

THEO 540X GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY IN AN INTERFAITH WORLD

Fall 2025

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course offers an introduction to Christianity as a worldwide movement in the context of a religiously plural world. We study factors that contributed to and sustain Christianity's current shape, reach, and impact and examine key cultural, ethical, and theological challenges facing mission and ministry in a world church. The course fulfills the Basic Graduate Theological Studies requirement for United Methodist ordination.

STRUCTURE OF COURSE

This course is both **asynchronous** and **synchronous** (in-person or online).

During the **asynchronous** portion of the course, you will be assigned to watch 12 video lectures (each approximately one hour long), to read several texts, and to complete written assignments.)

- Instructional work to learn content
 - Video Lectures: 1 hour each (12 hours total)
 - Reading (including textbooks and additional articles): 30 hours total
- Intercultural Faith Experience – during the asynchronous portion of the work, you will be required to visit a congregation from a different ethnic group than your own (see details under “assignments” below): 5 hours including preparation, visit, and follow up conversation with congregation

During the **synchronous** portion of the course, we will meet together (either in-person or virtually) to process the course information by sharing in intercultural experiences. This will include presenting your “intercultural faith experience” assignment. A final, major paper will be due after the last session of class.

- Class meetings will occur over three Friday/Saturday gatherings:
 - Sept 12 & 13
 - Oct 10 & 11
 - Nov 14 & 15
- Fridays we will meet 2 – 6 p.m. (Central Time)
- Saturdays we will meet 9 a.m. – 12 noon (Central Time)

The synchronous portion will be hybrid, meaning that you can join either online or in-person on campus.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

MDiv Degree Objective	Course Learning Objective	Means of Assessment
1. Demonstrate a general knowledge of Scripture, history and doctrine, and/or practices of the Christian traditions	Identify biblical and theological elements appropriate to mission and ministry in a world church today.	Asynchronous Notes Prophetic Dialogue Final Paper
2. Interpret Scripture and tradition critically and constructively in the varying contexts of contemporary life	Examine key theological challenges raised by Christianity's global reach, such as globalization and the integrity of Christian witness; culture, context, and Christian identity; and religious pluralism.	Asynchronous Notes Intercultural Experience Prophetic Dialogue Final Paper
3. Demonstrate a growing depth of understanding and practice in personal and corporate spiritual discipline(s)	-	
4. Promote prophetic inquiry and witness for the sake of justice	-	
5. Engage in critically informed analyses of gender, race, culture, social and economic structures that shape human beings	Appreciate the complex impact of the Western missionary movement and of Western colonial expansion on Christianity's current configuration.	Asynchronous Notes Interpretations of Jesus Paper Prophetic Dialogue Final Paper
6. Articulate critical and multi-faceted expressions of the gospel and invites others to receive it	Understand the scope, texture, and identity of global Christianity today as a polycentric, increasingly non-Western movement.	Interpretations of Jesus Paper Prophetic Dialogue Final Paper
7. Demonstrate the capacity to nurture further Christian formation through the practices of ministry (e.g., prayer, liturgy, preaching, pastoral care, and teaching)	-	

REQUIRED TEXTS

Green, Gene L., Stephen T. Pardue, and K.K. Yeo, eds. *Jesus without Borders: Christology In the Majority World*. Majority World Theology Series. Langham Global Library, 2015. ISBN: 978-1783689170. List price (Amazon): \$24.99.

Kim, Sebastian and Kirsteen Kim. *Christianity as a World Religion: An Introduction*. Second Edition. Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. ISBN: 978-1472569349. List price (Amazon): \$29.95

Bevans, Stephen B. and Roger P. Schroeder. *Prophetic Dialogue: Reflections On Christian Mission Today*. Orbis Books, 2011. ISBN: 978-1570759116. List price (Amazon): \$37.00

There are numerous additional readings that will required for each asynchronous topic (essays, articles). These will be uploaded and available for free on Canvas. See “Asynchronous Lecture Topics and Readings” below for a table listing these.

GRADING

Grade Scale		Grade Structure	
A	94-100	Class Participation	30%
A-	90-93	Intercultural Experience	20%
B+	87-89	Interpretations of Jesus Paper	20%
B	84-86	Prophetic Dialogue Final Paper	30%
B-	80-83		
C+	77-79		
C	74-76		
C-	70-73		
D	60-69		

ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are due on the dates and at the times indicated. No late submissions will be accepted, except in the case of extenuating circumstances that has been communicated to and approved by the instructor.

