

Course Syllabus, Fall 2007

HR 6302, WORLD RELIGIONS AND CHRISTIANITY: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Lecturer and Contacts

Dr. Robert Hunt

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Course Description

This course examines religious contexts and issues of Christian mission and ministry, offering resources for theological reflection on tasks of individuals and local church communities from a global perspective. It sets the following concrete objectives:

- To study key features of major religious traditions, for an appreciation and reflective analysis of the situation of religious diversity in contemporary society.
- To explore the theology and practice of inter-religious dialogue as the primary form of Christian engagement with non-Christian religious traditions.
- To consider the theological, pastoral, and spiritual implications of Christian mission and ministry in a culturally and religiously pluralistic world, on the global and local levels.
- Students will be expected to both reflect theologically on inter-religious engagement and learn specific skills related to facilitating and participating in inter-religious dialogue.

Readings and Resources

Required Readings:

- Brockman, Habito, and Hunt (draft essays and readings): *World Christianity Among World Religions: Mission and Ministry in a Global Society*.
- Esposito, Fasching, Lewis, *World Religions Today* (Oxford)
- Robert Hunt, *Muslim Faith and Values: What Every Christian Should Know*, (GBGM Press)
- Wesley Ariarajah, *The Bible and People of Other Faiths* (WCC Publications)
- Paul Griffiths, *Christianity Through Non-Christian Eyes* (Orbis)
- Paul Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religion*
- Selected articles, including items available on reserve, or as file attachments to be emailed to students, or as internet sites. (See class schedule below for particulars)
- Readings from Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Spirituality Vol. 1 and 2*. (PDF on Blackboard)
- Readings from Constance Padwick, *Muslim Devotions* (PDF on Blackboard)

Recommended Reading

- Ruben Habito, *Healing Breath: Zen Spirituality for a Wounded Earth* (MKZC Publications)
- Jane Smith, *Islam in America*. (Columbia University Press)
- Diane L. Eck, *A New Religious America* (Harper San Francisco)

Video Resources:

Puja (29 min); *Four Holy Men* (37 min) (Hinduism); *Guests of God* (Islam); *Land of the Disappearing Buddha* (52 min); *Spirit and Nature* (88 min) (Religion and Ecology); ??JUDAISM??

Course Requirements

Required For Credit:

- Report – “Religious Groups in my Home Town or Neighborhood” due Sept. 10th. The report is due in writing.
- Participation in assigned dialogue groups. These groups will meet 4 times during the semester.
- A four page report and analysis of each dialogue meeting demonstrating an awareness of key issues in the theology and practice of dialogue found in the required readings.
- Scribblings – a half page note written immediately after each class and reflecting on personal reactions and questions arising from the class. These notes are due immediately after class had written or by email within 24 hours of the class.
- Visit to a religious center of another religious tradition and an in-depth interview with a member of that tradition.
 - You must make an appointment with Dr. Hunt and present your proposed interview questions before the interview.
 - You must submit a reflection paper on the visit/interview (7 – 10 pages, double spaced, 11 point type. Your report must have page numbers and your name at the top right hand corner of each page. Reports should be stapled in the upper left hand corner and should not be in a folder or binder.). You must make this visit and interview by November 1st. The interview reflection paper will be due on December 1st.
- Mid-term examination on October 15th.
- Final essay/exam (Due December 10th.)

Desirable:

An open mind and open heart, willingness to learn new things, see different perspectives, and consider various theological, spiritual, and pastoral options in the face of contemporary realities.

Grading

The report “World Religions in My Hometown” should be a listing with address of institutions or other indications of your sources of information.

The mid-term exam will be an hour long short answer test taken by each student and based on the readings in *World Religions Today*.

The interview paper should clearly characterize the interviewees responses to your questions, what you learned from his or her responses, how these compare/contrast with what you have observed visiting the interviewee’s religious community and learned in the classroom and reading. Finally it should include briefly what implications you see for ministry.

The final essay will be based on a case study. You will be required to analyze the case in light of the question: “How would I be faithful to the gospel in this situation.” You should expect to answer 4 subsidiary questions in your essay: a. What are the central religious features of this situation? b. What are the possible Christian responses? c. What should be the primary response, and why? d. What would you expect for an outcome in this situation?

Reports and essays should have a clear structure with a single sentence thesis, arguments for the thesis, and a concluding summary pointing toward implications for ministry. Essays should be double spaced, with 11pt Times New Roman type. They should be left justified and have the students name in the upper right hand corner. Multiple pages should be stapled. Footnotes should be in a standard style.

All papers are due in printed form. No emailed papers will be accepted. All late papers will be graded down for lateness.

Course grade based on Dialogue Group Reports [20%], Midterm [20%], Final Exam [30%], and Interview Paper [30%] with up to one-half letter-grade deducted based on class presence, participation, and other assignments.

Guidelines for Classroom and Dialogue Dynamics. (Source: *NCCJ Manual on Dialogue*)

Protocols for Interviews related to Human Subjects in Research (Source: *Jack Seymore, Garrett Evangelical School of Theology*)

Class Schedule

Session	Theme	Readings
	Part I. The Contours of Religious Diversity	<p>Prior to the beginning of the course 6 persons will be trained as interfaith dialogue facilitators using the NCCJ Manual.</p> <p>Dialogue Sessions Begin: Meetings every 2 weeks for 8 weeks.</p> <p>Reading: Paul Knitter <i>Introducing Theologies of Religion</i>. Reading of this text should be completed by the 4th class session.</p>
1	Christian Mission and Evangelism in a Pluralistic World – outline of a Vocational Theology of inter-religious engagement.	
2	<p>Dialogue: Key Documents and Concepts</p> <p>Obstacles to Dialogue: Sources of our fears and prejudice concerning people of other faiths.</p>	<p><i>Interfaith Dialogue</i> (WCC Ecumenical Dictionary Entry)</p> <p><i>Guidelines on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies</i> (WCC)</p> <p><i>Ecumenical considerations for dialogue and relations with people of other religions</i> (WCC)</p>
3	Facilitating and Participating in Dialogue – (Guest Lecturer: Isobel Docampo of the Perkins Faculty.)	<p><i>NCCJ Guidelines and Training Manual for facilitating Interfaith Dialogue.</i></p> <p>“<i>The Dialogue Decalogue: Ground Rules for Interreligious, Interideological Dialogue</i>” by Leonard Swidler. <i>Journal of Ecumenical Studies</i> 20:1, Winter 1983, 1984.</p>
4	Hinduism – Origins	<p><i>World Religions Today</i>, pp. 270-339</p> <p><i>Christianity Through Non-Christian Eyes</i>, pp. 191-246</p> <p><i>Bhagavad Gita</i>, http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/ANCINDIA/GITA.HTM. Read all, Carefully read sections 1-5, 9, 12, 13.</p>
5	<p>Hinduism – Contemporary Manifestations</p> <p>(Report from and discussion led by Hinduism Dialogue Group)</p>	<p>Solomon Raja – <i>Folk Hinduism</i>, Chapter 3 (PFD file on Blackboard)</p> <p>Video: <i>Puja, Four Holy Men</i></p> <p><i>World Christianity Among World Religions: Mission and Ministry in a Global Society</i>: Brockman, Habito, and Hunt (draft essays and readings) – Relevant Essays from Section IV.</p>
6	Guest from the Hindu Community	

Session	Theme	Readings
7	Religions of China - Confucianism, Taoism, and the Chinese religious system	<p><i>World Religions Today</i> pp. 34 – 62</p> <p>Students may select readings from <i>Lao Tze, Confucious, Han Fe Tze, Mencius</i>. (Asiapac Comic Series on Blackboard and on reserve in Bridwell)</p> <p>www.beliefnet.com , www.fas.harvard.edu/~pluralsm/</p>
8	Chinese Religions – Contemporary Manifestations (Report from and discussion led by the Chinese Religions Dialogue Group)	<p><i>World Religions Today</i>, pp. 416 – 494</p> <p>http://www.falundafa.org/eng/index.htm (Review this site and learn the origins and beliefs of the Fu Lan Gong.)</p> <p><i>World Christianity Among World Religions: Mission and Ministry in a Global Society</i>: Brockman, Habito, and Hunt (draft essays and readings) – Relevant Essays from Section IV</p>
9	Guest from the Taoist/Confucian Tradition	
10	The History of Buddhism	<p><i>World Religions Today</i> pp. 340 – 415.</p> <p>Video: <i>Land of the Disappearing Buddha</i>.</p> <p>Reading from the Sutras. <i>The Teaching of the Compassionate Buddha</i>, “<i>The Sermon of Benares</i>” p. 5, “<i>Questions Tending to Edification</i>”, p. 8 (PDF on Blackboard)</p> <p>Students may select readings from <i>The Flowering of Zen in China</i>, or <i>The Book of Zen</i>, (Asiapac Comics on Blackboard and on reserve in the library)</p>
11	Contemporary Buddhism (Report from and discussion led by the Buddhism Dialogue Group)	<p><i>Christianity through Non-Christian Eyes</i>, pp. 130 – 181</p> <p>Reading from the Sutras. <i>The Teaching of the Compassionate Buddha</i>, “The parable of the Burning House” p. 119, “Nagarjuna’s Analysis” p. 147, “The White Lotus Ode” p. 188, “The Seasons” p. 193” (PDF or Blackboard)</p> <p><i>World Christianity Among World Religions: Mission and Ministry in a Global Society</i>: Brockman, Habito, and Hunt (draft essays and readings) – Relevant Essays from Section IV</p>
12	Guest from the Buddhist Tradition	
13	Survey of Muslim History and the development of Islamicate Civilization	<p><i>Muslim Faith and Values</i> Chapter 1</p> <p>Constance Padwick, <i>Muslim Devotions</i> (Read chapters 10a, 10 b, 11a, 11b, and 5a)</p>

