



**Hartford International**  
UNIVERSITY FOR RELIGION & PEACE

## HI-532 Contemporary World Christianity

Hartford International University Fall 2023

Course Modality and Meeting: Hybrid Synchronous  
Wednesdays, 7-9:50pm  
Zoom: <https://hartfordinternational.zoom.us/j/93723189689>  
Room 206

Instructor contact information: 80 Sherman Street, second floor  
Office hours: 30 minutes after all class zoom sessions and  
by appointment  
Email: [anorton@hartfordinternational.edu](mailto:anorton@hartfordinternational.edu)

### Course Description

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Over the last century, Christianity has undergone great change. There has been a recognition that the geography of Christianity has shifted. Christian practice plummeted in Europe, but has grown rapidly in Asia, Latin America, Oceania, and sub-Saharan Africa. Christians have emigrated from the Middle East, the ancestral home of the faith, at dramatic rates. Christians are found nearly everywhere on earth, saying their prayers in myriad languages, and practicing their faith in vastly varied cultures. In this course we will encounter Christians in their global diversity, seeing their faces, hearing their voices, and exploring the ways in which they practice their faith. We will gain perspective on the recent history and current state of the exciting field of World Christianity, with a religious studies approach to exploring the relationships of Christians worldwide with interfaith relations, multiple religious belongings, politics and nationalism, race + ethnicity, gender, transnationalism, and justice. This course is suitable as an appropriate starting point for those beginning their study of Christianity, but it also provides students with more background in Christianity a global and transnational perspective on the faith.

### Course Objectives

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Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Describe the changes in how Christianity is understood as a global and transnational religion in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.
- 2) Students will be able to identify the “four traditions” of Christianity currently dominant in the world and briefly describe the defining characteristics of each tradition.
- 3) Cultivate ways of seeing and hearing that recognize the tremendous diversity and complexity of religious views, practices, and experiences in World Christianity using historically and contextually specific examples.

- 4) Synthesize at an advanced level and articulate the story and characteristics of the Christian faith of one particular region and tradition.

## **Program Requirements and Learning Outcomes**

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This course meets the following **Master of Arts in Interreligious Studies: Learning Outcomes**

1. Be introduced to the interdisciplinary study of contemporary religious communities analyzing the impact of local, social and political contexts on beliefs and practices.
2. To demonstrate knowledge of the larger social and cultural dynamics affecting religious life and organizations in the 21st century and their implications of these dynamics for a ministry setting and religious community.

For the **Islamic Studies Specialization**, this course meets the requirements for the *Religious Pluralism* requirement, to explore how Muslims understand themselves in relation with other religious traditions.

For the **Ministerial Studies Specialization**, this course meets the requirements for the *Foundations of the Christian faith* requirement, which provides students the opportunity to examine the foundations and development of Christian faith, its major, doctrines, traditions, the important historical moments of the Christian tradition, and the ability to articulate the differences with other religious traditions

## **Course Reading**

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### **Required Text:**

Kim, S. C. H. and Kim, K. (2016) *Christianity as a world religion : an introduction*. SECOND EDITION. edn. London ; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

### **Required selections from the following:**

Jacobsen, D. G. (2020) *The world's Christians : who they are, where they are, and how they got there* Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell,.

Phan, P. C. and Tan, J. Y. (2016) *World Christianity : perspectives and insights : essays in honor of Peter C. Phan*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Womack, D. F. and Barreto, R. (2023) *Alterity and the evasion of justice : explorations of the "other" in world Christianity*. *World Christianity and public religion* Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Young, R. F. (2022) *World Christianity and interfaith relations*. *World Christianity and public religion series* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Zurlo, G. A. (2023) *Women in world Christianity : building and sustaining a global movement*. Hoboken, NJ, USA: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

All other required reading will be available for download and/or viewing in Canvas.

### **Recommended Texts**

See weekly Canvas module “Explore” sections

### **Course Expectations**

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The basic assumption of this course is that learning results from a continuing process of discourse – we learn from and with each other, journeying through the course. We bring our full selves to the setting. Within the course, there are both opportunities and responsibilities. In this course, you have the opportunity to learn. Your responsibilities are to maximize your learning from the course, to maximize and assist in the learning of your classmates, and to apply what you learn to your context and setting. To take advantage of the opportunity and to meet your responsibilities, you are to:

1. Prepare thoroughly for each week in accordance with the course calendar and instructor’s request—come to live lectures or forum discussions having completed reading and other assignments and ready to learn, asking/answering questions and participating in discussions;
2. Participate fully and constructively in all course activities and discussions as scheduled;
3. Display appropriate courtesy to all involved in the course (courteous behavior specifically entails communicating in a manner that respects, and is sensitive to, the cultural and other individual differences at Hartford International University) including giving each person who is speaking or each forum posting your undivided attention; and
4. Provide constructive feedback to the instructor regarding the course. I want to know how things are going for you in this class. If something is not working, tell me! I value your feedback and want to make this both an enjoyable and challenging learning experience.

The instructor will:

1. Learn alongside you – from you and with you! You matter: your thoughts, experiences, and worldview are valuable to me and to forming a community of learning in this class. I will seek to both learn from you and provide pathways for you to make your assignments and work relevant to your goals and context.
2. Foster an environment where each of us can be who we are and feel free to do so. Classroom interactions and every aspect of the learning process is strengthened by interactions between and among people with different worldviews and perspectives. We grow when we can hear and engage perspectives that are different than our own.
3. Provide course content that is pertinent and based on sound research and varied experience;
4. Provide consultation, advisement, and/or problem-solving time for students;
5. Provide clear instructions regarding assignments and expectations;
6. Honor and respect students;
7. Provide and consider constructive evaluations and feedback; and
8. Return assignments in a timely manner (usually within one week).

### **Course Requirements, Assignments, and Means of Assessment**

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## **Reflective Essays (15%)**

Students will complete three reflective essays: one at the beginning of the course and one at the end of the course. The first will be an autoethnography, as students respond to the following prompts to guide reflection on their “starting points” with regard to concepts in World Christianity:

- What is your understanding and story of Christianity from your own background? Tell a story. What about your parents? Your grandparents?
- What aspects of Christianity have you seen and/or experienced? In what contexts did you gain these insights?
- In what ways has your social location and identity influenced your definition of or understanding of “Christianity?”
- What do you hope to discover and learn in this course?

The second reflective essay will focus on the lived experience of Christian worship or congregational life. Students will attend (virtually or in person) a worship experience or other event in the live of a Christian congregation to encounter Christians from a different cultural, racial, social and/or theological location than their own. Students are encouraged to choose a virtual or in-person ethnographic experience that will help them construct their mid-term essay and final presentation. In other words, select your observation site based on your specific topics and communities of interest, drawing on your emerging questions coming out of course discussion and reading. Students will write a short reflective essay on this experience and discuss it in class.

The final essay will provide an opportunity to reflect and apply course learnings, considering this course alongside experience, other courses, vocation, context, and future next steps.

## **Weekly Discussion Participation (35%)**

Each weekly session will include 35-40 minutes of discussion in structured discussion groups. In the reading groups, students will have a specified role that engages with the required course content for that week (readings, videos, and other media). The structured reading groups are a central component of the course, designed to facilitate and inspire deep learning. Each student will be given a different role in the discussion, which will rotate weekly. This weekly discussion participation grade will be determined based predominately on student self-evaluations; at the end of the course, students will evaluate their own participation.

### **Structured Reading Group Roles:**

#### **Discussion Leader**

- Develop 2-3 questions that highlight the main points of the assigned texts, to help group members understand and think critically about the main points of the text/media.
- Facilitate group discussion: keep the discussion on track and make sure everyone participates.

### **Passage Analyst**

- Choose and summarize several passages or excerpts that you consider particularly insightful, compelling, or challenging. These passages may give key information, back up the information given, or summarize key information. They may also be passages that are controversial, contradictory with other material, or just be something you find interesting.
- Create a plan to discuss and analyze these passages with the group.
- Play a key role in encouraging others to engage the text meaningfully.

