

## Christianity and World Religions (RGT3863/6863F) 2013

**Course Description:** In the contemporary world, ecumenism must include dialogue between Christianity and world religions. This course will examine not only Christian attitudes to world religions, but also the attitudes of Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism to other belief systems. Lectures, discussion, paper. AD students enrol in RGT6863H.

### Objectives:

- to help students become literate in the faith of others as a preparation for life in a multifaith society/world
- to help students become aware of the need for multifaith literacy for doing theology
- to promote mutual understanding and collaboration between religions
- to educate students preparing for ministry in multifaith contexts (such as in prisons and hospitals, and in dealing with interfaith marriages, funerals, etc)
- to help students reflect on the issue of religious commitment and human rights in multifaith contexts
- to help students reflect on the close relationship between religion and culture
- to help students become aware of non-theological factors in interreligious dialogue
- to acquaint students with theories of truth and revelation in the encounter of world religions
- to help students think through the meaning of their faith in relation to those who share that faith and those who do not
- to familiarize students with the attitudes of Christians, Catholic and Protestant, to those of other faiths through the centuries
- to acquaint students with models of salvation for dialogue between Christians and adherents of other faiths
- to familiarize students with non-Christian perspectives on Christianity
- to help students acknowledge the demonic elements in their own tradition
- to provide students with fresh insights into the creative possibilities of their own faith in dialogue with others
- to help students become aware of the part that religion plays in international conflicts and how these tensions affect relations among people living in local religiously diverse communities
- to help students become aware of pluralist values in the religious
- to help students talk across the space, geographical and spiritual, that separates members of the religions
- to help students with an opportunity to develop an authentic and mature faith in the challenge of religious pluralism

## Requirements:

- weekly written accounting of reading
- lectures and discussion
- student papers are worth 70% of their grade
- **3000-level students** may do EITHER 2 papers on different topics (each at least 8 pages long, double-spaced, on topics approved by the professor, OR 1 paper, 15 pages long, double-spaced, on a topic approved by the professor. All 3000-level papers are due on December 12
- **6000-level students** must write 1 paper at least 20 pages long, double-spaced, on a topic agreed upon by the professor. The paper is due on December 12
- beginning the week after Reading week (October 21-25), all students should arrange to see me in my office to discuss the readings they did and to get any assistance they may need in the writing of their papers.
- the criteria for rating students for their overall reading during the semester are:
  - o the number of "studies" they read
  - o the rating of each "study" given in the bibliography (**bold**, *italics*, etc)
  - o the total number of pages covered in these "studies"
  - o the reading must include "studies" from all five bibliographies
  - o the reading must include the 2 required books: Knitter, *No Other Name?* or *Introducing Theology of Religions* and Mohammed, *Muslim-Christian Relations*

## Syllabus

### Judaism and Christianity

- The New Testament
  - Anti-Semitism
  - The Pharisees
- The Fathers and the Persecution of the Jews
- Emancipation of the Jews
- Judaism in the Modern Age
- Theological Issues
  - Unity of God
  - Jewish View of Humanity
  - No Original Sin
  - No Incarnation
  - No Need for Atonement

- No Mediator
- Freewill
- Repentance
- Jewish View of Sin
- No Exclusivism
- The Messiah
- The Torah
- Revelation
  
- Contemporary Judaism and Jesus Christ
  
- Jewish Theology of Christianity: Two-Covenant Theory
  
- Christian Theology of Judaism
  
- The Theological Significance of the State of Israel
  
- The Land
  
- Official Position of Catholics Engaged in Jewish-Catholic Dialogue

### Muslim Christian Dialogue

- Islam: An Introduction for Christians
  - Muhammad
  - The Qur'an
  - Islamic Law
  - Sunni's and Shi'ites
  - Sufism
  
- The Historical Background
  - Christianity Before Islam
  - The Birth of Islam
  - The Crusades
  - The Ottoman Empire
  - The Resurgence of Islam
  
- Theological Issues
  - The Negative Image of Islam
  - Irenic Voices
  - The Story of Abraham
  - Rethinking Revelation
  - Vatican II and World Religions
  - A Christian Theology of Islam

