



WORLD RELIGIONS
MISS 9406 / THEO9406 / PHIL9406/ APOL9406
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Theological and Historical Studies
Spring 2021

Mike Edens, PhD
Distinguished Professor of Theology and Missions
Office: Dodd 104
Office Phone: X3751
Cell Phone: (504) 975-0402
Email: medens@nobts.edu

Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

Course Description

This study of the world's living religions treats them individually with attention to historical development and doctrinal content. Emphasis is given to the role of cultural influences in the formation of the religion and in the process of sharing the Christian witness with them. Also can be taken as APOL9406, MISS9406, or PHIL9406

Student Learning Outcomes

As part of the larger Seminary purpose of equipping effective leaders of healthy churches in practicing the Great Commission and the Great Commandments, the Seminary core value of Doctrinal Integrity, and the key competencies of Disciple Making and Theological Heritage in the Seminary's curriculum, the objectives of this course are for the successful student:

- to have an increased sensitivity to persons from different faiths and the diversity of their beliefs.
- to achieve a working knowledge of the worldview and major beliefs (theology, revelation, anthropology, soteriology, and eschatology) of each religion studied, and how it compares with the Christian worldview and beliefs.
- to be able to describe the particular approach each world religion takes to resolve the problem of evil.
- to be able to describe different scholarly approaches to the study of world religions.
- to be familiar with the key leaders and movements within each religion studied.
- to be able to defend Christian exclusivism against pluralism, universalism, syncretism, and inclusivism.
- to have increased ability and desire to present a credible Christian witness to adherents of these religions.
- to be able to teach others about the belief systems of other religions.
- to describe missiological approaches that would contextualize Christian witness without doctrinal compromise.

Textbooks

Required Texts

Bowker, John. *Problems of Suffering in the Religions of the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Georges, Jason. *Ministering in Patronage Cultures: Biblical Models and Missional Implications*. Downer Grove: IVP, 2019.

Georges, Jason and Mark D. Baker. *Ministering in Honor-Shame Cultures: Biblical Foundations and Practical Essentials*. Downer Grove: IVP, 2016.

Noss, David S. and Blake R. Granaard. *A History of the World's Religions* (a recent edition current is 14th However, I recommend the 13th as the best buy.). New York: Routledge. [13th]2011.

Recommended Reading

(These books are particularly helpful resources for our work, but are not required. See a fuller bibliography at the end of the syllabus).

- Carmody, Denise L., and John Tully Carmody. *Ways to the Center*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 1989.
- Crockett, William V., and James G. Sigountos, eds. *Through No Fault of Their Own? The Fate of Those Who Have Never Heard*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991.
- Hopfe, Lewis M., and Mark R. Woodard. *Religions of the World*. 7th ed. New York: Macmillan, 1998.
- Lewis, James. F., and William G. Travis. *Religious Traditions of the World*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1999.
- Okholm, Dennis L., and Timothy R. Phillips. *Four Views of Salvation in a Pluralistic World*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

Course Requirements

(1) *Attendance and active participation* is essential.

(2) *All seminar participants will read the required texts*. Some in the seminar will likely be unfamiliar with the terminology utilized in various religious traditions.

(3) *Seminar paper*. Each seminar participant will present a paper to the seminar for discussion. The papers should be approximately 15-20 pages in length written to conform to a proper NOBTS style guide. Copies of Papers are due for distribution to participants at the beginning of the session preceding presentation.

Submission of topics: General guidance for research topics: The seminar examines theological, philosophical, missional and apologetic issues interacting with world religion. An aspect of any of these might be explored in its impact on religion (an individual religious expression, a regional type of religion or an abstract religious expression). As an example, sin, salvation, deity, humanity, creation and time are viewed differently across the spectrum of religion.

The process begins January 2, 2021 begins with each student opening a discussion of her interests with Dr. Edens preferably by phone but possibly in person. After that verbal exchange, the second step is to *send by email a list of first, second, and third choices for a proposed paper topic (first come, first served)*. If you are the first person requesting your first area of interest that will be your assignment. If not we will dialog until a mutual agreement is reached.

(4) *2 Critical Book review*. Each seminar participant will provide two critical analysis of agreed texts. The Noss text is a “double” assignment so students who do that review will only do Noss. The paper should summarize the work in 2-3.5 pages. Analyze the thesis and tools employed in achieving it will comprise the remainder of the 6-9 page critical review. The paper should frankly assess the strengths and weaknesses of the book. The critical book review is due at the beginning of the session in which it will be discussed.

Evaluation of Grade

Participation in initial discussions 15%

Critical book reviews 15%

Presentation of a critical book review 5%

Participation in discussions of the critical reviews of the required texts 15%

Written Research paper 35%

Presentation of research paper 15%

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Course Schedule

Jan 20: Orientation and finalization of paper assignments

Expert overview of one of the following Asian, Middle Eastern, Tribal or European Religions

Feb 3: Expert overview of two of the following Asian, Middle Eastern, Tribal or European Religions

Feb 17: Discussion of Critical Reviews of *Ministering in Patronage Cultures and Problems of Suffering in Religions of the World*

Expert overview of one of the following Asian, Middle Eastern, Tribal or European Religions

Mar 3: Discussion of Critical Reviews of *Ministering in Patronage Cultures and A History of the World's Religions*.

Mar 31: Paper presentation

Apr 14: Paper presentation

May 5: Paper presentation

May 12: Paper presentation

(adjustments to be made as the seminar populates)

Selected Bibliography

- Ahmad-Shah, E. *Buddhism and Christian Faith*. Delhi: Unity Books, 1973.
- Anderson, Norman. *Christianity and World Religions: The Challenge of Pluralism*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1984.
- Bervard, Theos. *Hindu Philosophy*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1947.
- Bowes, Pratima. *The Hindu Religious Tradition: A Philosophical Approach*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976.
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- Brown, Harold O. J. "Will the Lost Suffer Forever?" *Criswell Theological Review* (Spring 1990), 261-278.
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- _____. *Shamans, Prophets, and Sages*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 1974.
- _____, and John Carmody. *Ways to the Center*. Belmont: Wadsworth, 1989.
- Chandler, Russell. *Understanding the New Age*. Dallas: Word, 1988.
- Channakesavan, Sarasvati. *Concepts of Indian Philosophy*. Columbia: South Asia Books, 1976.
- Clark, David, and Norman Geisler. *Apologetics in the New Age*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990.
- Coakley, Sarah, ed. *Religion and the Body*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Corduan, Winfried. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998.
- _____. *A Tapestry of Faith: The Common Threads between Christianity and World Religions*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002.
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- Dyrness, William. *Christian Apologetics in a World Community*. Downer's Grove: InterVarsity, 1983, pp. 94-151.
- Feibleman, James K. *Understanding Oriental Philosophy*. New York: Horizon, 1976.
- Fisher, Mary Pat. *Living Religions*, 4th ed. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1999.
- _____, and Ninian Smart. *Religions of the World: Religion in the 21st Century*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1998.
- Geffre, Claude, and Muriassusai Dhavamony, eds. *Buddhism and Christianity*. New York: Seabury, 1979.
- Geisler, Norman L., and William D. Watkins. *Worlds Apart: A Handbook on World Views*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989.
- Goldsmith, Martin. *Islam and Christian Witness*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1982.
- Hackett, Stuart C. *Oriental Philosophy: A Westerner's Guide to Eastern Thought*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979.

- Hick, John. *Death and Eternal Life*. New York: Harper and Row, 1976.
- _____. *God Has Many Names*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982.
- Hinnels, John, ed. *A New Handbook of Living Religions*. New York: PenguinUSA, 1998.
- Hopfe, Lewis M., and Mark R. Woodard. *Religions of the World*. 7th ed. New York: Macmillan, 1998.
- Hume, Robert E. *The World's Living Religions*. New York: Macmillan, 1978.
- Jurji, Edward J. *The Great Religions of the Modern World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947.
- Knitter, Paul. *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes toward the World Religions*. London: SCM Press, 1985.
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- Netland, Harold A. *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
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