

GDR GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY CONCENTRATION

The Global Christianity Concentration in the Graduate Division of Religion will support and equip doctoral students who intend to teach and research topics related to the study of Christianity in diverse contexts around the world within the fields of religious studies and theology.

(In what follows, the terms “world Christianity” and “global Christianity” are used interchangeably; though the latter is specifically applied to the GDR program)

DESCRIPTION (& RATIONALE):

The emerging field of world/global Christianity investigates the diversity of Christian communities around the world, with a particular focus on indigenous expressions in non-Western contexts and the experiences of under-represented or marginalized communities of faith globally. Its purview also includes the study of how non-western expressions of Christianity have impacted western societies. As an area of academic study and research, world Christianity is inherently interdisciplinary. It utilizes a multiplicity of models, methods and theoretical constructs; though it tends to be strongly oriented towards historical, social scientific and theological approaches. It also has strong roots in mission studies and the study of religious traditions other than Christianity.

At a time when other major institutions of higher education (including Duke, Rice and Notre Dame Universities and Princeton Theological Seminary) are developing related programs, Emory University is well positioned in terms of capacity and resources to emerge as a major center for the study of world Christianity. In addition to the university’s numerous global engagements and strong support for international research (embodied by units such as The Halle Institute for Global Research), the Graduate Division of Religion’s diverse faculty, tremendous resources for studying religious cultures around the world, and interdisciplinary emphasis, add up to decisive advantages for developing scholars in one of the most promising and fertile areas of academic research and exploration in religious studies and theology. The growing importance of world Christianity scholarship is evident not only in an expanding network of academic conferences and but also in the considerable number of academic positions that have been created and filled within the last ten years in the United States and Europe.

The global Christianity concentration will attract/include students from different courses of study within the GDR. These students will have a strong commitment to investigating Christian communities’ beliefs, practices and lifeways in a variety of contexts around the world, especially non-western ones, that are shaped by a multitude of historical and cultural experiences. The concentration will enable students to acquire and master a variety of theories, models, new rationalities, and methodologies (including intercultural critique and ethnographic study) that are central to this field of study. It will not only provide a common interdisciplinary space for students to support one another and share their work but also enhance their ability to participate in programs and scholarly communities beyond Emory.

GOALS:

- To enable students to gain competency in the study of Christianity as a global phenomenon.
- To prepare students to teach and research in the field of global Christianity.
- To foster a community of scholars in global Christianity at Emory

OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS:

- Regular gatherings (including colloquy and extracurricular seminars) with faculty, researchers, practitioners, and students across campus to share research and discuss emerging literature.
- Orientation to global Christianity and related fields, as well as help with building connections among colleagues beyond Emory.
- Acquiring insight into the kinds of topics, questions, concerns, theories, problems, and lines of enquiry central to research within or related to the interdisciplinary field of global Christianity—including those that query or challenge dominant Western approaches or categories.
- Guidance in locating the students' own research and teaching within the broader field of global Christianity; support for presentations and publication.
- Opportunities to teach in the university and theological school classrooms and in the community.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CONCENTRATION:

- take two curricular seminars:
 - ✓ a designated seminar on Global Christianity Methodologies during course work.
 - ✓ a related seminar on a topic pertaining to sustained interaction between Christianity and another faith or religious tradition (with attentiveness to issues of intercultural exchange, multidirectional impact, or transnationalism).
- include as part of the comprehensive examinations specific questions on issues, concerns, debates, approaches, etc. pertinent to the study of global Christianity.
- plan a dissertation topic that draws on the study and research of global Christianity.

ADDENDUM

Faculty

As noted above, Emory University boasts a large number of faculty whose expertise or scholarship intersects with global Christianity. Faculty who are presently associated with the concentration are as follows:

- ~ Hanciles, Jehu J. (assoc. prof., world Christianity)
- ~ Jones, Arun W. (assoc. prof., world evangelism)
- ~ Kim, Helen (asst. prof., American religious history)
- ~ McDougall, Joy (assoc. prof., systematic theology)
- ~ Premawardhana, Devaka (asst. prof., anthropology of religion)
- ~ Villa-Flores, Javier (assoc. prof., Latin American and Latino studies)
- ~ Womack, Deanna Ferree (asst. prof., history of religions and multifaith)

Governance

Jehu J. Hanciles, who is director of the World Christianity program at Candler School of Theology, meets at least once a semester with an “advisory board” that comprises the faculty members listed above. This group essentially functions as an oversight committee for all matters related to World /Global Christianity in Candler and the GDR. A steering committee of this body will directly manage the GDR Global Christianity concentration. Its current members are as follows:

- ~ Jehu J. Hanciles (assoc. prof., world Christianity)
- ~ Arun Jones (assoc. prof., world evangelism)
- ~ Devaka Premawardhana (asst. prof., anthropology of religion)
- ~ Deanna F. Womack (asst. prof., History of Religions and Multifaith Relations)
- ~ Dianne M. Stewart (assoc. prof., Religion & African American Studies)

Reading Group

In addition to the wide-ranging scope of its discourse, Global Christianity’s inherently interdisciplinary nature and accommodativeness to a variety of theoretical models and methodologies, means that the concentration is likely to have broad appeal within the GDR.

There is already a “Global Christianity Reading Group” independently formed and run by GDR students who are committed to or engaged in Global Christianity study and research.

With the official establishment of the GDR concentration, this reading group will be reconstituted and run as a regular colloquy that supports the concentration. It is worth noting that such a seminar and related gatherings will also provide valuable intellectual community for GDR students enrolled in the Global Christianity “track” in the HS course of study—currently two (Jennifer Aycock and Younghwa Kim).

