



**TH 606: Christianity and World Religions
Spring Semester 2019**

Last revised: 3/2/2019

CLASS DATES AND TIMES

Spring 2019

Tuesdays, 6:30 – 10:00 p.m. on May 14, 21, 28, June 4 and 11

Saturday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. on June 1

PROFESSOR

Name: Professor Rachel Lindemuth

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Office hours: By appointment

MISSIO'S MISSION

Missio Seminary exists to produce missional Christian leaders—men and women who incarnate the story of Jesus with humility and authenticity and who communicate the story with fidelity to Scripture, appreciation of the Christian tradition, and sensitivity to the needs and aspirations of postmodern culture.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Recognizing that the world is now at our doorstep, learn how to communicate with people of other faiths in a responsible and respectful way. Putting aside any fears or biases, uncover what Muslims actually believe and decide for yourself why you think Islam is growing faster than Christianity. With a discerning eye and open mind, separate fact from fiction as we examine world religions from Buddhism to Hinduism and from Daoism to Mormonism. *Three hours.*

PERSONAL NOTE FROM THE PROFESSOR

We are becoming more aware of the interconnectedness of the world. We have a responsibility to respect and thoughtfully work to understand the lived experience and worship of other religions. The central message we have to offer as Christians is that of unfathomable love. If we are to embody this love and be Christ to the world, we must not be afraid to acknowledge and explore the spiritual reality of other belief structures. This exploring can often cause us to wrestle with our own belief structure and experience. This wrestling is something I have found can strengthen our belief in Christ and expand our view of God, while working compassion and love in our hearts for others as we strive to understand their deep-rooted beliefs. I look forward to this journey with each of you!

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the basic tenets of the world's dominant religious systems.
2. Articulate what you believe about Christianity in relation to other religious systems.
3. Evaluate world religions in a charitable yet critical way.

4. Experience a non-Christian religious service as an “insider” rather than as an “outsider.”

PROGRAM GOALS AND COURSE OBJECTIVES

Program Goals	Related Course Objectives
Goal 1: Students will cultivate grace-based missional lives increasingly characterized by the fruit of the Spirit, and love for God and others.	3. Evaluate world religions in a charitable yet critical way.
Goal 2: Students will cultivate wisdom and skill in interpersonal relationships, conflict management, and living in community.	4. Experience a non-Christian religious service as an “insider” rather than as an “outsider.”
Goal 6: Students will critically, constructively, and creatively engage our postmodern culture with the hope of the gospel.	1. Understand the basic tenets of the world’s dominant religious systems. 2. Articulate what you believe about Christianity in relation to these other religious systems.

COURSE ASSESSMENT AND METHOD OF EVALUATION

Assessment	Related Objectives	Percent Of Grade	Estimated Time In Hours
Readings (Cooper, Markham/Lohr, Volf)	1, 2, 3	20%	30
Religious Journal (Markham/Lohr)	2, 3	20%	15
Interfaith Paper	3, 4	20%	15
Review/Response Paper (Volf)	2	20%	15
Final Exam (Cooper, Markham/Lohr, Class Notes)	1	20%	10
TOTAL HOURS OF PREPARATION OUTSIDE OF CLASS			85
Lectures and Notes in E-campus	1, 2	-	2
Discussion Questions in E-campus	1, 2	-	3
TOTAL INSTRUCTION HOURS OUTSIDE OF CLASS			5*
* These required assignments involve instruction comparable to what occurs in the classroom (lectures, presentations, and instructor-led activities such as discussions and collaborative work). They should be completed on the due dates listed in this syllabus and will be available on e-campus.			

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Derek Cooper, *Christianity and World Religions: An Introduction to the World's Major Faiths*. P&R, 2012.
- Ian Markham and Christy Lohr, *A World Religions Reader*. 3rd Edition. Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
- Miroslav Volf. *Flourishing: Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World*. Yale University Press, 2016.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

- Gerald McDermott, *God's Rivals: Why Has God Allowed Different Religions? Insights from the Bible and the Early Church*. IVP, 2007.
- Dalai Lama. *The Dalai Lama: Essential Writings*. Orbis, 2008.
- Vinoth Ramachandra, *Faiths in Conflict?: Christian Integrity in a Multicultural World*. IVP Academic, 2000.
- Andrew Harvey, *The Essential Mystics: The Soul's Journey into Truth*. Castle Books, 1996.

DESCRIPTION OF TEXTS

Book	Focus	Purpose for Class
<i>Christianity and World Religions</i>	Explaining Major World Religions	This book describes six of the major religions of the world and provides Christian responses to them
<i>A World Religions Reader</i>	Providing Primary Sources to Religions	This book provides primary sources to the major world religions
<i>Flourishing</i>	Examining Purpose and Relationship of World Religions in our Globalized World	This book helps us process our responsibility and religious convictions in the globalized world

COURSE PROCEDURES AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Format: All assignments must be submitted using Times New Roman font, size 11 or 12, with standard margins on each side. Abstracts, title pages, and reference pages are not necessary. All assignments are due by midnight of the date given. Assignments and topics are subject to change.

