

ME 835

RELIGIONS OF SOUTH ASIA
AND THE
CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

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Syllabus and Lecture Outlines

for Classroom Use,

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

ME835: CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTERS WITH SOUTH & SOUTHEAST ASIAN RELIGIONS

Paul G. Hiebert

Spring, 2002. T.-Th. 1:00 - 2:10 p.m. Library 110

DESCRIPTION:

This course seeks to analyze the fundamental presuppositions and the various religions in India from both historical and contemporary perspectives. The purpose is to understand Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and Islam in South and Southeast Asia in terms of their central beliefs and worldviews, and look for bridges and barriers in the communication of the Gospel and developing contextualized theologies in these settings. Attention will be given to the broader question of the relationship of Christianity to non-Christian religions.

COURSE FORMAT:

Class sessions will combine lecture, discussion and presentation of papers. Participants will be expected to share what they have found helpful in their readings. When possible, they will also present their research papers in class.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Textbooks:

Klostermaier, Klaus K. A Survey of Hinduism. Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press. 1989.

Humphreys, Christmas Buddhism: An Introduction and Guide. N.Y.: Viking Penguin. 1988.

On Reserve: Additional readings will be placed on reserve. Participants are expected to conduct research on Hindu, Sikh and Indian tribal religions.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Each participant is expected to complete a major research paper on a topic related to one of the religions of South or Southeast Asia [Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam]. This may deal with understanding some aspect or school of thought within these religions, with a broad overview of their beliefs, with their interface with popular religious forms, or with their relationship to Christianity. Some may wish to complete a survey of the literature on the topic. Here, instead of writing a paper, the participant is expected to do more readings, and to write a critical review of the materials on the literature related to the topic. In such a review, the point is not to summarize the literature, but to examine the debate being carried on by the scholars. All papers should include some missiological applications.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOURCES:

There are several good bibliographies on South Asian religious materials. These include: Bibliography of Asian Studies. This is published yearly and

has the most exhaustive coverage of materials on Asia available. It includes books, articles and dissertations in English, French and German.

Religious Index, Humanities Index, and Social Science Index

are three important sources of information on journal articles. Look carefully under the topics of your interest. Books can be located through the card catalogue. Elizabeth flirer von Haimendorf has compiled an extensive bibliography on India up to 1976.

EXPECTATIONS:

Participants are expected to complete the reading of assigned text books and search out related materials before topics are discussed in class. They are expected to participate in the discussions, and to make presentations on their research.

Assessments: 20% reporting outside readings in class, 20% attendance and participation in discussions, 60% class report and major paper.