- Jesus, Muhammad and the Qur'an
- Facing the Future
  - Muslims
  - Protestants
  - Catholics

### Christianity

- Theories of Truth
- Models of Salvation
- Stages of Faith Development

### Hindu-Christian Dialogue

- What is Hinduism?
- The Practical Unity of Hinduism
- From Moksha to Brahman
  - 4 Vedas
  - 4 Sections
- Christian Mysticism: The Rhineland Mystics
- God as Suprapersonal and Personal
- Eckhart and the Trinity
- Vedanta: Shankara, Ramanuja, Madva
- Vedanta: God as Suprapersonal and Personal
- Brahmabandhav and the Trinity
- 4 Yogas
- The Bhagavad Gita
- Hindu Liberation Theology
- The Trinity and the Three Yogas

### Buddhist-Christian Dialogue

- What is Buddhism?
- The Four Noble Truths
- The Eightfold Path
- Engaged Buddhism
- Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism Compared
- Eastern and Western Methods of Meditation Compared
- Jesus the Bodhisattva

## Possible Essay Topics

(A student may write on any other topic with the approval of the professor)

### *Judaism*

1. Antisemitism in Mt/John/the NT/Christianity
2. Antisemitism in Holy Week
3. The Pharisees Reconsidered
4. Law and Grace in Jewish-Christian Dialogue/Paul
5. Theological Issues in Jewish-Christian Dialogue
6. A Christian Reaction to the Holocaust
7. The Land in Jewish-Christian-Muslim Dialogue
8. Jesus and Israel: One Covenant or Two?
9. Rethinking the Jewish-Christian Relationship
10. The Death of the Messiah

### *Islam*

1. Is Muhammad a Prophet?
2. Is the Qur'an a/the Word of God?
3. The Jewish, Christian, Muslim Jesus in Dialogue
4. The Future of Muslim-Christian Relations
5. The Christian Doctrines of Original Sin and the Atonement in Muslim-Christian Dialogue
6. Abraham: The Forefather in Faith of Jews, Christians, and Muslims

*Hinduism*

1. Is the Bhagavad Gita a/the Word of God?
2. Reincarnation as a Christian Hope
3. Yoga and Christian Prayer
4. Approaches to Hindu-Christian Dialogue: Bede Griffiths and Henri Le Saux ( Swami Abhishiktananda)
5. Gandhi and Hindu Liberation Theology

*Buddhist*

1. Meditation: Christian and Buddhist
2. Can a Christian be a Buddhist too?
3. Thomas Merton and His Encounter with Eastern Religions
4. Christianity Meets Buddhism
5. Engaged Buddhism and Christian Liberation Theology
6. Zen and the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius

*General*

1. The Challenges and Benefits of Interreligious Dialogue
2. Revelation in Non-Christian Scriptures
3. Ministry in a Multifaith Milieu
4. Models of Salvation and their Implications for Interreligious Dialogue
5. Globalization, Multiculturalism and Religion
6. Religious Pluralism and Religious Education
7. Religious Liberty and Human Rights
8. Spirituality in Interfaith Dialogue
9. Worship in Common/Interreligious Prayer

10. Liberation Theology: Christian and Jewish/Muslim/ Hindu/ Buddhist
11. Multifaith Belonging and Christian Identity
12. Non-Theological Factors in Interreligious Dialogue
13. Feminism and Religious Pluralism
14. Religion and Culture
15. Vatican II and World Religions
16. Christocentric and Theocentric Approaches to Interreligious Dialogue:  
in the Thought of Paul F. Knitter/John Hick
17. The Need for Interfaith Literacy in a Pluralist Society
18. To be Religious Today is to be Interreligious
19. Religions Don't Dialogue. People Do
20. The Geography of Salvation
21. Eastern Spirituality in America
22. One or Many Saviour Figures?
23. The Trinity and Interfaith Dialogue
24. Pneumatocentric and Christocentric Approaches to Interfaith  
Dialogue Compared
25. The Holy Spirit and the Salvation of Non-Christians.