

SMC419H1S/RLG3236: RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND THE CHURCH

SEMINARS: Thursdays, 9 am – 12 noon, Carr Hall 107

Instructor: Reid B. Locklin

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Office Hours: *T 10:10 am – 12 noon* and by chance or appointment

Email Policy: I will attempt to respond to legitimate email enquiries from students within 3-4 days. If you do not receive a reply within this period, please re-submit your question(s) and/or leave a message by telephone. Where a question cannot be easily or briefly answered by email, I will indicate that the student should see me during my posted office hours.

Course Description

This course will examine Christian responses to religious diversity, focusing particularly upon twentieth-century developments in theology of religions and comparative theology. In the first major unit, we will briefly trace the historical background of this contemporary conversation, beginning with Biblical traditions and concluding with the theological paradigms of “exclusivism,” “inclusivism” and “pluralism.” The second major unit takes up several major Christian theological topics and re-examines them in light of dialogue with one or more other religious traditions. Then, in the final unit, we will focus more narrowly upon the challenges of interreligious dialogue and practice in the Catholic encounter with Hinduism.

The format of the course will be seminar discussion. Although most course readings emerge from the context of post-Vatican II Catholicism, students are more than welcome to explore comparable developments outside this tradition in their major papers.

Course Objectives

1. To acquire and demonstrate sympathetic familiarity with diverse Christian theologies of religion and comparative theology;
2. To demonstrate critical understanding of and engagement with the challenges posed to traditional Christian identity in its encounter with other religious traditions;
3. To refine academic skills in reading, research, critical analysis, and clear written expression.

Common Reading

- The following required textbooks are available at **Crux Books** (5 Hoskin Avenue, at Wycliffe College; 416.599.2749)
 - Jacques Dupuis, S.J., *Christianity and the Religions* (Orbis, 2001);
 - *Theological Studies* 64.2 (2003), special issue on “The Catholic Church and Other Living Faiths in Comparative Perspective,” ed. Francis X. Clooney, S.J.
- Students will also need to procure the *SMC419H1S/RLG3236 Course Reader*, available from **Tru-Copy** – 1033 Bay Street, Toronto; 416.928.1146.

Please see the attached course outline for specific assignments and full bibliographic information.

Assignments and Evaluation

10% – *Class Participation*, including attendance and participation in seminar discussions. *Graduate students will also be required to complete some additional readings and to meet as a separate group 3 times during the term.*

5% – *One 20-30 Minute Class Presentation*, in which 1-2 students lead discussion on the readings, drawing on their own critical summaries and additional materials, as needed. Students are required to consult with the instructor prior to their assigned session(s). **NOTE: all presenters will receive the same mark for the group presentation.**

35% – *At least 7 Annotated Bibliographical Citations (ABCs)* of 300-400 word length on assigned focus readings, worth 5% each. The format for these summaries is described in an attached handout. Each student's seven highest scores (out of 11 total) will be used to calculate this portion of the final grade. **ABCs will only be accepted in class on the session for which they are assigned – summaries will not ordinarily be accepted late or outside of class.**

50% – *A Major Research Paper* on a topic related to: Christian (or other) theology of religions, comparative theology and/or some specific question of interreligious dialogue between Christianity and another major religious tradition. This topic should be formulated in consultation with the instructor, and the final paper should be *12-18 pages in length (20-30 pages for graduate students)*. Further notes:

- a. A 1-2 page statement of topic, bibliography and basic outline of this paper is due no later than **1:00 pm Monday, 27 October**, in the strongbox outside Alumni Hall 311. Although this will not receive a separate grade, it is required – students who do not submit it on time will receive a one letter grade penalty on the final paper.
- b. Final papers are due no later than **1:00 pm Monday, 8 December** in the strongbox outside Alumni Hall 311.
- c. No extensions will be granted on these deadlines; however, late papers will be accepted until **1:00 pm Friday, 12 December**, with a penalty of 2% per day of lateness.
- d. Papers by doctoral students must include evidence of at least some research in a language other than English.

Marking protocols will follow the Grading Regulations described in the *University of Toronto Faculty of Arts and Science (St. George Campus) 2008-2009 Calendar* for undergraduate students or in the *University of Toronto School of Graduate Studies 2008-2009 Handbook* for graduate students.

Academic Expectations

Students are expected to attend seminar meetings regularly, to submit assignments on time, and to participate actively in class discussions. It is also expected that reading assignments will be completed prior to the class for which they are assigned. Excessive absences and/or obvious lack of preparation will weigh against the participation portion of the student's final grade. *Please turn off pagers and cell phones during class.*

All students in this class are bound by the Code of Behavior on Academic Matters detailed in the *University of Toronto Faculty of Arts and Science (St. George Campus) 2008-2009 Calendar* and in the *University of Toronto School of Graduate Studies 2008-2009 Handbook*. Each student is responsible for completing her or his own work and for appropriately acknowledging outside sources used in the preparation of papers and other written work.