

# Christians and Others / January 2012

January 3-24, 2012

Gardencourt 206

Monday-Friday, 9:00-11:30 a.m

Instructor: Christopher Elwood  
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## Course Description:

This course explores resources within Christian tradition for interpreting and addressing the challenge of religious difference and for living, working, witnessing, and engaging with religious others. Classic and contemporary contributions on the nature and value of religion, the relation between Christian faith and human religiousness, and the place of Christianity among other traditions of faith are among the themes to be examined. Students will also attend to particularly significant moments of religious encounter, exchange, and challenge in the modern period as a means toward evaluating various theological interpretations of religion and articulating their own position.

*Students taking this course should have completed FQI and HCE I.*

## Goals and Objectives:

The goal of the course is to help students develop their capacity for faithful and coherent theological expression in pastoral practice.

Students will

- gain a basic understanding of Christian theologies of religion, both contemporary and historic;
- become familiar with and learn to interpret theologically key historical moments of Christian and non-Christian religious exchange, encounter, and challenge;
- sharpen their skills of theological interpretation through the close reading and discussion of primary sources;
- develop their capacity to make responsible and relevant use of historic theological writing;
- clarify their own theological and ethical positions through the production of a dialogical paper and a constructive statement of their position on the relation of Christian faith to other traditions.

## Required text:

Paul F. Knitter, ed. *Introducing Theologies of Religions*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2002. (Abbreviated "Knitter" in the list of assignments)

## On Library Reserve:

*N.B. All required reading not from the required text for the course should be posted on the CAMS site.*

Ajzenstat, O.E. "Beyond Totality: The Shoah and the Biblical Ethics of Emmanuel Levinas." Tod Linafelt, ed.

*Strange Fire: Reading the Bible after the Holocaust*. New York, New York University Press: 2000, 106-120.

Dawe, Donald G. and John B. Carman, *Christian Faith in a Religiously Plural World*. Maryknoll, N.Y., 1987.

D'Costa, Gavin, ed. *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1990.

Eck, Diana L. *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*. San Francisco: Harper, 2002.

Eck, Diana L. *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras*. Boston, 1993.

Edwards, John. *The Jews in Christian Europe*. London: Routledge, 1988.

Edwards, Jr., Mark U. *Luther's Last Battles*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell, 1983.

Gager, John G. *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity*. New York, 1983.

Ghazi, Abidullah al-Ansari. *Raja Rammohun Roy: An Encounter with Islam and Christianity and the Articulation of Hindu Self-Consciousness*. Xlibris, 2010.

Heber, Reginald. "From Greenland's Icy Mountains." (Word document)

Heim, Mark S. *Salvations: Truth and Difference in Religion*. Maryknoll, N.Y., 1995.

- Hick, John, and Brian Hebblethwaite, ed. *Christianity and Other Religions: Selected Readings*. Philadelphia, 1980.
- Hick, John, and Paul F. Knitter, ed. *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1987.
- Hirota, Dennis. "Images of Reality in the Shin Buddhist Path." Dennis Hirota, ed. *Toward a Contemporary Understanding of Pure Land Buddhism*. SUNY, 2000, 33-72.
- Kaufman, Gordon D. *God—Mystery—Diversity: Christian Theology in a Pluralistic World*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996.
- Keller, Catherine, ed. *Polydoxy: Theology of Multiplicity and Relation*. Routledge, 2011.
- Knitter, Paul. *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions*. Maryknoll, N.Y., 1985.
- Lindbeck, George. *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*. Philadelphia, 1984.
- Lyden, John C. *Film as Religion: Myths, Moral, and Rituals*. New York, NYU Press, 2003.
- Mendes-Flohr, Paul, and Jehuda Reinharz, ed., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*. New York: Oxford, 2010.
- Oberman, Heiko A. *The Roots of Antisemitism*. New York, 1985.
- Ramadan, Tariq. *What I Believe*. New York: Oxford, 2010.
- Roy, Rammohun. *Vindication of the Incarnation of the Deity as the Common Basis of Hinduism and Christianity*. (Word document).
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1979.
- Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. *The Meaning and End of Religion*. New York: Harper, 1978.
- Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. *Towards a World Theology*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981.
- Thatamanil, John. "Comparative Theology after 'Religion.'" Stephen Moore and Mayra Rivera, ed. *Planetary Loves: Spivak, Postcoloniality, and Theology*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2011.
- Thomas, Owen C. *Attitudes Toward Other Religions: Some Christian Interpretations*. New York, 1969.
- Yoder, John Howard. *The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

