Course Rationale and Description
(Why do we offer this course? Which of LSTC’s degree program learning outcomes does it address?):

Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich are widely regarded as two of the most significant theologians of 20th century. Niebuhr’s Christian Realist perspective and Paul Tilliche’s method of correlation were groundbreaking in their time. Together, their work provides the foundation for the liberal and liberation theologies that followed them, paving the way for contemporary theologies that go beyond Niebuhr and Tillich’s work in crucial ways. In particular, Niebuhr and Tillich serve as conversation partners that can help to shape theologies that are responsive to lived realities of politics and culture.

This rigorous course will ground students in a critical understanding of Niebuhr and Tillich’s key theological positions and the major theological themes of their work. From that critical understanding, we will work to connect the thought of Niebuhr and Tillich to contemporary political issues and cultural forms. Ultimately, students will leave the course having developed a theological account of the interplay between politics, culture, and faith that draws on the work of two major Christian theologians and responds to contemporary realities.

This course addresses the following learning outcomes for each degree program.
MDiv/MAM learning competencies:
1) Conveys a developed sense of being a person created and called to live ethically in community; (ELCA) Conveys a developed sense of being created and called to give witness to Jesus Christ, Trinitarian faith, care for creation, and community with human neighbors.
3) Draws the wisdom of our forebears in the faith in history and theology into active engagement with emerging challenges.
5) Manifests the ability to know, interpret, and affect particular situations, values, and meanings through methodologically grounded historical, socio-cultural, ethical readings/analysis of one’s own denomination and broadly cultural-historical traditions within and around each of these competencies.

MATS learning competencies:
1) Conveys a developed sense of being a person created and called to live ethically in community.
3) Draws the wisdom of our forebears in the faith in history and theology into active engagement with emerging challenges.
4) Manifests the ability to know, interpret, and affect particular situations, values, and meanings through methodologically grounded historical, socio-cultural, ethical readings/analysis of one’s own denomination and broadly cultural-historical traditions within and around each of these competencies.
Th.M./Ph.D. learning objectives:

3) That students enhance their ability to formulate productive questions and to pursue research about significant issues or themes and grow in general in capacities for carrying out the scholarly task.

4) That students integrate their specialization with their overall competence in theology and other academic disciplines.

5) That students grow in those qualities essential for the practice of scholarly ministry, such as emotional maturity, faith and integrity, and concern for justice.

6) That students develop an ability to engage in critical scholarly discussions with professors and peers.

Course Learning **Outcomes** (Learners will be able to):

(What **difference** will this course make to students’ knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices?)

Learners will be able to:

1) identify key theological positions and major theological themes in the work of Niebuhr and Tillich.

2) analyze contemporary political issues and cultural forms in relation to the work of Niebuhr and Tillich.

3) evaluate and critique the key theological positions of Niebuhr and Tillich.

4) articulate a Christian theological account of politics, culture, and faith.

**Strategies** for Learning:

(How shall we go about achieving these outcomes?)

- Course readings
- Lectures
- Small group discussions
- Each students will present once on a relevant contemporary political issue or cultural form, in connection with the day’s readings
- Midterm paper in which students review and critique one of Niebuhr’s shorter works (*The Irony of American History* or *The Children of Light & the Children of Darkness*)
- Final paper in which students develop a Christian theological account of politics, culture, and faith, with Niebuhr and Tillich as primary interlocutors

**Assessment:**

(How shall we know if we—students and instructors—have been successful in achieving the outcomes?)

- Written feedback on students’ personal reflections and final project
- Class discussions
- Feedback sessions: Throughout the semester, the instructor will meet with groups of students to solicit feedback on the course.
**Bibliography:**

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<tr>
<th>Text Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>ISBN# (Required)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Reinhold Niebuhr: Major Works on Religion and Politics</em></td>
<td>Niebuhr, Reinhold</td>
<td>1598533754</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Nature &amp; Destiny of Man, Volumes 1 &amp; 2</em></td>
<td>Niebuhr, Reinhold</td>
<td>0664257097</td>
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<td><em>Politics and Faith</em></td>
<td>Stone, Ronald</td>
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<td><em>Systematic Theology, Volume 1</em></td>
<td>Tillich, Paul</td>
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Additional information: