

Holistic Theology

757

Holos University

Instructor: Oliver H. London, Ph. D.

2010

Syllabus

Course Description

Students will complete a course in broad ecumenical studies of Theology, emphasizing Holism, Spirituality and the major religions (Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, Taoism, Islamism, Native American Religions, South American Religions and African religions). We may cover others (e.g. Zoroastrianism, Jainism and Manichaeism) if you wish to cover them. You will also analyze your religious belief systems in light of the course and your learning. There will be basic readings and also latitude to read in other areas that you are specifically interested in. Our focus will be on what you learned about the topic and what you learned about yourself. This is a survey course of holistic world religions.

THIS IS A DISTANCE ONLY CLASS!

Texts:

Prothero, Stephen, God is not One (2010), HarperOne, New York, New York ISBN 978-0-06-157127-5

Smith, Huston, The World's Religions (1991), HarperCollins, New York, New York ISBN 978-0-06-166018-4 Any edition will do.

Optional Materials: Great Religions of the World by the Teaching Company: These are either CDs or DVDs. If you wish to buy them call 1-800-858-3224 and identify you self as a Holos student taking Holistic Theology. You can then purchase them for \$149.95 for the DVDs or \$99.95 for the CD- special academic price for us. DO NOT CALL THE GENERAL NUMBER. If you do they will charge you the regular price of over \$500.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to give students the broadest possible understanding of theology.

Upon completion of this course students will:

- Evaluate, critique, understand and compare several religions:

- A. Christianity, Judaism & Islamism
- B. Hinduism, Taoism & Confucianism
- C. Native American religions, South American religions & African religions
- D. Other-Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Manichaeism, Catharism, your personal interest may be added here

- Define holistic religion.
- Develop their own personal holistic theology model and explain it.
- Compare theology to spirituality- compare and contrast

Brief Need Statement

Many churches were founded on beliefs in spiritual beings and moral purposes and guidance. They were developed to help us lead our earth lives “properly” and help us prepare for the next life. They could be perceived as structured ways to look at spirituality. Our link for all of them is how they tie to spirituality and how well they made that tie. Of course, we will also analyze critique, compare and draw conclusions for ourselves. This will lead us to the final paper which is your holistic spiritual view of the cosmos.

DEFINITION

According to the new LEXICON WEBSTER’S DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, theology is: “The science which studies God and all that relates to him, including religion and morals. Christian theology has many branches, e.g. ascetical (dealing with training and virtue), dogmatic (formulation of doctrine), moral (the behavior of man in the light of his final destiny), mystical (contemplation of union with God), natural (in which God is known by the light of human reason alone), pastoral (dealing with the care of souls), and positive (dealing with revealed truth).” Despite the sexist language of Webster, this is the broadest definition. Mysticism and pastoral care are well covered in other courses.

Course assignments:

1. (a) Brief introduction of yourself and a picture. Also define holistic theology and spirituality using 4 sources- two for each. Write a 2-4 page paper and submit before our first phone conference. Be prepared to discuss and explain your position in our first phone conference. Use out two texts and, as an option, The Learning Company series on religions as references. Read the introduction to Protero first before reading Smith.

(b) Overview the two texts and review how they see the unity and differences in religions. This will be included in your 4 pages.

2. Take two of the three religions listed in A above (Christ, Judaism and Islamism), read four books (the two texts will be two of the sources) or other key sources for each of them. Then review major ideas in them, critique each- positive and negative- and draw conclusions on each. Then compare and contrast the two and draw conclusions. How are they holistic and spiritual? What did you learn about the religions and what did you learn about yourself?
3. Take two of the three religions listed in B above and follow the same process as in A.
4. Take two of the three religions listed in C above and follow the same process as in A.
5. Take two of the three areas listed in D above and follow the same process as in A.
6. Compare all of the religions you have studied this term and write a paper comparing all of them using our standard model listed above.
7. Write a personal synthesis paper explaining your own model of holistic theology. Support it with any information you can from the course. What are your overall learnings from the course- content and personal?

Paper one should be approximately 2-4 pages

Papers 2-6 should be approximately 10-12 pages in the following order:

- a. Review one of the religions- key ideas.
- b. Critique it- positive and negative.
- c. Draw your conclusions about this theology.
- d. Do the same for the second religion- a through c.
- e. Take the two and compare/contrast the two. Critique them.
- f. How are they holistic and how do they relate to spirituality?
- g. What did you learn about the religions?
- h. What did you learn about yourself?

Paper 7 should be approximately 6- 12 pages.

NOTE: Page lengths are approximate- it depends on how concise of a writer you are!

We will have 5 conference calls during the semester. We will decide the times and dates as soon as we can after the beginning of the term.

It should be fun!