All assignments are expected to conform to Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, 7th edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Assignment 1: Asynchronous Notes (Due by Friday 15 November at 9 a.m.)

Rationale: Since this is an intensive course, it is imperative that you complete all the asynchronous work (videos and reading) and come to the synchronous sessions prepared to process the material.

Task: Provide basic notes on the twelve video lectures and the three assigned books.

Parameters: Write 2-3 sentences providing a synopsis of each lecture and book. Gather these in a single Word document, double-spaced, Times New Roman font, 12pt type.

Process:

1. Read each book and write a 2-3 sentence synopsis that explains its primary argument.
2. Watch each video and write a 2-3 sentence synopsis that describes its content.
3. Gather all the synopses on a single Word document
4. Submit that document to Canvas by the due date.

Assignment 2: Intercultural Experience (Due Thursday 2 October at 11:59 p.m.)

Rationale: The intent of this exercise is to experience and then reflect on an expression of Christian faith different from your own culture, ethnicity, and/or nationality.

Task: Visit a congregation different from your own culture, ethnicity, and/or nationality and prepare a reflection on the experience. You can visit in a group with other students or individually (*although each student must write their own reflection to submit*). If allowed by the congregation, you are encouraged to take videos, pictures, sound recordings, or other multimedia recordings as part of your visit.

Parameters: A PowerPoint presentation consisting of six slides: a title slide with your name on it and one slide to answer each of the five questions listed below (see “Process”).

The slides should follow the 1/5/5 rule:

- Each slide should include at least one image (picture or video—ideally taken during your visit if allowed) and
- Each slide should *not* include more than five lines of text with five words on each line.
- If you need additional space to explain your slide, use the speaker notes section under the slide, including any appropriate references to course materials or fuller descriptions and reflections than the slides allow.

Process:

1. Identify a congregation and visit it. Ideally, the visit happens during an event (whether a worship service, a dinner, a festival, or anything else). If you cannot do this, you can set an appointment to meet with a congregational leader who can explain the congregation to you. While in-person visitation is ideal, attending an event virtually is possible. Please contact the instructors if you do not foresee being able to visit in-person for recommendations of virtual visits you can make.
2. Develop a Power Point presentation in which you reflect on the visit, using the following questions (answer one question per slide, using the 1/5/5 rule on each slide):

- Introduce the congregation and explain how it is uniquely formed culture, ethnicity, and/or nationality it represents.
 - What aspect of the Christian experience did I find most intriguing or appealing? Why?
 - What aspect of the experience did I find most challenging? Why?
 - What might people from this congregation find challenging or strange about how my ministry site worships? Why?
 - What did the experience show me about the place of culture in Christian faith?
3. Upload your PowerPoint to the appropriate assignment tab on Moodle.
 4. Be prepared to present your Power Point during the synchronous week of class. We will use them as case studies to apply the missiological theory we are learning.

Assignment 3: Interpretations of Jesus Reflection (Due by Thursday 30 October at 11:59 p.m.)

NOTE: *While there are four options to choose from, you are required to complete only ONE essay. So, write your essay on Asian OR African OR Latin American OR North American interpretations of Jesus. DO NOT DO MORE THAN ONE ESSAY.*

Rationale: This exercise is to examine an interpretation of Jesus in a particular context and explore its meaning and impact across cultural boundaries.

Task: Select an interpretation of Jesus introduced in the assigned readings from one of the regions covered in the asynchronous portion in class (ex., Jesus as ancestor from the African region; Jesus as trickster from the North American region; etc.). Bringing the regional reading into conversation with the appropriate chapters in *Jesus without Borders* and *Christianity as a World Religion*, critically reflect on key claims and ponder implications of this interpretation for the meaning and experience of Jesus in your own context.

Parameters: An essay of 1,600-1,700 words in length (5-5 ½ pages), submitted in Microsoft Word format, double-spaced, Times New Roman font, 12pt type

Process:

1. Select an interpretation of Jesus from Africa, Asia, Latin America, or North America from the course material that you find intriguing or challenging.
2. Read the relevant chapter in Kim/Kim (ex., ch. 2: “Asian Christianities”).
3. Read the appropriate chapters in *Jesus without Borders*, as well as the relevant selections in the “Additional Required Reading” folder on Moodle.
4. Summarize the main features of the interpretation in two pages. Then critically reflect on the implications of this interpretation for the meaning and experience of Jesus in your own context in the remainder of the essay.
5. Upload your essay to the appropriate assignment tab on Moodle.

Assignment 4: Prophetic Dialogue Final Paper (Due Sunday 23 November at 11:59 p.m.)

Rationale: The intent of this exercise is to offer you an opportunity to practice the skills of constructing a theological argument using the model of prophetic dialogue for a particular ministry setting today. **NOTE:** “Ministry setting” can take different forms—for example, a congregation, a campus ministry, a house church, a social justice initiative. Also, choose a ministry setting in the context most relevant to you—for example, Korea, DRC, the United States.

Task: Write an essay in which you think about how Bevans and Schroeder’s model of “prophetic dialogue” can help you examine faulty views and practices of mission in your ministry setting and construct a new missional vision that can renew mission practices.

Parameters: The essay should be 2,600-2,900 words (8-9 pages, double-spaced) in length and be submitted in Microsoft Word format, double-spaced, Times New Roman font, 12pt type.

Process:

1. Reread the appropriate chapters in *Prophetic Dialogue*.
2. Summarize the key features of Bevans and Schroeder’s understanding of mission as “prophetic dialogue.”
3. Using the Bevans/Schroeder model, and drawing on the other sources we’ve studied (course texts, additional required reading, lectures, online discussion), describe how the model of prophetic dialogue can help you rethink *mission* in your ministry setting. **Be creative!**

Ask yourself:

- How can the model of prophetic dialogue help me identify and challenge faulty theological views of mission in my ministry context?
 - How can the model help me construct a new missional vision for my ministry context?
 - How might one or more of the six components of the model (ex., “witness and proclamation”; “justice, peace, and the integrity of creation”; “reconciliation”) help us renew or build new missional *practices* in my ministry context? (Ex., the component of “peace, justice, and the integrity of creation” might change the way we practice our public witness; the component of “interreligious dialogue” might deepen our collaboration with our Muslim neighbors down the street, or perhaps help us *begin* a relationship.)
4. Upload your essay to the appropriate assignment tab on Moodle.
 5. Using the same assignment link on Moodle, read your group mates’ papers and assess them using the assessment form. This must be completed by the assessment due date.

ASYNCHRONOUS LECTURE TOPICS AND READINGS (each lecture is ~1 hour long)

Video Lecture Title	Readings	
Global Christianity: What Is It?	<p>Hanciles, "Migration and Mission"</p> <p>Kim/Kim, <i>Christianity as a World Religion</i>, ch. 1.</p>	<p>Take notes on these before the synchronous session starting Sept 12</p>
"Go...Make Disciples": Biblical and Historical Developments in Mission	<p>Bevans/Schroeder, <i>Constants in Context</i>, ch. 1.</p>	
"Go...Make Disciples": The Modern Missionary Movement	<p>Bevans/Schroeder, <i>Prophetic Dialogue</i>, chs. 9-10</p> <p>Robert, "Shifting Southward"</p>	
"Go...Make Disciples": Shifts in Theology of Mission	<p>Kim/Kim, <i>Christianity as a World Religion</i>, ch. 8.</p> <p>Irvin, "World Christianity: An Introduction"</p>	
Doing Theology in a Global Church: Intercultural Theology	<p>Bevans/Schroeder, <i>Prophetic Dialogue</i>, chs. 6-7.</p> <p>Kim/Kim, <i>Christianity as a World Religion</i>, chs. 2, 3</p> <p>Kuster, "Toward an Intercultural Theology"</p> <p>Kuster, "Intercultural Theology Is a Must"</p> <p>Yeo, <i>Jesus without Borders</i>, ch. 2, 7, 8.</p>	<p>Take notes on these before the synchronous session starting Oct 10</p>

