



WSBM 530 “Current Issues on Human Identity: A Biblical Perspective”

Dr. Andy Steiger

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_____ Tuesdays 7 – 9 PM

Fall 2023

2 credit hours

_____ Room: **TBD**

*WSBM exists to equip Willingdon Church – head, heart and hands –
to be more biblically literate
and to serve more effectively in church and related ministry.*

I. Course Description

This course provides students with a biblically and theologically rooted understanding of human identity, purpose, value, and flourishing. Special attention will be paid to both historical and current trends with a view to critical engagement. Students will engage theoretically and practically with issues from eugenics, euthanasia, abortion, sexuality, A.I, human rights, and human responsibilities as they explore how a biblical theology of the human person offers a guide for both life and ministry.

II. Course Resources

The course textbook is, *Reclaimed* by Andy Steiger. It is available for purchase wherever books are sold as paper book, ebook, and audio book. The journal articles are available for free via the link below as both a pdf document and as an mp3 audio version.

Andy Steiger - Reclaimed: How Jesus Restores Our Humanity in a Dehumanized World. Zondervan Reflective, 2021.

Journal Articles:

- Andy Steiger - *Artificial Dignity: The Humanizing and Dehumanizing Implications of Polanyi vs. Turing's Ontology*

- Andy Steiger - *Deciphering Humanity: What Polanyi and the Rosetta Stone Can Teach Us about Being Human*
- Andy Steiger - *Will Pedobots Lead to Less Harm?: The Danger in Creating Artificial Dignity.*
- Andy Steiger - *Rights and Responsibilities of Consciences: The Courts Cannot Have it Both Ways.*
- Andy Steiger - *Have You Ever Wondered Why the Environment Matters?*
- All journal articles can be accessed here:
<https://www.dropbox.com/home/Apologetics%20Canada/Courses/WVSBM>

III. Course Outline

Dates:	Topics:	Current Issues discussed:	Pre-reading	Assignments
Oct. 3	A Biblical Perspective of Humanity.	Identity, Same-sex attraction, Transgenderism,	Book: Intro & Ch 1 Article: Deciphering Humanity*	
Oct. 10	A Biblical Perspective of Dehumanization.	Artificial Intelligence, Furies, Transhumanism.	Book: Ch 2 Article: Will Pedobots Lead to Less Harm? *	
Oct. 17	A Biblical Perspective of Human Dignity.	Abortion, MAiD, Artificial Dignity, Secularism	Book: Ch 3 Article: Artificial Dignity*	
Oct. 24	A Biblical Perspective of Crimes Against Humanity.	Environmentalism, Racism, Woke, Critical Race Theory, Social Justice	Book: Ch 4 Article: Have You Ever Wondered?*	Mid Term Quiz
Oct. 31	A Biblical Perspective of Human Flourishing.	Individualism, Human Enhancement, Gender Surgeries, Loneliness	Book: Ch 5	Reflective Essay 1
Nov. 7	A Biblical Perspective of Human Rights.	Canadian Charter, Religious Freedom, Conscientious Objector	Book: Ch 6 Article: Rights and Responsibilities*	
Nov. 14	A Biblical Perspective of How Humans Should live.	Determinism, Post Truth, Pronouns, Propaganda	Book: Ch 7	Reflective Essay 2
Nov. 21	A Biblical Perspective of Humanization.	Progressive Christianity, Legalism, Toxic Masculinity, Feminism	Book: Ch 8	Research Essay Final Quiz

* Journal articles are provided as optional reading material to go deeper. Articles are provided in written and audio format.

IV. Course Objectives

By the end of this course, each student will demonstrate:

knowledge of...

- a biblical theology of human personhood and the image of God
- historical and current trends concerning human identity and purpose

appreciation for...

- their value as persons created in God's image and loved by God
- how a biblical understanding of human identity serves to inform life and ministry
- the importance of a biblically informed understanding of human person for addressing contemporary issues concerning human identity and purpose

ability to...

- articulate a vision of human identity, purpose, and destiny
- engage critically with contemporary understandings and trends concerning human identity and human relationship
- think critically and interact graciously with others holding different views
- do credible research and writing that engages biblical theology with contemporary issues

V. Student Projects & Grading

The course grade will be based on the student's performance on the following assigned projects.

Assignment Due Date	Assignment	Value of Grade
Oct. 24	Mid-term quiz	10%
Oct. 31	Reflective Essay 1	20%
Oct. 3- Nov. 21	Attendance	10%
Nov. 14	Reflective Essay 2	20%
Nov. 21	Research Essay	30%
Nov. 21	Final Quiz	10%

1) Reflective Essays

Students are required to submit two reflective essays over the course of the term. This assignment provides the opportunity to put content into your own words and reflect on its application. For the first half of the term (Reflective Essay 1),

briefly answer the question *What is a human?* (250-500 words) and spend the rest of the essay discussing how you might apply this insight in your life and ministry (250-500 words). For the second half of the term (Reflective Essay 2), *briefly* answer the question *What leads to human flourishing?* (250-500 words) and spend the rest of the essay discussing how you might apply the insight in your life and ministry (250-500 words). Each essay should be 500- 1,000 words in total.

IMPORTANT:

Reflective Essay 1, due Oct. 31
Reflective Essay 2, due Nov. 14

2) Research Essay:

For this project, research a historical moment, past or present, where significant dehumanization took – or is taking – place. (e.g. Genocide against the Rohingya people, Rwandan genocide, the Jewish Holocaust, the Congo under King Leopold II, slavery (ancient, transatlantic, modern), Martin Luther's antisemitism, human trafficking, killing fields of Cambodia, rape of Nanking, Armenian genocide). Your research essay needs to address the following questions:

- What was the historical context? What led to this atrocity?
- What was the philosophy, science, or religion that enabled it?
- If Christians were involved, how did Christians get this issue right and wrong?
- How does a biblical worldview correct the dehumanizing elements that underlie this atrocity?
- How do we prevent this from happening again?
- How does the insight from your research apply to your life and ministry context?

For a subject beyond those listed, you need instructor approval. The Research Essay must be **2,500-3,000 words**. **Your research essay will be graded on the following criteria:**

- how clearly you set out the argument you make in your essay
- how carefully key terms are defined
- how clearly the steps in your argument are organized
- your overall understanding of the issue you are writing about
- how deeply you have researched the issue
- biblical and theological engagement
- how compelling your argument is
- your knowledge of objections to your argument
- the depth of responses you give to these objections
- the quality of your sources (Works Cited)
- your use of English grammar and syntax

IMPORTANT:

Due Nov. 21
Worth 30%

3) Midterm Quiz:

The midterm quiz will test your comprehension and synthesis of concepts covered over the first half of the course (Oct. 3 – Oct. 24).

Due: Oct. 24
Worth 10%

4) Final Quiz:

The final quiz will test your comprehension and synthesis of lessons from the second half of the course (Oct. 31 – Nov. 14).

Due: Nov. 21
Worth 10%

VI. Instructor Bio

Andy Steiger is the founder and president of Apologetics Canada Ministries (AC). He passionately engages pressing issues related to our humanity from a Christian perspective. He has presented at various venues such as Cambridge University on philosophical issues related to Artificial Intelligence, provided ethical guidelines on robotics for the United Nations, and addressed legal concerns over rights of conscience at the World Congress in Philosophy of Law.

Andy has published widely from children's books to the Supreme Court Law Review. His most recent book, [*Reclaimed: How Jesus Restores Our Humanity in a Dehumanized World*](#) was awarded runner up to evangelistic resource of the year. Andy is known for making complex theological and philosophical ideas understandable through the art of storytelling as seen in AC's video resources. [*The Human Project*](#) video series debuted at film festivals around the world and won a number of awards including Best Short Film and People's Choice. Recently released is [*BRANDED: A Series on Identity*](#) which is now available on RightNow Media. Between his 20 years of pastoral experience and a PhD from the University of Aberdeen, Andy brings both experience and research to his work.

Andy currently lives in Abbotsford, British Columbia, with his wife, Nancy, and their two sons. Most weekends you'll find the Steigers in the mountains or lakes of BC.

VII. Additional Resources

Adam Hochschild. *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. New York: Mariner Books, 1998.

Andy Steiger. *Reclaimed: How Jesus Restores Our Humanity in a Dehumanized World*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020.

Allison Bashford, and Philippa Levine, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Anthony A. Hoekema. *Created in God's Image*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1986.

Carl R. Trueman. *The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self: Cultural Amnesia, Expressive Individualism, and the Road to Sexual Revolution*. Grand Rapids: Crossway, 2020.

Charles Sherlock, ed. *The Doctrine of Humanity*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1996.

Christopher McCrudden, ed. *Understanding Human Dignity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Christopher R. Browning. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. New York: HarperPerennial, 1993.

Claudia Koonz. *The Nazi Conscience*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003.

David Gooding, and John Lennox. *Being Truly Human: The Limits of Our Worth, Power, Freedom and Destiny*. Belfast: Myrtlefield House, 2018.

David Livingstone Smith. *Less Than Human: Why We Demean, Enslave, and Exterminate Others*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011.

Farr Curlin & Christopher Tollefsen, *The Way of Medicine: Ethics and the Healing Profession*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2021).

