

# MULTNOMAH BIBLICAL SEMINARY

Name and Units: Christian Theology & World Religions  
Three Credits

Instructor: Dr. Paul Louis Metzger

Course Description: Catalog course description:  
The course serves as an introduction to and examination of prominent religions of the world and alternative spiritual paths, and how each relate to different topics and contexts within the scientific age. Consideration will also be given to the theme of religious pluralism in our post-Christendom global context. The course reflects upon various worldviews against the backdrop of foundational relational motifs and values, and considers the significance of hospitality and neighborliness for effective ministry in our contemporary society.

Relationship to Curriculum and Prerequisites: M.Div. standard and advanced tracks: required.  
MAPS standard and advanced tracks: required.  
MATS standard and advanced tracks: required.

M.Div. Program Learning Outcomes and Course Learning Outcomes:

| M.Div. Program Learning Outcomes  | Course Learning Outcomes  |
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| 1. Exhibit spiritual growth as wholehearted disciples of Jesus Christ through engaging the recognized practices of Christian formation nourished by the Word of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and be able to guide others in a similar personal relationship with Christ. |   |
| 2. Demonstrate knowledge of the contents of the Bible and competence in biblical interpretation.  |   |
| 3. Reflect theologically on life and ministry from biblical, historical and constructive theological perspectives in ways that are consistent with evangelical orthodoxy.   |   |
| 4. Understand and engage their cultural context.  | 1. The student will demonstrate a charitable approach to engaging diverse faith perspectives and their adherents in oral and written communication.<br><br>2. The student will demonstrate critical awareness of significant connections and distinctions between the Christian faith and other faith traditions in oral and written communication.<br><br>3. The student will demonstrate creative adaptation in communicating Christ truthfully and meaningfully to those of other persuasions in oral and written communication. |
| 5. Model competent and Christ-like ministry leadership in the Church and marketplace.   |   |

MAPS Program Learning Outcomes

| MAPS Program Learning Outcomes | Course Learning Outcomes |
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and Course Learning Outcomes:

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| 1. Minister in a support role based upon an ability to serve with a clear biblical and theological foundation.                          | 1. The student will demonstrate critical awareness of significant connections and distinctions between the Christian faith and other faith traditions in oral and written communication.  |
| 2. Understand the nature of the family and to develop ministry strategies from a biblical perspective in light of contemporary culture. | 1. The student will demonstrate critical awareness of significant connections and distinctions between the Christian faith and other faith traditions in oral and written communication.  |
| 3. Support pastors of local churches in matters of leadership and people management.  |   |
| 4. Utilize a variety of communication skills including expository preaching, small group leadership, and one-on-one dialogue.           | 1. The student will demonstrate a charitable approach to engaging diverse faith perspectives and their adherents in oral and written communication.<br><br>2. The student will demonstrate creative adaptation in communicating Christ truthfully and meaningfully to those of other persuasions in oral and written communication. |
| 5. Assess counseling needs and develop listening, guidance, and relational skills.  |   |

MATS Program Learning Outcomes and Course Learning Outcomes:

| <b>MATS Program Learning Outcomes</b>  | <b>Course Learning Outcomes</b>   |
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| 1. Articulate and defend their ethical and theological system.   | 1. The student will demonstrate a charitable approach to engaging diverse faith perspectives and their adherents in oral and written communication.   |
| 2. Have a basic awareness of the history of Christian theology and spirituality and respectfully engage traditions other than their own. | 1. The student will demonstrate a charitable approach to engaging diverse faith perspectives and their adherents in oral and written communication.<br><br>2. The student will demonstrate critical awareness of significant connections and distinctions between the Christian faith and other faith traditions in oral and written communication.<br><br>3. The student will demonstrate creative adaptation in communicating Christ truthfully and meaningfully to those of other persuasions in oral and written communication. |
| 3. Demonstrate a capacity for constructive theological reflection.   |   |
| 4. Perform scholarly independent study.  |   |
| 5. Produce and defend scholarly research papers and/or a thesis.   |   |

TESOL Program Learning Outcomes

| <b>TESOL Program Learning Outcomes</b> | <b>Course Learning Outcomes</b> |
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and Course Learning Outcomes:

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| 1. Students will understand the universal components of language.   |  |
| 2. Students will gain exposure to current language acquisition theory.  |  |
| 3. Students will understand theoretical foundations and practical approaches for teaching each skill area.  |  |
| 4. Students will skillfully employ a wide variety of teaching techniques.   |  |
| 5. Students will be able to design curriculum for language courses.   |  |
| 6. Students will be able to understand the sociopolitical, economic, cultural and educational contexts in which English is taught around the world. | <p>1. The student will demonstrate a charitable approach to engaging diverse faith perspectives and their adherents in oral and written communication.</p> <p>2. The student will demonstrate critical awareness of significant connections and distinctions between the Christian faith and other faith traditions in oral and written communication.</p> <p>3. The student will demonstrate creative adaptation in communicating Christ truthfully and meaningfully to those of other persuasions in oral and written communication.</p> |

Required Resources:

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| <p>Prices for required resources for this course can be viewed at: <a href="https://www.multnomah.edu/Intranet/">https://www.multnomah.edu/Intranet/</a></p> <p>Eastman, Roger, ed. <i>The Ways of Religion: An Introduction to the Major Traditions</i>. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. ISBN: 9780195118353</p> <p>Metzger, Paul Louis. <i>Connecting Christ: How to Discuss Jesus in a World of Diverse Perspectives</i>. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012. ISBN 0849947243</p> <p>Newbigin, Lesslie. <i>The Gospel in a Pluralist Society</i>. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989. ISBN: 2825409715</p> |
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Recommended Resources:

Prices for recommended resources for this course can be viewed at: <https://www.multnomah.edu/Intranet/>

Barbour, Ian. *When Science Meets Religion: Enemies, Strangers, or Partners?* New York: HarperOne, 2000.

