

Course Syllabus **Worldview Literacy** Directed Individual Study Course

Version 2.0 & 3.0 worldview themes based

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To Teachers: Feel free to adapt / customize this syllabus to meet your own particular course needs.

Student Prerequisites for the Course You should be

- 1) high school age or older--ideally old enough to have learned some things of importance from intellectual exploration, but not so old as to have closed any doors to more such exploration,
- 2) intellectually curious, eager to learn and explore, concerned about building your understanding of reality / "the big picture," looking forward to gaining insight into life's "big questions," and
- 3) willing to agree to a) respect holders of beliefs and opinions different from your own, and b) promise to not attempt to "convert" other classmates to religious or other faith-based beliefs you hold.

Overview of the Course's Purpose:

1) This is not a course about teaching you what to believe. To quote from the "Neutrality Pledge" on the **project Worldview** website: "Your worldview should be uniquely yours... We won't force our beliefs on you! We will help you find your way in taking a free inquiry path to a worldview." The course is designed to provide both a structure and numerous jumping off places for educational exploration. It is our hope that students can use it in their quest to make sense out of "the confusion of existence" and find meaning in life.

2) This is a global education course--where global education is to be thought of as wholistic (or holistic!) education that focuses on whole systems and emphasizes the interconnections and interdependencies that more traditional education can easily overlook. It extends boundaries of concern, and strives to involve the whole person--seen as a thinking, feeling, and doing creature. The global perspective it provides is to be connected with broadening one's worldview.

3) As students explore new intellectual terrain and begin preliminary conceptual mapping of it, as they shop for things to believe in and value, as they raise questions--they are urged to avoid locking onto answers too soon. Turning again to the **project Worldview** website, sprinkled throughout its numerous pages you'll often find this **Caution:** "As you shop in 'The Reality Marketplace' avoid spending your 'reality cash' too early, before you have seen everything!"

General Learning Objectives:

As a result of completing this course, you should

- 1) better appreciate what a worldview is, how it develops and why it is important,
- 2) increase your literacy with respect to knowledge important to worldview development,
- 3) better appreciate the human heritage--physical, biological, and intellectual--human society and human nature, and better appreciate all of this as it relates to you personally,
- 4) better appreciate the complexities behind the search for answers to life's big questions, the various forms that some of those answers can take, and conflicts that arise out of these different answers,
- 5) have completed a rigorous analysis of your own worldview, and pondered the meaning of this analysis
- 6) better understand yourself (and perhaps better understand a key person or two in your life?), and
- 7) have matured as a thinking/feeling/joining/doing human being, and furthered your own global education.

General Course Organization:

This semester long course is designed to be completed in 16 weeks. It is divided up into four units of study, with four weeks (twenty nominal one hour class periods) spent on each unit. The course is referred to as a "directed individual study course" because the bulk of the student's time during the semester will be spent working by himself or herself either at the computer, reading or writing.

Course Format and Activities:

The course is divided into four units, reflecting the division of worldview themes into four divisions or wings. Each has twenty themes presented on thirteen separate web pages, cards or text sections (some of these cover only one theme, some cover two related themes). Each unit is also linked to worldview development questions, which students will consider both before and as they study various worldview themes within the unit. Typically one class period will be spent on each theme(s) web page and individual study will proceed according to a **five step* method** detailed on page 8 of *The Worldview Literacy Book*. This involves students reading, taking self tests to gauge understanding, surfing the web through "More to Explore links," and taking questionnaires to assess the compatibility of their worldview with the worldview theme(s) being studied. [* Note: If *The Worldview Theme Song Book* (see below) is available a sixth step can be added where the feelings conveyed by the song(s) for the theme(s) are considered.]

Textbook:

The Worldview Literacy Book, by Stephen P. Cook, Parthenon Books, 2009

(Note: This was once bundled with the *The Worldview Kit* CD, now files on that CD are freely available online. While having the book itself presents some advantages in completing this course, many will find that the portions of it freely available online will suffice.)

supplemental texts:

Coming of Age in the Global Village, by Stephen P. Cook with Donella Meadows, Parthenon Books, 1990

The Worldview Theme Song Book by Stephen P. Cook, Parthenon Books, 2015

Additional Materials or Equipment Needed:

Access to a computer and the internet; Adobe Reader to read the .pdf files (available free from Adobe Acrobat).

