

757: HOLISTIC THEOLOGY

Faculty: Delphine Rossi Knowlton, ThD, Rev

Holistic Theology provides an in-depth study of the world's great religions – Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism and Islam; an opportunity to study the indigenous spirituality of Native Americans, South Americans and African cultures or to study ancient and new religions of personal interest such as Baha'i, Seventh-Day Adventist, Jainism, Science of Mind and Quaker faiths. Students explore similarities and differences in religious doctrines; experience a variety of religious services; discover how different religions attend to holism – the body, soul and spirit; explore religious healing practices; and develop a personal philosophy of theology. This experiential and readings-based theological exploration includes developing and integrating a fundamental knowledge of interrelated aspects of theology, spirituality, holism and mysticism.

COURSE DELIVERY STYLE & PLAN OF ACTION

Holistic Theology is a distance learning course offered in the spring and fall semesters. There are several required assignments and conference calls during the semester.

LEARNING OUTCOMES Students will:

- Explore the doctrine and dogma of the world's great religions – Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Taoism; list and discuss similarities and differences between the great religions; and identify several points of uniqueness in each religion
- Become familiar with the doctrine and basic tenants of indigenous spirituality, ancient religions and new religions
- Identify various concepts of God or All That Is
- Describe the holistic nature of various religions and how the religion attends to the whole person – body, soul and spirit
- Identify healing practices among various religions
- Visit four different religious services and identify their primary religious practices
- Describe mysticism and how direct experience of God contributes to religious and or spiritual beliefs
- Assimilate knowledge of various religions and create a personal religious or spiritual philosophy citing specific traditions and dogma that are most meaningful
- Apply knowledge of the world's religions to a healing practice and practice as an ordained minister

REQUIRED TEXTS

Mundy, Jon. *What is Mysticism?* New York: Royal Fireworks Press, 2008.

Shield, Benjamin and Carlson, Richard, Eds., *For the Love of God: New Writing by Spiritual and Psychological Leaders*. San Rafael, California: New World Library, 1990.

Smith, Houston. *The World's Great Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions*. San Francisco: Harper, May 1999.

TWO ADDITIONAL TEXTS OF CHOICE ARE REQUIRED. Students select two books of choice to read and reference during their studies.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Bowker, John. *World Religions: The Great Faiths Explored and Explained*. New York, New York: DK Publications, 2006.

Boyett, Jason. *12 Major World Religions: The Beliefs, Rituals and Traditions of Humanity's Most Influential Faiths*. Berkeley, California: Zephyros Press, 2016.

Doane, T.W. *Bible Myths and Their Parallels in Other Religions*, 3rd edition. Montana: Kessinger Publishing Company, 1882. Read On-line at <http://www.ebooksdownloads.xyz/search/bible-myths>

Freke, Timothy and Peter Gandy. *The Jesus Mysteries: Was the "Original Jesus" a Pagan God?* New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999.

Pagels, Elaine. *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas*. California: Vintage Press, 2004.

Pagels, Elaine. *The Gnostic Gospels*. California: Vintage Press, 1989.

Reagan, Michael, Ed., *The Hand of God: Thoughts and Reflections of the Spirit of the Universe*. Atlanta, Georgia: Lionheart Books, LTD, 1999.

Sitchin, Zechariah. *The 12th Planet: Book 1 of the Earth Chronicles*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1976.

Thiering, Barbara. *Jesus & The Riddle of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1987.

HOLOS FACULTY-STUDENT COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Students and instructors communicate frequently via email and calls while ZOOM or phone conferences create a collegial forum for sharing ideas among course participants. Telephone conferences and calls with instructors are at the student's expense. Our faculty will inform students of times when they will not be available by email or phone communication. We ask that students do the same and inform instructors if they will not be available for scheduled

phone conferences. Please allow three days for a response when emailing an instructor. If you have not received a response after three days, re-send the email or call your instructor and leave a voice message. With the possibility of unforeseen circumstances, if you have still not received a response after a week, forward your email communications with your instructor to the Dean of Faculty.

ASSIGNMENT FORMATS

- All written assignments must be Microsoft Word documents sent by email as attached files. Please do not send PDF files.
- Double-space all papers.
- FONT: 12 point Candara, Arial or Times New Roman or a suitable clean font.
FILE NAME and E-MAIL SUBJECT LINE: When you save your document, please use the following format to name your Word file. Always include your name and the assignment number in the subject line of your E-mail and on the title page of your assigned papers. For example - SmithJ_887#1.doc. (Last Name, First Initial_Course #, Assignment#.doc)
- END NOTES: All referenced material must be cited using endnotes. Cite all referenced material using *Chicago Manual of Style* endnotes or *APA Style*.

757 ASSIGNMENTS Fall 2018

DUE DATES All students enrolled in Holos 757 *Holistic Theology* will receive a copy of the course assignment due dates via email at the beginning of the semester.

ASSIGNMENT #1 The World's Great Religions

20% of grade

Learning Outcomes of Assignment: Students will differentiate between definitions of theology, holistic theology and spirituality; identify the basic doctrine and dogma of the world's great religions and their religious practices; identify each religion's concepts of God or All That Is; and identify several points of uniqueness in each religion.

Assignment Description: 1. Define holistic theology, theology and spirituality in several paragraphs for each definition. 2. Then, read *The World's Great Religions* and two additional resources. 3. Write an 8 page paper describing the basic doctrine and dogma of each religion and their religious practices; identify each religion's concept of God; and identify several unique points about the religion. The world's great religions are: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Taoism.

Required Texts and/or Materials: *The World's Great Religions* and two additional books of choice.