### Requirements:

1. **Preparation** for class and active, thoughtful participation in discussion (10%);
2. A short (2-3 page) **review** of the film, "Of Gods and Men," focusing on issues related to religious and cultural identity and difference, due **January 5** (5%);
3. **Dialogical paper** (5 pages) on a theologian who articulates a position on religious difference that you do not share, giving a generous and persuasive reading of this position together with an indication of the direction of your critique, due **January 17** (35%);
4. **Position paper** (8 pages) that outlines your present position on the relation of Christian faith to other faiths, utilizing theological sources and figures studied in this course, due **January 23** (50%);
5. **Practices paper**, an optional assignment: write a 5 page report on and analysis of an experience within the last 12 months of an intentional interfaith encounter (e.g., attending a service of worship, engaging in a process of dialogue or interfaith social or community service), due **January 25** (about 15%, with adjustments made to the weighting of other assignments).

*All papers should be typed, double spaced (12-pt. Times New Roman font) and submitted electronically to the instructor's email inbox.* Essays submitted for this course will observe conventions of academic writing. Students needing help with citation, voice, development of argument, or other aspects of writing style, should consult with the Academic Support Center within the first two weeks of the semester.

### Policy on Late Work:

Written assignments submitted late, when no extension has been granted, will be penalized in the grading by one letter grade increment for every day (i.e., a B+ paper becomes a B if one day late, a B- if two days, a C+ if three days, etc.). Assignments submitted more than ten days after the due date will not be accepted.

### **Citation Policy:**

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:

- Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

### **Academic Honesty:**

All work turned in to the instructor is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center and should make use of the available resources at an early date, since violations of seminary policy on academic honesty can lead to a failing grade for the course.

### **Accessibility and Accommodation:**

Students requiring accommodation for a physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (ASC; [kmapes@lpts.edu](mailto:kmapes@lpts.edu)) within the first few days of the course and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

### **Use of Electronic Devices in Class:**

Do not send or read text messages during class. Cell phones should be turned off. In the event that you have a legitimate need to be accessible during class, you may ask the instructor for an exception to this rule. For this class, the use of laptops is strongly discouraged. If you have a special need to use a laptop, please discuss this with the instructor. Students granted permission to use a laptop in class should not access the Internet unless specifically for purposes directly relevant to the course. Any misuse of electronic devices during class time, including checking of email or social networking sites, will be grounds for dismissal from the session and will negatively affect the course grade.

### **Inclusive Language:**

The use of inclusive language in course work is a policy of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, avoid language for people that leaves out part of the population or perpetuates stereotypes. Do not assume masculine gender when the gender of the person is unknown. When referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors. See [http://www.lpts.edu/Academic\\_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp](http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp).

## **Schedule of topics and assignments**

### **January 3**

T

Introductions: contemporary discussions

- Knitter, Introduction

Recommended background:

- John C. Lyden, "The Religion Film Dialogue as Interreligious Dialogue," in *Film as Religion*, 108-126

### **January 4**

W

Film: *Of Gods and Men* (2010; 122 minutes)

- Knitter, ch.1-3

**January 5**  
Th

One way  
**Film review due**

- Knitter, ch. 1-3
- Karl Barth, "The Revelation of God as the Abolition of Religion," [from *Church Dogmatics* 1/2], in Hick and Hebblethwaite, ed., *Christianity and Other Religions*, 32-51

**January 6**  
F

One way that includes many

- Knitter, ch. 4-6
- Karl Rahner, "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions" [from *Theological Investigations* V], in Hick and Hebblethwaite, ed., *Christianity and Other Religions*, 52-86
- *Nostra Aetate (In Our Time)*,  
[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decl\\_19651028\\_nostra-aetate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html)

Recommended background:

- Justin Martyr, "Second Apology,"  
<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/justinmartyr-secondapology.html>, ch. 1, 7-8, 10-13

**January 9**  
M

Many ways to the one end

- Knitter, ch. 7-9
- John Hick, "The Non-Absoluteness of Christianity," in Hick and Knitter, ed., *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, 16-36