Session	Theme	Readings
14	Basic Muslim Beliefs and Practices	<i>Muslim Faith and Values</i> (Chapters 2 and 3) <i>Islamic Spirituality</i> Ed. Nassar (Chapter 16) Video: <i>Guests of God</i>
15	Muhammad and the Qur'an	<i>Muslim Faith and Values</i> (Chapters 4 and 5) <i>Qur'an</i> , Surahs 100 – 114 <i>Islamic Spirituality</i> (Chapters 1, 2, and 3)
16	Shari'ah Civilization – Contemporary Islam (Report from and discussion led by the Islam Dialogue Group)	<i>Muslim Faith and Values</i> (Chapter 6) Selections from Mawdudi, <i>Towards Understanding Islam</i> , Chapters 6 and 7. (Available online at http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/Books/M_tui/chapter6.html and http://www.witness-pioneer.org/vil/Books/M_tui/chapter7.html) <i>Striving Together in Dialogue, A Muslim-Christian Call to Reflection and Action</i> (WCC) <i>World Christianity Among World Religions: Mission and Ministry in a Global Society</i> : Brockman, Habito, and Hunt (draft essays and readings) – Relevant Essays from Section IV
17	Guest from the Islamic Tradition	
18	Judaism - Historical Development	<i>World Religions Today</i> , pp. 64 – 129
19	Contemporary Judaism (Report from and discussion led by the Judaism Dialogue Group)	<i>Christianity through non-Christian Eyes</i> , pp. 13 – 53 <i>World Christianity Among World Religions: Mission and Ministry in a Global Society</i> : Brockman, Habito, and Hunt (draft essays and readings) – Relevant Essays from Section IV
20	Guest from the Jewish Community	
21	Mid-Term Exam.	
	Part II. Implications for Theology, Ministry, and Spirituality – Directions in Dialogue	One or more of the following classes is to be presented by a member of a different religious community.
22	Dialogue and the Sanctity of Creation	<i>World Christianity Among World Religions: Mission and Ministry in a Global Society</i> : Brockman, Habito, and Hunt (draft essays and readings) – Section I, Relevant Essays from Section IV
23	Dialogue and Peacemaking	<i>World Christianity Among World Religions: Mission and Ministry in a Global Society</i> : Brockman, Habito, and Hunt (draft essays and readings) – Relevant Essays from Section IV

Session	Theme	Readings
24	Dialogue and Shared Community Life	<i>World Christianity Among World Religions: Mission and Ministry in a Global Society</i> : Brockman, Habito, and Hunt (draft essays and readings) – Relevant Essays from Section IV
25	Dialogue and Shared Spirituality	<i>World Christianity Among World Religions: Mission and Ministry in a Global Society</i> : Brockman, Habito, and Hunt (draft essays and readings) – Relevant Essays from Section IV
26	The History of Christian Attitudes toward Non-Christians	<i>World Christianity Among World Religions: Mission and Ministry in a Global Society</i> : Brockman, Habito, and Hunt (draft essays and readings) – Section II
27	Contemporary Theologies of Religion – A review and discussion	<i>World Christianity Among World Religions: Mission and Ministry in a Global Society</i> : Brockman, Habito, and Hunt (draft essays and readings) – Section III
28	The Christian Vocation in a Pluralistic World	
29	Final Examination	

Syllabus Attachments

Minority Concerns and the Perkins Curriculum

In 1975 the Perkins Senate passed resolutions which bear on the relation of the Perkins curriculum to this school's common concern for the status of ethnic minority groups and of women both in education for ministry and in the ministry itself. The following statement summarizes these resolutions with respect to all courses except those in the area of Ministry.

1. Instructors and students alike are urged to use inclusive language, images and metaphors which will give full and positive value to both the past contributions and the future prospects of ethnic minorities and women in the church and in society at large.
2. Instructors and students alike are urged to give sensitive consideration to the role of images from a predominantly white and male culture in shaping both the language and concepts of Christian theology and the models and methods of Christian ministry that are widely current today.
3. Instructors are urged to make every effort to provide in the syllabi, assignments and formats of their courses, opportunities (1) for women students and students from ethnic minority groups to pursue their study with special reference to their own status or tradition and (2) for all students to become acquainted with the special problems and conditions that affect women and ethnic minority groups in human society.

SMU Disability Accommodations

Southern Methodist University provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you need academic accommodations for a disability, you must first contact Ms. Rebecca Marin, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities (214-768-4563) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. Then you should schedule an appointment with your professor to make appropriate arrangements for the course work in this class.

Perkins Regulations Regarding Incompletes

The grade of Incomplete is granted only in rare cases when a student is prevented, by extraordinary circumstances of illness or other severe hardship, from completing some major portion of the required course work before the deadline for submission of grades for the term. Requests for a grade of Incomplete must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. For more information, see the Perkins Catalog, p. 34.