Assignments, Quizzes and Exams:

Other than assigned reading and web surfing, over the entire course duration, students will be required to:

- a) take 55 self tests (they are version 2.0 based, ten questions long, computer graded, for student use only)
- b) take four unit exams (each consisting of 80 multiple choice questions--teacher, parent or facilitator graded)
- c) write a three page (double-spaced) paper entitled "What I've Learned About Myself" which interprets the results of a rigorous analysis of his or her worldview that student has conducted using online analysis programs (version 3.0 based)

Student Evaluation / Grades: (this part of the course syllabus can be customized as needed!)

The details here will vary with special activities selected and with student / teacher, parent or facilitator arrangements. If the student is essentially working independently, the entire grade could be based on the unit exam results in b) above, provided work in c) was acceptable (pass / fail). Where teachers are available to evaluate the written paper, another grading scheme can be worked out. At bare minimum, someone other than the student will need to access unit exam, answer sheet, and solutions .pdf files to preserve the integrity of this examination experience.

Course Policies:

Students need to meet course pre-requisites--both in actuality and in spirit! Unless specifically authorized by a teacher in charge during special activities, narrowness, close-mindedness, lack of respect, intolerance, evangelizing, forcing beliefs on others, etc. are grounds for dismissal!

Course Schedule / Questions To Consider follow➔

Unit #1: Diamond ♦ **WORLDVIEW THEMES: INDIVIDUAL<-->KNOWLEDGE** (loosely as “thinking”) **Worldview themes associated with the diamond symbol involve how the individual relates to knowledge, including the basis for knowledge, the orientation adopted and tools used for acquiring more knowledge.**

#1A HUMBLY UNSURE	#1B SKEPTIC
#2A THE TRUE BELIEVER	#2B I KNOW WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU
#5A SCIENTIFIC MATERIALISM	#5B VITALISM
#6 SCIENTIFIC METHOD	
#7A MYSTICISM	#7B MAGIC
#8A MONOTHEISM	#8B BELIEF IN A PERSONAL GOD
#9A RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM	#9B APOCALYPTICISM
#10 SECULAR HUMANISM	
#11A FATALISM	#11B FREE WILL
#12 THE ARTISTIC WORLDVIEW	
#13 DANCING WITH SYSTEMS	
#15 THE COLLECTIVE COGNITIVE IMPERATIVE	
#30 INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM	

Worldview Development Questions:	Related Worldview Theme #s:
1) What is the basis for my knowledge?	6, 7A, 9A, 10, 12, 13, 34, 38
2) How do I justify my beliefs?	1B, 6, 9A, 15
3) With what level of certainty do I believe?	1A, 2A
4) To what extent will I promote my beliefs? How tolerant am I of conflicting beliefs?	2B, 30, 36A, 39B
5) What tools or methods will I employ in seeking new knowledge?	6, 7A, 7B, 9A, 12, 13, 30
6) Why do I see what I see? What reality generating mechanisms do I primarily rely on?	3, 4, 6, 7A, 7B, 9A, 12, 15, 36B
7) What is the nature of Reality? Specifically, what are things made of? Is there more to Reality than visible (or potentially visible) matter and its interactions (materialism), and if there is, what role should a non-material / spiritual component of Reality (vitalism) have in my worldview?	5A, 5B, 6, 7A, 12
8) Do I believe in God? If so, how do I conceive of God?	7A, 8A, 8B, 10, 14A
9) Do I believe that God shares knowledge with human beings? To what extent are the sacred books of various religions representations of such knowledge?	5A, 5B, 7A, 7B, 9A, 12
10) How did the universe originate? Does it have a Creator? Does the universe have a purpose?	4, 5A, 5B, 8A, 9A, 10
11) Do I believe that the end of the world as we know it can be expected any time soon? What will eventually happen to life on Earth?	4, 9B, 23A
12) Why am I here? How did I come to be? Is there a purpose or meaning behind human existence?	4, 5A, 5B, 8A, 8B, 9A, 10, 14A, 14B, 25, 27, 44A
13) Do human beings have real choice as to their actions / behavior, or is such behavior predetermined as part of a much larger scheme?	11A, 11B
14) Is a reductionistic (breaking big unmanageable problems into smaller more manageable ones) or wholistic (holistic) approach the best path to acquiring knowledge?	3, 4, 5A, 6, 7A, 12, 13, 25, 27, 46A
15) Do I see the universe as orderly or chaotic? Where do I see beauty?	4, 5A, 5B, 6, 7A, 7B, 8B, 9B, 12, 18B
16) Should free inquiry be encouraged?	1B, 2B, 9A, 15, 20B, 30, 31, 34, 35A, 50A

Unit #2: Heart ♥ **WORLDVIEW THEMES: INDIVIDUAL <--> INDIVIDUAL** (loosely as “feeling”)

Worldview themes associated with the heart symbol involve an individual’s interaction with another individual (or with himself or herself) with respect to the underlying driving motivation and the extent to which thinking, feeling, and doing--and behaviors associated with these--are under control.

