Introduction to Hinduism and Buddhism

AP/WM649

Spring 2013 Tuesday: 6:30-9:30 pm

Instructor: Kevin Xiyi Yao

Office Hours: Room GL 114, ?
Friday: 9:00-11:00 AM (Always best to make appointment)

Contact Information: E-mail: xyao@gordonconwell.edu; Tel: 978-646-4286

Byington Scholar: ?

Course Website: Log into sakai.gcts.edu and click on the tab labeled “AP/WM 649 HA-12”.

Course Description and Learning Objectives

With a shared origin, Hinduism and Buddhism are the belief systems of one of the largest segments of the world population, and pose one of the major religious challenges to Christianity in the past and future. This course is an introductory study for students to understand the beliefs, practices and cultural impacts of these two traditions. More specifically this course provides an opportunity for students to be able

First, To understand the beliefs and common practices of Hinduism and Buddhism;

Second, To assess their shaping influences on the worldview and the patterns of culture and life of the peoples in Asia and other parts of the world;

Third, To discover and grasp essential differences between Hinduism/Buddhism and Christian worldviews, and to evaluate the two traditions from the Christian perspectives;

Fourth, To explore the Christian missiological approaches to the traditions and mission strategy relevant in the Hindu and Buddhist contexts. By so doing, students will formulate a Biblical approach to non-Christian religions or theology of religion.
Requirements

A. Two integration journals summarizing lectures, readings, and personal reflections. It should be double-spaced, seven-eight pages for each. The first one is due on ? and the second on ?. (40%)

B. A research project and presentation (40%): each student should choose a subject related to the topics of this course, and do research on it:
1. Each student should choose his or her own topic and methods, and must submit one page project proposal specifying the topic and its significances, goals and methods, and listing the primary sources. Due Date: ? All proposals need to be approved by the professor;
2. The topics could be the introductions and explorations of any aspects of Hinduism and Buddhism, or their interactions with Christianity. The nature of the projects could be introductory, apologetic or evangelistic;
3. In Week 12, 13 and 14 each student is required to present the results of his or her studies to the whole class, and responsible for 25 minutes in one class session, including presentation and Q & A time. Each student can design the format of his or her presentation, and employ any audio-video means or multi-media to articulate their points;
4. Each student should prepare and submit a file containing (1) a three-five pages, double-spaced introduction of the project topic, its significances, and goals of the project; (2) the materials of any kinds, relevant to the topic, and supporting his or her points; (3) a five pages, double-spaced conclusion summarizing the main ideas and points of the project. Due Date: ?

C. A book report on Christianity at the Religious Roundtable by Timothy C. Tennent. All the chapters of the book except Part 3 should be read. The length: 8-10 pp, double-spaced. The contents: summarization of the main points of the book, and students’ comments and reflections. Due Date: ? (20%).

Assignment and Grading Summary

Assignments should be turned in (hard copy) in class on the due date.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Integration Journals</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>March 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; May 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Project and Presentation</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>February 28th, Week 12, 13, 14 May 3rd</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Report</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>April 5th</td>
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**Required Textbooks**


Students are expected to read the required materials before each class session in order to facilitate class discussions.

**Other Texts Included in Readings**


**Topics and Required Readings**

**Week 1,** Course overview: syllabus;
The Biblical view of religions and Christian approaches;
General introduction to Hinduism and Buddhism: Their common historical past and relation; sketches of their historical developments; their current challenges to the Church.

Readings:
Tennent, 9-27
Kraemer, ch. IV

**Week 2,** Hinduism I:
A brief history;
The basis of the Hindu worldview: the wheel of rebirth, Dharma, Karma, Moksha, and Nirvana.

Readings:
Ellinger, ch.2. 6. 9
Jacobs, ch. 1.2
Fowler, ch.1.

**Week 3,** Hinduism II:
The pantheon of the Hindu gods: Brahmann, Vishnu, Shiva;
The Hindu scriptures: Veda; The Hindu rites, festivals and social system (the castes).
Modern development of the Hindu influence in the West;
Christian evaluation, reflections, challenges, and evangelism among the Hindu population.

Readings:
Ellinger, ch. 3, 4, 5
Jacobs, ch. 3, 5, 6
Fowler, ch. 5, 6, 7, 9, 10
Thomas, M.M., 49-62.
Howell, 407-420.

Week 4, Reading Week

Readings:
Tennent, Part 1
Frykenberg, ch. 7

Week 5, Buddhism I:
The Buddha; the Buddhist worldview: the four noble truths I: The human predicament

The project proposal is due

Readings:
Harvey, 3-5, 64-86
Fernando, ch. 1, 3, 4, 6

Week 6 Buddhism II: The solutions
The four noble truths II: Karma, Rebirth, Nirvana

Readings:
Harvey, 86-94
Fernando, ch. 7, 8, 9

The first integration paper is due.

Week 7, Buddhism III:
Morality, wisdom, poverty, and celibacy.

Readings:
Harvey, ch. 6,8
Fernando, ch. 10,11,13, 14

Week 8, Buddhism IV:
Historical developments: Hinayana and Mahayana; Cross-Cultural Spread.
Buddhism as a world religion:
The diversification of the Buddhist tradition in the world today;
Contemporary revivals and reforms.

Readings:
Harvey, 5-28

Week 9, Reading Week

Readings:
Tennent, Part 2

Week 10, Buddhism V:
Popular forms of Buddhism;
The gods; Rites and festivals;

Readings:
Harvey, ch.3,4.5.9

The book report is due.

Week 11, Buddhism VI:
The case of the East Asia;
Christian evaluation, reflections, challenges, and evangelism among the Buddhist population; The religious challenges to Christian evangelism in the 21st century; Reflections on Christian responses.

Readings:
Lim, ch.1,2
Newbigin, 149-159.

Week 12, Presentations
Week 13, Presentations

Week 14, Final Exam Week: Presentations

The second integration paper is due on May 1st.
The project file is due on May 3rd.

All topics and required readings are subject to change without notice.

Selected Bibliography

Studies of Hinduism


Zaehner, R.C., *Hinduism*, Oxford University Press, ?


**Studies of Buddhism**


**Christians and Hindus / Buddhists**


