Meet the Christians: A Global Family Album (HI-525)
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Course Description:
Today Christians are found nearly everywhere on earth, saying their prayers in myriad languages and practicing their faith in vastly varied cultures. In this course we will encounter Christians from every continent, seeing their faces, hearing their voices, and exploring the ways in which they practice their faith. Christians are often so different from each other that they may regard each other as alien, or even as enemies, but we will sketch out their family resemblances and trace out some of the most important “family trees.” Together we will build a kind of composite portrait album of modern Christians, a way of seeing Christians in relation to one another that does not dismiss their serious differences. Along the way, we will take part in the scholarly debate concerning whether they even belong in the same album – whether it is more accurate to speak of many “Christianities” than of a single faith with many variations.

This course is suitable for anyone interested in learning about the current state and recent history of Christianity. It provides an appropriate starting point for those beginning their study of Christianity, but it also provides students with more background in Christianity a global perspective on the faith. This online course will run for a condensed term of seven weeks, and it will include a generous set of learning materials, along with plentiful opportunities for creativity, interaction, and dialogue.

Course Learning Outcomes
1. Students will develop a critical and sympathetic appreciation for the breadth, unity, and diversity of global Christianity, describing the who, where, and how of Christianity around the world (MARS LO#4, DMin LO#1).
2. Students will compare and contrast the four major Christian traditions (Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, and Pentecostal/Charismatic) examining their stories, spiritualities, structures, and conceptualizations of God and salvation (MARS LO#1).
3. Students will analyze the social, political, and religious particularities of Christianity in six major geographical locations (Middle East and North Africa; Central, South, and East Asia; Sub-Saharan Africa; Latin America; Europe; North America and Oceania) (MARS LO#3).
4. Students will evaluate the significance of the diversity of global Christianity for charting the course forward for intra- and interfaith dialogue (DMin LO#3, MARS LO#2).

Course Materials
Each week the course will feature a reading in our course text, Douglas Jacobsen’s survey text, The World’s Christians: Who they are, Where they are, and How they Got there. The readings from this text will be supplemented with a host of online materials, including recorded talks, supplementary readings, and especially videos and interviews with Christian leaders from each region we study.

The course will begin by looking at global Christianity through the lens of the “Four Traditions,” the Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, and Pentecostal streams of Christianity that make up the vast majority of Christians in the world today. The remaining six weeks of the course will be spent in studying the recent history and current composition of the major Christian communities of the world, including the Christian communities found in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas.
Course Structure:
The class will run for an intensive period of seven weeks, each of which will correspond to the overall pace and workload of two weeks of study in a typical, fifteen-week semester. All the work for the course will be due during the seven weeks of study; no assignments will be due after the course concludes. Some of the course readings will be possible to complete before the start of the course, but other than that, all work will be assigned and completed during the seven weeks of the course.

All assignments and study materials for the course will be asynchronous; that is, none of them will require participants to log into the system at a particular time of day. However, students will have specific days of the week when assignments of a particular kind are due. The schedule for the class will provide a repeating, weekly pattern. Students who may need to interrupt the pattern for travel or other commitments will need to make specific arrangements with the instructors.

Assignments and Assessments:
There will be two main kinds of weekly assignments, both of which will bring students into rich interactions with each other and with the professors. The first kind of assignment, the “Weekly Reaction Paper” will require students to write a short essay of 700-900 words in reaction to the material for the week. The assignment will also require students to engage substantively three fellow students. In some weeks, when nature of the material requires it, this assignment may be split into two in order to allow for the coverage of two disparate topics.

The second kind of weekly assignment for the course will be the “VoiceThread Q & A” discussions. VoiceThread is a system that allows us to have richly interactive, asynchronous conversations to which each person can contribute videos, audio recordings, images, and texts. The platform does not require people to log in at the same time, but it provides a way to have very rich interactions that go beyond the capabilities of discussion boards. Depending on the nature of the material covered, there may be more than one VoiceThread per week for students to take part in.

Small Assignments structured as quizzes will be administered during some weeks of the course. These will not be quizzes that students “study for.” Instead, they will be designed to help students process and remember specific course content. For example, a “quiz” might require a student to think carefully about the material covered in a video interview and summarize the main points of the interview, then provide a quick reaction to it.

Relative Weighting of Grades
Weekly Reaction Paper  
60%
Weekly VT Discussion 
40%
“Quizzes” 
10%

Required Text:
Course Schedule:

1. **Week 1, (May 14-18): The Four Traditions: Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal.**
   a. This unit introduces a simplified way of understanding Christian diversity and the four major traditions that include most current Christian communities.
   b. **Text:** Introduction, Part I: Who They Are and Chapters 1-4 (Pages 1-62).
   c. Lecture & other materials to be provided in the weekly module.
   d. Activities will include a “get to know you” exercise, as well as VoiceThread and Reaction Paper Discussions.

2. **Week 2, (May 21-25): Christianity in the Middle East, North Africa, And Eastern Europe.**
   a. **Text:** Part II Introduction, Chapters 5-6.
   b. Lecture & other materials to be provided in the weekly module.
   c. Activities will include VoiceThread(s) and Reaction Paper Discussion(s).

3. **Week 3, (May 28 – June 1): Christianity in Central & South Asia, Western Europe.**
   a. **Text:** Chapters 7-8.
   b. Lecture & other materials to be provided in the weekly module.
   c. Activities will include VoiceThread(s) and Reaction Paper Discussion(s).

4. **Week 4, (June 4-8): Christianity in North America**
   a. **Text:** Chapter 12
   b. Lecture & other materials to be provided in the weekly module.
   c. Activities will include VoiceThread(s) and Reaction Paper Discussion(s).

5. **Week 5, (June 11-15): Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa**
   a. **Text:** Chapter 9.
   b. Lecture & other materials to be provided in the weekly module.
   c. Activities will include VoiceThread(s) and Reaction Paper Discussion(s).

6. **Week 6, (June 18-22): Christianity in Latin America**
   a. **Text:** Chapter 11.
   b. Lecture & other materials to be provided in the weekly module.
   c. Activities will include VoiceThread(s) and Reaction Paper Discussion(s).

7. **Week 7, (June 25-28): Christianity in East Asia and Oceania**
   a. **Text:** Chapters 10, 13.
   b. Lecture & other materials to be provided in the weekly module.
   c. Activities will include VoiceThread(s) and Reaction Paper Discussion(s).
Late Work
Due to the intensive nature of this course, late work is not acceptable. Please communicate immediately with the instructor if you are unable to complete assignments when due. Extensions for assignments will only be given in consultation with the instructor, when deemed warranted (i.e. major illness, unanticipated family emergencies).

Seminary Grading Scale
A (95-100) Demonstrates excellent mastery of the subject matter, a superior ability to articulate this, and provides helpful connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.
A- (90-94) Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter, ability to articulate this well, and makes connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.
B+ (87-89) Demonstrates a very good understanding of the subject matter, able to articulate lessons learned in the assignment well. Meets expectations of the course.
B (83-86) Demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter and the ability to articulate lessons learned. Meets expectations of the course.
B- (80-82) Demonstrates an understanding of the material at hand, has some difficulty articulating this, and basic connection of the material to daily life or contemporary issues/life. Meets basic expectations for the course.
C+ (77-79) Demonstrates a basic comprehension of the subject matter, weak articulation and connections. Does not meet expectations for the course.
C (70-76) Demonstrates a minimal comprehension of the subject matter and has difficulty making connections. Does not meet expectations of the course.
F (below 70) Unable to meet the basic requirements of the course.

Doctor of Ministry Grading Scale
90-100 High Pass
83-94 Pass
70-82 Low Pass
below 70 Fail

Communication and Technology
Students will be expected to use their Hartford Seminary email for communication in regard to the course. In addition, all students will need to log into the course site several times per week in order to take part in discussions and to access readings, videos, mini-lectures and other course materials. Students must also create a free account with VoiceThread, and have access via the VoiceThread app, in Canvas, or in a separate browser window.
Plagiarism and Academic Integrity
Academic honesty and integrity are expected of all students. Plagiarism exists when: a) the work submitted was done, in whole or in part, by anyone other than the one submitting the work, b) parts of the work, whether direct quotations, ideas, or data, are taken from another source without acknowledgement, c) the whole work is copied from another source [especially a web based source], or d) significant portions of one’s own previous work used in another course. See “Plagiarism” at http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/.

Inclusive Language
Hartford Seminary is committed to a policy of inclusion in its academic life and mission. All members of the community are expected to communicate in language that reflects the equality of genders, openness to diverse cultural and theological perspectives, and sensitivity to one another’s images of God.

Accommodations
The Americans with Disabilities Act ensures equal access to qualified individuals with disabilities, and prevents discrimination on the basis of a disability. It is Hartford Seminary policy to provide reasonable accommodations on a case-by-case basis, which may mean working with outside social and governmental agencies to provide the necessary range of services for student success. Students with disabilities who wish to receive accommodations must contact the Student Services Coordinator. Students with disabilities are eligible for disability support services when they are enrolled in courses and they have disclosed their disability and requested related accommodations during enrollment and/or before the start of each semester. All students seeking accommodation must fill out the Request for Disability Accommodations form.

Official Handbooks
For all other questions you might have regarding policies or procedures, please check the student handbook http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-handbook/ and seminary policies at Academic policies are listed at http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/. 