang OR A Whimper?: Apocalyptic Desire and Anti-Apocalyptic Stasis in Contemporary American Narratives.” South Atlantic Modern Language Society Conference. Atlanta. Nov. 2013.

“The Song Does Not Remain the Same: the Function of Pop Culture Poetry in Two Blank Fiction Novels.” *Connotations* Symposium. Mulheim, Germany. July 2013.

“A Hospitable Lie: Experimental Approaches to Telling the Truth in Contemporary Fiction.” Hospitable Texts: New Approaches to Religion and Literature Conference. University of Notre Dame, London Campus. July 2011.

“The Perpetual Self”: the Death and/or Birth of Sufjan Stevens.” “LitPop: Writing and Popular Music.” Northumbria University. Newcastle-upon-Tyne. June 2011.

“‘The End of the World as We Know It’: The Apocalyptic in Contemporary North American Fiction.” The Festival of Faith and Writing. Calvin College. Grand Rapids, Michigan. April 2010.

“Building the City/Writing the City: Michael Ondaatje’s *In the Skin of a Lion*.” Midwest Regional Christianity and Literature Conference. Wheaton College. Wheaton, Illinois. September 2009.

“(Im)personal Jesus: the Rebirth of the Religious Imagination in US Indie Rock.” Popular Culture Association Conference. Cincinnati, Ohio. October 2008.

“The ‘Psychic Data’ of the Supermarket: Death and Advertising in Don DeLillo’s *White Noise*.” Southeast Regional Christianity and Literature Conference. Wingate College, Wingate, North Carolina. April 2008.

“GOD IS NOWHERE; GOD IS NOW HERE: The Paradoxical Co-existence of Hope and Evil in Douglas Coupland’s *Hey Nostradamus!*” Southeast Regional Christianity and Literature Conference. Loyola University. New Orleans, Louisiana. April 2007.

*Co-winner of the prize for best paper at this conference.

“Transcending Irony: the Spiritual Sojourners of Douglas Coupland’s *Generation X* and *Shampoo Planet*.” The Festival of Faith and Writing. Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. April 2004.

“Postmodernism, Apocalypse, and Transcendence in Douglas Coupland’s Fiction.” Rocky Mountain Regional Modern Language Association Conference. Boulder, Colorado. September 2004.

“Consumer in a Coma: Douglas Coupland’s Rewriting of the Contemporary Apocalypse.” “Spiritual Identities” Conference. Lancaster University. Lancaster, UK. 2004.

Public-Facing Lectures:

“The Prophetic Imagination in Hip Hop.” The Hutchmoot Arts Conference. Franklin, TN. Oct. 2018.

“God Inside My House: Chance the Rapper’s Theology of Art & Life.” Theology on Tap Lecture Series. The Camp House, Chattanooga, TN. Nov. 2017.

“Apocalypse Now: The End of the World in Popular Culture.” The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity. London, England. July 2017.

“Music for the Kitchen Sink: The Smiths, Class Warfare, and the Other.” The Festival of Faith and Music. Calvin College. April 2017.

“‘Let Justice Roll Down:’ MLK & the Black Lives Matter Movement.” L’Abri Fellowship. Greatham, United Kingdom. July 2017.

“R-E-S-P-E-C-T”: Southern Soul Music and Racial Reconciliation.” The Festival of Faith and Music. Calvin College. April 2015.

“Jean Francois Lyotard & Flannery O’Connor: Subverting a False Picture of Reality?” L’Abri Fellowship. Greatham, United Kingdom. June 2014.

“Irony, Narcissism, and the *Age of Adz*.” The Festival of Faith and Music. Calvin College. April 2013.

“Independent Music, Youth Subculture, and the Spiritual Impulse.” Christ, Church, and Culture Conference. Nashville, TN. March 2012.

“The Dual Roles of Prophetic Critique and Religious Imagination in Contemporary Independent Music.” L’abri Fellowship. Greatham, United Kingdom. July 2011.

“‘The End of the World as We Know It’: The Apocalyptic in Contemporary North American Fiction.” The Festival of Faith and Writing. Calvin College. Grand Rapids, Michigan. April 2010.

“‘Clenched Fists and Black Eyes’: the Prophetic Role of Anger and Lament in Popular Music.” The Festival of Faith and Music. Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. April 2009.