### **Concept Mapper**

- Read through the discussion posts and look up any concepts or ideas that group members found unfamiliar and then explain them to the group.

### **Creative Connector**

- Make at least one connection between the reading group material and other social, cultural, political, or economic ideas related to peacebuilding. These outside ideas include, but are not limited to, articles from credible media sources; TV shows; literature; movies; artwork; or a cultural, social, political, or economic idea from another course.

### **Intersectional Activist**

- Think critically about systems of oppression (such as sexism, racism, xenophobia, etc.) and explore the relationships between the week's content and justice, working toward becoming co-creators of a more just and peaceful world.

### **Mid-term Essay (25%)**

Students will write an exploratory, 1000-2,000 word essay identifying a particular issue in World Christianity and providing the background to the development of a larger proposal presented at the end of class. This essay should demonstrate the student's understanding of the historical and social context of the issue at hand, providing a solid foundation for further exploration of a specific topic in World Christianity related to the course topics and learning outcomes. Students will work on these ideas throughout the first half of the course, gaining peer and instructor feedback to refine thinking.

### **Final Presentation and Proposal (25%)**

Building on the mid-term essay, each student will develop a customizable, interactive presentation focusing on a specific issue related to World Christianity in context. Each student will present material on an issue within a **particular Christian community** or tradition. Students should upload their proposal on the topic of their presentation by the 6<sup>th</sup> week of the class (5%). For the presentation, students will be responsible for providing the following: a) an overview of the main area of focus, situated in a particular historical/social reality and context, b) the recent demographic changes to the Christian communities in that context and a timeline of key events, c) using course materials, answering "how have they defined Christianity?" in that setting, and d) at least two guiding questions for class discussion (15%).

## Course Calendar

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### **Week One (Sept. 5-6)**

Topic: Christianity as a Globalized Religion

Reading + Content:

- Kim and Kim: pp. 1-22
- Jacobsen pp. 1-60

Assignments:

- Meet for class Wednesday from 7-9:50pm

### **Week Two (Sept 7-13)**

Topic: Where are the Christians? Regional Similarities + Distinctions, Part 1: Asian, African, and European Christianities

Reading + Content:

- Kim and Kim pp. 23-166

Assignments:

- Meet for class Wednesday from 7-9:50pm
- Submit Reflective Essay #1: Autoethnography Paper (due Sept. 13 11:59pm)

### **Week Three (Sept 14-20)**

Topic: Where are the Christians? Regional Similarities + Distinctions, Part 2: Latin American, Caribbean, North American, and Oceanic Christianities

Reading + Content:

- Kim and Kim pp. 167-268

Assignments:

- Meet for class Wednesday from 7-9:50pm

### **Week Four (Sept 21-27)**

Topic: Christianity as a Transnational Religion

Reading + Content:

- content in canvas module

Assignments:

- Meet for class Wednesday from 7-9:50pm

### **Week Five (Sept 28-Oct 4)**

Topic: Christians: Race, Ethnicity, and Power

Reading + Content:

- content in canvas module

Assignments:

- Meet for class Wednesday from 7-9:50pm
- Submit Reflective Essay #2: Ethnographic Experience Paper (due Sunday, Oct. 1, 11:59pm)

### **Week Six (Oct 5-11)**

Topic: Women in World Christianity (Guest Lecture by Gina Zurlo)

Reading + Content:

- Selections from Zurlo

Assignments:

- Meet for class Wednesday from 7-9:50pm
- Mid-Term Essay Proposal Due (Sunday, Oct. 8, 11:59pm)

### **Week Seven (Oct 12-18)**

Topic: Christianity and Postcoloniality (guest lecture by Htoi San Lu)

Reading + Content:

- TBD content in canvas module

Assignments:

- Meet for class Wednesday from 7-9:50pm

### **Week Eight (Oct 19- 25)**

Topic: Christianity, Politics, and Nationalism: Christianity as minority and majority religion

Reading + Content:

- Selections from Young
- content in canvas module

Assignments:

