

LIDLAW GRADUATE SCHOOL

MASTER OF THEOLOGY
Course Assessment and Delivery Outline

R209.830: Unique Christ, Pluralist World

Laidlaw Christchurch Campus
Lecturer: Bob Robinson

Semester 2, 2015
NQF Level 8, 30 credits

1. COURSE STRUCTURE

Block courses:

- Monday 17 – Friday 21 August: 9.00 – 10.30am; 11.00am – 12.30pm.
- Monday 28 September – Friday 02 October: 9.00 – 10.30am; 11.00am – 12.30pm.

2. CONTENT OVERVIEW:

This theologically cross-disciplinary course will: re-examine the Biblical foundations for the traditional Christian claims about the example, uniqueness, finality and universality of Christ (giving special attention to Jesus' self-understanding, actions and teaching in the Gospels, and to his resurrection); outline some of the subsequent Biblical and theological developments in christology; consider and respond to a variety of challenges to Christian claims about truth, particularity, and universality in our contemporary and postmodern contexts. The course will then attempt to develop a well-informed contemporary restatement of the example, uniqueness, finality and universality of Christ, including some implications for the assessment of other religions and for mission and inter-faith encounter in a pluralist world.

3. METHODOLOGY.

A number of distinctive methodological features undergird the course as it draws upon: the theological exegesis of the Bible as Scripture; reader-response hermeneutics (with the reader situated in a postmodern and pluralist setting); recent contextual and missional studies; interaction with an extensive range of recent scholarship, including examples from the majority world.

Abbreviations: the following will be used in course material and may be used by students in assignments without further explanation:

EUFU The example, uniqueness, finality and universality of Christ
IJOS Edwards, *Is Jesus the Only Savior?*
JATR Robinson, *Jesus and the Religions*
TTR McDermott and Netland, *A Trinitarian Theology of Religions.*

4. ASSESSMENT TASKS, GRADING CRITERIA, DUE DATES AND TIMES

The course will be assessed by means of three assignments designed to determine whether students have achieved the learning outcomes. These assessment tasks are:

- (a) **A preliminary reading report presenting a thematic and interactive analysis, and initial evaluation, of JATR**

Length: 2000 words.

Learning outcomes assessed—aspects of: 1, 3, 4

Due time*: 8 am, Monday, 10 August 2015
(*electronically submitted to Moodle)

20% of final grade

An instruction and guidance sheet giving further details of what is expected will be posted in advance on Moodle.

Grading criteria:

1. ANALYSIS & UNDERSTANDING: Accurate analysis and critical understanding
2. REFLECTION: Discerning reflection and interaction
3. EVALUATION: Appropriately critical initial evaluation
4. COMMUNICATION & PRESENTATION: Clarity and coherence; Style, grammar, spelling; Annotation and bibliography

(b) A critical review, with some initial implications for EUFU, of a substantial text or texts that raise significant pluralist / inter-faith issues

An instruction and guidance sheet giving a list of suitable texts, and further details of what is expected, will be provided in a course handout (and posted on Moodle).

Length: 2000 words.

Learning outcomes assessed—aspects of: 1, 2, 4

Due time*: 8 am, Monday, 21 September 2015
(*electronically submitted to Moodle)

20% of final grade

Grading criteria:

1. UNDERSTANDING: Content understood and accurately reported
2. RESEARCH & ANALYSIS: Critical evaluation; reference to journal reviews
3. SOME INITIAL IMPLICATIONS: Perceptive discernment and relevance
4. COMMUNICATION & PRESENTATION: Clarity and coherence; Style, grammar, spelling; Annotation and bibliography

(c) A substantial final essay with a summative component and research options. Choose one of the following three:

- A summative essay entitled 'A contemporary re-statement of the example, uniqueness, finality and universality of Christ in a pluralist, postmodern age, and some missional and inter-faith implications'

OR:

- A summative and research essay entitled 'A contemporary re-statement of the example, uniqueness, finality and universality of Christ with reference to ...*'

*student to add a particular research dimension (christological, philosophical, cultural, inter-faith etc) – but please confirm its appropriateness for the course learning outcomes with the lecturer before the course ends or by Friday 09 October 2015 at the latest.

OR:

- A research essay entitled 'Recent evangelical interest in the inter-faith encounter: a critical and christological assessment'

An instruction and guidance sheet giving further details of what is expected for each of these three options will be provided in a course handout (and posted on Moodle).

Length: 5000 words.