Glen Scrivener. *The Air We Breathe*. The Good Book Company, 2022.

- Gordon McConville. *Being Human in God's World: An Old Testament Theology of Humanity*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016.
- Gregory R. Hansell, and William Grassie, eds. *Transhumanism and Its Critics*. Philadelphia: Metanexus Institute, 2011.
- Hannah Arendt. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York: Penguin Boks, 2006.
- Hans Schwarz. *The Human Being: A Theological Anthropology*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2013.
- Hal Gold. *Japan's Infamous Unit 731: Firsthand Accounts of Japan's Wartime Human Experimentation Program*. North Clarendon: Tuttle, 2011.
- Himm S. Sokreaksa. *The Tears of my Soul*. Grand Rapids: Monarch, 2006.
- Imaculée Ilibagiza. *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Genocide*. Carlsbad: Hay House, 2006.
- J.I. Packer and T Howard. *Christianity: The True Humanism*. Waco: Word Books, 1985.
- James C. Peterson. *Changing Human Nature: Ecology, Ethics, Genes, and God*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2010.
- James Porter Moreland. *The Soul: How We Know It's Real and Why It Matters*. Chicago, Moody Publishers: 2014.
- James Porter Moreland, and Scott B. Rae. *Body and Soul: Human Nature and the Crisis in Ethics*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2000.
- Jens Zimmermann. *Incarnational Humanism: A Philosophy of Culture for the Church in the World*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012.
- Jeremiah J. Johnston. *Unimaginable: What Our World Would Be Like Without Christianity*. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2017.
- Jessica Riskin. *The Restless Clock: A History of the Centuries-Long Argument over What Makes Living Things Tick*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.
- Joanna Bourke. *What It Means to Be Human: Reflections from 1791 to the Present*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2011.

- John Gray. *Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals*. London: Granta Books, 2002.
- John C. Lennox. *2084: Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Humanity*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Reflective, 2020.
- John Douglas Macready. *Hannah Arendt and the Fragility of Human Dignity*. London: Lexington Books, 2018.
- John F. Kilner. *Dignity and Destiny: Humanity in the Image of God*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2015.
- John F. Kilner, ed. *Why People Matter: A Christian Engagement with Rival Views of Human Significance*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.
- John M. Rist. *Real Ethics: Reconsidering the Foundations of Morality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- John Witte Jr., and Frank S. Alexander, eds. *Christianity and Human Rights: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Joshua R. Farris. *An Introduction to Theological Anthropology: Humans, Both Creaturely and Divine*. Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2020.
- Kevin Scherer. *Truly Human: Recovering Your Humanity in a Broken World*. Chesterton: Ancient Faith Publishing, 2017.
- Marcus Düwell, Jens Braarvig, and Roger Brownsword, eds. *The Cambridge Handbook of Human Dignity: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- Marc Cortez. *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed*. New York: T&T Clark International, 2010.
- Max Tegmark. *Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*. New York: Knopf, 2017.
- Michael Polanyi. *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.
- — —. *The Study of Man*. Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Publishing, 2014.

Nancy R. Pearcey. *Love Thy Body: Answering Hard Questions about Life and Sexuality*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2018.

Neil Shenvi and Pat Sawyer. *Critical Dilemma: The Rise of Critical Theories and Social Justice*. Grand Rapids: Harvest House, 2023.

Owen Strachan. *Reenchanting Humanity: A Theology of Mankind*. Ross-shire: Mentor, 2019.

Pamela Newkirk. *Spectacle: The Astonishing Life of Ota Benga*. New York: HarperCollins, 2015.

Paul G. Bain, Jeroen Vaes, and Jacques-Philippe Leyens, eds. *Humanness and Dehumanization*. New York: Psychology Press, 2014.

Peter Garnsey. *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Philip Zimbardo. *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*. New York: Random House, 2007.

Ray Kurzweil. *The Singularity Is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*. New York: Penguin Books, 2005.

Robert Louis Wilken. *Liberty in the Things of God: The Christian Origins of Religious Freedom*. Yale University Press, 2019.

William Fanklin, and Joseph M. Shaw. *The Case for Christian Humanism*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991.

Sherry Turkle. *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less From Each Other*. New York: Basic Books, 2012.

Slavenka Drakulić. *They Would Never Hurt A Fly: War Criminals on Trial in The Hague*. New York: Viking Penguin, 2004.

Stewart Goetz, and Charles Taliaferro. *A Brief History of the Soul*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

Tertullian. *The Apology*.

Wesley J. Smith. *A Rat Is a Pig Is a Dog Is a Boy: The Human Cost of the Animal Rights Movement*. New York: Encounter Books, 2012.

NOTE: For information on all academic policies please see WSBM Policies Manual online.