- Meet for class Wednesday from 7-9:50pm

### **Week Nine (Oct 26 -Nov 1)**

Topic: Christianity and multiple religious belonging (guest lecture by Briana Wong)

Reading + Content:

- Wong, B. (2019) 'Buddhist-Christians in Cambodian America', *Studies in World Christianity*, 25(1), pp. 50-17.
- content in canvas module

Assignments:

- Meet for class Wednesday from 7-9:50pm
- Mid-term Essay Due (Sunday, October 29, 11:59pm)

**Week Ten (Nov 2-8)**

Topic: Interfaith relations in World Christianity

Reading + Content:

- Selections from Young
- Womack, D. F. (2023) 'American Muslims, Arab Christians, and Religio-Racial Misrecognition', in Womack, D.F. and Barreto, R.C. (eds.) *Alterity and the Evasion of Justice*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, pp. 27-48.
- content in canvas module

Assignments:

- Meet for class Wednesday from 7-9:50pm

**Week Eleven (Nov 9-15)**

Topic: Christianity in relation to indigenous religions (guest lecture by Felicity Apaah)

Reading + Content:

- content in canvas module

Assignments:

- Meet for class Wednesday from 7-9:50pm

**Week Twelve (Nov 16-22)**

Topic: Christianity and Justice

Reading + Content:

- Selections from Womack and Barreto
  - Biney, M. O. (2023) 'World Christianity and the Evasion of Social Justice Issues: A Focus on Pentecostalism in West Africa', in Womack, D.F. and Barreto, R.C. (eds.) *Alterity and the Evasion of Justice: Explorations of the "Other" in World Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
  - Padua Freire, A. E. (2023) 'Marginal Desire and Unsubmissive Transit between the Center and the Margin of Christianity: Two Brazilian Cases', in Womack, D.F. and Barreto, R.C. (eds.) *Alterity and the Evasion of Justice: Explorations of the "Other" in World Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
  - Moyo, F. L. (2023) 'Child Marriage, the Untold Story of My Mother, and the Church in Africa; Feminist Ethics of *Ubuntu*', in Womack, D.F. and



Barreto, R.C. (eds.) *Alterity and the Evasion of Justice: Explorations of the "Other" in World Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

- content in canvas module

Assignments:

- Meet for class Wednesday from 7-9:50pm
- Presentation Idea Summary due (discussion in class on Nov. 22)

### **Week Thirteen (Nov 23-29)**

Topic: READING WEEK – NO CLASS

Reading + Content:

- TBD content in canvas module

Assignments:

- Meet for class Wednesday from 7-9:50pm

### **Week Fourteen (Nov 30-Dec 6)**

Topic: Presentations

Reading + Content:

- content in canvas module – view presentation discussion questions

Assignments:

- Meet for class Wednesday from 7-9:50pm

### **Week Fifteen (Dec 7-13)**

Topic: Presentations

Reading + Content:

- content in canvas module – view presentation discussion questions

Assignments:

- Meet for class Wednesday from 7-9:50pm

### **Week Sixteen (Dec 14-20)**

Topic: Course Conclusion + The Future of World Christianity

Reading + Content:

- content in canvas module

Assignments:

- Meet for class Wednesday from 7-9:50pm
- Submit Reflective Essay #3: Final Reflection (due December 17, 11:59pm)
- Participation Self-Assessment Quiz Completed (due December 17, 11:59pm)

## Academic Policies and Grading

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### Accommodations

For students who could benefit from writing assistance, or to request accommodations, please contact Eamon Ormseth, the Student Services Coordinator ([eormseth@hartfordinternational.edu](mailto:eormseth@hartfordinternational.edu)).

### Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism, the failure to give proper credit for the words and ideas of another person, whether published or unpublished, is strictly prohibited. All written material submitted by students must be their own original work; where the words and ideas of others are used they must be acknowledged. Additionally, if students receive editorial help with their writing they should also acknowledge it appropriately.

Credit will not be given for work containing plagiarism, and plagiarism can lead to failure of a course. Faculty will report all instances of plagiarism to the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean will then collect documented details of the case and advance any recommendations for further action to the Academic Policy Committee. Through this process the situation will be reviewed and any additional penalties that may be warranted (up to and including expulsion from the school) will be determined.