D'Costa, Gavin and Paul F. Knitter. *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*. Faith Meets Faith Series. Orbis Books, 2000.

Hick, John. *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.

Hick, John. *God Has Many Names*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1982.

McLaren, Brian D. *A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey*. A Leadership Network Publication. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

Netland, Harold. *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Encountering Religious Pluralism: the Challenge to Christian Faith and Mission*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001.

Pals, Daniel L. *Seven Theories of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Noss, David S. and John B. Noss, *Man's Religions*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1984.

Sanders, John, ed. *What About Those Who Have Never Heard? The Fate of the Unevangelized*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

Schmidt, Roger, ed. *Patterns of Religion*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1999.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J., ed. *The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age: Theological Essays on Culture and Religion*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997.

Van Woorst, Robert E. *Anthology of Asian Scriptures*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Anthology of World Scriptures*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 2000.

Which **Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)** and **Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)** do the required assignments address?

Assignments:

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| <p>Readings: The student is to read the entirety of <i>The Ways of Religion</i>, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Roger Eastman, editor), the entirety of <i>Gospel in a Pluralist Society</i> (Lesslie Newbigin) and the entirety of <i>Connecting Christ</i> (Paul Louis Metzger) by the final exam. Students will submit a reading report to indicate the amount of reading completed.</p>   | <p>CLO: 4<br/>MDIV PLO: 4<br/>MAPS PLO: 1, 2, 5<br/>MATS PLO: 2</p>       |
| <p>Mid-Term Examination: There will be a midterm exam, which will cover materials presented, discussed, and read up to that point. The exam will occur during class on 10/20.</p>  | <p>CLO: 4<br/>MDIV PLO: 4<br/>MAPS PLO: 1, 2, 5<br/>MATS PLO: 1, 2, 3</p> |
| <p>Project: In groups of 2 – 4, the student is to create a project that builds upon the model offered by the instructor on the first day of class. The project will focus upon developing a holistic missional model of engaging one's increasingly religiously diverse community where one lives and ministers. A presentation of the group's project will be given on the last day of class. A copy of the group's PowerPoint presentation must be submitted on Connect to fulfill the assignment.</p> | <p>CLO: 4<br/>MDIV PLO: 4<br/>MAPS PLO: 1, 2<br/>MATS PLO: 1, 2, 3, 4</p> |

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| <p>Getting Started:<br/>Identify where potential partnerships might exist/what is your criteria for pursuing partnership:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing relationship.</li> <li>Favorable or antagonistic to Christians.</li> <li>Doing similar work in the community/shared values/opportunity to work toward the common good together.</li> </ol> <p>If you do not have a relationship with someone of another religion, think of other ways to partner. Is there an issue you feel passionate about that is not exclusively Christian? Take abortion, for example. You might feel passionate about reducing abortions based on our biblical values. Are there others from diverse religious traditions in your community who also care about that issue, perhaps not from a Christian standpoint, but care about it nonetheless?</p> <p>The Project:<br/>Explain the project: <u>what</u> you are doing, with <u>whom</u>, <u>why</u> (biblical/theological), <u>how</u>. In addition to the biblical and theological rationale, go on to explain the rationale for why you are proceeding in this way.</p> <p>Provide the outcomes and offer measurables for how you would evaluate "success."</p> <p>Perform a SWOT analysis for the project (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats).</p> <p>2,500 – 3,000 words</p> <p>Due 12/8, submit PowerPoint presentation via Connect.</p> |   |
| <p>Final Examination: The final exam will cover the entirety of the course lectures, discussions, and some readings. The exam will take place during class on 12/8.</p>   | <p>CLO: 4<br/>MDIV PLO: 4<br/>MAPS PLO: 1, 2, 5<br/>MATS PLO: 1, 2, 3</p> |

Grading:

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| <p>Reading report: 20 points<br/>Mid-Term Exam: 80 points<br/>Project: 100 points<br/>Final Exam: 100 points<br/><b>Total 300</b></p> | <p>Grading for the Course: A numerical scale will be used to determine letter grades. Grades will be posted on SelfService at the end of the term. Scale: 95-100%=A, 90-94%=A-, 87-89%=B+, 83-86%=B, 80-82%=B-, 77-79%=C+, 73-76%=C, 70-72%=C-, 67-69%=D+, 63-66%=D, 60-62%=D-; below 60%=F.</p> |
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Course Schedule:

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| <p><b>I. Overview and Orientation: A Relational-Incarnational Approach</b></p> <p><b>II. An Engagement of Diverse Traditions</b><br/>*In addition to considering various religions' beliefs, rituals, and practices, consideration will also be given to how these faith traditions and Christianity approach science and appropriate scientific findings in our contemporary world. In particular we will ask our various speakers to reflect upon how their traditions view the relation of body and soul (or if there even are souls, or bodies), and the various rites, rituals, and relational meaning given to end of life care.</p> <p><b>III. An Engagement of Hot Topics</b><br/>In addition to the topic of religious pluralism, we will also be engaging a variety of traditions, including Christian theology, regarding how they interact at a theoretical level with the sciences. One of the hot topic issues is consideration of Stephen Jay Gould's framework of the non-overlapping magisteria (NOMA) and the New Atheists' response, which is discussed at length in <i>Connecting Christ</i> chapter 16.</p> |
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We will also be considering Ian Barbour's very famous suggested typology of different relationships between religion and science (for more on this, see his book *When Science Meets Religion* in the recommended reading section).

Instructor Contact  
Information:

Dr. Paul Louis Metzger