1. **Assigned Readings:** Students should complete each assigned reading. They will then submit in the comments section of e-campus or a Word Document the percentage of each book thoughtfully read. This includes all class readings: Cooper, Markham/Lohr and Volf. **This assignment is due in e-campus by June 13.**
2. **Interfaith Paper:** Students will write a response paper that discusses their presence at a non-Christian worship service. (Note: Students are only allowed to travel together with other students in their visitation of a non-Christian worship service in groups of *no more than two*. In these instances, each student will write their own paper. The preference is you visit on your own.)

The paper should include the following and will be graded accordingly:

- a. Researching, locating, and visiting a non-Christian worship service (of your choosing). The options are as follows when it comes to religious services—no others: Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hare Krishna, or Scientology.

- b. Speaking with a representative of the religion and asking a few questions (of your choosing). You may want to call or send an e-mail beforehand to make sure someone will be expecting you.
- c. Briefly explain the history and heritage of the religion.
- d. Composing a 3-4 page response to the experience – which includes your experience, thoughtful reflections, conversations, and what you have learned.
- e. Note: The paper should not be overly critical of the experience, but rather should be written in a spirit of humility and adventure. The point of this assignment is to learn about how another religious group worships and not to criticize.

This assignment is due in e-campus by June 9.

3. **Review/Response Paper:** Miroslav Volf, *Flourishing*. You should read this book fully, intelligently, and critically. The assignment on this text is a review and response, 4-6 pages in length. The first half should summarize the content of the book, its purpose, major arguments, themes, and general approach. The second half is your response to the book. What did you agree with? What did you disagree with? What challenged you? What inspired you? Do you agree with the conclusions? **This assignment is due in e-campus by June 11.**
4. **Religious Journal:** Students will read portions of *A World Religions Reader*. For each section, students should discuss the impact of what they are learning in relation to their Christian faith. The journal should include the following and will be graded accordingly:
 - a. Demonstrating your engagement with the book by referring to specific passages and themes as necessary.
 - b. Taking a learning posture from these religious readings rather than being overly critical.
 - c. Noting similarities and dissimilarities between these religions and Christianity as necessary.
 - d. Focusing on how these religious readings challenge or inspire your faith in Jesus Christ.
 - e. There are four entries in all. Each journal entry should be 2-3 pages in length. They should be combined and put in one document and submitted in e-campus as one file.

The combined due date in e-campus for this journal is by June 11.

Entry 1 – Hinduism or Jainism

Entry 3 – Judaism or Confucianism & Daoism

Entry 2 – Buddhism or Indigenous Religions

Entry 4 – Islam

5. **Final Exam:** Students will take an objective, multiple-choice test at the completion of the class that evaluates their understanding of the major world religions. Questions will focus on the major tenets of the different world religions studied in this class, which will come from Cooper and Markham/Lohr as well as through class discussions and lectures. No notes, resources, or other aids are allowed to be used before or during the test, and students can only take the test once. The test will be available in e-campus from **June 12 to 15**.

COURSE SCHEDULE WITH TOPIC, ASSIGNMENTS, SUBMISSION METHOD, AND DUE DATE

Session 1 Tuesday, May 14		
Topic and Assignments	Submission Method	Due Date
Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to World Religions; Biblical and Theological Responses 	-	5/14

Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooper, introduction, chs. 6-7 • Markham/Lohr, chs. 1, 12, 13 • Volf, introduction, ch. 1 	-	5/14
Session 2 Tuesday, May 21		
Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hinduism 	-	5/21
Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooper, ch. 1 • Markham/Lohr, chs. 2-4 • Volf, ch. 2 	-	5/21
Assignments Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make Journal Entry #1 (but turn in jointly by June 11) 	-	-
Session 3 Tuesday, May 28		
Topic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buddhism 	-	5/28
Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooper, ch. 2 • Markham/Lohr, ch. 5 • Volf, ch. 3 	-	5/28
Assignments Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make Journal Entry #2 (but turn in jointly by June 11) 	-	-
Session 4 Saturday, June 1		
Topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confucianism and Daoism • We will have a retreat day together. Class will be held at Clare House: 608B Legion Road, Aston, PA 19014. More details will be given in opening class. 	-	6/1
Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooper, ch. 3 • Markham/Lohr, ch. 6 • Volf, ch. 4 	-	6/1

