

Union Theological Seminary

Dealing with Diversity: Evangelical/Pentecostal and Mainline Perspectives on Religious Pluralism

ST 323 / Fall 2008 / Thursday 4:10-6:00

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GOALS/OBJECTIVES

- This course seeks to promote an *inter-Christian* dialogue about how Christians can engage in *inter-religious* dialogue.
- The focus will be on what so-called Mainline and Evangelical/Pentecostal Christians might learn from each other in their efforts to live faithfully and responsibly in a society of ever greater religious pluralism.
- The course hopes to address a recognized and growing need in all theological education: how to enable students to engage the diversity of religions and of Christianities in a world that calls for respect and cooperation among differing worldviews and theologies.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Edward Rommen and Harold Netland, eds. *Christianity and the Religions: A Biblical Theology of World Religions*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1995.
- Dennis L. Okholm & Timothy R. Phillips, eds. *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.
- Amos Yong. *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003.
- Sung Wook Chung, ed. *Christ the One and Only: A Global Affirmation of the Uniqueness of Jesus Christ*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.
- Paul F. Knitter. *Introducing Theologies of Religions*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002.

PROCEDURES/EXPECTATIONS

1. Participation

- Careful, critical reading of all assigned readings is expected. So is active participation in class discussions. That doesn't mean you have to talk a lot, but we do want to hear your voice at least occasionally.
- Since much of the learning experience in this course will come from engaging each other, attendance is required. Missing more than one class will affect your

final grade. (If you find yourself in extraordinary situations that require you to miss more than one class, let me know beforehand.)

2. Personal Responses

- For each class, you're asked to post on Blackboard a succinct *Response* to the readings. It should consist of two parts:
 - *Summary*: a tight synopsis of the main argument/ideas of the readings. (no more than 150 words)
 - *Issue*: the *one* concern you would like to talk about in class. (no more than 150 words).
 - N.B. If your Response is over 300 words it loses any possibility of meriting an "A."
- To be submitted by 10:00 PM of the day before class. Late submissions can be graded no higher than a B.
- If you miss one Response, and/or are late once, grace will make up for such lack of good works.

3. Point-Counterpoint Papers

- For each class, two to four students will launch our dialogue with "Point/Counterpoint" papers. These papers should offer arguments in support ("Point") or in criticism ("Counterpoint") of the readings.
 - While everyone is encouraged to do the "Supplementary Readings" given for each class, the Point-Counterpoint presenters are *required* to do these readings and incorporate them into their presentations as much as they deem appropriate.
 - Presenters do not have to submit Reflection papers on Blackboard for that day's class.
- This means that even if you are personally in favor of or opposed to the content of the readings, you may be asked to argue the contrary.
- Four to five pages, double-spaced, 12 point, one-inch margins. (N.B. All written work is to follow these formatting requirements.)
- A hard copy of the paper is due at the beginning of the class period.
- By the next day, Friday, 10:00 PM, you are asked to post on Blackboard the original paper presented in class, together with any additional comments you want to make in light of the class discussion.

4. Book Review

- You are asked to do one Book Review. You can select it from the "Title for Book Reviews" for each week of the course. (We will have one reviewer for each book, so I'll do my best to give you your choice.)
- The Review should be posted on Blackboard on the Wednesday before the class for which it is listed (by 6 PM).
 - Book reviewers do not have to post a Reflection paper for that day, but they will be asked to be part of the Fishbowl and comment on their book within the general discussion.

- No more than five pages.
- Reviews should contain two parts: a) a clear summary of the book's contents (about 3 pages), and b) your own evaluation of it (about 2 pages).

5. Fishbowl Discussions

- To cope with the size of our class and to give everyone an opportunity to speak, we will use a Fishbowl for our discussions. The Fishbowl will be in the center of the classroom and will consist of about 12 chairs.
- The Fishbowl will be made up of the Point/Counterpoint presenters, Book reviewers, plus four to six other students, who will be selected randomly each class.
 - There will be two additional "open chairs" for students outside the bowl who want to join the discussion; they can take a seat, have their say, and then vacate the seat.

