

THEO 143-01: GLOBAL & CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

Online (Asynchronous), Summer 2023

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1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Where is faith found on the earth? Today, we have faith experiences in religious institutions and in surprising contexts! The more we learn about our own traditions, the more we see how important it is to see the existence and validity of other religious traditions!

Thus, this course is an undergraduate survey of world religions. THEO-143-01 makes undergraduate students conversational about a variety of global religious characteristics. We will use readings, pre-recorded lessons, and films to promote interest and highlight religious themes.

This class teaches valuable habits which help you understand different religious viewpoints and relate to people whose worldviews are radically different from your own. These habits can help to open up new and excellent partnerships which help religious and non-religious people face pressing issues together.

2. COURSE PROCESS

How does my religious/non-religious viewpoint engage with differing viewpoints? This is the question that we will think, read, watch, play, and talk out in this course! Each week offers a three-part interactive class session.

- 1) Watching the recorded presentation of the week's main topic in Canvas.
- 2) Reading the assigned chapters from the course text.
- 3) Completing one "path" that reinforces the content of the recording and the reading.

You will also complete a Midterm and Final to show what you learned in the course.

3. COURSE GOALS

This course will hone your *abilities, skills, knowledge, and attitudes* related to world religions:

Ability: Understand one's own view of God, humanity, and the universe.

Skill: Talk about one's own perspective in a way that is informed by people of other faiths.

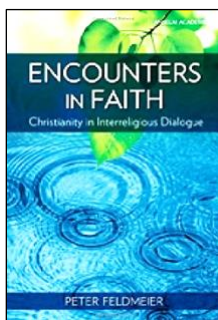
Knowledge: Learn to identify the sacred texts, founders, and prayer practices of major world religions.

Attitude: Develop a friendly appreciation of the commonalities and distinctions of world religions.

4. COURSE TEXTS / MEDIA (these are all found on Canvas, in the "Books" Module)

a) Feldmeier, Peter. *Encounters in Faith: Christianity in Interreligious Dialogue*. Winona: Anselm, 2011.

b) Excerpts from:



- Pauline Hope Cheong, Peter Fischer-Nielsen, Stefan Gelfgren, & Charles Ess (eds). *Digital Religion, Social Media, and Culture: Perspectives, Practices, and Futures*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2012.
- McLaren, Brian D. *The Great Spiritual Migration: How the World's Largest Religion is Seeking a Better Way to be Christian*. New York; Convergent, 2016.
- Prothero, Stephen. *Religion Matters: An Introduction to the World's Religions*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2020.
- Shatzer, Jacob. *Transhumanism and the Image of God: Today's Technology and the Future of Christian Discipleship*. Downers Grove, Illinois : IVP Academic, 2019.

5. COURSE ACTIVITIES / GRADING

Consider this a "Build-Your-Score" Course. All students start at zero and build points toward their grade, rather than start with a perfect score and lose points on course activities. This is an approach that is more about emphasizing the paths to successful learning, and less about emphasizing the mistakes.