

FTH 402/FND 230 Christianity & World Religions

Fall 2019

Course Outline

Class Start Date & End Date

September 9 – December 9, 2019

Class Meeting Time, Location, and Room

Mondays, 6:30-9:15pm, St. Eugene de Mazenod Room

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Course Description

Founders of religions and the meaning of religion. Christianity in relation to other religions. An introduction to Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese Religions, and Amerindian Religions. New religious movements. Interfaith dialogue, especially between Christians and Jews.

Course Objectives

This course will hold together the intimate relationship between spiritual discipline and dogma central to the religious traditions under consideration. Key aspects of Jewish tradition and practice that inform Christianity and Islam will be discussed. We will then focus on the Eastern tradition of Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. As well as introducing each of these traditions we will do a careful reading of a primary text associated with the understanding of the spiritual life in each tradition. We will also study *Nostra Aetate*, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions of the Second Vatican Council promulgated on 28 October 1965 by Pope Paul VI and recent relations and teachings of the Church on Judaism, Eastern Christian Churches, Islam, and Buddhism. Throughout the course fruitful ways of engaging those of other faiths will be discussed.

This course is designed to encourage and develop learning and skill in the following four areas, with varying degrees of focus depending on the program of the student in question:

1. Intellectual Formation
Each religious tradition is an ocean of meaning. Often theological ideas and positions have been highlighted and contrasted. Our approach will provide students with an understanding of how such ideas are rooted in spiritual practice: *lex orandi, lex credendi*. Students will gain

an appreciation and understanding of the way religious ideas and practice inform the faithful's engagement with the great human questions. What is learned about each tradition will provide them with a life-long interest in the faith and understanding of others through deepening their understanding of the Christian (particularly Roman Catholic) evangelical vision.

2. Cultural Context

Canada has become a deeply pluralistic society with various levels of government some of which promulgate a secularist agenda. The various religious communities of Canada have faithful that span a variety of ideological perspectives and diverse theological accents. Each provides a home to intra-religious conversation and, at times, struggle. Some are navigating the public sphere and sorting through how their spiritual disciplines fit into Canada and/or provide Canadian culture with fruitful leaven. Students will have an opportunity to learn and think about the challenges of pluralism and the secular as well as have conversations with women and men who shape their life through the spiritual disciplines of each tradition we are studying.

3. Personal and Spiritual Formation

All study has the capacity to deepen a person's spiritual life and theological understanding. None so much as the study of theology and the spiritual life and bringing the best thinking of the Christian tradition into conversation with other religious traditions. This class will endeavor to meet each student on their current ground and help them mature both in their understanding of the Christian traditions and the religious life of those faithful to the other traditions under consideration. The surest ground for the engagement of the other is the deep soil of the tradition one holds dear.

4. Capacity for Ministerial Leadership

Many theologians and leaders within Christian communities have pointed to the deep pluralism of the modern West including Canada. To engage the life of God's world requires both knowledge and the capacity to be attentive to the various communities of faithfulness who are seeking to navigate and speak to our particular cultural context. To be faithful to the Gospel in this moment in history we are invited to redouble our capacity for the ministry of healing across various ideological and religious boundaries including those within the Christian tradition. Leadership in this context need to learn the art of engaging deep difference with an eye toward healing enmity and turning enmity into empathy, moving away from glib universalisms to a profound regard for what stands behind the gifts of difference and how they illuminated what is life-giving across boundaries without abandoning the centre of the Christian revelation. Interfaith conversation worthy of the name is not margin speaking to margin or focusing on theological abstractions we may share. Rather it is the best of each person's spiritual tradition speaking to the best of the spiritual tradition of others and doing so without fear and with confidence in the Holy Spirit.

Required Reading

Nostra Aetate, the Declaration on the relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions of the Second Vatican Council.

The Catholic Church and the World Religions, Gavin D'Costa (2011) or *The World's Religions*, Huston Smith (1991).

Christian Responsibilities to Muslims, David J. Goa (2015).

The following primary source texts:

Healing of Soul, Healing of Body, edited by Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub (1994); *The Book of Psalms*, Robert Alter (2007).

Maximus Confessor, Selected Writings, translation and notes by George C. Berthold (1985).

The Study Quran, A New Translation and Commentary, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, editor-in-chief (2015). Students are welcome to use editions of the Quran available on-line and consult the above edition for clarification of details they wish to understand.

Dhammapada, Thich Nhat Hanh and Ananda Maitreya (2001).

Course Assignments and Evaluation

- Class preparation: thoughtful and careful preparation for each class enhances our learning and ability to engage and think together. Ideally each student should devote an average of six (6) hours of preparation for each class. This includes assigned reading and additional reading to enlarge one's knowledge and understanding of each tradition we are studying.
- Class participation: students are expected to participate fully in all sessions. Our thinking together is central to learning and to the learning of each of our fellow students. Your thoughts, questions and queries are all invaluable. College policy as expounded in the *Student Handbook* will be implemented.

The following assignments are required:

Student presentation and report on Roman Catholic engagement with other faiths.

Each student will discuss *Nostra Aetate* reflecting on its call for engagement with the faith of others. Each student will research some aspect of Roman Catholic engagement and/or dialogue since Vatican II with one of the traditions we are studying (Jewish, Eastern Orthodox, Islamic or Buddhist). This may include the work of the Secretariat for Non-Christians and of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue as well as other initiatives. Along with your oral presentation in class you will submit a written report of 4-5 pages (1000 - 1250 words).

Due 16 September (15%)

An autobiographical essay: "the gifts of my faith and engaging the faith of others".

This paper will be 4-5 pages (1000 - 1250 words) and reflect on how your faith positions the faith of others and on your experience or lack thereof with those of other faith traditions.

Due 30 September (15%)

Primary text discussion. Considerable class time will be devoted to a discussion on a primary text from each of the traditions we are learning about. In preparation for each of these classes write a paragraph commenting on a central idea in the text that engages you as well as a paragraph that focuses an issue or theme you wish to discuss and prepare for our conversations during the weekly classes noted associated with the primary text readings.

Due as noted in the class schedule (40%)

Final Paper.

The final paper is an opportunity for you to integrate the work we have done together including your reading, lectures, and engagements with those of other faiths and the research pathways you have followed. You are to select at least one book from the “**Recommended Reading**” list as a “dialogue partner” for your paper. It is also expected that you will engage the primary source text we are reading and discussing for each tradition. Each student will work out the theme and approach for their final paper in discussion with the professor; shape a thesis statement and include key bibliographic references and submit this for approval prior to writing the paper.

The final paper requirements are designed differently depending on the undergraduate and graduate requirements and individual program goals.

a) Undergraduate students will complete a 5-7-page paper (1250-1750 word) focusing on an aspect of a religious tradition or spiritual discipline they wish to understand more deeply. The paper should also engage Roman Catholic teaching on the relationship of the church and Christian to those of other faiths.

b) Graduate students in the MDiv or MRE programs will complete a 10-page (2500 word) research paper focusing on an aspect of a religious tradition or spiritual discipline they wish to understand more deeply. The paper should also engage Roman Catholic teaching on the relationship of the church and Christian to those of other faiths and explore the gifts and challenges of interreligious engagement.

c) Graduate students in the MTS or MTh programs will complete a 10-page (2500 word) research paper focusing on an aspect of a religious tradition or spiritual discipline they wish to understand more deeply. The paper should also engage Roman Catholic teaching on the relationship of the church and Christian to those of other faiths and explore the gifts and challenges of interreligious engagement.

Due 16 December

(30%)

Recommended Reading

Interreligious Engagement

The Third Desert, the Story of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue, Fabrice Blee (2011)

Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue, Jacques Dupuis, SJ (2002)

The End of Religion, Dom Aelred Craham (1971)

The Monks of Tibhirine, John W. Kiser (2002)

A New Charter for Monasticism, John Moffitt, editor (1970)

The Intra-Religious Dialogue, Raimon Panikkar (1999)

Christian de Charge: A Theology of Hope, Christian Salenson (2012)

Judaism

Between Man and Man, Martin Buber (1965)

The Genius of Judaism, Bernard-Henri Levy (2017)

Messengers of God, Biblical Portraits & Legends, Elie Wiesel (1976)

Hillel, If Not Now, When?, Joseph Telushkin (2010)

The Sabbath, Abraham Joshua Heschel (1979)

The Christian East

On Human Being, A Spiritual Anthropology, Olivier Clement (2000)

Standing in God's Holy Fire, The Byzantine Tradition, John Anthony McGuckin (2001)

His Life is Mine, Archimandrite Sophrony (1977)
Beyond the Shattered Image, Insights into an Orthodox Christian Ecological Worldview, John Chryssavgis (2007)

Islam

Muhammad, Prophet of Peace amid the Clash of Empires, Juan Cole (2018)
In the Footsteps of the Prophet, Tariq Ramadan (2007)
Untold, A History of the Wives of Prophet Muhammad, Tamam Kahn (2010)
The Qur'an. A Biography, Bruce Lawrence (2006)
Images of Muhammad, Narratives of the Prophet in Islam Across the Centuries (2009)
Jesus & Muhammad, Parallel Tracks, Parallel Lives, F.E. Peters (2011)
Islam, A Short History, Karen Armstrong (2002)
Hallaj, Mystic and Martyr, Louis Massignon (1994)

Buddhism

The Raft is Not the Shore, Thich Nhat Hanh & Daniel Berrigan (2009)
Conversations: Christian and Buddhist, Dom Aelred Graham (1968)
The Scientific Buddha, His Short and Happy Life, Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (2012)
Unsui: The Diary of Zen Monastic Life, edited by Bardwell L. Smith (1973)
Ashvagoshā, The Awakening of Faith, edited by Alan Hull Walton (1960)

Course Schedule

9 September

- Introduction to the course including course requirements and expectations.
- *Nostra Aetate*, the Declaration on the relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions of the Second Vatican Council.
- Roman Catholic engagement with Judaism, Eastern Orthodox Churches, Islam and Buddhism since the Second Vatican Council.
- Engaging pluralism and the secular.

16 September

- Student presentation and report on Roman Catholic engagement with other faiths.
- The art of engaging difference.

Readings:

Nostra Aetate, the Declaration on the relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions of the Second Vatican Council.

“Catholicism and the World Religions: A Theological and Phenomenological Account”, Gavin D’Costa, *The Catholic Church and the World Religions*, pages 1-33.

Assignment due: Report on Roman Catholic engagement with another faith since the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*.

23 September

- Student presentation and report on Roman Catholic engagement with other faiths.
- The art of engaging difference.
- *Of Gods and Men*, 2010 French film directed by Xavier Beauvois, on the monks of Tibhirine, Algeria.

30 September

- The Way of Torah and Jewish experience.
- The First Testament and how Jews hear the scripture.

Readings:

“Catholicism and Judaism”, Roy H. Schoeman, *The Catholic Church and the World Religions*, pages 36-70.

Healing of Soul, Healing of Body, edited by Rabbi Simkha Y. Weintraub (1994).

Assignment due: An autobiographical essay on “the gifts of my faith and engaging the other”.

7 October

- In conversation with a Rabbi.
- The historical and theological landscape of the Christian East.
- Wisdom from the Desert, the Mountain, the Cosmos: spiritual discipline in the Christian East.
- *The Island [Ostrog]*, 2006 Russian biographical film directed by Pavel Lungin.

Readings:

Oriental Lumen, Apostolic Letter, Supreme Pontiff John Paul II, May 2, 1995.

14 October Thanksgiving Holiday, no class

21 October

- The doctrine of the *Symphonia*, relationship of church to state.
- Relationship between Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Churches
- Canadian context of the Eastern Churches

Readings:

“The Trial of Maximus” and “The Four Hundred Chapters on Love”, *Maximus Confessor, Selected Writings*, translation and notes by George C. Berthold, pages 17-31 and 35-98 respectively.

28 October

- In conversation with faithful in the Eastern Church
- The liturgical mysteries (sacraments) and spiritual disciplines for the life of the world and the experience of the faithful.

Readings:

“The Church’s Mystagogy”, *Maximus Confessor, Selected Writings*, translation and notes by George C. Berthold, pages 183-225.

4 November

- The House of Islam
- The Qur’an, Prophet Muhammad, Sharia
- Spiritual disciplines and the pathways of salvation and Muslim experience.

Readings:

“Catholicism and Islam”, Christian W. Troll, SJ, *The Catholic Church and the World Religions*, pages 71-105.

The Study Quran, A New Translation and Commentary, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, editor-in-chief, Surahs 1-40. Also read the essay in this volume titled, "How to Read the Quran", Ingrid Mattson, pages 1587-1600.

11 November Reading Week (no class)

18 November

- In conversation with faithful in the House of Islam
- The struggle for the soul of Islam

Readings:

The Study Quran, A New Translation and Commentary, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, editor-in-chief. Surahs 41-114.

Christian Responsibilities to Muslims, David J. Goa.

25 November

- The Buddha's Quest.
- Gospel of Buddhism.
- The holy community, vows, compassion and the journey to "no self."

Readings:

"Catholicism and Buddhism", Paul Williams, OP, *The Catholic Church and the World Religions*, pages 141-177.

The Drammapada, Thich Nhat Hanh and Ananda Maitreya, pages 1-35

2 December

- In conversation with a Buddhist disciple.
- Householder Buddhism: the Jodo Shinshu community in Canada.
- Thomas Merton and D.T. Suzuki, in friendship.

Readings:

The Drammapada, Thich Nhat Hanh and Ananda Maitreya, pages 37-110.

9 December Final class

- Pathways to engaging the other.
- The Church in a pluralistic world.
- The common challenges we share with other religions: engaging culture, politics and ideology, and "the other".

16 December

Assignment due: final integrative essay. Kindly submit this paper by email to the instructor. Your paper will be considered submitted when you receive a note confirming it was received in good order.

General Academic Information

Late Submission Policy.

Extensions in case of genuine emergencies require a conversation with the instructor. Late assignments will be accepted with a penalty of one letter grade per day. Assignments more than one week late will not be accepted.

Course Attendance

No credit will be given for a course if the student has been absent, for any reason whatever, from one-third or more of the lectures and/or seminars scheduled for the term. Likewise, no credit will be given if term assignments or other assignments are or remain incomplete.

Leave of Absence and Policy for Incompletes

Extensions to an incomplete grade may be granted in extenuating circumstances, but may not exceed 16 weeks following the end of the course. Students who fail to complete course work by the agreed deadline will have a grade assigned which is based on work completed.

Academic Integrity

Acts of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, etc.) are subject to an appropriate penalty. The grade "F" may be assigned to a student guilty of such acts by the professor of the course in which the infraction occurred. A second offense against academic integrity renders the student liable to automatic dismissal from NTC. Further details are available in the Student Handbook in the Academic Misconduct Policy.

Academic Grievances

Students may appeal grades received; the procedure is outlined in the Student Handbook in the Grade Appeal Policy. For other grievances, students will refer to the Student Grievances Policy also outlined in the Student Handbook.

NOTE: The GPA is computed on the basis of cumulative grade point (letter) values, not percentage values. All courses are included in this calculation except those exceeding degree requirements and/or received as transfer credits from other recognized institutions.

Grading System

Undergraduate Studies C.Th., Dip.Th., B.Th.			Graduate Studies M.T.S., M.Div., M.Th., G.C.C.S.A., M.R.E.		
Grade Meaning	Grade	Grade Point	Grade Meaning	Grade	Grade Point
Excellent	A+	4.0	Excellent	A+	4.0
	A	4.0		A	4.0
	A-	3.7		A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3	Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0		B	3.0
	B-	2.7		B-	2.7
Adequate	C+	2.3	Adequate	C+	2.3
	C	2.0		C	2.0
	C-	1.7		C-	1.7
Marginal	D+	1.3			
	D	1.0			

Fail	F	0.0	Fail	D+	1.3
				D	1.0
				F	0.0

Written Assignments - Style and Format

Newman Theological College requires that all written work be submitted in acceptable academic format and style. Please note the following regulations:

Regulations

Research papers, book reports, article summaries, reflection papers, and essays should be double-spaced, printed on one side only, and submitted on white, 8.5” x 11” paper.

A standard type style, such as Times New Roman, with a 12-point font size, must be used. The instructor will specify the most recent edition of the style manual to be used:

1. Kate Turabian, “A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations” (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).
2. Joseph Gibaldi & William Aichters, eds., “MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers” (New York: Modern Language Association of America).
3. American Psychological Association “Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association” (Washington: APA Publications).

Copies of these standard references may be purchased in the NTC bookstore.

Ignorance of standard form is not considered an acceptable excuse for deviation from required standards of format and style.

Academic Regulations

The following Academic Regulations are located in the Academic Calendar for your reference:

- Changes in Registration: Add/Drop/Withdraw Notice
- Course Work
- Final Examination Schedule
- Incomplete Grade Policy
- Inclusive Language

Related Academic Matters

The following Related Academic Matters are located in the Academic Calendar for your reference:

- Grade Reports & Posting
- Glossary of Academic Terms

Other Related Policies

The following policies are located in the Student Handbook for your reference:

- Academic Misconduct Policy
- Grade Appeal Policy

Recording of Lectures

Audio or video recording of lectures, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior consent of the instructor. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Student Accessibility Services:

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Student Services, contact Doreen Bloos at 780-392-2450 ext. 2212; Email doreen.bloos@newman.edu.