

CODE: THO 2316

TITLE: Religion, Culture, and Diversity

CREDITS: 3 cr.

TERM: Winter 2010

PROFESSOR: Derek Bianchi Melchin

DESCRIPTION	<p>Living in contemporary societies means engaging with religious and cultural diversity as a fact of everyday life. However, it also challenges us to address the problems that emerge when people's beliefs, values, and practices come into conflict. This course will introduce students to some of the questions raised by the contemporary challenges of religious and cultural pluralism. The first section of the course uses case studies to examine some of the ways we typically respond to situations of religious and cultural difference. The second section focuses on understanding the process of interreligious and intercultural engagement more fully: what are we doing when we struggle to "make sense" of others whose cultural and religious values differ from our own? The third section builds on this framework to develop elements for a theological response to the problems of religious diversity and conflict in contemporary societies. Throughout, the aim of the course is to help students gain a better understanding, both of the types of challenges that religious diversity presents us with, as well as some ideas about how we can respond to these challenges, both socially and theologically.</p>
OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To identify some of the core questions raised by the contemporary phenomenon of religious and cultural pluralism.• To identify some of the factors that contribute to distrust and conflict in situations of religious and cultural difference.• To explore some of the processes of engagement that can help people to more successfully navigate their encounters with other religious and cultural traditions.• To develop critical tools for sustaining theological reflection and engagement in situations of cultural and religious diversity.
WORKLOAD	<p>Weekly readings and class participation Two short assignments Final take-home exam</p>
EVALUATION	<p>Participation: 10% Assignments: 25% each Exam: 40%</p>
REQUIRED TEXTS	<p>Course reader of selected texts</p>
RECOMMENDED TEXTS	