

MR543: CHRISTIAN WITNESS IN THE HINDU WORLD (4 units)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course seeks to provide an overview of (1) the Hindu world, (2) Hinduism's globalization, (3) Hinduism's relationship to Christianity in the Indian subcontinent, (4) Christian evangelization attempts in the past, (5) various contextual questions arising, and (6) proposals for finding a new way forward. Lectures and readings are designed to identify significant theological and social issues and challenges in planning Hindu evangelization strategies. Exposure to the Hindu missionary effort and to indigenous religious communication methodologies is encouraged with a view to finding contextual approaches for articulating the Christian message in the Hindu / South Asian context.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: At the conclusion of this course students will be:

- Familiar with common Hindu beliefs and practices
- Aware of Hinduism's global spread
- Informed regarding current tensions in the Hindu world
- Able to identify critical issues in the Christian dialogue with Hinduism
- Aware of significant missionary approaches among Hindus
- Able to discern appropriate methodologies for Christian witness among Hindus
- Gaining a love for Hindus

COURSE FORMAT:

The class will be conducted on the Internet using a 10-week lesson program aligned with Fuller's academic calendar. Each week students and the instructor will interact with the material examining key themes and issues through journaling, threaded discussions and web-based research.

REQUIRED READING:

- Jeyaraj, J. Daniel, ed. *Dharma Deepika*. South Asian Journal of Missiological Research. July 2006.
- Kalapati, Joshua. *Dr. Radhakrishnan and Christianity*. Delhi, India: ISPCK, 2002
- Lipner, Julius. *Hindus: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Mathew, C.V. *The Saffron Mission*. Delhi, India: ISPCK, 1999.
- Morgan, Kenneth. *The Religion of the Hindus*. Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1996.
- Vivekananda, Swami. *Vedanta: Voice of Freedom*. Vedanta Society of St. Louis, 1990.

NOTE: All of these texts except Morgan are available at the Fuller Bookstore (www.fullerseminarybookstore.com).

RECOMMENDED READING: A list of additional readings suitable to various students' contexts will be available from the instructor. Additional readings will be provided in an online course reader.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Weekly threaded discussions (30%), journaling (20%), web research (5%).
2. Short essays (500-700 words) will be written on assigned topics (15%):
 - (a) Describe the origins and backgrounds of modern Vedic religions.
 - (b) Based on your reading of *The Saffron Mission*, write an essay evaluating the thesis that "Hinduism is the most ancient religion."
 - (c) Describe the lessons for witness in Dennis Hudson's article "Winning Souls for Siva" (ch. 2 in *A Sacred Thread: Modern Transmission of Hindu Traditions in India and Abroad*. Raymond Brady Williams, ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).
3. Final paper (1000-1250 words) responding to an argument in *Vedanta: Voice of Freedom*. (30%)
4. ThM. students: (1) Write a 1000-word critical review of *Dr. Radhakrishnan and Christianity*. (2) Read two additional books and write a 500-word summary of each.

PREREQUISITES: None.

RELATIONSHIP TO CURRICULUM: Elective.

FINAL EXAM: None.

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