ASSIGNMENT #2 Similarities and Differences between the World's Great Religions

25% of grade

Learning Outcomes of Assignment: Students will explore, compare and contrast the basic similarities and differences between the world's great religions; identify each religion's concepts of God or All That Is; identify several points of uniqueness in each religion; and describe how mysticism in each of the religions contributes to religious beliefs.

Assignment Description: 1. Review *The World's Great Religions* and *What is Mysticism* and two additional resources 2. Review Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Taoism and compare and contrast the similarities and differences among the religious doctrines, dogma and religious practices identifying what is unique about each religion; compare and contrast their concept of God or All That Is; and identify how the religion's mystics have contributed to their religious beliefs. 3. Create a thoughtfully prepared paper of 10-12 pages discussing these similarities and differences.

Required Texts and/or Materials: *The World's Great Religions*, *What is Mysticism*, *For the Love of God* and two additional books of choice.

ASSIGNMENT #3 Personal Experiences of Different Religious Services and Practices

20% of grade

Learning Outcomes of Assignment: Students will select four different religions and attend the religion's primary worship service to learn of and identify each religion's basic doctrine and worship practices. A focus of this assignment is a non-judgmental, personal experience of different religions.

Assignment Description: 1. Select four different religious worship services to fully attend. 2. While at the service, identify the following:

1. Describe how the church is decorated and any major statues, symbols, etc.
2. Describe how welcoming church members were as you entered, were seated, and during and after the service at the church.
3. Note whether the service was formal, traditional, informal, etc.
4. Identify who led the service and who assisted in the service.
5. List the order of service, its length, etc.
6. Describe your impressions of a felt sense of the presence of God or All That Is in this church-service.
7. Discuss your personal thoughts and intuitive impressions of the church service.

3. Write a 2 page summary of each of your religious service visits completing items 1-7 above.

Required Texts and/or Materials: *The World's Great Religions*, *What is Mysticism* and *For the Love of God*.

ASSIGNMENT #4 The Holistic Nature of Religion

20% of grade

Learning Outcome: Describe the holistic nature of various religions and how the religion attends to religious holism – body, soul and spirit; identify healing practices among various religions; become familiar with the doctrine and basic tenants of indigenous spirituality, ancient religions and new religions.

Assignment Description: 1. Select two religions either from indigenous spirituality, ancient religions or new religions. 2. Research each religion or spiritual philosophy and identify and describe how they attend to the holistic nature of the individual - body, soul and spirit; identify the healing practices unique to their beliefs. 3. In a well-prepared paper of 8 pages, share the basic philosophy of each religious or spiritual practice; describe their philosophy in regards to attending to the holistic nature of the individual and their healing beliefs and practices.

Required Texts and/or Materials: *The World's Great Religions*, *What is Mysticism* and two additional books of choice.

ASSIGNMENT #5 A Personal Philosophy of Theology, Mysticism and Spirituality

15% of grade

Learning Outcomes: Assimilate knowledge of the great religions and create a personal religious or spiritual philosophy citing specific traditions and dogma that are most meaningful; apply knowledge of the world's religions to a healing practice and practice as an ordained minister.

Assignment Description: 1. Review all course materials and consider the various religious traditions, mystics and spiritual paths you've explored. 2. Reflect your personal beliefs about God or All That Is. 3. Describe your personal theological philosophy including your thoughts on theology, mysticism and spirituality in a concluding paper of 6 pages.

Required Texts and/or Materials: *The World's Great Religions*, *What is Mysticism*, *For the Love of God* and two additional books of choice.

CONFERENCE CALLS on ZOOM and SKYPE

Course conference calls are required! Conference calls are intended to enhance valuable aspects of a distance learning environment while creating a greater sense of community among Holos faculty and graduate students. Graduate students will receive an invitation to the conference call and are asked to reply to the invitation prior to the call. Each student pays for his or her own individual conference call costs. Conference calls will be held on

ZOOM or Skype. As course students register, we'll decide on call dates and times depending on time zones.

September, October, November and December 2018

Time: 60 minutes.

Description: Each conference call centers on readings, assignments and personal insights during the course. Graduate students have opportunities to discuss questions, experiences and assess healing techniques with classmates and their instructor.

Learning Outcomes of Conference: Create a sense of community among Holos University graduate students and faculty; create a sense of collegueship and support among course graduate students; discuss ideas and insights from Holos 757 Holistic Theology required readings; review and discuss upcoming assignments in 757 Holistic Theology.

FINAL ASSIGNMENT

Students will receive a course evaluation form at the end of the semester. Please complete and return the evaluation form as directed. Notification of your final course grade(s) will be received only after you have submitted an evaluation for all courses you completed this semester. Students who plan to take an Incomplete in a course must wait until finishing a course before returning the evaluation form for the course.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION on HOLISTIC THEOLOGY

One of the most essential aspects of holistic theology or the study of God or All That Is is an understanding of the origin, development and creation of various religions, their doctrines, dogma and practices. Holistic Theology offers an opportunity for exploring, discovering, intuiting and comparing and contrasting the basics of the world's great religions, indigenous spirituality, ancient and new religions. In this way, knowledge and skills for personal insight, personal growth, existential perspectives on life and a greater spiritual understanding of life experiences is possible.

Holistic Theology provides an experiential component to learning in several ways. First, to know God and develop a personal philosophy of God or All That Is, one must create, maintain and nurture an intimate relationship with God. Learning more about theology and religions may assist students in expanding their knowledge and beliefs about God. And second, in experiencing different religious services, without judgment, students have a personal experience of how others worship God or All That Is which may assist them in further developing their philosophy of God and understanding of theology.

On a cognitive level, Holistic Theology centers on becoming familiar with the world's great religions, minor religions, spiritual philosophies and mysticism explored through course readings. This course integrates research, history, theology, mysticism, personal intuition, holistic health, healing and spirituality.