

**Associated Canadian Theological Schools****THS 743/ CCM 643****World Faiths and the Gospel****Fall 2009****Instructor: Joanne Pepper, Ph.D.****Phone: 604-888-7511, ext. 3127****Monday 8:30-11:10 a.m.****Office: CPS, Fosmark lower floor****Email: [jpepper@twu.ca](mailto:jpepper@twu.ca)****COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will examine the historical origins, beliefs, and practices of major world religions with the purpose of analyzing the impact of the worldview generated by each faith group. A general introduction to the study of worldviews will be followed by a structural survey of Animism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam. As class interest and time permits, additional studies into other religions may also be undertaken.

Class time will be devoted to lectures, videos and discussion. Special emphasis will be given to examining theology and soteriology from a cross-cultural perspective and to the manner by which both Christian and non-Christian traditions may interact. A concluding focus for study will be to gain insights into potential points of contact for mission and ministry in cross-cultural encounters or in pluralistic societies.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

1. To enable the student to gain an appreciation of the complexity of non-Christian religious worldviews as they relate to socio-cultural backgrounds as well as to the exercise of biblical theology and missiology.
2. To enable the student to become aware of the significance and difficulties of making Christianity understandable and relevant to diverse people groups of the world without losing its fundamental dynamic.
3. To enable the student to interact with issues of applied theology in a thoroughly Christian manner and to apply knowledge of the field to the effective, compassionate, and culturally meaningful communication of the Christian message.

**TEXTBOOKS:**

Calvin E. Shenk, *Who Do You Say That I Am?: Christians encounter other Religions.*  
Waterloo, Ontario: Herald Press, 1997. Course pack available in TWU bookstore.

David W. Shenk, *Global Gods: Exploring the Role of Religions in Modern Societies.*  
Waterloo, Ontario: Herald Press, 1995.

**RECOMMENDED RESOURCE:**

Harold Netland, *Encountering Religious Pluralism: The Challenge to Christian Faith and Mission.* Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2001.

**ATTENDANCE:**

It is the responsibility of the student to attend all class sessions of courses for which s/he is registered. Indeed, regular class attendance is especially important in a class that meets only once weekly. Each successive session will be predicated on the assumption that student comprehension and interaction with the class material will be progressive and cumulative. A student will be devalued one full letter grade if s/he is absent without permission or legitimate cause for more than one-quarter of class sessions.

**EVALUATION:**

Course grades are assigned according to normal seminary standards and procedures, as outlined in the ACTS catalogue. *All assignments must be completed in order to receive credit for the course.*

<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
A+ = 4.30	B+ = 3.30	C+ = 2.30
A = 4.00	B = 3.00	C = 2.00
A- = 3.70	B- = 2.70	C- = 1.70

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Reading and response to David Shenk, *Global Gods.*

Due on or before Oct. 5

15%

To gain a good understanding of the framework of the book and the key issues the author will address, read chapters one and two of *Global Gods*. Then, choose any three subsequent chapters from 3-12 for an in-depth examination. Read each of the three chosen chapters, and make written response to any 4 questions for reflection which

follow at the end of the chapter. Each chapter reflection response should be approximately 1½-2 typed pages in length.

2. Midterm exam

20%

The exam will be an in-class exam, comprised of both objective and subjective questions. The format will be discussed further in classes prior to the exam. Oct.19

3. Research Essay: Informal interviews and paper

30%

Due on or before November 9.

a. Choose one world religion as a focal point for the topic of your assignment. Briefly **note the essentials of this world faith**, according to its mainstream history, beliefs and practices. Then, interview informally, but in a face-to-face setting, at least four or five people presently living in North America who are adherents of this faith community. Try to speak to people who represent different facets of the religion (eg. clergy and laity; differing gender, age, culture, education, economic backgrounds). Try to **identify those faith issues** (belief and practice) **which seem to most deeply affect people** in differing gender, age, culture or economic groups. Can you hypothesize why these issues are significant to your informants? Summarize the most salient points of your field interviews. (10%)

b. Integrate your interviews with additional academic research (8-10 sources minimally, no more than 4 from an internet source [not counting journals on-line, etc.]), to reflect on the dynamic of **religious change**. How has modernity or postmodernity [subtly or not-so-subtly] influenced a particular faith community? (e.g. How have paradigm shifts in belief and practice emerged over time? Has this resulted in a weakened or strengthened religious community? Explain.) What do you predict will be the greatest challenges facing the religious community in the next decade, and why? (10%)

c. Conclude your paper with a section on **dialogue** *between* an Evangelical Christian worldview and the worldview of the religion upon which you've centered your research and the means of **Christian mission** and evangelistic ministry *to* individuals of the religion under study. (e.g. Discuss bridges of similarity and commonality, and walls of contrast and confrontation.) Formulate a plan for helping individuals of another faith to encounter the Biblical Christ. (10%)

The paper should be no longer or shorter than 10-12 double-spaced typewritten pages.