For clarity as to what constitutes plagiarism, the following description is provided:

1. Word for word plagiarism:
  - a. the submission of another person's work as one's own;
  - b. the submission of a commercially prepared paper;
  - c. the submission of work from a source which is not acknowledged by a footnote or other specific reference in the paper itself;
  - d. the submission of any part of another person's work without proper use of quotation marks.
2. Plagiarism by paraphrase:
  - a. mere re-arrangement of another person's works and phrases does not make them your own and also constitutes plagiarism;
  - b. paraphrasing another person's words, ideas, and information without acknowledging the original source from which you took them is also plagiarism.
3. See Part II of Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, (7th Edition, University of Chicago Press, 2007) for an explanation of the proper ways to acknowledge the work of others and to avoid plagiarism.
4. Reuse of your own work: Coursework submitted for credit in one course cannot be submitted for credit in another course. While technically not plagiarism, this type of infraction will be treated in the same manner as plagiarism and will be subject to the same penalties. If you are using small amounts of material from a previous submitted work, that work should be referenced appropriately. When a student is writing their final program requirement (paper, project or thesis) it may be appropriate, with their advisor's permission, to include portions of previously submitted materials if properly referenced.

### **Add/Drop Deadline**

Students can drop the course without academic or financial penalty if they drop the course before the drop deadline.

### **General University Policies**

Student Handbook can be found at <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-handbook/>

**Attendance policy** – The following practices are standard:

For **online courses**—3 or more weeks without posts equal 3 class absences without a serious reason are an automatic failure “without explanation or permission.”

### **Inclusive language**

Inclusive language is encouraged when the writing is the student’s own. In general, do not use the terms “man” or “mankind” for human beings; use instead “human beings,” “humans,” “persons,” “people,” “individuals,” “humanity,” “humankind,” “figures,” etc.

– Pronouns: generally, use the non-binary pronouns “they/them/their” when referring to people whose gender/gender preference is unknown or unrelated to the context, or when the preference is expressed as non-binary.

– Avoid using the third person singular masculine or feminine, unless you are certain that the person referred to is male or female or expresses as male or female exclusively. For example, revise a sentence like: “A student must ask questions if he expects to learn” to something like: “Students must ask questions if they expect to learn,” or “A student must ask questions if they expect to learn.”

– When a source you quote uses exclusive language, you may quote it as it appears, or substitute/add bracketed words, e.g., “[humanity]” – unless to do so would, in the judgment of the student, defeat the purpose of the quotation or violate the integrity of the student.

– Students who prefer to use male pronouns for the deity should consult with their professor/advisor on a case-by-case basis.

### **Email Policy**

The instructor will use the official HIU student email address for all course communications. Students should check their hartsem.edu email account regularly.

### **Classroom etiquette**

Student etiquette and interactions are specified by the Student Handbook

<http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/> and <http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-handbook/>

### **MA and PhD University Grading Scale**

A (95-100) Demonstrates excellent mastery of the subject matter, a superior ability to articulate this, and provides helpful connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.

A- (90-94) Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter, ability to articulate this well, and makes connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.

B+(87-89)	Demonstrates a very good understanding of the subject matter, able to articulate lessons learned in the assignment well. Meets expectations of the course.
B (83-86)	Demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter and the ability to articulate lessons learned. Meets expectations of the course.
B-(80-82)	Demonstrates an understanding of the material at hand, has some difficulty articulating this, and basic connection of the material to daily life or contemporary issues/life. Meets basic expectations for the course.
C+(77-79)	Demonstrates a basic comprehension of the subject matter, weak articulation and connections. Does not meet expectations for the course.
C (70-76)	Demonstrates a minimal comprehension of the subject matter and has difficulty making connections. Does not meet expectations of the course.
F (below 70)	Unable to meet the basic requirements of the course.

- Please note: A+'s and C-'s are not part of the grading system.

### **MAP Grading Scale**

High Pass (4.00), Pass (3.00), and Fail (0.00)