

**HT640: BUILDING BRIDGES: CHRISTIANITY and WORLD RELIGIONS**  
*University of Dubuque Theological Seminary*  
**Fall Semester 2019**

**Professor: Dr. Bonnie Sue Lewis**

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**Course Description**

This seminar will provide an introduction to four of the world's major organized religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam. It will explore their complex relationships with Christianity, cultural and historical developments, religious commitments and practices, and engagement with those of other faiths. The course will also seek to provide not only awareness and understanding of these great world religions, but will challenge us, as Christians, to find ways that we can address the issues that separate us, to seek common ground with the values that we share, and to bear a Christian witness that winsomely engages our neighbors and builds bridges for faith and friendships of peace.

**Course Objectives**

Students who complete this course will be able to:

1. Identify the major elements and historical backgrounds of each religion studied.
2. Evaluate the complex interactions between Christians and those of other faith commitments, with their underlying cultural values and assumptions, and their impact on current relations.
3. Evaluate theologically the role of Christian congregations in relationship to those of other communities and the call to participation in the *missio Dei*.

**M.Div. Curricular Goals**

1. Evangelize the world with faithfulness and contextual sensitivity.
2. Educate and equip individuals and congregations to live and minister joyfully and faithfully as part of their own denomination and the ecumenical church.
3. Engage contemporary theological and ethical issues with insight and humility.

**M.A.M.D. Curricular Goals**

1. Articulate and reflect critically and constructively on the biblical and theological foundations of God's mission in the world.
2. Develop, implement, and assess strategies for missional living in a specific cultural context.
3. Develop skills and capacities for faithful and competent Christian witness.

## **Required Texts**

Larson, Marion and Sara Shady, *From Bubble to Bridge: Educating Christians for a Multifaith World*

Mays, Rebecca Kratz, Ed., *Interfaith Dialogue at the Grass Roots*

McLaren, Brian, *Why did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and Mohammed Cross the Road? Christian Identity in a Multi-Faith World*

Prothero, Stephen, *God is not One: The Eight Rival Religions that Run the World*

Volf, Miroslav, *Allah: A Christian Response*

## **Recommended Texts**

Aslan, Reza, *No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*

de Lange, Nicholas, *Judaism*

Drummond, Richard, *Islam for the Western Mind: Understanding Muhammad and the Koran*

Idliby, Ranya, Suzanne Oliver, and Priscilla Warner, *The Faith Club: A Muslim, A Christian, A Jew – Three Women Search for Understanding*

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, *Islam: Religion, History, and Civilization*

Peace, Jennifer Howe, et. al., *My Neighbor's Faith: Stories of Interreligious Encounter, Growth, and Transformation*

Rahula, Walpola, *What the Buddha Taught*

Swami Achuthananda, *Many Many Many Gods of Hinduism*

Yong, Amos, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbor*

## **Course Requirements**

1. Regular attendance and conscientious class participation, including a weekly 300-400 word, typed response to each week's reading.
2. Two 2000 word position papers.
3. A final paper/project of 3500 words chosen from one of two options.