**REL479: Christianity in Asia**

**Professor Christopher A. Daily, Ph.D. Fall 2017**

**Office: ACB 426**

**Office Hours: Tuesday 1-2pm, and by appointment**



Christianity is a global religion, with its shape, composition, and distribution shifting, sometimes dramatically, over time and space. This course introduces some of the religion's diverse manifestations, past and present, in Asia. The course materials will broadly cover Christianity in the Middle East, South, Southeast, and East Asia. We will begin by examining the earliest forms of Christianity that spread to Asia during the first millennium of the Common Era before studying different European and North American Roman Catholic and Protestant missions to the region. The course will also look at the broad process of indigenization in each of the regions in order to observe the ways in which Christianity blended with local cultures and belief systems, such as Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and other indigenous religious systems. We will also study independent indigenous Asian Christian movements, some of which emerged in opposition to western influence and have begun to outgrow their western counterparts in terms of size, today comprising some of the largest Christian movements on the planet. By the end of the course, we will have gained an appreciation for the mosaic that is Asian Christianity, past and present.

**Learning Objectives:**

Through this course, students will:

a. gain an appreciation for the range of diversity of Christian beliefs and practices that currently exist and have previously existed across Asia and, further, throughout the world.

b. have a better understanding of some of the varieties of Christianity that are growing the most rapidly on the planet today, representing, perhaps, the leading Christianities of tomorrow.

c. come to appreciate an increasingly influential strand of the religious arena in modern Asia, as, in some regions (India and China, for example), Christianity is the religion currently growing the fastest.

d. build an awareness of the error committed when one understands Christianity exclusively through one’s own cultural lens.

e. consider whether today there exists across Asia – or indeed elsewhere – such a thing as an essential ‘Christianity’ or, instead, if there are only many ‘Christianities’ that have undergone different processes of enculturation, with little or, perhaps, even no commonality whatsoever between them.

f. develop experience working with a variety of academic methods for the study of global religious and cultural phenomena.

**Assessment:**

**1. 40% Regional Reflection Papers (4 reflection papers worth 10% each, 40% in total)**

At the conclusion of each regional section, you will be provided with a choice of prompts that guide you in making connections and drawing conclusions about Christianity in that particular region. In your reflection paper, you will respond to **one** of the prompts in a 4-5 page reflection, which draws upon and cites evidence from the assigned course readings. No additional outside research is required for these reflection papers, although you may occasionally be given an option (not required) to conduct fieldwork in one of the prompt options. Otherwise, course readings will provide you with sufficient material to respond to the prompt.

**2. 25% Research Paper**

This research project will require substantial outside reading, and should result in an 8-10 page paper. I will guide you in selecting a topic on Christianity in the Asian region (or nation) of your choice, and you will conduct research on this chosen topic. Topics should be finalized by the start of November. The final paper is due by December 1, 11:59pm.

**3. 25% Final Exam (take home exam, essay format, due in designated final exam time slot)**

**4. 10% Class Participation (Regular attendance of class and constructive engagement in class discussions)**

**Required Texts:**

This course will make use of a virtual course pack, which contains various academic publications (journal articles, book chapters, etc.) on the Christianities of Asia. These readings will be posted to Blackboard, although in some weeks I may instead provide hard copies in the preceding class.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**1. Course Introductions (no reading)**

**2. Introducing Asian Christianities: What is the ‘essence’ of a ‘Christianity’?**

Phan, P. ‘Introduction: Asian Christianity/Christianities’ in *Christianities in Asia* (London, Wiley-Blackwell: 2011), ed. P. Phan, Ch 1.

**I. MIDDLE EASTERN CHRISTIANITIES**

**3. Early Middle East Movements and the Assyrian Church of the East**

Loosley, E. ‘Peter, Paul and James of Jerusalem. The doctrinal and political evolution of the Eastern and Oriental Churches in *Eastern Christianity in the modern Middle East* (London, Routledge: 2010), ed. A. O’Mahony, Ch 1.

**4. ‘Arab Christians’ Through the Ages: A Broad History of Christianity in the M.E. Region**

Fargues, P. ‘The Arab Christians of the Middle East: A Demographic Perspective’ in *Christian Communities in the Middle East: the challenge of the future* (Oxford, OUP: 1998) ed. A. Pacini, 48-66.

**5. Christianity in Iraq**

Habbi, Y. ‘Christians in Iraq’ in *Christian Communities in the Middle East: the challenge of the future* (Oxford, OUP: 1998) ed. A. Pacini, 294-304.