Learning outcomes assessed: 1, 2, 3, 4

Due time*: 8 am, Monday, 02 November 2015
(*electronically submitted to Moodle)

60% of final grade

Grading criteria:

1. READING AND RESEARCH: Comprehensive reading and discerning research
2. KNOWLEDGE: Systematic and coherent account of key principles
3. ANALYSIS: Skills of critical analytical rigour
4. IMPLICATIONS: Relevant discernment; persuasive application
5. COMMUNICATION & PRESENTATION: Clear introduction & conclusions; Clarity and coherence; Style, grammar, spelling; Annotation and bibliography

5. LEARNING HOURS

R209 is a 30 credit course with an expectation therefore of some 300 study hours. The hours are allocated approximately as follows:

• Class time	30
• Expected preliminary reading before each daily session	20*
• Other lecturer-guided reading and reflection	70*
• Analytical reading report: 2000 words	40
• Critical review: 2000 words	40
• Final essay: 5000 words	100

*These two allocations of study hours should assist compliance with the MTh programme requirement (found in the Graduate School Academic Handbook) of an additional 800-1000 pages of reading.

Attendance. Full attendance at lectures is expected. Unsatisfactory attendance (less than 80%) is grounds for failure of the course.

6. TEXTBOOKS

The course will make extensive classroom use of three texts that students must possess:

- Edwards, James R. *Is Jesus the Only Savior?* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005.¹
- McDermott, Gerald R., and Harold A. Netland. *A Trinitarian Theology of Religions: An Evangelical Proposal.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014.² (Note *paperback* version.)
- Robinson, Bob. *Jesus and the Religions: Retrieving a Neglected Example for a Multicultural World.* Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2012.³ This volume will be needed some four or five weeks before the first teaching block in order to complete the first assignment: due 10 August.

¹ Recently available at www.amazon.com for US\$14.50 (+ postage). (Not known at Book Depository.)
NB: *not* the book of the same name by Ronald Nash.

² *Paperback* version recently available at www.bookdepository.co.uk for cNZ\$36 (free postage).

³ Available bobr@netaccess.co.nz: NZ\$30 (+\$3.50p&p—student only price; Book Depository cNZ\$49).

7. INDICATIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

There is a vast number of volumes written for our two main subject areas: christology and religious pluralism. As well as, *IJOS*, *JATR* and *TTR* (see above), reference will also be made to a number of the items below. This material has been carefully chosen by the course lecturer and will be of considerable help with the assignments (though there is not been space to include assessments of specific religions). Students would find some of these volumes well worth owning. Books suggested for the assignments will be on desk (restricted) loan in the Laidlaw College Christchurch library (and, if available, in the Laidlaw Henderson library). Items on this list should have priority in the fulfilment of the MTh programme requirement of 800-1000 pp of reading.

1. Bloesch, Donald G. 'The Finality of Christ', in his *Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 229-49.
2. Bock, Darrell L. *Who Is Jesus? Linking the Historical Jesus with the Christ of Faith*. New York, NY: Howard Books, 2012.
3. Bock, Darrell L, and Robert L. Webb, eds. *Key Events in the Life of Jesus: A Collaborative Exploration of Context and Coherence*. Grand Rapids, IL: Eerdmans, 2010.
4. Bockmuehl, Markus, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
5. Brinkman, Martien E. *The Non-Western Jesus: Jesus as Bodhisattva, Avatara, Guru, Prophet, Ancestor or Healer?* Sheffield, UK: Equinox, 2009.
6. Davis, Kendall and O'Collins, eds. *The Resurrection: an Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Resurrection of Jesus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
7. D'Costa, Gavin. *Christianity and World Religions: Disputed Questions in the Theology of Religions*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
8. D'Costa, Gavin, Paul Knitter and Daniel Strange. *Only One Way? Three Christian Responses on the Uniqueness of Christ in a Religiously Plural World*. London: SCM Press, 2011.
9. 'Declaration *Dominus Iesus* on the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church.' Vatican City: Offices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2000. [Moodle]
10. Dupuis, Jacques. *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997.
11. Erickson, Millard J. *The Word Became Flesh. A Contemporary Incarnational Christology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1991.
12. *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 17.1 (1993) [issue on 'The Uniqueness of Christ']; editorial and the articles by France and Fleming are especially important.
13. Evans, C Stephen. *The Historical Christ and the Jesus of Faith: the Incarnational Narrative as History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
14. Freyne, Sean. 'The Galilean Jesus and a Contemporary Christology,' *Theological Studies*, 70 (2009), 281-97.
15. Gaventa, Beverly Roberts, and Richard B. Hays, eds. *Seeking the Identity of Jesus: a Pilgrimage*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.
16. Glaser, Ida. *The Bible and Other Faiths: Christian Responsibility in a World of Religions*. Leicester and Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2005.
17. Greene, Colin J. D. *Christology in Cultural Perspective: Marking out the Horizons*. Carlisle and Grand Rapids, MI: Paternoster and Eerdmans, 2003.
18. Grenz, Stanley J. 'Evangelical Theology and the Religions,' in his *Renewing the Center: Evangelical Theology in a Post-Theological Era* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 249-86.
19. Johnson, Keith. *Rethinking the Trinity and Religious Pluralism: an Augustinian Assessment*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011.
20. Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti. *An Introduction to the Theology of Religions: Biblical, Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
21. _____. *Christology: A Global Introduction*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003.
22. McDermott, Gerald R. *Can Evangelicals Learn from the World's Religions? Jesus, Revelation and Religious Traditions*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