“A Passion for the Real: Jean Baudrillard and Slavoj Zizek.” L’abri Fellowship. Greatham, United Kingdom. June 2007

Academic & Public-Facing Arts Event Organizing:

Douglas Coupland and the Art of the ‘Extreme Present’ (Virtual Conference): Along with Drs. Andrew Tate (Lancaster) and Diletta De Cristofaro (Northumbria), I organized a two-day virtual academic conference to celebrate and discuss the visual art and literature of Douglas Coupland. The conference took place in April 2021. Keynote speakers included curator/author Shumon Basar, Dr. Bran Nichols (Surrey), and editor/curator Victoria Camblin. The conference also included twenty academic

presentations, an interview with Douglas Coupland, and a panel discussion on Coupland and Marshall McLuhan organized by *Image Journal*. **April 2021.**

“Thirty Years of *Generation X*” Academic Publishing Cluster:

I was the organizer of a publishing event and roundtable for the Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present (ASAP) titled “Thirty Years of *Generation X*.” Each participant presented an individual essay, video presentation, or artwork. Contributors also joined in a recorded roundtable discussion. The written/visual presentations and roundtable was published on November 15, 2021 in *ASAP/JOURNAL*. Contributors include **Shumon Basar** (Writer and Curator, Dubai/Berlin), **Dr. Diletta De Cristofaro** (Research Fellow, Northumbria University, UK/Italy), **Makoto Fujimura** (Artist, USA/Japan), **Dr. Mary McCampbell** (Associate Professor of Humanities, Lee University, USA), **Dr. Andrew Tate** (Reader in Literature, Religion and Aesthetics, University of Lancaster, UK). **November 2020.**

Stone Cold Fact: A Joel Hilgenberg Retrospective

I initiated, organized, and assisted hanging and curating a retrospective of the late Joel Hilgenberg’s art at Marshall Arts Gallery in Memphis. It was a large show, with hundreds of pieces on loan from owners. Around two hundred Memphians came to the opening; the exhibition stayed open for two weeks. **Oct. 2019**

Lee University Arts & Culture Series:

I am the creator and sole organizer of a yearly lecture and performance series that began in 2011. For this series, I have brought multiple musicians, filmmakers, scholars, and visual artists to speak and/or perform at Lee University. The first focus of this series is to highlight the interdisciplinary nature of the humanities, emphasizing the understanding that all of the arts present and grapple with similar questions about God, the nature of reality, and the complexity of the human experience. A second focus is rooted in the conviction that engaging the arts is a relational, conversational activity, not a mere consumer exchange. Because of this emphasis, each presentation/performance is followed by an open conversation between artist/lecturer and students. **Nov. 2011-2020.**

The Festival of Faith and Music at Calvin College:

I was on the steering committee for the Festival of Faith and Music for four different festivals. For the last three festivals, I have put out a call for academic papers, selected papers, and curated the panel content. I have also been very involved (via committee work while at Calvin or at-large) with choosing musicians, speakers, and workshop topics, as well as judging a “new bands” contest. The Festival of Faith and Music was a “biennial conference that brings together musicians, critics, journalists, artists, and listeners for three days of discussing and celebrating insightful music that explores, in some significant way, issues of faith.” While volunteering on the festival committee, I helped bring in speakers such as Cornel West and Makoto Fujimura and musicians such as Over the Rhine and Lupe Fiasco (and many, many more). **April 2009, April 2013, April 2015, April 2017.**

Contemporary Britain Trip:

In the summer of 2013, I organized a trip for Lee University students so that they could learn about the contemporary arts scene in some “off the beaten path” yet artistically vibrant places in the UK. I also wanted them to have time to reflect on the relationship between what they have seen and a larger cultural and theological context. Most of the

Lee “Global Perspectives” trips directors hire a travel agency/ tour guide/ chartered buses—but I wanted my students to have a more direct cultural experience. I organized home stays with members of my former church in Newcastle, as well as bed and breakfasts in other cities. The students visited many galleries in Scotland and England and heard lectures from arts activists, a film professor, a vicar, and film series curator. I also provided some lectures. After all of this, we spent ten days at English L’Abri so that they could process and contextualize what they had seen. **June 2013.**

Globe Café Arts Events & Trips for International Students

While I was a postgraduate student in the UK, I began volunteering for a cultural café at a local evangelical Anglican church named Jesmond Parish Church. The weekly café hosted from 50-200 international students, most of whom were not Christians. I became very specifically drawn to working with the continental European students because I wanted to understand their cynicism and fearfulness towards Christianity. I was studying the relationship between critical theory, theology, and the arts at the time—and this focus ended up informing my ministry on a very core level. I was the team leader for the Café’s art events including renting a theater for a film screening and discussion, renting the local Jazz Café for a music night, hosting Bible studies that relate to artistic and philosophical themes, and many other events. I was also continually recruiting students for these activities. I also organized and hosted many local day trips to various cities and an overnight arts trip to Glasgow. For this trip, I did all the organizing, recruiting, and research in order to give the group of international students an informed tour of the most artistically significant sites in Glasgow. **Sept. 2001-Sept. 2006.**

Scholarly Service:

2021: External Examiner for PhD thesis by Joy Clarkson, “Learning How to Die: Affective Practice, Death, and Popular Art”. St. Andrews University.

2020: Judge for the “Culture & the Arts” category for the 2020 *Christianity Today* Book Awards

2019-2021: Faculty Sponsor for the Lee University Black Student Union

2018-present: Title III Grant Implementation Committee at Lee University

2018-2021: Chair of Lee University Faculty & Staff Diversity Committee

2011-2020: Founder and Organizer of the Lee University Arts & Culture Series

2011-present: Faculty Sponsor for the Lee University Humanities Coalition

2011-2018: Served on Lee University Faculty & Staff Diversity Committee

Oct. 2016-2018: Developed and led a Racial Justice Advocacy Group at Lee University.

Spring 2015: Judge for Alpha Chi Honor Society’s Academic Showcase at Lee University

2009-2017: Served on Calvin College's Festival of Faith and Music's Steering Committee. Created the CFP, selected submitted papers, and organized academic panels.

2013-2014: Peer reviewer for *Connotations* Literary Journal (University of Tubingen, Germany)

Spring 2011, 2012, 2013: Judge for Lee University Film Festival

Spring 2012: Judge for *Christianity & Literature's* Youth Writing Contest

Fall 2009: Peer reviewer for Duke University press journal, *Pedagogy*.

Events Organized for Students at Lee University:

Speakers That I Have Brought to Campus:

Jemar Tisby, Dr. Luke Powery (Duke), Jeffrey Overstreet (SPU), Mark Charles, Michelle Higgins, Ekemini Uwan, Dr. Christina Edmondson (Calvin), Rev. Kevin Smith, Rev. JR Caines, Katelyn Beaty, Dr. Joe Kickasola (Baylor), Dr. Elissa Yukiko Weichbrodt (Covenant), Aaron Roche (musician), John Ringhofer (musician), Dr. Andrew Tate (Lancaster), Dr. Reginald McLelland (Covenant), Rev. Randy Nabors, John Cotton (filmmaker), Fancy Rhino (Filmmaking/ media group).

Other Events:

March 2019: "Confederate Symbols: History & Perception" panel with Dr. Drew Bledsoe and Indyasia Fowler

Jan. 2019, 2017, 2016: MLK Week Events: On the third week of January for each of these years, I planned, organized and led justice-related events (films, panels, etc.) and helped bring in speakers for chapel services.

Jan. 2019: Racial Trauma Panel: Five Local Educators and Mental Health Workers Spoke on this Panel.

August 2017: Racial Solidarity Vigil: Over 700 attendees came to this event that featured three student speakers, prayers led by administrators, and a large choir and band. This event was featured in an article that I wrote for *Christianity Today*.

Fall 2015: Theology Round Table on Race: I assisted Dr. Daniela Augustine (the creator of this series) choose and bring in speakers for the event. I have also been invited to by Dr. Augustine to speak three times on topics relating theology and film, literature, and popular culture.

Autumn 2012: Philosophical Film Series

Spring 2011: Pop Culture Discussion Group

Classes Designed and Taught:

I have taught a wide range of core courses in the general humanities (from ancient to contemporary), literature (American & British), and rhetoric & composition. In particular, I have taught both Modern Western Culture and Foundations of the Modern World (and designed both) multiple times each year for the past eleven years at Lee University. I teach these courses in a very interdisciplinary fashion focusing on the history of ideas, an ongoing conversation about meaning, God, and the human condition.

The following is a list and brief descriptions of upper-level classes that I have designed and taught. Unless noted, each of these classes was taught at Lee University.

The Prophetic Imagination in Fiction & Film: In this course, we will explore fictional narratives (literature and film) that grapple with theological questions and make prophetic claims. We will read, watch, and discuss these texts through the framework provided by theologian Walter Brueggemann in his seminal text *The Prophetic Imagination*. We will also look at some of the writings of the Old Testament prophets alongside the fictional works discussed in class.

The Prophetic Imagination in Popular Culture: In this course, we will explore popular literature, music, television, and film that grapple with theological questions. Much of the popular art that we will focus on could be called “prophetic” in the way that it critiques the seductive, false notions of “the good life” that are often leading us away from the gospel itself. Although most of the artists that we will study are not Christians, they have an acute moral and spiritual sensibility that leads them to ask questions about meaning, fulfillment, and moral convictions. **(Regent College Summer 2020)**

The Christian Imagination: In this interdisciplinary course, we will read fiction and poetry, watch films, and look at visual art that encourage us to recognize the mystery of God and the paradoxical nature of the human condition. We will also read essays from artists and scholars in order to discuss what it means for the artist of faith to create meaningful things in which faith is, as O’Connor notes, “the light by which I see.” Last of all, we will address why it is important for every Christian to value the imagination and what this might look like in practice.