#3 FOCUSED VISION	
#14A MORALISTIC GOD	#14B REINCARNATION
#16 THE GOLDEN RULE, VILLAGE ETHIC OF MUTUAL HELP	
#17A BITTERNESS & VENGEANCE	#17B GRATITUDE & FORGIVENESS
#18A PASSIONATELY IMPULSIVE	#18B DISPASSIONATE
#28A HEDONISTIC ORIENTATION	#28B HEALTHY ORIENTATION
#29A THE SELF-RESTRAINED PERSON	#29B THE THREATENING PERSON
#32 VALUING HUMAN RIGHTS	
#33A SERVITUDE	#33B ADDICTION
#38 VALUING FAMILY	
#39A TOUGH LOVE	#39B SCAPEGOATING
#41 STRUGGLING WITH A BASIC NEED: SELF ESTEEM	
#52 INDEPENDENT LIVING FOR THE SICK OR DISABLED	

Worldview Development Questions:

Related Worldview Theme #s:

17) What is it like to be me? Am I too focused on me and on my immediate concerns? Do I pay more attention to lower level details rather than to higher level relationships or goals?	3, 4, 41
18) Extending my perspective to consider my own death (and human mortality in general), what happens after death?	4, 5A, 5B, 7A, 13, 14A, 14B
19) To what extent should my behavior be guided by religious beliefs of what happens to people after their death?	5A, 5B, 7A, 8A, 9A, 9B, 10, 14A, 14B, 16, 28A, 29A, 44A
20) How should I treat other individuals? Helpful or Hurtful? Forgiving or Blaming? Accepting or Threatening?	1A, 16, 17A, 17B, 21B, 29B, 36A, 39B
21) To what extent should what I do (my behavior) be based on my head (reason) or my heart (feelings)?	15, 17A, 17B, 18A, 18B, 29A, 29B
22) When and why should I restrain my own behavior?	9A, 14A, 23B, 28B, 29A, 34, 38, 42, 44A, 45B, 47B
23) Why is some individual freedom limited? Is this right?	15, 24, 32, 33A, 33B, 45A, 50A, 52
24) What makes a good family? How should I treat my family?	3, 34, 38, 39A
25) Can I accept and love both myself and other people close to me? In the "dance between separateness and unity" which do I value more: my own accomplishment and ability to function as an independent individual, or the growth and feeling of wholeness I experience in my relationship with a significant other?	16, 17B, 38, 39A, 41
26) All people need a sense of hope, self-respect and self determination, right? Can I empathize with people who are different, perhaps handicapped in a way that I am not?	16, 21B, 24, 33A, 33B, 41, 52

Unit #3: Club ♣ **WORLDVIEW THEMES: INDIVIDUAL <--> GROUP** (loosely as “joining”)

Worldview themes associated with the club symbol involve an individual’s relationship to groups of other individuals -- including the whole society he or she is part of -- and participation in activities (including earning a livelihood) associated with these groups.

#19 CAPITALISM (this bigger theme is composed of two themes: #19A ECONOMIC INDIVIDUALISM /#19B CORPORATE CAPITALISM)	
#20A ELITISM	#20B AUTHORITARIANISM
#21A POPULISM	#21B SERVICE TO OTHERS
#31 EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY	
#34 VALUING TRADITIONS & TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES	
#35A SELF RELIANT NONCONFORMITY	#35B WORKING FOR CHANGE
#36A CYNICISM	#36B CONSPIRACISM
#37A PROUD IDENTIFICATION	#37B GLOBAL CITIZEN
#42 ETHICAL ORIENTATION	
#43 SEEKING WEALTH AND POWER	
#48 THE CO-OPERATIVE, DECENTRALIZED SOCIETY ADVOCATE	
#49A SOCIAL WELFARE STATISM	#49B SOCIALISM
#50A LIBERTARIAN	#50B LEFT ANARCHIST

