

Spring 2018

HIST 585-6: Special Topics in History:
(cross-listed with RLR 700-3)

Topic: Christians in Asia and Africa

Instructor	Day(s)	Time(s)	Maximum Enrollment
Jones	M	2:30 – 5:30 pm	12

Semester Description:

This course explores the development of Christian identities and expressions in select Asian and African societies, when these were either directly controlled or significantly influenced by European imperialism and colonialism during the 19th and 20th centuries. Through rich case studies, it interrogates assumptions about the unidirectional movement of Christianity, from missionary and colonizer to convert and colonized. The course employs various comparative schema to elucidate the history of Christian communities and persons in Africa and Asia. Methodologically, it compares works of social history with those in the new and burgeoning field of anthropology of Christianity, to assess relative strengths and challenges in distinctive disciplinary approaches to the writing of history. In subject matter, the course compares various regions of the world in order to apprehend particular perceptions and appropriations of Christianity in Africa and Asia. The course also compares diverse forms of European rule, and the effects these had on local populations, as well as different local understandings of power and authority, and how these interacted with specific forms of colonialism and imperialism. Finally, it compares distinct expressions of Christian mission, and of various local religious traditions and cultures, to discern their roles on the formation of Asian and African Christian thought and practice.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course students will be able to (1) understand social, religious and anthropological approaches to the historical study of Christianity in Asia and Africa; (2) provide an account of the ways in which European and local cultures and religions contributed to the formation of Christian identities; and (3) describe how imperial and local powers and authorities in different contexts interacted to influence and shape the life of various Christians and Christian communities.

Required Textbooks, Articles, and Resources:

1. Introduction, *Historiography of World Christianity – Readings from Walls*, Sanneh, Tony K. Stewart, Vicente Rafael, *Postcolonial/Subaltern Studies*
2. *Historiography of World Christianity – Readings from Fenella Cannell*, Joel Robbins, Comaroffs, A. Jones
3. Webb Keane, *Christian Moderns: Freedom and Fetish in the Mission Encounter* (U. of California Press, 2007)

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4. Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity Among the Ewe in Ghana* (Edinburgh University Press, 1999)
5. Paul Kollman, *The Evangelization of Slaves and Catholic Origins in Eastern Africa* (Orbis Books, 2005)
6. David Mosse, *The Saint in the Banyan Tree: Christianity and Caste Society in India* (University of California Press, 2012)
7. Eliza Kent, *Converting Women: Gender and Protestant Christianity in Colonial South India* (Oxford University Press, 2004)
8. Richard Elphick, *The Equality of Believers: Protestant Missionaries and the Racial Politics of South Africa* (University of Virginia Press, 2012)
9. J. D. Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Indiana University Press, 2000)
10. J. J. Carney, *Rwanda Before the Genocide: Catholic Politics and Ethnic Discourse in the Late Colonial Era* (Oxford University Press, 2014)
11. Lian Xi, *Redeemed by Fire: The Rise of Popular Christianity in Modern China* (Yale University Press: 2010)
12. Sebastian C. H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity* (Cambridge University Press, 2015)

Grading:

Students are expected to attend each class, and come to each class with the readings for that session completed. In addition, each student will write one 5 – 7 page reflection paper on the readings for one particular class session, and that paper will be used as the basis for class discussion. Finally, each student will write one 20 – 25 page research paper on some period or aspect of Christianity in Asia and/or Africa, dealing with historical as well as religious and social contextual issues inherent in their topic. Students will be graded as follows:

- Class participation in discussions: 20%
- Weekly reflection papers: 30%
- 25 page research paper: 50%