

Location / Branch: AGTS Main Campus
Semester / Year: Fall Semester/ 2009
Course Start Date: Friday, September 18, 2009
Course End Date: Saturday, October 31, 2009
Professor Name: Ivan Morris Satyavrata
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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.

Course 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

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]

Course Outline:

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

Methodology:

The course will include lectures and class discussions based on reading and self-study by students. It will also involve preparation of a research paper and critical application and/or field research in a final summary assessment paper.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation:

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

Reading Report:

The student must provide evidence of having completed the assigned reading in a one-page [200-250 words] critical summary & review of each of the textbooks read. Due Date: Oct 29, 2009

Research Project:

Write a research project on a topic of your interest and choice relating to the course material. The paper should be 15-20 pages in length. It should include adequate bibliographic research, be properly footnoted and represent thorough dialogue with significant scholarly literature on the topic. Your paper should seek to add a creative dimension to the question under consideration, offering original insight into the topic under consideration. Suggestions may be discussed with the instructor, but prior approval is advised.

Due Date: Nov 20, 2009

Reflection & Assessment Paper [Take Home Exam]:

The reflection paper is designed to give the student an opportunity to reflect on and evaluate the extent to which he has assimilated the course. 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.

The student may select any one of the following two options:

1. 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
2. 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.

Due Date: Dec 4, 2009

Grading Procedure:

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| 1. Class Attendance & Participation | 10% |
| 2. Reading Report | 25% |
| 3. Research Project | 40% |
| 4. Reflection & Assessment Paper | 25% |

Work submitted past the due date is subject to penalty

Selected Bibliography:

- Adler, M.J. *Truth in Religion: The Plurality of Religions and the Unity of Truth*. New York: Macmillan, 1990.
- Ariarajah, S.W. *Hindus and Christians: A Century of Protestant Ecumenical Thought*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
- Barnes, M. *Christian Identity and Religious Pluralism: Religions in Conversation*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1989.
- Bediako, K. *Theology and Identity: The Impact of Culture upon Christian Thought in the Second Century and in Modern Africa*. Oxford: Regnum Books, 1992.
- Braaten, C.E. *No Other Gospel: Christianity among the World's Religions*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992.
- Clark, A. and B. Winter [eds.] *One God, One Lord: Christianity in a World of Religious Pluralism*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993.
- Copley, A. *Religions in Conflict: Ideology, Cultural Contact and Conversion in Late-Colonial India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Coward, H.G. *Hindu-Christian Dialogue: Perspectives and Encounters*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1993.
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- D' Costa, G. *Theology and Religious Pluralism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986.
- _____ *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*. New York: Orbis Books, 1990.
- _____ *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000.
- _____ 'The Impossibility of a Pluralist View of Religions,' *Religious Studies* 32 (1996) 223-232.
- Dupuis, Jacques. *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*. New York: Orbis, 1997.
- Flanagan, K. 'Theological pluralism: A sociological critique' in I. Hamnett [ed.] *Religious Pluralism and Unbelief: Studies Critical and Comparative*. London: Routledge, 1990.
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- Heim, M. *Salvations: Truth and Difference in Religion*. New York: Orbis, 1997.
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- Hughes, D.A. *Has God Many Names?* Leicester: Apollos, 1996
- Karkkainen, Veli-Matti. *An Introduction to the Theology of Religions: Biblical, Historical & Contemporary Perspectives*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003.
- Knitter, P.F. *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes to World Religions*. New York: Orbis, 1985.
- Kraemer, H. *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*. New York:

- Harper & Brothers, 1938.
- Lewis, Gordon R. and Bruce A. Demarest. *Integrative Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.
- Lightner, R.P. *The God of the Bible and Other Gods*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998.
- Lipner, J. *Hindus: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Mc Dermott, Gerald R. *Can Evangelicals Learn from World Religions? Jesus, Revelation & Religious Traditions*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003.
- Neil, S. *Christian Faith and Other Faiths: The Christian Dialogue with Other Religions*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- _____. *The Supremacy of Jesus*. Illinois: IVP, 1984.
- Netland, H. *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Newbigin, L. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.
- Pinnock, C. *A Wideness in God's Mercy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- Race, A. *Christians and Religious Pluralism*. New York: Orbis, 1982.
- Richard, H.L. 'A Survey of Protestant Evangelistic Efforts among High Caste Hindus in the Twentieth Century', *Missiology: An International Review* 25/4(1997) 419-445
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- Saldanha, C. *Divine Pedagogy: A Patristic View of Non-Christian Religions*. Rome: Las, 1984.
- Sharpe, E.J. *Faith Meets Faith: Some Christian Attitudes to Hinduism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. London: S.C.M. Press Ltd, 1977.
- Sullivan, F.A. *Salvation outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response*. London: Chapman, 1992.
- Tennent, T.C. *Christianity at the Religious Round Table*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.
- Ward, K. *Religion and Revelation: A Theology of Revelation in the World's Religions*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1994.
- Zacharias, Ravi. *Jesus among other Gods*. Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 2000.