

Starting Points Syllabus--2014-2015

Tutor: Dan Werthman (danw@eastsidecommunity.org)

Text: *Starting Points* by David Quine

Description: Starting Points is an introductory course in world view thinking that is designed to enable the student to define, develop, and apply a biblical framework for evaluating and comparing ideas in relation to the basic categories of absolute truth as revealed in the Bible. The course covers the basics of a Christian worldview and assists the student in forming his/her own worldview from Scripture, provides practice in discerning worldviews in literature, studies several approaches to basic apologetics in order for the student to better understand the Christian worldview and articulate it against contemporary challenges to the faith, and examines the basic Christians ideas undergirding our country's founding documents and institutions. The course is interdisciplinary, covering the topics of Bible, literature/composition and American history.

Class Meetings: Mondays and Wednesdays from 8:00 to 8:55 AM.

Tutor Contact: I serve as the Pastor of Eastside Community Church (where the PEP East Campus is located), and so I am usually in my office (in the southeast corner of the building) 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM on Mondays and Wednesdays. He can be reached by phone (cell: 904-629-8005) or e-mail at danw@eastsidecommunity.org. Syllabi, assignments, and other class resources will be posted on <http://dwerthman.weebly.com/>. Grades will be posted Engrade.com.

Realistic Expectations for this class: This course is intended primarily for the 9th grade student. Students should expect to spend at least **5 hours per week** on this course in addition to class time. Students are expected to complete all reading and written assignments given in the workbook prior to class. Workbook assignments will be checked for completeness at the beginning of each class. In class, we will discuss reading and writing assignments and answer questions. Students will have written assignments in addition to coursework in the text and should be prepared for a weekly quiz. Assignments are to be turned in on time, complete and well done, in hard copy, and handed in to the tutor.

Goals for this class:

Students will:

- Be able to define the meaning of "worldview" and apply it to everyday life.
- Know and articulate the basic doctrines of the Christian faith.
- Develop a Biblical worldview for their own lives.
- Know and identify the seven main questions concerning worldview as the starting point for our Core curriculum.
- Learn how to identify and evaluate the worldviews expressed in literature and movies and critique them from a Biblical framework.
- Follow the methodology of three different approaches for communicating the Christian worldview to non-Christians in our day and gain practice in answering challenges to the faith.
- Identify and evaluate the ideas that shaped the thinking and actions of the founders of the United States
- Be prepared to study world views and the ideas of western thought in depth in subsequent core classes.

Materials used in this course:

- The Bible
- *Starting Points* by David Quine
- *Bible Basics For A Christian Worldview* (Download from <http://dwerthman.weebly.com/>)
- *How To Read Slowly* by James Sire
- *Know What You Believe* and *Know Why You Believe* by Paul Little
- *The Magician's Nephew* and *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* and *The Horse And His Boy* and *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis
- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
- *Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* by Robert Lewis Stevenson
- *The Deadliest Monster: An Introduction To Worldviews* by Jeff Baldwin
- *Assumptions That Affect Our Lives* by Christian Overman
- *Never Before In History* by Gary Amos
- *The Wizard of Oz* (movie)
- *It's A Wonderful Life* (movie)
- Handouts of supplemental exercises, examples & resources (Tutor provides hard copy to student in class, electronically on the website or via e-mail).

Preparation for this class:

Each student will be expected to bring to class each week:

- 3-ring binder with loose-leaf pages and dividers
- *Starting Points* by David Quine
- **(Note: It is recommended that the spine of the workbook be cut off – this can be done at any office supply store – three-hole punched, and placed in the three-ring binder for the class so that assignment pages in the workbook can be turned in for grading without tearing up the text.)**
- Bible
- Writing instruments for taking notes during class
- Copy of the up-to-date syllabus *in your notebook*

Evaluation Methods:

Essays, tests, projects, course work done at home, pop quizzes, in-class writing assignments, oral presentations, and class participation.

Grades are determined as follows:

30 percent: Homework (*Starting Points* notebook; other assignments)

30 percent: Class Participation and Quizzes

40 percent: Papers and Essays

Grading:

A = 100-90 B=89-80 C=79-70 D=69-60 F=59-0

Late Assignments:

Assignments are due at the beginning of each class. Papers turned in late will be marked down 20%.

Worldview Essay:

The worldview essay as described in the *Starting Points* workbook will be modified and is due at the beginning of the 2nd quarter. Students will write the paragraphs described in the *Starting Points* notebook from a descriptive, not a personal perspective. In other words, instead of writing about the student's personal view of God, the student will write about the Biblical view of God, based upon studies in the 1st quarter. Prior to the final draft, outlines and a rough draft will be required.

*** The Seven Key Questions concerning worldview:**

- What is the nature of God?
- What is the nature of the universe?
- What is the nature of man?
- What is the nature of evil?
- What is the measure of good and evil (on what are moral guidelines measured)?
- What happens after death?
- What is the meaning of history?