<p>African Christianity: Historical and Theological Developments</p> <p>If you choose this for your “Interpretation of Jesus” Assignment, read all of the additional articles uploaded to Canvas beyond the required ones listed on the right.</p>	<p>Kim/Kim, <i>Christianity as a World Religion</i>, ch. 3</p> <p>Phiri and Nadar, "African Women's Theologies"</p> <p>Yeo, <i>Jesus without Borders</i>, chs. 2, 7</p>	
<p>Asian Christianity: Historical and Theological Developments</p> <p>If you choose this for your “Interpretation of Jesus” Assignment, read all of the additional articles uploaded to Canvas beyond the required ones listed on the right.</p>	<p>Kim/Kim, <i>Christianity as a World Religion</i>, ch. 2</p> <p>Joy, “Asian Christologies”</p> <p>Yeo, <i>Jesus without Borders</i>, chs. 3, 5</p>	<p>Take notes on these before the synchronous session starting Oct 10</p>
<p>Latin American Christianity: Historical and Theological Developments</p> <p>If you choose this for your “Interpretation of Jesus” Assignment, read all of the additional articles uploaded to Canvas beyond the required ones listed on the right.</p>	<p>Kim/Kim, <i>Christianity as a World Religion</i>, ch. 5</p> <p>Costas, “Outside the Gates”</p> <p>Yeo, <i>Jesus without Borders</i>, chs. 4, 6</p>	
<p>North American Christianity: Historical and Theological Developments</p> <p>If you choose this for your “Interpretation of Jesus” Assignment, read all of the additional articles uploaded to Canvas beyond the required ones listed on the right.</p>	<p>Kim/Kim, <i>Christianity as a World Religion</i>, ch. 6</p> <p>“Native American Theology,” ch. 3</p> <p>Yeo, <i>Jesus without Borders</i>, ch. 1</p>	
<p>Rethinking Mission in a Global Church: Different Approaches to Mission</p>	<p>Bevans/Schroeder, <i>Prophetic Dialogue</i>, chs. 1-4.</p> <p>Bevans/Schroeder, <i>Constants in Context</i>, Part 3, pp. 281-285.</p>	<p>Take notes on these before the synchronous session starting Nov 14</p>

	Yeo, "Biblical Interpretation in the Majority World"	Take notes on these before the synchronous session starting Nov 14
Rethinking Mission in a Global Church: Prophetic Dialogue	Bevans/Schroeder, <i>Prophetic Dialogue</i> , ch. 8 Bevans/Schroeder, <i>Constants in Context</i> , ch. 12.	
Rethinking Mission in a Global Church: Prophetic Dialogue in Action	Bevans/Schroeder, <i>Prophetic Dialogue</i> , ch. 5.	

COURSE SCHEDULE (The class will meet 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., June 2-6)

Sept 2	Class Starts, begin Asynchronous work
Sept 12	Definition of, biblical basis for, and theology of mission
Sept 13	Overview of the history of Christian mission practices
Oct 2	Assignment Due: Intercultural Experience
Oct 10	Mission practice and mission ethics
Oct 11	Challenges of cross-cultural engagement and the attending religious, economic, political, and other dimensions of culture
Oct 30	Assignment Due: Interpretations of Jesus
Nov 14 & 15	Lead faith communities in the practice of mission
Nov 15	Assignment Due: Asynchronous Notes
Nov 23	Assignment Due: Final Paper Due

ACADEMIC POLICIES

This course follows all school academic policies and procedures, which can be accessed in their entirety on the Registrar section of MyGETS at this

link: https://mygets.garrett.edu/ICS/Registrar_and_Advising/Common_Syllabus_Policies.jnz.

AI Policy

Not Allowed	Allowed with appropriate acknowledgment	Allowed and no acknowledgement needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generative AI help with <u>papers</u> (generating topics, ideas, outlines, arguments) • Generative AI help with <u>writing</u> (paraphrasing, summarizing, generating language for assignments) • Generative AI help with <u>reading</u> (summarizing or outlining reading assignments) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language translation • Language assistance for non-native English speakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Editing, polishing, or revising paper drafts • Proofreading • Presentation design • Citation generation • Research • Note-taking <p>Note: the professor used these tools in developing the course material.</p>
<p>You must consult the professor(s) for uses not mentioned above.</p>		
<p>To properly cite the use of AI in Chicago/Turabian style, access this link: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/qanda/data/faq/topics/Documentation/faq0422.html.</p>		