Worldview Development Questions:	Related Worldview Theme #s:
27) What economic system is best? Do I prefer the competition of pure capitalism or an economic system based on co-operation?	19, 21A, 48, 49A, 49B, 50A, 50B
28) As I participate in society, do I trust and identify with common people or the elite?	20A, 20B, 21A, 21B, 36B
29) On what basis should people be governed? Can democracy work?	9A, 20B, 30, 31, 32, 46B, 49B, 50A, 50B
30) Should I value and fit into society as it is or work to change it?	9A, 21B, 34, 35A, 35B, 46A, 47A
31) What is human nature? Do I have a positive or negative view of it?	14A, 16, 21A, 21B, 29A, 29B, 36A, 36B, 39B, 42
32) Where do I belong? Do I feel allegiance to a particular group? If so, to whom? Who are these people?	27, 35A, 37A, 37B, 38, 39B, 46B
33) What is the purpose of education, and how can that purpose be best achieved?	30, 31
34) What should ethics and morality ultimately be based on? Can I accept ethical decision-making that equally values all human beings as global citizens?	6, 8B, 9A, 13, 14A, 16, 22B, 23A, 25, 29A, 32, 34, 37A, 37B, 38, 42, 44A, 45B, 51
35) How should I live? Should I be self-centered and look out for me, or be other-oriented and promote the common good?	3, 4, 14A, 16, 19, 21B, 23B, 25, 26B, 29A, 29B, 32, 34, 38, 42, 43, 44A, 49B, 50A
36) What makes a good society? Should society be organized in a community-based, decentralized way which values appropriate technology and the principle of subsidiarity?	22A, 22B, 34, 38, 46A, 48, 49A, 50B, 51
37) To what extent should governments interfere in the economy and in people's lives?	19, 20B, 22A, 22B, 26A, 40, 43, 49A, 50A, 50B, 51

Unit #4: Spade ♠ **WORLDVIEW THEMES: INDIVIDUAL <--> NATURE** (loosely as “doing”)

Worldview themes associated with the spade symbol involve an individual’s relationship to the natural world and how his or her support of, or participation in, activities (including daily lifestyle, earning a livelihood, etc.) impact nature.

#4 GLOBAL VISION: THE BIG PICTURE	
#22A EXPANSIONISM	#22B IMPERIALISM
#23A SUSTAINABILITY	#23B ENOUGHNESS
#24 STRUGGLING WITH A BASIC NEED: SUSTENANCE	
#25 ANTHROPOCENTRISM	
#26A THE CONSUMERIST	#26B THE MORE IS BETTER MENTALITY
#27 BELONGING TO NATURE	
#40 ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMICS	
#44A SANCTITY & DIGNITY OF LIFE	#44B ANIMAL RIGHTS
#45A BORROWING MENTALITY	#45B WORK HARD, PAY AS YOU GO APPROACH
#46A THE TECHNOLOGICAL FIX MENTALITY	#46B MILITARISM
#47A THE ATTITUDINAL FIX MENTALITY	#47B PACIFISM
#51 ETHICAL GLOBALIZATION	

Worldview Development Questions:	Related Worldview Theme #s:
38) Can I get beyond an egocentric perspective? Can I fit my experience, and the human experience in general, into the much larger content of space and time?	3, 4, 10
39) Which is more important, short-term economic growth or long term efforts to build a sustainable economy?	19, 22A, 23A, 40
40) Should powerful nations or multinational corporations be allowed to extend their power and influence over poor nations or powerless people?	22B, 24
41) To what extent do I empathize with those engaged in a struggle to provide life's basic necessities?	16, 21B, 24, 39A
42) Should human beings act as if they belong to nature or have mastery over it?	22A, 23A, 25, 27
43) Which do I value: freedom to consume or freedom to limit consumption?	16, 22A, 23A, 23B, 25, 26A, 26B, 27, 29A, 42, 43, 44
44) What obligations do people have to protect the natural environment? How can the market economy be reworked to value environmental health?	22A, 23A, 25, 27, 40, 49A
45) To what extent should an effort be made to limit the human population?	22A, 23A, 24, 25, 27, 42, 44A
46) To what extent do I believe that life is sacred and should be protected?	5B, 42, 44A, 44B
47) To what extent is debt--monetary, personal, or ecological--justifiable?	26A, 29A, 45A, 45B
48) Does technology typically improve the quality of life? Should its use be limited--if so, how? Do I prefer technological fixes or attitudinal fixes?	13, 24, 40, 42, 46A, 47A
49) In resisting evil, is my approach more militarist or more pacifist?	17A, 17B, 29B, 39B, 46A, 46B, 47A, 47B
50) Does globalization need an ethical dimension?	22A, 22B, 24, 32, 37B, 40, 42, 43, 50A, 50B, 51