MNST 5110 Religions and Cultures  
North Park Theological Seminary Spring 2019  
Classroom Course Syllabus

Course Instructor:  
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Course Description:  
This course addresses the learning outcome in all NPTS programs to, “engage diversity and exhibit growth towards intercultural competence for ministry reflective of God’s global redemptive work.” Through the lens of twelve major religions, participants will reflect upon the inter-relationship between religions and cultures in order to understand one’s own position on pluralism. Emphasis is placed upon the practice Christian hospitality in the midst of pluralistic diversity drawing upon social sciences and missiological principles. Participants will personally observe and reflect upon non-Christian worship as part of their learning. 3 seminary credits.

Participant Learning Objectives for Course:  
By the completion of this course, a participant should be able to:

1. Interpret the interrelationship between the religious and cultural context of major world religions, including one’s own.
2. Critique the historic and contemporary understandings of the nature and function of religion from both western and majority world perspectives.
3. Analyze and exegete etic perspectives of worldview values through firsthand observation of non-Christian cultural religious worship experiences.
4. Articulate the nature of religious plurality and theologize about the same in terms of a Christian response to other faith expressions.
5. Engage in practices of hospitality and dialog with adherents of other faiths.
6. Distinguish between the missio Dei and missions, articulate their necessary connections and apply both to a ministry and ecumenical interfaith setting.
7. Identify several countries of the world and their general religious affiliations.

Required Texts: Other required readings posted weekly online in the course shell)  
Note: Purchase a used 2005 version online, not the overpriced 2011 study version!  

Course Teaching and Learning Methods:  
This course emphasizes experiential learning. In conjunction with classroom discussions, reading and writing, participants will be expected to attend at least two of the six pre-arranged non-Christian religious worship events and report on them following the guidelines presented online. Dates of visits are in course schedule. If none of the options fit student’s calendar, see instructor.

Participant Responsibilities:

1. Review course shell. Become familiar with assignments and rubrics for each. Review the
assigned learning materials for each week as listed in the online course shell

2. Attend all class sessions and interact with the assigned weekly learning material and our guest speakers. Our schedule will include guest speakers that will be announced in class. Students are asked to bring questions for the guests and reflections on course learning materials. Attendance and weekly interactions will be graded. 10% of course grade

3. During the semester attend two services of the scheduled non-Christian religious communities new to you. Following the visit, write a 750-word reflection on the experience using the categories of the WATERCRESS guidelines and the rubric provided. These are to be posted in the appropriate online forums within two weeks after the visit or sooner if possible. During this semester six visits will be arranged by the instructor in the Chicagoland area and students may attend two or all if desired. If none of these options fit your schedule, please contact the instructor for other options. Only two visits are required but if participants chose to, they may report on up to four different visits with the two non-required visits taking the place of your two lowest scoring quizzes. Due dates are posted in the course schedule found online. Total 20% of grade

4. Using the rubric provided online, participants will write one reflection paper of 750-1000 words on each of the topics below, posting it online in the appropriate electronic forums by the assigned dates and times found in the course schedule.
   • #1 What does folk religion do for its adherents? What elements of folk religion can you identify in your own life and faith practices? 10% of grade
   • #2 Can Christians and Muslims live together in peace? On what basis? 10% of grade
   • #3 Would you describe yourself as pluralist, exclusivist or inclusivist? (Newbigin, chap.14). How will this affect your ministry? 10% of grade

5. Three quizzes (non-cumulative) on learning materials and geography maps. Dates of quizzes are listed in the online course schedule. 10% each. Total of 30% of grade

6. Personal Interfaith Hospitality Practice. Based on your interaction with the learning materials and events this semester, what steps will you take to practice Christian hospitality to people of other faiths or no faith? Post your writeup in online forum by the deadline given in the course schedule using the rubric online. 10% of grade

Grading:
Weight of assignments will be as follows:
   Class attendance and participation 10% of total grade
   Report on worship visits 20% of total grade
   Reflection papers 30% of total grade
   Quizzes 30% of total grade
   Personal Interfaith Hospitality Practice 10% of total grade

Course grade will be computed according to the grading policy found in the NPTS catalog.

Notes:
1. The instructor reserves the right to modify the course to best accommodate the learning needs of the class.

2. For any questions or concerns about Canvas please open a helpdesk ticket online.
3. Use proper online “netiquette” when posting online. Remember there are people on the other end of your communication. Use your best academic writing skills and avoid sarcasm, emoticons, abbreviations or writing in CAPS. Use inclusive language.

4. NPTS encourages all students to follow the Statement of Inclusive Language from the Board of Publication Policy of the Evangelical Covenant Church which states, “We are committed to being inclusive in language and imagery in an effort to eliminate prejudice, whether gender, racial, ethnic, national, religious, denominational, cultural, or physical. This way of proceeding in no manner seeks to deny personal identity; rather, it guards against any use of word or phrase that tends to exclude people.” Consider how you can best incorporate inclusive language into all of your communication (written and oral) during the course particularly in your references to God and to humanity.

5. In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating will receive a failing grade on the assignment and are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:
1. Plagiarism – the use of another’s work as one’s own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another’s answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one’s answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.
For additional information, see the Seminary Academic Catalog, pp. 25–27.

6. North Park is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this class related to a disability, contact the Center for Student Engagement by email ada@northpark.edu or phone at 773-244-5737 to schedule an appointment with the Learning Specialist. You can also stop by The Center for Student Engagement, located on the first floor of the Johnson Center.

7. Students who believe they have been harassed, discriminated against, or involved in sexual violence should contact the Title IX Coordinator (773-244-6276 or TitleIX@northpark.edu) for information about reporting, campus resources and support services, including confidential counseling services.
   As members of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students, and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty are legally obligated to share information with the University’s Title IX coordinator in certain situations to help ensure that the student’s safety and welfare is being addressed, consistent with the requirements of the law. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of sexual assault, relational/domestic violence, and stalking.
   Please refer to North Park’s Safe Community site for reporting, contact information and further details. http://www.northpark.edu/Campus-Life-and-Services/Safe-Community

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