GRADING RUBRIC USED FOR ALL SUBMITTED ASSIGNMENTS

<p>Followed Directions</p>	<p>The student followed all the directions provided by the instructor in the syllabus or online for the assignment (including word counts, content, format, etc.). = 100% 20 points</p> <p>= A 19.2 point</p> <p>= A- 18.4 point</p>	<p>The student followed the directions in a way that addressed the core learning objectives, but did not follow the logistical directions (e.g., word counts, outline of assignment). = B+ 17.8 points</p> <p>= B 17.2 point</p> <p>= B- 16.4 point</p>	<p>The student followed the logistical directions but did not address the core learning objectives. = C+ 15.8 points</p> <p>= C 15.2 point</p> <p>= C- 14.4 point</p>	<p>The student failed to follow the logistical and learning objective directions provided by the instructor in the syllabus or online. 0 points</p>
<p>Professionalism</p>	<p>The assignment was submitted on-time, well-presented visually, and free of spelling, grammatical, and other language mistakes. = 100% 20 points</p> <p>= A 19.2 point</p> <p>= A- 18.4 point</p>	<p>The assignment was submitted on-time, but either is not visually compelling or has a noticeable number of language mistakes. = B+ 17.8 points</p> <p>= B 17.2 point</p> <p>= B- 16.4 point</p>	<p>The assignment was submitted on-time, but is not visually compelling and has a noticeable number of language mistakes. = C+ 15.8 points</p> <p>= C 15.2 point</p> <p>= C- 14.4 point</p>	<p>The assignment was late without excuse and/or is presented in such a way that is visually confusing and/or has linguistic mistakes that make it difficult to understand. 0 points</p>

Coherence	<p>There is a logical flow throughout the assignment such that it is easily understandable and persuasive in the points it makes. = 100% 20 points</p> <p>= A 19.2 points</p> <p>= A- 18.4 points</p>	<p>There is a logical flow throughout the assignment such that it is easily understandable. It may not be persuasive in its presentation, however. = B+ 17.8 points</p> <p>= B 17.2 points</p> <p>= B- 16.4 points</p>	<p>There is an overall logic apparent in the assignment, though it requires some effort to grasp what the logic is. = C+ 15.8 points</p> <p>= C 15.2 points</p> <p>= C- 14.4 points</p>	<p>There is no apparent logic to the assignment. It is obtuse and difficult to understand the points it makes. = 0 points</p>
Content	<p>The student clearly interacts with the appropriate course materials (readings, lectures, or other sources), demonstrating both comprehension of the material and offering creative and constructive insight for further conversation on the</p> <p>= A 19.2 points</p> <p>= A- 18.4 points</p>	<p>The student clearly interacts with all the appropriate course materials (readings, lectures, or other sources) appropriate to the topic, demonstrating comprehension of the material. = B+ 17.8 points</p> <p>= B 17.2 points</p> <p>= B- 16.4 points</p>	<p>The student clearly interacts with only some of the appropriate materials pertaining to the topic of the assignment, demonstrating comprehension of the material. Alternatively, the student uses the appropriate</p> <p>= C 15.2 points</p> <p>= C- 14.4 points</p>	<p>The student's assignment either does not refer to any course material or clearly misunderstands the material it does use. = 0 points</p>

	topic at hand. = 100% 20 points										materials, but does not represent them accurately . = C+ 15.8 points
Collegiality	Assignment is academic in tone (or is appropriate to intended audience), inviting further constructive conversation on the topic, even in the case of disagreeing with authors, the instructor, or other students. = 100% 20 points	= A 19.2 point	= A- 18.4 point	The assignment is academic in tone (or is appropriate to the intended audience), though can emphasize deconstructive interaction more than constructive. = B+ 17.8 points	= B 17.2 point	= B- 16.4 point	The assignment is more conversational than academic in tone (or is not entirely appropriate to the intended audience) and/or is defensive about engaging in constructive self-reflection. = C+ 15.8 points	= C 15.2 point	= C- 14.4 point	The assignment is entirely informal (or is inappropriate to the intended audience) and/or may be entirely negative by attacking others and resisting reflection on one's own work invited by course material or peer feedback. 0 points	