6. Final Paper: "My Suggestions for a More Fruitful Dialogue between Evangelical/Pentecostal and Mainline Christians"

- You are asked to review the course material, reflect on it, and then formulate your own recommendations as to how Evangelical/Pentecostal and Mainline Christians can better learn from each other and cooperate in trying to work out a more authentic Christian approach to other religions.
- About three pages.
- To be posted on Blackboard by Dec. ____ and presented during the exam period (and Christmas party) on Dec. ____.

GRADING

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|---------------------------|-----|
| - Participation | 10% |
| - Response Papers | 25% |
| - Point/Counterpoint Pprs | 35% |
| - Book Review | 20% |
| - Final Paper | 10% |

OFFICE HOURS

COURSE CONTENT AND READINGS

Sept 4 Introductions

Sept 11 **Mainline Perspectives** (Knitter Part II)

- Required Readings:
 - Knitter, *Introducing*, Part II (63-108)
 - Second Vatican Council's *Nostra Aetate*
 - Cracknell, Kenneth. "Ambivalent Theology and Ambivalent Policy: The World Council of Churches and the Interfaith Dialogue 1938-1999."
- Supplemental Readings:
 - John Pawlikowski, "Vatican II's Theological About-Face on the Jews: Not Yet Fully Recognized." *The Ecumenist*. 37 (2000) 4-6.
 - Dermot Lane, "Vatican II, Christology, and the World Religions," *Louvain Studies* 24 (1999) 147-70.
- Titles for Book Reviews
 - Francis A. Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response*.
 - Dupuis, Jacques. *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*.
 - D'Costa, ed. *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*.

Sept 18 **Progressive Perspectives** (Knitter, Part III)

- Required Readings:
 - Knitter, *Introducing*, Part III (109-172)
 - John Hick et alii, "A Pluralist View" in *Four Views on Salvation*, 29-91.
- Supplemental Readings:
 - Knitter, "My God is Bigger than Your God"
 - Pieris, Aloysius, "Interreligious Dialogue and Theology of Religions."
- Titles for Book Reviews
 - Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *Divinity and Diversity: A Christian Affirmation of Religious Pluralism*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003.

- Jeannine Hill Fletcher. *Monopoly on Salvation? A Feminist Approach to Religious Pluralism*. New York: Continuum, 2005.
- Jonathan Sacks. *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations*. NY: Continuum, 2002.

Sept 25 **Evangelical Perspectives (Knitter, Part I)**

- Required Readings:
 - Knitter, *Introducing*, Part I (19-62)
 - Karl Barth, "The Revelation of God as the Abolition of Religion."
 - Harold Netland, "Toward an Evangelical Theology of Religions," in *Encountering Religious Pluralism*, 308-348.
- Supplemental Readings:
 - Pannenberg, Wolfhart. "The Religions from the Perspective of Christian Theology and the Self-Interpretation of Christianity in Religion to Non-Christian Religions."
 - Miroslav Volf, "A Study in Provisional Certitude."
- Titles for Book Reviews
 - Harold Netland, *Encountering Religious Pluralism*
 - Carl E. Braaten, *No Other Gospel!*
 - McDermott, Gerald R. *Can Evangelicals Learn from World Religions*.

Oct 2 **Biblical Foundations for Evangelical Perspectives**

- Required Readings:
 - Rommen and Netland, eds. *Christianity and the Religions: A Biblical Theology of World Religions*, pp. 9-140.
- Supplemental Readings:
 - McDermott, *God's Rivals: Why Has God Allowed Different Religions?* Pp. 26-83.
- Titles for Book Reviews
 - David W. Baker, ed. *Biblical Faith and Other Religions: An Evangelical Assessment*.
 - Glaser, Ida. *The Bible and Other Faiths: Christian Responsibility in a World of Religions*.
 - Clarke, Andrew D. and Bruce W. Winter, eds. *One God, One Lord: Christianity in a World of Religions*.

Oct 9 **Christological Foundations**

- Required Readings:
 - Sung Wook Chung, ed. *Christ the One and Only*, pp. 1-135.

