

## **GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY: IMPLICATIONS OF A CROSS-CULTURAL FAITH**

**McMaster Divinity College**  
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**May 7–11**  
**Mon: 11:30–4:00**  
**Tues–Thur: 9:00–4:00**  
**Fri: 9:00–12:00**

### **Course Description**

This course examines the history of Christianity from a global and cross-cultural perspective and explores the implications for the Western, evangelical Church. In recent years global Christianity has become an area of great interest. This interest is fueled in part by the growing awareness in the West of the remarkable expansion of the faith throughout the rest of the world. Students will engage with the story of the recent growth movements but will also study the cross-cultural elements that have existed in the Church since the first century. The course will examine various regions and periods of history in order to identify both points of unity and distinctiveness. Special attention will also be given to the key turning points that have contributed to periods of Christianity growth and decline around the globe. Critical analysis and self-reflection are key elements to this course.

### **Specializations:**

Christian Thought and History, Pastoral Studies, Christian Worldview, Church and Culture

### **Course Objectives**

#### **Knowing**

- To gain an appreciation for the diverse, international, inter-cultural nature of historic Christianity
- To understand the scope, texture, and identity of global Christianity today as a polycentric, increasingly non-Western movement

#### **Being**

- To develop a theological and spiritual lens for evaluating the contemporary world
- To allow classic Christian writings to shape our own spirituality

#### **Doing**

- To develop skills of critical thinking and analysis of theological texts
- To consider one's own context and allow other traditions to challenge us

### **Required Texts**

Jenkins, Philip. *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. Third ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Kim, Sebastian and Kirsteen Kim, *Christianity as a World Religion*. Continuum, 2008.

Rah, Soong-Chan. *The Next Evangelicalism Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity*. Westmont: IVP, 2009.

## Assignments

**Participation** **10%**

**Book Review Essay** (4-6 pages) **20%**

Students, depending on their program concentration, will write a review essay of one the assigned texts. This essay is not meant to simply report on what the book is about, but also to evaluate whether it achieves what it is trying to do. Therefore, a book review is more than a summary of the content (even though this is an important component), but a critical analysis of the book and your reactions to it.

**Global Faith Reflection Essay** (6-8 pages) **25%**

The aim of this exercise is to help you track and assess your growth in cultivating a global consciousness and imagination as a Christian in light of your experience in the course. Each student will write a brief essay in which you reflect on ways in which your self-understanding as a Christian has been challenged or expanded in light of your study of global Christianity.

**Final Essay** (10-12 pages) **35%**

The intent of this exercise is to offer you an opportunity to practice the skills of constructing a theological argument that creatively interprets the meaning and significance of the central Christian convictions we have studied throughout the semester for a particular life situation today.

## Course Outline

1. Introductions, Historical Overview, The Problem of Western Myopia
  - a. Introduction to a global faith: A demographical overview
  - b. Legends of an ancient, worldwide Faith (apostolic missions)
  - c. Roman empire, Western Catholicism, American Protestantism: A history of myopia and isolation
2. The Spread of the Faith outside the Roman Empire (1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Centuries)
  - a. Syria and Armenia
  - b. Ethiopia
  - c. India
3. Ancient, Cosmopolitan Africa: The Greek, Latin, and Coptic Churches
  - a. Alexandria
  - b. North Africa
  - c. Coptic Egypt
4. On the Fringe of the Empire
  - a. Byzantine Christianity
  - b. Celtic Christianity
  - c. Gaelic, "Barbarian," and Arian western Europe
5. Oriental Christianity: The forgotten force of early Christianity
  - a. Early missions to China
  - b. The Mongol Dynasty
  - c. India and 2000 years of apostolic memory

6. European Exploration and Colonization
  - a. Africa
  - b. South-east Asia
7. The Fight for the Americas
  - a. South American colonization and faith
  - b. North American colonization and faith
8. Encounters with Islam: From the early Middle Ages to the Present
  - a. Early Islam and peace with the early regimes
  - b. Competing empires and the deterioration of relations
  - c. From the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to the present
9. Revolution and Reformation
  - a. The new face of Latin American Christianity
  - b. Indigenous African faith
  - c. The explosive growth of Christianity in China and South Korea
10. Pentecostalism: Global Sensation
  - a. Glamour to Ghetto: Pentecostalism's journey from Los Angeles to the world
  - b. Influence on local cultures
  - c. Influence on the rest of Christianity
11. The future of a Global Faith
  - a. Implications of western Christianity's decline relative to the rest of the world
  - b. Opportunities for greater engagement and reciprocal education

### **Textbook Purchase**

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, Ontario M9W 6H3 : phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

### **Academic Honesty**

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty: <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>.

### **Gender Inclusive Language**

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

## **Style**

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses. Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

Go to: <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf>

## **Disclaimer**

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.

## **Bibliography**

- Anderson, Allan. *To the Ends of the Earth Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Baumer, Christoph. *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2006.
- Bednarowski, Mary Farrell. *Twentieth-Century Global Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008.
- Coakley, John Wayland, and Andrea Sterk. *Readings in World Christian History*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2004.
- Goudzwaard, B, et al. *Hope in Troubled Times: A New Vision for Confronting Global Crises*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.
- Hanciles, Jehu. *Beyond Christendom: Globalization, African Migration, and the Transformation of the West*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008.
- Hylson-Smith, Kenneth. *To the Ends of the Earth: The Globalization of Christianity*. London: Paternoster, 2007.
- Irvin, Dale T., and Scott W. Sunquist. *History of the World Christian Movement: Earliest Christianity to 1453*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001–September.
- Jenkins, Philip. *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia- and How It Died*. New York: HarperOne, 2008.
- Koschorke, Klaus, et al. *A History of Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, 1450-1990: A Documentary Sourcebook*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- Marty, Martin E. *The Christian World: A Global History*. New York: Modern Library, 2007.
- Meinardus, Otto F. A. *Two Thousand Years of Coptic Christianity*. America University in Cairo Press, 2016.
- Moffett, Samuel Hugh. *A History of Christianity in Asia. Beginnings to 1500*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992.
- Noll, Mark A. *The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009.
- Oden, Thomas C. *How Africa Shaped the Christian mind: Rediscovering the African Seedbed of Western Christianity*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2007.
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- Walls, Andrew F. *The Cross-cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002.