

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
MC 911 (01) Encountering Non-Christian Religions  
Doctor of Philosophy/Intercultural Studies Degree Program

COURSE SYLLABUS

December 12-16, 2011

Rev. Dr. Ivan Satyavrata  
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Bachelor of Theology [1980]: Southern Asia Bible College, Bangalore, India

Bachelor of Divinity [1985]: Union Biblical Seminary, Pune, India

Master of Theology [1991]: Regent College, Vancouver, Canada

M. Th. Thesis title: *'Lord and Life-Giver': A Comparative Evaluation of Teaching on the Personhood of the Holy Spirit in Early Patristic and Indian Christian Theology with special reference to Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Origen, and to Brahmabandhav Upadhyay, Vengal Chakkarai and Raimundo Panikkar.*

Doctor of Philosophy [2001]: The Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, Oxford, U.K. [British Open University]

Ph.D. Thesis title: *"God has not left Himself without Witness": A Critical Examination of the 'Fulfilment' Concept in the Christian Understanding of Other Religions in Indian Christian Thought, with special reference to the Contribution of Krishna Mohan Banerjea and Sadhu Sundar Singh to Protestant Fulfilment Theology.*

Ivan Satyavrata spent the early years of his ministry as a pioneer pastor in downtown Bombay, active in street evangelism and outreach in the city slums. He served on the teaching faculty and in various administrative capacities at Southern Asia Bible College, Bangalore since 1985, prior to his appointment as President in 1998. Since April 2006 he has been serving as Senior Pastor of a multilingual 3500 member congregation in the city of Calcutta in east India. The Church serves as the hub for a mission to the wider region, giving support and oversight to over 300 churches and with a social outreach providing education and basic health care for over 30,000 children.

An ordained minister of the Assemblies of God, Ivan is also deeply engaged in a variety of compassion and development ministries, as Board Chairman of Bombay Teen Challenge, a Christian NGO involved in the rehabilitation of street children, drug addicts and commercial sex workers in the city of Bombay, and also serves as a society member of World Vision India. He has played an active role in evangelical and pentecostal theological education in India, and serves presently as Director of AGATESA [The Assemblies of God Association for Theological Education in South Asia], and the Chair of the Board for the Centre for Global Leadership Development [Southern Asia Bible College], Bangalore. Ivan had his early education in India, did his Th. M. at Regent College, Vancouver, Canada, and his Ph.D. through the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, Oxford, U.K. In addition to a number of articles, he has published his first book, *The Holy Spirit: Lord and Life-Giver* [IVP], and his Ph.D. thesis is due for publication. His chief interest has been in issues relating to the Christian witness to people of other faiths. The Satyavratas are a close-knit family: Ivan's wife Sheila [Elizabeth] partners closely together with

him in their ministry, and she and their sons, Rahul Benjohn and Rohan Joel, are the pride and joy of his life.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

How should Christians present Jesus as “the Way, the Truth and the Life” in an increasingly globalized world marked by growing ethnic, cultural and religious diversity? This course seeks to equip students with biblical, theological and phenomenological resources for responding effectively to the challenges presented by religious pluralism to Christian Witness in the twenty-first century.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE GLOBAL MISSIONS DEPARTMENT

The specific learning outcomes for the programs of the Global Missions Department at AGTS include that the student will be able to:

1. make decisions, live and serve according to revealed truth and the will of God
2. develop biblical theology of missions which addresses the contemporary missional context
3. utilize the tools of the social sciences to develop a plan to communicate the gospel in word and deed to persons of another culture
4. facilitate the ongoing process of contextualization as missional leaders and communities of faith in specific settings
5. articulate a Spirit driven missiology and praxis
6. identify, exemplify and foment biblical leadership

## THE PURPOSE, PROGRAM GOALS, SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN INTERCULTURAL STUDIES

1. The purpose of the Ph.D./ICS is to facilitate the development and academic certification of vocations in missiological and intercultural teaching and scholarship by:
  - a. providing an environment and essential tools that enable research and theological reflection,
  - b. creating a unique learning experience customized to each student’s call, gifts and academic interest,
  - c. equipping missiologists for research, teaching and missional praxis in an increasing complex multicultural world, and
  - d. giving credible voice to scholar practitioner missionaries and national leaders before the academy and the Church.
2. The Ph.D/ICS program goal is to contribute to the discipline of intercultural studies by enriching research, teaching and the practice of those involved in the field.
3. The specific learning outcomes for the Ph.D/ICS program are that the upon completing the program the student will be able to:

- a. demonstrate a breadth of knowledge in theological and religious studies and other academic disciplines, and a comprehensive knowledge of the disciplines that comprise missiology and intercultural studies
- b. competently innovate, defend and critique scholarly work and missional practice for the benefit of the academy and the broader community of faith
- c. demonstrate ability to engage in original missiological intercultural research and writing that contribute to the discipline and to their research context for the sake of their tradition, the Church and the academy
- d. make decisions, live and serve according to revealed truth and the will of God in a continuing integrated commitment to learning, spiritual formation, and personal and professional growth
- e. demonstrate the ability to utilize research and theological/missiological reflection in specific contexts
- f. commit to the vocation of theological, missiological and intercultural scholarship in its dimensions of teaching, learning, and research

## OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to enable/ equip the student:

1. To understand the contemporary phenomenon of religious pluralism and the various impulses giving rise to its emergence
2. To introduce and evaluate alternative Christian responses to non-Christian religious tradition and experience
3. To offer an informed biblical and theological response to the ideology of pluralism
4. To identify and critically evaluate crucial issues involved in the Christian encounter with people of other faiths
5. To share Jesus with people of other faiths clearly, boldly and sensitively

## METHODOLOGY

The course will include lectures, class discussions, and written and oral seminar presentations from students followed by student critique. It will also involve library and field research in the preparation of a final assessment document. It will include an exam as a formative assessment.

## CLASS TOPICS

1. Our Changing World & Faiths in Conflict
2. Encountering Religious Pluralism: A Historical Overview
3. Restrictivism and the Liberal Response
4. Pluralism and the Evangelical Response
5. The Bible and Non-Christian Religious Experience
6. Jesus and Non-Christian Religions in Early Church History
7. Jesus and the Non-Christian Religions in the History of Mission
8. Jesus and the Religious Experience of Hindu Converts

9. Where Jesus meets Islam
10. Jesus as Fulfilment: A Theological Assessment
11. The Decisiveness of Christ & the Mission Mandate
12. Sharing Jesus with People of Other Faiths

#### COURSE LITERATURE

*(Books will be available for purchase at the Evangel University bookstore. Be sure to buy and read the textbooks for every class before you come to the modules. It is likely that you will find substantial discounts through Gary Flokstra at [info@4wrd.org](mailto:info@4wrd.org). 4WRD have new and used books for missionaries & mission organizations. This service organization is located in Springfield. You may also purchase the books from Amazon.com.)*

#### Required Textbooks:

1. Harold Netland, *Encountering Religious Pluralism: The Challenge to Christian Faith & Mission*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001. [pp.348]
2. Vinoth Ramachandra, *Faiths in Conflict: Christian Integrity in a Multicultural World*. Leicester: IVP, 1999. [pp.171]
3. Chris Wright, *Thinking Clearly about the Uniqueness of Jesus*. Crowborough: Monarch, 1997. [pp.176]
4. Ajith Fernando, *Sharing the Truth in Love: How to Relate to People of Other Faiths*. Grand Rapids: Discovery House, 2001. [pp.269]
5. Gerald R. McDermott, *God's Rivals: Why has God Allowed Different Religions? Insights from the Bible and the Early Church*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2007. [pp.181]
6. Stackhouse, John G. Jr. [ed.] *No Other Gods before Me?* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. [pp.208]

*Note: If you have read any of the required textbooks, select substitutes from the bibliography.*

[Total = 1350 pages]

#### CALENDAR AND OUTLINE (subject to change)

##### Monday

Time	Topic	Professor	Reading
8:00-10:00 am	1. Our Changing World & Faiths in Conflict		
10:00-10:30 am	Break		
10:30-11:50 am	1. Our Changing World & Faiths in Conflict		
11:50-12:50 pm	LUNCH		
1:00-3:00 pm	2. Encountering Religious Pluralism: A Historical Overview		
3:00-3:30 pm	Break		

*MC 911 (01) Encountering Non-Christian Religions*  
*Ivan Satyavrata, PhD*

3:30-5:00 pm	2. Encountering Religious Pluralism: A Historical Overview		
5:00-6:00 pm	Supper	Unstructured	
6:00-9:00 pm	(Writing, preparation for oral reports, free time)		

Tuesday

Time	Topic	Professor	Reading
8:00-10:00 am	3. Restrictivism and the Liberal Response		
10:00-10:30 am	Break		
10:30-11:50 am	4. Pluralism and the Evangelical Response		
11:50-12:50 pm	LUNCH		
1:00-3:00 pm	4. Pluralism and the Evangelical Response		
3:00-3:30 pm	Break		
3:30-5:00 pm	5. The Bible and Non-Christian Religious Experience		
5:00-6:00 pm	Supper		
6:00-9:00 pm	6. Jesus and Non-Christian Religions in Early Church History		

Wednesday

Time	Topic	Professor	Reading
8:00-10:00 am	7. Jesus and the Non-Christian Religions in the History of Mission		
10:00-10:30 am	Break		
10:30-11:50 am	8. Jesus and the Religious Experience of Hindu Converts		
11:50-12:50 pm	LUNCH		
1:00-3:00 pm	8. Jesus and the Religious Experience of Hindu Converts		
3:00-3:30 pm	Break		
3:30-5:00 pm	9. Jesus, the Fulfilment of Hindu Religious Experience		
5:00-6:00 pm	Supper		
7:00-9:00 pm	(Writing, preparation for oral reports, free time)		

Thursday

Time	Topic	Professor	Reading
8:00-10:00 am	9. Jesus, the Fulfilment of Hindu Religious Experience		

10:00-10:30 am	Break		
10:30-11:50 am	10. Where Jesus meets People of Other Faiths		
11:50-12:50 pm	LUNCH		
1:00-3:00 pm	10. Where Jesus meets People of Other Faiths		
3:00-3:30 pm	Break		
3:30: -5:00pm	WRAP UP		
5:00pm	Class dismissed for the week!		