You may choose to study further any of the religions we will address in class, or you may choose to research any of the following:

New Age	Zoroastrianism	Bahai'ism	Hare Krishnaism
Shintoism	Confucianism	Taoism	Jainism
Mormonism	Jehovah's Witnesses	Christian Science	Zen
Wicca	Tribalism (specify group)	Kabbalism	Shiite Islam

4. Final Exam 30%

Part A: An in-class exam of both objective and subjective questions covering the second half of the semester, dealing with classwork and discussions. [15%]

Part B: A take-home essay exam, based partly on responses to Calvin Shenk's book. Due on or before Wednesday, December 9. [15%]

Read Shenk's text, *Who do You Say That I Am?* Then, choose one section of the overall work for a closer examination. Interact with Shenk's viewpoints on either: (1) Religious plurality [chapters 1-3]; (2) Biblical perspectives on religion [chapters 4 & 5]; (3) Theological issues and assessments concerning religions [chapters 6 & 7]; (4) Christ and other religions [chapters 8 & 9]; or (5) Forms of witness [chapters 10-13].

Think back to the ideas and/or persons encountered during this past semester. Recall the symbols, beliefs, and practices of non-Christian faiths. Evaluate Shenk's views, in light of what you have studied and experienced. Estimate the strengths and weaknesses of the author's viewpoint, and offer your own (similar or different) social and biblical positions on the subject.

Your response paper should be no shorter or longer than 4-5 double-spaced typewritten pages. Make specific references to ideas of the author by indicating page and paragraph citing. You may use additional sources to help evaluate and/or critique the ideas presented by Shenk. If you do use other sources in addition to your own class and field notes, attach a bibliography of any additional works consulted.

5. Class Participation 5%

Consistent attendance, thoughtful responses and contributions to class discussions through comments, questions, research and readings.

**Summary of Course Requirements:**

Reading and Response	15%
Midterm exam	20%
Research Project	30%
Final Exam	30%
In-class portion [15]	
Take-home portion [15]	
Class Participation	<u>5%</u>
	100%

**Policy on Late Assignments:** Late assignments will be penalized one percent of the assignment's total mark, per weekday. No assignments will be accepted after one week past the due date.

## *Supplement: Important Academic Notes from ACTS*

### **Web Support – Student Portal** <https://students.twu.ca>

All students at TWU have a TWUPass username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application or can be managed through the computing services help desk or the link on the student portal. Your student email account is also available through this student portal and is vital for communication about grades, account statements, lost passwords, sign-up instructions, etc. If you do not know your account or password, there is a link at the login area called “I forgot my password.” When you click on that link, you will be walked through the process of retrieving your account information.

### **Campus Closure**

In the event of deteriorating weather conditions overnight or other emergency situations, every effort will be made to communicate information regarding the cancellation of classes to the radio stations CKNW (980 AM), CKWX (1130 AM), MAX (850 AM), PRAISE (106.5 FM) and KARI (550 AM) by 6:30 a.m., and an announcement will be placed on the University's switchboard as well as on the website <http://www.twu.ca/conditions/>. The first announcement regarding a closure will cover the period up to 1:00 p.m. only. If classes are to be cancelled beyond 1:00 p.m., this decision will be announced by the same means before 11:00 a.m. that day. Students and faculty should assume that all night classes will continue to operate. If the emergency continues into the evening, students and faculty may check for a closure notice on the University's switchboard and website after 3:00 p.m. that day.

### **Paper Formatting**

Students need to adhere to Turabian format except in counselling courses, for which APA format is used.

Students are encouraged strongly to use RefWorks (available through the library home page [www.twu.ca/library](http://www.twu.ca/library)) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. They will need to be aware of the need to “clean up” most bibliographies generated by this program. Students are encouraged to view the documents on the following websites for format samples: <http://faculty.ucc.edu/egh-damerow/turabian.htm> or [www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/](http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/). Note that in RefWorks the available formatting styles are those of Turabian (Notes), 6th edition, and APA – American Psychological Association, 5th edition.

Counselling students are expected to purchase the APA Publications Manual. More information found at the following website. <http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>. CANIL students can locate this on the CANIL intranet, under the “student” side. A hard copy is given to incoming students in the fall.

**Please check with your professor to see which one he/she recommends you use!!**

### **Research Ethics**

Please note that all research projects involving human participants undertaken by members of the TWU university community (including projects done by ACTS students to satisfy course or degree requirements) **MUST** be approved by the Trinity Western University Research Ethics Board. Information and forms may be found at

<http://www.twu.ca/academics/research/ethics/> Those needing additional clarification may contact Dr. Bruce Guenther. Please allow at least three (3) weeks from the date of submission for a review of the application.

### **Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism at TWU**

As Christian scholars pursuing higher education, academic integrity is a core value of the entire TWU community. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship at TWU. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding all forms of plagiarism and cheating in scholarly work. TWU has a strict policy on plagiarism (see academic calendar 2008-09, pp. 37-38). Further details on this subject are contained in the ACTS Student Handbook in section 4.12. The handbook is available online on the ACTS webpage ([www.acts.twu.ca](http://www.acts.twu.ca)) at the following link: [www.acts.twu.ca/Handbook.html](http://www.acts.twu.ca/Handbook.html).

Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it is the student's responsibility. An excellent resource describing plagiarism and how to avoid it has been prepared by TWU Librarian William Badke and is freely available for download (PPT file) or used as flash (self running) tutorials of varying lengths from:

<http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/plagiarism.ppt>

<http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/Plagiarism.swf> (14 minute flash tutorial)

[http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/Plagiarism\\_Short.swf](http://www.acts.twu.ca/lbr/Plagiarism_Short.swf) (8 minute flash tutorial)

### **Equity of Access**

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to inform the ACTS Director of Student Life of that fact before the beginning of a course so that necessary arrangements may be made to facilitate the student's learning experience. We are unable to accommodate any student who informs the Director of Student Life of a disability after the beginning of class.