Contemporary Popular Culture: This is an interdisciplinary class in which we will look closely at various popular culture texts (novels, music, film, graphic novel, television, advertising, etc.) in order to discuss the philosophical and theological questions that they raise. Alongside these core texts, we will also read and discuss some modern and postmodern philosophy/theory. As we use these secondary texts to help us “diagnose” the spiritual state of the contemporary landscape, we will also explore how, in a seemingly “depthless” and post-religious culture, the discussed pop culture artifacts might still reflect the collective longings/religious impulse of both their creators and the culture that embraces them. Most importantly, we will focus on the ability these texts have to be apocalyptic, to unveil truth and aid in our spiritual formation. In order to do this, we must actively practice discernment, learning to “read” these texts critically and analytically in the light of God’s word, as we open our eyes and ears to receive prophetic insights from some seemingly unlikely places.

Post-Secular Film & Fiction: In this course, we will analyze both film and fiction from predominantly non-Christian authors that resist and even subvert a philosophical

materialist ideology. As we grapple with these texts, we will also read theological writings from John Milbank, NT Wright, and others who address the post-secular desires that we see in a supposedly “secular” culture.

Philosophical Cinema: In this course, rather than “using” film to learn about/discuss philosophy, we will be “reading” film as philosophy. All films (even trivial ones) make philosophical statements about the nature of reality; the films chosen for this class are works that raise complex philosophical statements and/or present claims about God, humanity, and the universe. In order to develop an understanding of philosophical categories and enrich our philosophical vocabularies, we will read essays by critics and philosophers alike. These will provide some of the tools needed to generate an informed discussion about these very complex films, many of which refer back (directly or indirectly) to the discussed thinkers.

Southern Storytellers: In this course, students will be introduced to some of the most influential voices in Southern storytelling through interaction with select fiction, films, art, and music. The course’s primary questions are: how does the unique texture of the Southern experience lead to a particular type of storytelling? What type? In attempting to respond to these questions, students will investigate the complex interrelationship between the development of regional history and the formation of cultural identity in the form of storytelling. Particular attention will be given to the interweaving of religious experience, class-consciousness, and racial conflict into the fabric of the “Southern story”. Class sessions will be a combination of lecture and discussion on the various forms of storytelling. **(Taught at Calvin University & Lee University)**

Methodology & Bibliography (Critical Theory): This class will focus on understanding and critiquing the presuppositions that we, as individuals and as a collective culture, hold when encountering a text. In order to think critically and practice discernment in our studies of the humanities, we must first attempt to make distinctions between cultural constructs and biblically informed truths (and focus on the often-complex interrelationship of the two). Along with reading and discussing the implications of nineteenth and twentieth century critical theory, we will also use the questions raised as a springboard to hone writing and research skills.

African American Literature & Culture: This interdisciplinary course will focus on the study of 20th/21st century African American music (blues, jazz, hip hop, soul), film, and literature within a historical context. We will also look at questions concerning racial identity, political justice and injustice, and racial reconciliation through the framework of both theory and theology. Some of the authors we will read/ study: Richard Wright, Langston Hughes, W.E.B. Dubois, Gwendolyn Brooks, Amira Baraka, Cornel West, Malcolm X, MLK, Toni Morrison, Ta-Nahesi Coates.

The Apocalypse in Fiction, Music, and Film: In this course, we will focus on three different understandings of the term “apocalyptic”: Judeo-Christian, modern, and postmodern. We will read theory and theology alongside works from literature and popular culture. **(Taught at Calvin University)**

Charles Taylor: A Secular Age: In this course, we will read about Taylor’s philosophical understanding of “secularism” as well as ideas of the self and community. As we do this, we will interrogate the notion of the “secular” and consider the sorts of “post-secular” longings we see in examples from contemporary literature and film.

The Christian Mind: This course will focus on the theology of culture. It will also relate core theological concepts to the study of literature, history, philosophy, and film.

Modernism: This course will introduce students to the philosophical roots, historical contexts, and cultural products of modernism. In doing this, students will read, view and discuss novels, poetry, films, music, and visual art produced in Europe and America between the World Wars.

Postmodernism: In this course, students will develop a complex understanding of postmodern art, literature, theory, and culture. With a starting point of poststructuralist theory, the course will ask whether the cultural movement/ stage called “postmodernism” is a break from or continuation of modernism.