Session 5 Tuesday, June 4		
Topics: • Judaism	-	6/4
Reading: • Cooper, ch. 4 • Markham/Lohr, ch. 9 • Volf, ch. 5, epilogue	-	6/4
Assignments Due: • Make Journal Entry #3 (but turn in jointly by June 11) • Turn in Interfaith Paper	- E-campus	- 6/9
Session 6 Tuesday, June 11		
Topics: • Islam	-	6/11
Reading: • Cooper, ch. 5 • Markham/Lohr, ch. 11	-	6/11
Assignments Due: • Make Journal Entry #4 (turn in with combined journal) • Turn in Combined Journal (Markham/Lohr) • Turn in Review/Response Paper • Turn in Reading Percentage • Turn in Final Exam	E-campus E-campus E-campus E-campus	6/11 6/11 6/13 6/12-15
Final Due Date – June 15, 2019		
<p>Note: All assignments are due by the due dates listed above. Assignments turned in late will receive lower grades by one letter each day late (e.g., B+ becomes B); assignments turned in more than 5 days late will receive no grade. After the final due date, faculty cannot grant students permission to submit late work. Students must seek a course extension before the final due date by submitting a variance request form to the academic office. The form is available from the academic office. See the Academic Catalog for policies on course extensions.</p>		

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY AND ACADEMIC POLICIES

Academic Policies: Students are fully responsible to know and follow all seminary rules, regulations, and deadlines published in Missio Seminary’s Academic Catalog, and all requirements concerning their degree programs. The catalog is found on Missio’s website (www.missio.edu).

Course Syllabus: Students are fully responsible to know and fulfill the requirements stated in the course syllabus. Students should speak with the professor about issues related to course work and deadlines during the course. See “Completion of Course Work” below for policies on course extensions.

E-campus Course Site: Students are fully responsible for course content and materials that are posted on the course site. Students are encouraged to check the course site frequently during the course. Student

usage of the course site is tracked by the software and monitored by the professor of the course. Students who experience difficulty accessing or using the E-campus should email helpdesk@biblical.edu and include their student ID# in their correspondence.

Academic and General Integrity: As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to integrity and Christ-likeness in all areas of life. What this means in the academic realm is that the completion of all assignments and assessments are to reflect your own work. Students found guilty of cheating or plagiarism will receive a grade of zero on the assessment and will follow the process outlined in the Academic Catalog. See Missio's catalog for more information on plagiarism and Missio's policies related to cheating and plagiarism.

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND GRADES

Students are expected to arrive on time and attend all class sessions. Attendance is especially crucial in courses formatted in block scheduling with evening or all day Saturday class sessions. If you know you are going to miss a class or arrive late, contact the course instructor in advance via email. Nevertheless, your grade may be lowered for absences or lateness at the discretion of the instructor.

COMPLETION OF COURSE WORK – VARIANCE FORMS

All course work is to be completed by the last day of classes for the term or by the date posted in the course syllabus. Extensions to this time limit will be made only by the academic affairs committee. The individual faculty member does not have the authority to grant any extensions of time beyond the last class of the term. Requests for extensions must be made in writing to the committee at least one week prior to the last day of classes. Variance forms for this purpose are available in the academic office or on Missio's website. All requests should specify the reasons for the extension and the length of the extension desired. Requests are not automatically granted. www.missio.edu Login using your student ID# and password and go to "Current Students/Forms to Download."

STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS

Student course evaluations are an important part of Missio's commitment to continuous improvement. Students are required to complete the course evaluation within one week of the final due date of the course. See Missio's Student Handbook and program supplement for your program (if applicable) for more information.

STUDENT PC SECURITY STATEMENT

Missio recognizes the need for computer use throughout the entire educational process today. Computers equipped with Internet access and applications that help deliver information and knowledge are vital. Students are encouraged to bring their electronic computing devices to campus to facilitate their course work and supplemental activities. Given the current climate of online dangers such as viruses, malware, phishing scams, and other related risks it is critical to secure all such devices regardless if they're being used on campus or not. Please take the appropriate steps to safeguard the security of your own electronic devices to protect the integrity of the student network on campus and provide a safe computing environment for everyone to use. Contact the Academic Office if you have any questions about this statement.

GRADING SYSTEM

To remain in good academic standing, a student must maintain the grade point average designated for his or her program (see Missio's Student Handbook for details).

MISSIO SEMINARY GRADING SYSTEM			
A	4.00	93.0 – 100	Superior
A-	3.67	90.0 – 92.9	
B+	3.33	87.0 – 89.9	
B	3.00	83.0 – 86.9	Good
B-	2.67	80.0 – 82.9	
C+	2.33	77.0 – 79.9	
C	2.00	73.0 – 76.9	Fair
C-	1.70	70.0 – 72.9	
D+	1.30	67.0 – 69.9	Poor
D	1.00	63.0 – 66.9	
D-	.70	60.0 – 62.9	
F	0.00	0 – 59.9	Failing