

THE CONTENT OF THIS DESCRIPTION IS NOT A LEARNING CONTRACT AND THE INSTRUCTOR IS NOT BOUND TO IT. IT IS OFFERED IN GOOD FAITH AND INTENDED AS A HELPFUL GUIDE TO THE STUDENT.

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TITLE: Rethinking Church

YEAR: Fall 2023-2024

PROFESSOR(S): Edwin Chr. van Driel

CREDIT HOURS: 3

REGISTRATION: LIMITED TO: 18
AUDITORS: 3

UNLIMITED _____
NO AUDITORS _____

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is premised on the notion that American Protestantism is facing a perfect storm. Growing insecurity about the place of the church in a secularized, Western society, ongoing internal conflicts and debates, and a heritage of individualism and voluntarism are tearing the fabric of denominations and local congregations. In this course we read contemporary ecclesiological proposals that seem to help pastors and congregations imagine new possibilities for the life of the church in this context.

CLASS OBJECTIVES:

1. To help students think theologically about the church and the challenges that it faces;
2. To help students imagine new possibilities for the life of the church and their ministry;
3. To help students read and analyze theological texts on ecclesiology and to place these in wider theological conversations

PREREQUISITES: none

READING ASSIGNMENTS/BIBLIOGRAPHY:

This year we will be studying the work of practical theologian Andrew Root, who has published a series of books on how to be church in a secular age.

- Andrew Root, *Faith Formation in a Secular Age*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2017. ISBN: 978-0801098468, \$17.99
- Andrew Root, *The Pastor in a Secular Age: Ministry to People Who No Longer Need a God*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2019. ISBN: 978-0801098475, \$21.99
- Andrew Root, *The Congregation in a Secular Age: Keeping Sacred Time against the Speed of Modern Life*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2021. ISBN: 978-0801098482, \$19.92
- Andrew Root, *Churches and the Crisis of Decline: A Hopeful, Practical Ecclesiology for a Secular Age*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2022. ISBN: 978-1540964816, \$19.99
- Andrew Root, *The Church after Innovation: Questioning Our Obsession with Work, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2022. ISBN: 978-1540964823, \$23.86
- Andrew Root, *The Church in an Age of Secular Mysticisms: Why Spiritualities without God Fail to Transform Us*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2023. ISBN: 978-1540966735, \$28.99

WRITTEN AND ORAL ASSIGNMENTS/TESTS: Discussion questions and final paper

CLASSROOM PROCEDURES: Seminar

GRADING PROCEDURES: Based on papers

ATTENDANCE: Required.

This course meets the MAPS Ministry Elective Requirement.