23. _____. *God's Rivals: Why Has God Allowed Different Religions?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007.
24. McKim, Robert. *On Religious Diversity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
25. McLaren, Brian. *Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha, and Mohammed Cross the Road? Christian Identity in a Multi-Faith World*. Nashville, TN: Jericho Books, 2012.
26. Nazir-Ali, Michael. *The Unique and Universal Christ: Jesus in a Plural World*. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008.
27. Netland, Harold A. *Encountering Religious Pluralism: The Challenge to Christian Faith and Mission*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001 and Leicester: Apollos, 2001.
28. Newbigin, JE Lesslie. *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*. London: SPCK, 1989.
29. _____. 'Religious Pluralism and the Uniqueness of Jesus Christ', *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 13 (1989), 50-54.
30. Oakes, Edward T. *Infinity Dwindled to Infancy: A Catholic and Evangelical Christology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011.
31. Okholm, Dennis L and Timothy R Phillips, eds. *More Than One Way? Four Views on Salvation in a Pluralist World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.
32. Pinnock, Clark. *A Wideness in God's Mercy: the Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.
33. Ramachandra, Vinoth. *The Recovery of Mission: Beyond the Pluralist Paradigm*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1996; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997.
34. _____. 'Truth and Pluralism,' in *Mission in Context: Explorations Inspired by J. Andrew Kirk*, edited by John Corrie and Cathy Ross (Farnham, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 125-38. [Copy in Moodle]
35. Robinson, Bob. 'What Exactly is Meant by the "Uniqueness of Christ"?' Pt 1: *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 25 (2001), 362-71; Pt 2: *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 26 (2002), 76-90.
36. Serretti, Massimo, ed. *The Uniqueness and Universality of Jesus Christ: In Dialogue with the Religions*. Et: Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004.
37. Stackhouse, John G, ed. *No Other Gods before Me? Evangelicals and the Challenge of World Religions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001.
38. Strange, Daniel. 'For Their Rock is Not as Our Rock': An Evangelical Theology of Religions. Nottingham, UK: IVP, 2014.
39. Sumner, George R. *The First and the Last: The Claim of Jesus Christ and the Claims of Other Religious Traditions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004.
40. Sung Wook Chung, ed. *Christ the One and Only: A Global Affirmation of the Uniqueness of Jesus Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005.
41. Tennent, Timothy C. *Christianity at the Religious Roundtable. Evangelicals in Conversation with Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002.
42. Van Engen, Charles. 'The Uniqueness of Christ in Mission Theology,' in his *Mission on the Way: Issues in Mission Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 169-87.
43. Varghese, Roy Abraham. *The Christ Connection: How the World Religions Prepared the Way for the Phenomenon of Jesus*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2011.
44. Vickers, Douglas. *The Cross: Its Meaning and Message in a Postmodern World*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2010.
45. Volf, Miroslav. *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1996.
46. WEF Theological Commission Working Group, 'Proclaiming Jesus Christ as the One Universal Saviour and Lord in a World of Religious and Secular Pluralism,' *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 20 (1996), 385-88.
47. World Council of Churches, 'Religious Plurality and Christian Self-Understanding.' ['Bossey Declaration'] Geneva: 2006. [Copy in Moodle]
48. Wright, Chris. *Thinking Clearly about the Uniqueness of Jesus*. Crowborough: Monarch, 1997.

Excellent website for a constructive evangelical approach to religious pluralism (sponsored by Fuller Seminary): http://cms.fuller.edu/EIFD/Back_Issues.aspx.