**January 10**  
T

Many ways, different ends

- Knitter, ch. 10-12
- John B. Cobb, Jr., "Beyond Pluralism," in D'Costa, ed., *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered*, 81-95
- S. Mark Heim, "A Trinitarian View of Religious Pluralism," <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=2666>

Recommended background:

- S. Mark Heim, *Salvations*, 212-229

**January 11**  
W

Repudiation

- Heiko A. Oberman, *The Roots of Antisemitism*, 101-146

Recommended background:

- John G. Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism*, 247-269
- John Edwards, "Renaissance, Reformation, and the Jews," in *The Jews in Christian Europe*, 41-65
- Mark U. Edwards, Jr., "Apocalyptic Expectations: The Scourge of God" and "Against the Jews," in *Luther's Last Battles*, 97-142

**January 12**  
Th

Religion

- Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, 15-50, 125-129, 203-245, 302-305
- Raimon Panikkar, "Eruption of Truth," <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=2015>

- John Thatamanil, “Comparative Theology after ‘Religion’,” in *Planetary Loves: Spivak, Postcoloniality, and Theology*, 238-257, *plus notes*

**January 13**  
F

**Writing day—no class**

**January 16**  
M

**Martin Luther King Jr. Day—no class**

**January 17**  
T

Otherness

*Dialogical paper due*

- Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 1-4, 31-40, 49-50, 63-68, 73-79, 86-87, 100-110, 353-359
- O.E. Ajzenstat, “Beyond Totality: The Shoah and the Biblical Ethics of Emmanuel Levinas,” in Tod Linafelt, ed., *Strange Fire: Reading the Bible after the Holocaust*, 106-120

**January 18**  
W

Reasoning(s)

- Frank E. Talmadge, “Four Phases of Jewish Reluctance,” in Talmadge, ed., *Disputation and Dialogue*, 259-264
- Moses Mendelssohn, Letter to Johann Caspar Lavater, in Frank E. Talmadge, ed., *Disputation and Dialogue*, 265-272
- Martin Buber, “The Two Foci of the Jewish Soul,” in Frank E. Talmadge, ed., *Disputation and Dialogue*, 273-283
- John Howard Yoder and Peter Ochs, “What Needs to Change in the Jewish Christian Dialogue and Why,” in Yoder, *The Jewish-Christian Schism Revisited*, 30-40

Recommended background:

- Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, ed., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, 47-49, 55-62

**January 19**  
Th

Idolatry

- Wilfred Cantwell Smith, “Idolatry in Comparative Perspective,” in Hick and Knitter, *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, 53-68
- Reginald Heber, “From Greenland’s Icy Mountains”
- Rammohun Roy, *Vindication of the Incarnation of the Deity as the Common Basis of Hinduism and Christianity*
- Abidullah al-Ansari Ghazi, *Raja Rammohun Roy: An Encounter with Islam and Christianity and the Articulation of Hindu Self-Consciousness*, 130-143

Recommended background:

- Abidullah al-Ansari Ghazi, *Raja Rammohun Roy*, 93-129, 218-228, 250-288

**January 20**  
F

Similarities/Differences

- Dennis Hirota, “Images of Reality in the Shin Buddhist Path,” in Hirota, ed., *Toward a Contemporary Understanding of Pure Land Buddhism*, 33-72
- John B. Cobb, Jr., “A Christian Critique of Pure Land Buddhism,” <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1486>
- Gordon D. Kaufman, “God and Emptiness: An Experimental Essay,” in *God—Mystery—Diversity*, 141-150, (151-156), 221-223

**January 23**  
M

Postmodernity and difference

***Position paper due***

- Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections," [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20060912\\_university-regensburg\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_en.html)
- Tariq Ramadan, *What I Believe*, 80-84, 90-95, 112-118, (123-133)
- Tariq Ramadan, "Manifesto for a new 'We'," <http://muslimpresence.com/?p=1113>
- Sharon V. Betcher, "Take my yoga upon you: A spiritual *pli* for the global city," in Catherine Keller, ed., *Polydoxy: Theology of Multiplicity and Relation*, 57-80

**January 24**  
T

Conclusions

- Knitter, Conclusion

**January 25**  
W

No class

***Practices paper due***