- Supplemental Readings:
 - Harold Netland, "No Other Name: The Question of Jesus," Chapter 7 in *Dissonant Voices*, pp. 234-277.
- Titles for Book Reviews
 - S.W. Chung, *Christ the One and Only*, pp. 136-240.
 - S. Mark Heim, *Is Christ the Only Way?*
 - George R. Sumner. *The First and the Last: The Claim of Jesus Christ and the Claims of Other Religious Traditions.*

Oct 23 **The Evangelical Debate: Exclusivism vs. Inclusivism** (speaker: Dr. Harlold Netland)

- Required Readings:
 - Okholm & Phillips, *Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralistic World*, pp. 93-270.
- Supplemental Readings:
 - Amos Yong. "Whither Theological Inclusivism? The Development and Critique of an Evangelical Theology of Religions,"
 - Joseph DiNoia. "Christian Universalism: The Nonexclusive Particularity of Salvation in Christ."
- Titles for Book Reviews
 - Morgan, Christopher W. and Robert A. Peterson, eds. *Faith Comes by Hearing: A Response to Inclusivism*
 - Sanders, John, ed. *What about Those Who Have Never Heard? Three Views on the Destiny of the Unevangelized.*
 - Harold. Netland, *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth..*

Oct 30 **Radical Particularism** (Knitter Part IV)

- Required Readings:
 - Knitter, *Introducing*, Part IV (173-237)
 - Heim, S. Mark. "God's Diversity: A Trinitarian View of Religious Pluralism."
 - Heim, S. Mark. "Salvations: A More Pluralistic Hypothesis."
- Supplemental Readings:
 - Stanley Grenz, "The Universality of the 'Jesus-Story' and the 'Incredulity toward Metanarratives.'"
 - Paul Griffiths, "Why We Need Interreligious Polemics."

- Titles for Book Reviews
 - S. Mark. Heim. *Salvations: Truth and Difference in Religion*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995.
 - Paul J. Griffiths, *Problems of Religious Diversity*.
 - Paul J. Griffiths, *An Apology for Apologetics: A Study of the Logic of Interreligious Dialogue*
 - William C. Placher, *Unapologetic Theology: A Christian Voice in a Pluralistic Conversation*.

Nov 6 **African American Evangelical/Pentecostal Perspectives** (Speaker:

- Required Readings:
 - Hayes, Diana. *Will the Circle Be Unbroken? The Need For Interreligious Dialogue in the Black Community*. Continuum. (Forthcoming, hopefully in time for our course.)
 - Hopkins, Dwight. "A Black American Perspective on Interfaith Dialogue"
 - Carruthers, Iva E. "Black Theology and Ecumenism."
 - Taylor, James Lance. "The Black Church: Sacred Cosmos Meets Sacred Ground,"
- Supplemental Readings:
- Titles for Book Reviews

Nov 13 **Pentecostal Perspectives** (Guest: Dr. Geoman George)

- Required Readings:
 - Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, 13-81.
 - Geoman K. George, *Religious Pluralism: Challenges for Pentecostalism in India, 194-235*.
- Supplemental Readings:
 - Solivan, Samuel. "Interreligious Dialogue: An Hispanic American Pentecostal Perspective."
 - Kuttianimattathil, Jose. "The Holy Spirit and World Religions: The Meaning of God's Revelation."
- Titles for Book Reviews
 - Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practice, and the Neighbor*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2008.
 - _____ . *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions*. Chapters 1-7.

Nov 20 **Pentecostal Perspectives** (Speaker: Prof. Amos Yong)

- Required Readings:
 - Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, 83-192.
- Supplemental Readings:
 - Knitter, "A New Pentecost? A Pneumatological Theology of Religions"
 - Richie, Tony. "God's Fairness to People of All Faiths: A Respectful Proposal to Pentecostals for Discussion Regarding World Religions."
- Titles for Book Reviews
 - Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology*.
 - Kim, Kirsteen. *The Holy Spirit in the World: A Global Conversation*

Dec 4 **Socio-Politically Engaged Evangelicals** (Speaker:

- Required Readings:
 - Richard Quebedeaux, "Interreligious Dialogue: Next Step for Conservative Protestant Intellectuals?"
 - Bong-Ho Son and David S. Lim, "The Unique Christ for Peace and Justice," in Bruce J. Nicholls, ed. *The Unique Christ in Our Pluralistic World*, 201-30.
 - Miller, Donald E. and Tetsunao Yamamori. *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*. Chapter 1 & 2.
- Supplemental Readings:
- Titles for Book Reviews
 - Miller, Donald E. and Tetsunao Yamamori. *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement*