Instructor: Dr. Brian J. Walsh  
Tuesdays, 7.00-9.00  

Description:  
While theology has always found a fruitful dialogue partner in the arts, this course will approach the world of contemporary music in genres as diverse as rock, bluegrass, hip hop, folk and alternative rock as theological resources in their own right. Attending to the interweaving of biblical iconography, symbols, narratives, motifs and themes in the lyrics of these artists, we will explore the prophetic, pastoral, liturgical and theological contribution that they make for Christian reflection and praxis in a late modern socio-historical context. There will be focused attention in this course on the artistry of Canadian singer/songwriter Bruce Cockburn. We will also have sessions with local musicians playing their music and in conversation.  

Required Texts:  

Selected Readings  

Some Further Recommended Readings:  

**Course Learning Objectives:**
1. to develop intertextual listening skills, attending to biblical themes, motifs, narratives and echoes in contemporary music.
2. to develop theological discernment of shifting cultural realities.
3. to engage in creative theological reflection in dialogue with the music of the artists discussed in the class.
4. to explore the pastoral, liturgical and praxiological possibilities inherent in the work of these artists.

**Requirements:**
1. Class Participation 20%
2. Album review 20% Due: October 19
3. Major essay engaging the theological motifs, images, echoes and implications of a significant theme in the work of a contemporary artist: 60%
   Proposals for the paper are due on November 2; and the paper is due on December 7.

**Additional requirements for Advanced Degree Students:**
2. Reflection Paper: addressing questions of theological method in the theology/pop culture interface – 5 pages, due at the end of the course (or could be incorporated into the major research paper)

**Some Important Notes:**
1. **Double Sided Printing:** In order to conserve natural resources, all assignments in this course are to be double-sided or to be printed on the clean backs of re-used paper.
2. **Wycliffe College Policy on Assignment Extensions:**
   Basic Degree students are expected to complete all course work by the end of the term in which they are registered. Under **exceptional circumstances**, with the written permission of the instructor, students may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An extension, when offered, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. An SDF must be requested no later than two weeks before the completion of the term in which the course is taken. The request form is available on the college website or from the Registrar’s office.

   **One percentage point per day will be deducted on the course grade if an extension has not been requested by the stated deadline.**
Course Outline

Sept. 14   Prophecy, Pathos and Music
           Reading:       Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, chs 1-3

Sept. 21   Kicking at the Darkness: What are we doing here?
           Reading:       Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, chapters 4-6
                       Walsh, *Kicking at the Darkness*, chapters 1-3

Sept. 28   One Day I Shall Be Home: Cockburn’s Creation Dream
           Reading:       Walsh, *Kicking at the Darkness*, chapters 4-6

Oct. 5     Rumours of Glory: Cockburn’s Humans

Oct. 12    U2 and the Postmodern Turn
           Reading:       Stephen Catanzarite, *Achtung Baby*

Oct. 19    Funerals, Bibles and the Burbs: Arcade Fire’s Prophetic Parodies

           Album Reviews Due

Oct. 26    Reading Week

Nov. 2     Waiting for a Miracle in a Broken Wheeled World: Cockburn, evil and hope

           Paper Proposals Due

Nov. 9     Beyond Relevance: Worship, Hymnological Eclecticism and the Pop Music Canon: A conversation with Rob Crosby-Shearer about the music of Wine Before Breakfast and River
           Reading:       tba

Nov. 16    Hip Hop Prophecy: Guest Lecture by Cyril Guérette (aka Ill Seer)
           Reading:       tba

Nov. 23    Music, Soul and Faith
           Guest singer-songwriters Deb Whelan and Monica Schroeder in conversation and playing some tunes.

Nov. 30    From Worship to Art and Back Again: an evening with Glen Soderholm

Dec. 7     House Concert/Party

           Major Essays Due