**6. Christianity in Jordan, Israel, and Palestine**

Pacini, A. ‘Socio-Political and Community Dynamics of Arab Christians in Jordan, Israel, and the Autonomous Palestinian Territories’ in *Christian Communities in the Middle East: the challenge of the future* (Oxford, OUP: 1998) ed. A. Pacini, 259-85.

**7. Christianity in Syria**

Mousalli, H. ‘The Christians of Syria’ in *Christian Communities in the Middle East: the challenge of the future* (Oxford, OUP: 1998) ed. A. Pacini, 286-93.

**8. The State of Middle Eastern Christianity Today**

Flamini, Roland. ‘FORCED EXODUS: Christians in the Middle East’ in *World Affairs* (NY: Sage Publications, 2013)*,* Vol. 176, No. 4, (November/December 2013), pp. 65-71. \*\**See also various contemporary news stories (BBC, Al-Jazeera, etc.) on Christians in contemporary Middle East.*

**II. CHRISTIANITY IN SOUTH ASIA**

**9. Christianity in India: St Thomas Christians through Protestant Colonialism**

E. Koepping, ‘India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma/Myanmar’ in *Asian Christianities*, pg. 9-23; read also *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., pp. 401-402, 410-412 (‘Indian Rites Controversy’)

**10. Christianity in South Asia from Colonialism Onwards**

E. Koepping, ‘India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma/Myanmar’ in *Asian Christianities*, pg. 24-44

**11. British Colonialism, Protestant Missionaries, and Modern Indian Christianity**

J. Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India*, chpt. 2

V. Devasahayam, “Conflicting roles of the Bible and Culture in shaping Asian theology: a tale of

two Indian theologies” in *Transformations*, New York: Sage Publications,pg. 21-27

**12. Indian Christianity Today: Indian Dalit Theology**

J. Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines*, chpt. 5

Prakash Louis, “Dalit Christians: Betrayed by State and Church” in *Economic & Political Weekly*, 1404-1408

**III. CHRISTIANITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

**13. The Christianities of Indonesia; the Batak Christian Church**

P. Phan, pp. 61-76.

**14. The Philippines: Spain enters The Philippines, Catholicism battles Islam**

P. Phan, chpt. 6

**15. Modern Filipino Theologies: Philippines Independent Catholic Church**

R.C. Ileto, *Popular Movements in the Philippines*, chpt. 3

M. Ramos, ‘Inculturating Theology in the Indigenous Categories: The Quest for Filipino Cultural Identity’ in *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, pp. 695-700

**16. Vietnam and Laos: Early Missions, the Jesuit Alexander de Rhodes, and Christianity in Vietnam and Laos since the War**

P. Phan, chpt. 7

**17. Malaysia and Singapore: Dutch/British Colonialism and the Challenge of Islam**

C. Daily, *Robert Morrison and the Protestant Plan for China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), chpt. 2.

**IV. CHRISTIANITY IN EAST ASIA**

**18. Church of the East in Tang China, Franciscans in Yuan China**

Moffett, pp. 287-323, 399-410

**19. Matteo Ricci and the Jesuits in Ming China**

Moffett, pp. 399-420, 443-469

**20. Robert Morrison and Protestants in late-Qing China**

C. Daily, ‘Introduction’, *Robert Morrison and the Protestant Plan for China*

**21. The Taiping Uprising**

J. Spence, ‘Introduction’*, God’s Chinese Son*

**22. Christianity in China Today**

D. Bays, ‘Chinese Protestant Christianity Today’, *The China Quarterly*, vol 174, 488-504.

P. Phan, ‘A New China’, pp. 149-162

**23. Christianity in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau**

P. Phan, chpt. 9

**24. Christianity throughout Japanese History**

P. Phan, chpt. 10

**25. Indigenous Japanese Christianities**

M. Mullins, ‘Indigenous Christian Movements’, in M. Mullins, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in Japan* (Leiden: Brill), pgs. 143-162; N. Thelle ‘The Christian Encounter with Japanese Buddhism’ in M. Mullins, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in Japan* (Leiden: Brill), pgs. 227-247

**26. Catholic and Protestant Christian Missionaries in Korea: Why did Christianity thrive in Korea?**

Chung, pp. 3-32, 67-80

**27. NO CLASS – AAR Conference**

**28. NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**29. Korean Christianity: Christianity in dialogue with Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and Korean popular religion**

Chung, pp. 107-150

**30. Course Conclusions: Asian Christianities, The Future**