Friday

Time	Topic	Professor	Reading
8:00-10:00 am			
10:00-10:30 am	Break		
10:30-11:50 am			
11:50-12:50 pm	LUNCH		
1:00-3:00 pm			
3:00-3:30 pm	Break		
3:30: -5:00pm	WRAP UP		
5:00pm			

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

*Pre-Session:*

*Reading* – A minimum of 1750 pages pre-session reading, including 1350 from the prescribed text-books, and an additional 400 pages from the bibliography, or relevant material from the area of the world where the student lives or works. Evidence of reading to be submitted in the form of a one page [200-250 word] reading report for each book.

*Sessions:*

*Class Participation*

An assessment of each student's class involvement based on active participation, discussion and Q&A/ feedback.

*Post-Session:*

*Research Project*

Write a research project (final assessment document) on some aspect of the class material. The paper should be 15 pages [3500-4000 words] in length. The paper is your attempt to write a publishable, scholarly article. For examples, look for models in journals such as *Missiology*, *International Review of Mission*, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, etc.

Alternatively, it might be aimed at a practical journal such as *Evangelical Missionary Quarterly*, though it must be longer and more thoroughly documented than is customary for that journal. It should be richly footnoted, representing thorough dialogue with significant scholarly literature

on the topic. You must do adequate bibliographic research on this paper in order to fulfill the course requirements.

Your paper should seek to add a creative dimension to the question under consideration, offering something new that is not reflected in the current literature. It should be relevant to your missionary work, and it should offer an applied approach to the issue at stake. In other words, do not simply discuss a theoretical issue. Rather, apply it to some concrete missionary situation.

### *Reflection Paper*

The 4-5 page [1000-1250 word] reflection paper is designed to give the student an opportunity to reflect on and evaluate the extent to which he has assimilated the course. The student may select any one of the following two options:

- A] Research and select the written testimony of a convert to Christian faith. Reflect and respond to his / her experience based on what you have learnt through this course. OR
- B] Use the approach recommended in this course in a practical encounter with a person of another faith. Include portions of a verbatim with relevant comment in a brief report of your experience.

### *Take-home Examination*

The final examination will be distributed on the last day of the course, with instructions on how it is to be written. It will evaluate the student's essential grasp of the main themes of class discussion and the student's ability to integrate his/her reading in a creative and reflective response to the proposal outlined in this course. While the student may consult class-notes or bibliographical sources, and is encouraged to discuss the question[s] with fellow students, the final response must be his/her own synthesis.

## GRADING PROCEDURE

1. Reading Report	20%
2. Class Participation	5%
3. Research Project	40%
4. Reflection Paper	15%
5. Take Home Exam	20%

## General Guidelines for Formal Writing Assignments

Each writing assignment should be typed, double-spaced in a 12 point font. It should contain your name and should conform to Turabian, APA, or other another approved formal academic style manual.

## GRADING SCALE

A+ (10)	publishable	A (96)	100-94	A- (93)	93-90
B+ (89)	89-87	B (86)	86-84	B- (83)	83-80
C+ (79)	79-77	C (76)	76-74	C- (73)	73-70

D+ (69)	69-67	D (66)	66-64	D- (63)	63-60
F	59 or below				

**Students with Disabilities:** If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, you must register with the Office of Student Services. Contact Student Services, 1435 N. Glenstone Ave, Springfield, MO, 65802, (417) 286-1081 or email: [studentservices@agts.edu](mailto:studentservices@agts.edu). Students are required to provide documentation of disability to Student Services prior to receiving accommodations.

**Non-Discriminatory Language.** All AGTS students, employees, and faculty members are urged to use non-discriminatory language in both verbal and written communication at the Seminary. While AGTS does not endorse the following websites, they provide more information on non-discriminatory language:

General Principles: [http://www.randomhouse.com/words/language/avoid\\_guide.html](http://www.randomhouse.com/words/language/avoid_guide.html)

Gender: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/apa/gender.html>

Racial and Ethnic Identity: <http://www.apastyle.org/race.html>

Disabilities: <http://www.apastyle.org/disabilities.html>

Age Discrimination: [http://www.randomhouse.com/words/language/avoid\\_guide.html](http://www.randomhouse.com/words/language/avoid_guide.html)

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*MC 911 (01) Encountering Non-Christian Religions*  
Ivan Satyavrata, PhD

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#### SPECIFIC DATA

Prepared by: Dr. Ivan M. Satyavrata

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