Website

A Global Christianity program website is already under construction under the auspices of the Candler School of Theology. The website is being developed with the full expectation that it will also provide content and links that directly serve both the GDR Global Christianity “track” and “concentration”. The modalities and practicalities of this, specifically the extent to which this domain will also act as a face of the GDR program, are still to be worked out. Much depends on GDR guidelines and requirements. As things stand, Candler will likely bear the lion share of the of costs and ongoing maintenance; but GDR resources and support will also be solicited as needed.

Seminars

The number of GDR seminars on offer are expected to increase significantly once the concentration is established. At present, at least four (4) seminars that meet Global Christianity requirements have already been taught at least once or ready to be introduced: namely,

Global Christianity Methodologies (Jehu J. Hanciles)

studies major texts, conceptual frameworks or theories, models, and approaches central to the study of global Christianity with a focus on three major disciplinary areas (history, theology, and

intercultural studies). The study of the Christian movement as a global phenomenon (or of global Christianities) not only requires serious consideration of non-Western realities or dimensions but also calls for new models or conceptual tools that facilitate critical appraisal of the wealth of data from contexts around the world. The most common approaches emphasize the intersection of global and local, the inherently multicultural and multidirectional nature of the global Christian movement, and the multiplicity of experiences and representations (over time and space) needed to provide a full account of the Christian story.

students will: 1) examine world Christianity as a discipline or area of study—its emergence, relevance, central debates, prospects, etc.; 2) gain familiarity with new theoretical models and constructs that challenge or complement Western theological and religious categories; 3) analyze key areas of debate, dialogue, and competing views within the relevant discourse(s); 4) acquire insight into the kinds of topics, questions, concerns, theories, problems, and lines of enquiry central to research within or related to the discipline of world Christianity.

Christian Identities and Expressions in Colonial Africa and Asia, 1800-1970 (Arun W. Jones)

explores the development of Christian identities and expressions in select Asian and African societies, when these were either directly controlled or significantly influenced by European imperialism and colonialism during the 19th and 20th centuries. Through rich case studies, it interrogates assumptions about the unidirectional movement of Christianity, from missionary and colonizer to convert and colonized. The course employs various comparative schema to elucidate the history of Christian communities and persons in Africa and Asia.

Students learn to (1) understand social, religious and anthropological approaches to the historical study of Christianity in Asia and Africa; (2) provide an account of the ways in which European and local cultures and religions contributed to the formation of Christian identities; and (3) describe how imperial and local powers and authorities in different contexts interacted to influence and shape the life of various Christians and Christian communities.

History of Christianity in South Asia (Arun W. Jones)

investigates the ways in which Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant and Pentecostal/Charismatic traditions have taken root and developed in South Asia, explores interactions between Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and other religious traditions in South Asia, and examines the contextual nature of Christian belief and practice. Furthermore, it provides an introduction to various academic approaches to the historical study of world Christianity, and to the study of Christianity in socially and religiously pluralistic societies.

At the end of this course students will be able to: (1) identify the major theoretical approaches to the historical and contemporary study of world Christianity; (2) provide a historical overview of two millennia of Christianity in South Asia; (3) describe the main characteristics of Orthodox, Roman Catholic, mainline Protestant and Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity in South Asia; and (4) explain some ways in which South Asian Christian traditions have interacted with the religious beliefs and practices of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, and/or other religious traditions in South Asia.

Ethnographic Approaches to Global Christianity (Devaka Premawardhana)

introduces students to how ethnographic research—characterized by long-term immersion in a place and sustained engagement with its people—has been used to document, understand, and analyze the varieties of contemporary Christianity. It entails the close reading of ethnographic texts on such world Christianity themes as missions and colonialism, conversion and identity, language and translation, ritual and embodiment. Attention is also be paid to the role and writings of

Western missionary ethnographers who have long carried out, with varying degrees of sensitivity, detailed empirical studies of non-Western cultures and religions. Finally, students will become familiar with the anthropology of Christianity, the framework under which much ethnographic research on Christianity today is done, as well as with the emerging cross-disciplinary dialogue between anthropology and theology.

This course will enable students to: 1) understand the range of anthropological theories of and ethnographic approaches to the study of religion broadly and to the study of world Christianity specifically; 2) appreciate the role of cultural context and local conditions in the reception and negotiation of Christianity; 3) attend to the ethics of fieldwork engagement and ethnographic representation; 4) provide a rationale for the inclusion or exclusion of ethnographic methods from future scholarly projects in the field of world Christianity.

Gender and Christian-Muslim Encounters: West and South Asia (Deanna F. Womack)

This course critically analyzes the influence of gender norms on Christian-Muslim encounters in Muslim-majority contexts of the Middle East/North Africa and South Asia, from the eighteenth century to present. The course centers around the impact of gender constructs on: 1) daily life and religious practices of Muslims and Christians; 2) relationships between Muslims and Christians, historically and today; and 3) western intellectual, religious, and military interventions in these regions. Subjects of discussion related to these three areas include feminism, women's history, masculinity, sexuality, orientalism, western missions, *da'wa*, world Christianity, colonialism/imperialism, religious hybridity, minority rights discourses, and secularism. Course readings are drawn from history, ethnography, post-colonial theory, and gender studies. Attention will be given to interpreting this scholarship from the perspectives of religious studies and theology, particularly when the author does not focus directly on questions of religion. Students who work on regions outside of the Middle East/North Africa and South Asia will be encouraged to incorporate their research into class projects.