The Salvation of Non-Christians: Studies in Theology of Religions

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- Course’s Description: In the light of the multi-religions and multi-faiths worldly context, wherein we live today, the questions of how the Christians view other religions, and how they view God’s stance on other faiths, become of a crucial importance and primary relevance. This course attempts, first, to introduce students to the main exclusivist, inclusivist, and pluralist trends of thought on other religions within the field of study called “theology of religions.” Second, it takes them more specifically into the question of the salvation of the non-Christians and explores with them a possible pneumatological-trinitarian hermeneutics of Christian soteriology that endeavors to exceed the theologically narrow, and seemingly inter-religiously controversial boundaries of Christocentric theology.

- Course’s Objectives:
  At the end of the course the students would:
  1- acquire knowledge of the basic components of the exclusivist, inclusivist and pluralist approaches in this field of study.
  2- analyze and perceive the core argument of every approach in the field
  3- would be exposed to parallel approaches to other religions in Islam and see how the trends of exclusivity, inclusivity and plurality find traces in a non-Christian thought
  4- would practice, by means of the presentations and the term papers, an attempt to present some theology of religions’ discourses to religious communities or lay audiences in an accessible and relevant manner.

- Required Readings During the Course’s Sessions: parts of chapters or essays are going to be read, studied and presented by the students from these books during the sessions. The texts that are available in the library would be availed to the students on the course’s shelf in the library. Other texts that are not available in the library would be provided by the instructor in hard copies form, and they would also be placed on the
course’s shelf in the library. The students are encouraged, before and during the course, to acquaint themselves with one of the following basic introductory texts on the subject. They texts are not required, yet highly recommended:


- Course’s Schedule:

  *(On Theology of Religions)*

- **Monday, June 22, 2015:**

  **I- Session .1 (9:00 am-10:30 am):** Introducing the Syllabus and the subject of the course  
  *(short pause- 10:30 am -10:45 am)*

  **II- Session .2 (10:45 am- 12:30 pm):** What is theology of Religions? (1)  
  *[R.R: V.M. Kärkkäinen, *Introduction to the Theology of Religions*, pp. 17-29]*
  
  *(Lunch Break- 12:30pm -2:00 pm)*

  **III- Session .3 (2:00 pm- 3:30 pm):** What is Theology of Religions? (2)  
  
  *(short pause- 3:30 pm- 3:45 pm)*

  **IV- Session .4 (3:45 pm- 5:30 pm):** Religious Plurality in the Bible  
  *[R.R: V.M. Kärkkäinen, *Introduction to the Theology of Religions*, pp. 33-51]*

  *(The School of Exclusivism)*
- Tuesday, June 23, 2015:
I- Session .5 (9:00 am - 10:30 am): Exclusivism (1): Early Church Fathers
[ R.R: St. Cyprian, Letters (1-81), in The Fathers of the Church, Vol. 51, lt. 73]

( short pause- 10:30 am - 10:45 am)

II- Session .6 (10:45 am - 12:30 pm): Exclusivism (2): St. Augustine
[ R.R: St. Augustine, Letters, in The Fathers of the Church, Lt. 102]

( Lunch Break- 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm)

III- Session .7 (2:00 pm - 3:30 pm): Exclusivism (3): Karl Barth
[ R.R: K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, I/2, pp. 283-285; 294-303; 308-309; 314-315; 323-328; 344-359]

( short pause- 3:30 pm - 3:45 pm)

IV- Session .8 (3:45 pm - 5:30 pm): Exclusivism in Islam?
[ R.R: Y. Qadi, “The Path of Allah or the Paths of Allah?” in Between Heaven and Hell, M. H. Khalil (ed.), 109-121]

(The School of Inclusivism)

- Wednesday, June 24, 2015:
I- Session .9 (9:00 am - 10:30 am): Inclusivism (1): The Second Vatican Council

( short pause- 10:30 am - 10:45 am)

II- Session .10 (10:45 am - 12:30 pm): Inclusivism (2): Karl Rahner

( Lunch Break- 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm)

III- Session .11 (2:00 pm - 3:30 pm): Inclusivism (3): Clark Pinnock
[ R.R: C. Pinnock, A Widness in God’s Mercy, pp. 17-48; 149-184]

IV- Session .12 (4:35 pm - 5:30 pm): Inclusivism in Islam?
(The School of Pluralism)

- Thursday, June 25, 2015:
  I- Session .13 (9:00 am- 10:30 am): Pluralism (1): John Hick  

  (short pause- 10:30 am-10:45 am)

  II- Session .14 (10:45 am- 12:30 pm): Pluralism (2): Raimundo Pannikar  

  (Lunch Break- 12:30 pm- 2:00 pm)

  III- Session .15 (2:00 pm- 3:30 pm): Universalism in Islam?  

  (short pause- 3:30 pm- 3:45 pm)

  IV- Session 16. (3:45 pm- 5:30 pm): Assessing the Three Schools and Proposing A New Approach.

  (A Pneumatico-Trinitarian Theology)  
  of Religions

- Friday, June 26, 2015:
  I- Session .17 (9:00 am- 10:30 am): Trinitarian Inclusivism: Gavin D’Costa  

  (short pause- 10:30 am- 10:45 am)

  II- Session .18 (1:45 am- 12:30 pm): Pneumatic Inclusivism: Amos Yong  
  [R.R: A. Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*, pp. 35-56; and Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, pp. 81-120; 235-266]

  (Lunch Break- 12:30 pm- 2:00 pm)
III- Session .19 (2:00 pm- 3:30 pm): Pneumactico-Trinitarian Inclusivism: Najib Awad


*(short pause- 3:30 pm- 3:45 pm)*

IV- Session .20 (3:45 pm- 5:30 pm): Conclusions & Evaluation

- **Course Requirements and Assessment Expectations**

  1) **Assigned readings’ preparation and active class participation**: Students are required to read these texts as thoroughly and perceptively as they can and then to demonstrate an active class participation by coming to the sessions with questions or comments on them and the taught materials therein.

  2) **Presentations**: The students are required to prepare a presentation on one of the listed topics in the course’s outline. The instructor would ask the students to sign in for the required presentations during the first introductory session of the course. The presentation must be no more than 45 minutes long. The second 45 minutes or so of the session would be spent in open discussion between the presenter and the classmates over the texts’ contents and aspects related to their subjects. The students are free to use any audio-visual or material they find useful in performing their presentations. Every presenter must:

     A- present the content of the readings perceptively and coherently and to make sure that every main argument in the texts have been given fair presentation before his/her class-mates.

     B- give his/her own appraisal and point of view on the text’s subject and claims.

     C- attend to the questions of the classmates in a way that would invite for further discussion.

  3) **Term Paper**: students are expected to write 10- 12 pages-long papers (foot/endnotes, bibliography, outlines, are excluded). Every student is to imagine that he or she was invited to read an essay/give public lecture to a church/mosque/religious community or lay religious audiences on the theology of religious approach he or she made a presentation on. Every essay must:

     A- introduce lucidly and correctly the field of study called ‘theology of religions’

     B- present in a lucid and interesting way a specific theology of religions’ approach (i.e. of the scholar which the student already made the presentation on)

     C- displays the importance/problematic influences of this approach and its relevance/irrelevance and validity/invalidity in today’s human religious life.
The students must submit their essays to the instructor on **July, 20th, 2015.**

- **Grading Division:**

  1- reading’s preparation and class participation (50%)
  
  2- presentations: (20%)

  3-Term Papers: (30%)

- **Grading Criterion**

  Students are graded using the A, B, C, or F system, with “+” and “−” markings allowed. For purposes of this course, these grades mean:

  **A** Exceptional in several or most ways; completes all tasks, is creative and even original in content, and displays mastery of expression.

  **B** Adequate in all basic ways; parts of the task are slighted, the content has minor weakness, and expression is competent yet not compelling.

  **C** Inadequate in some ways; does not address significant tasks, shows weak or erroneous content, and expression sometimes obstructs understanding.

Auditors are welcome to participate in discussion and assignments to the degree they wish and should clarify their intent with the instructor, but their work will not be graded.

- **Additional Policies:**

  1) **Attendance:** Attendance in class is required. If you know you will be unable to attend a class session please inform the professor in advance. Missing two sessions will result in an automatic lowering of your final grade by 10%. Missing three or more sessions will result in automatic failure of the course.

  2) **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the failure to give proper credit for the words or ideas of another person, whether published or unpublished, and is strictly prohibited. Credit will not be given for written work in this course containing plagiarism, and plagiarism may result in a failing grade for the entire course. Please consult the Plagiarism Policy on pp. 56-57 of the Hartford Seminary Catalogue 2011-2012, and/or contact the instructor with questions in this regard.

- **Selected Bibliography**

- **General Bibliography**

  Asad, Talal. *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*,
-Jesus – God and Man*, 2d ed., Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe (trans.), Philadelphia: The

- Exclusivism


Inclusivism


Tanner, Norman, P. SJ. Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils: Trent to Vatican II, London: Sheed & Word/


- Pluralism


.“The Myth of Pluralism: The Tower of Babel-A Meditations on Non-violence” in
Cross Currents, 29(1979), pp. 201-226.

- Pneumatico-Trinitarian Prroach


