Cultures and Contexts: Global Christianity

CORE-UA 500.010

Fall 2018

Lectures: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00pm-3:15pm, Room: 19 UP, 102

Professor Elayne Oliphant

Office: 726 Broadway, Suite 554, Room 564

Office Hours: Mondays, 11:00am-1:00pm

Email: elayne.oliphant@nyu.edu

Teaching Assistants

Leela Khanna, lnk235@nyu.edu, Office Hours: Wednesdays, 11:00-1:00; Office: 25 Waverly Place, Room 200

Joseph Livesey, jfl322@nyu.edu, Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:00-1:45; Office 726 Broadway, Room 553

Schuyler Marquez, schuyler.marquez@nyu.edu, Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:00-2:00pm

The Exodus, Marc Chagall, 1952-1966, Oil on canvas

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the ongoing global formation and reformation of Christianity, from its origins in a pluralistic ancient Mediterranean world and spread throughout Europe and the Middle East, to its historical and ever-transforming role in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Rather than attempting to identify an essential core of this complex religious and cultural formation, we will explore the problems and possibilities Christian texts, concepts, institutions, practices, and narratives have posed for a diversity of populations over distinct historical periods and regions. We will gain an appreciation both for how various populations have responded to Christianity and the ways in which these encounters have disrupted and transformed Christian narratives. Exploring this global and at times cacophonous conversation will allow us to consider how Christians have justified and reproduced, as well as critiqued and questioned the power of empires and nations, elites and tyrants, as well as reformers and critics.
The course is divided into three sections. In the first, we will look at the broad themes that tend to accompany Christianity in its various global expressions. We will cover five distinct themes, which we will then frame our conversations throughout the course: 1) incarnation & presence; 2) resurrection & absence; 3) mission & conversion; 4) sin & immanence; 5) salvation & transcendence. In the second section of the course we will look at Christian institutions and structures of power, placing the concepts from the first section in a range of political and historical contexts, including the Roman Empire, European colonial expansion, American slavery, and postcolonial Africa. In the final section of the course, we will explore a variety of Christian actors, including mystics and saints, relics and images, words and bodies, and economies and architectural forms. Keeping the five course themes in mind, we will explore how they are expressed through these material and immaterial forms.

Recitation discussions will focus on the week’s theme, often through a close reading of a primary document, or a careful examination of an image, object, or short film connected to the week’s readings.

Cultures and Contexts is intended to prepare you for life in a globalized world. Through critical engagements with primary cultural materials, it introduces you to ways humans come to understand themselves as members of social, religious, national, and regional collectives, and with the dynamics of cultural interaction and influence. By taking Global Christianity you will learn a great deal about the remarkable diversity of the most populous religion on the planet. Rather than attempting to create a narrow definition of Christianity and ascertain whether or not its various “incarnations” measure up, we will expand that which we understand Christianity—and religion—to be. As a part of the College Core Curriculum, this class is designed to extend your education beyond the focused studies of your major, preparing you for your future life as a thoughtful individual and active member of society.

**COURSE TEXT**

For sale at The Strand and on reserve at Bobst Library:


All other readings will be made available through NYU Classes.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Summary Papers</td>
<td>15% (or 5% each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Thematic Papers</td>
<td>20% (or 10% each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christianity in the City Paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation and Attendance</td>
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Participation and Attendance (15 Percent)

Attendance is mandatory at lectures and recitations. All students are expected to contribute to discussions in recitations. Teaching assistants will take attendance at all lectures and recitations. You do not need to email the professor or teaching assistants to let us know about any absences. It is entirely up to you to make sure you have caught up on the material you missed. All handouts will be added to the Resources tab on NYU Classes. Lecture slides will be posted following each lecture. However, as you will soon see, understanding the ideas conveyed in the slides will require attendance at lecture, careful note taking, and attendance at recitations. On the first day of class, identify two students who agree to make their notes available if you miss a class. Students who miss more than four class sessions or more than two recitations will receive a failing grade for participation and attendance. If an extended illness or personal event is disrupting your studies, address it as soon as possible by seeking out your advisor and then the professor to determine how best to keep yourself on track.

Assignments

Summary Papers (15 Percent)

Three times throughout the semester, students will submit a 2-page, 3-paragraph discussion of selected course readings. The first two paragraphs will summarize the central argument of the text. The third will put this argument into conversation with one other text we have read this semester. Summary Papers will be due in hard copies at the beginning of class on Thursday, September 20; Thursday, November 1; and Tuesday, November 27. The lowest grade received on a Summary Paper will be dropped.

Thematic Papers (20 Percent)

Twice throughout the semester, students will be required to submit a short (3-4-page) paper examines one of the course themes: incarnation & presence; resurrection & absence; mission & conversion; sin & immanence; and salvation & transcendence. In the papers, students will first describe the theme in light of two of the tensions it produces. They will then choose two articles from the course and describe how the practices described within express one of each of the tensions of the chosen theme. Thematic Papers will be due in hard copies at the beginning of class on Thursday, October 4, and Tuesday, November 13.

Christianity in the City Papers (10 Percent)

Students will visit one of New York City’s many Christian spaces or objects. This may involve visiting one of the city’s churches during or outside of services, or exploring one of the many Christian objects found in its museums. Students will then write a 4-5-page paper describing and analyzing the site in light of one of the course themes. The paper is due in hard copies at the beginning of class on Tuesday, December 4.

Midterm (15 Percent)

The midterm exam will be based on concepts we explore in weeks 1 through 7. The midterm will include multiple choice, short, and long answer questions. A Study Guide will be provided on Thursday, October 11. The midterm will take place in class on Thursday, October 18.

Final Exam (25 Percent)

The final exam will be based on the readings, discussions, films, and images we explore throughout the semester. It will include multiple choice, short, and long answer questions. A Study Guide will be provided in class on Thursday,
December 6; a review session will be held on Tuesday, December 11; and the final exam will be held in class on Tuesday, December 13.

GRADES

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100%</td>
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<td>A</td>
<td>93-96.9%</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.9%</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62.9%</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>59.9% and below</td>
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SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

- Use 12 point font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, and double-spacing
- Include your last name and page number in the footer at the bottom right of each page
- Give yourself plenty of time to proofread and edit each assignment before submission
- Bring your assignments—printed and stapled—to your Teaching Assistant at the beginning of class on the day it is due

EXTENSIONS/LATE POLICY

Absolutely no extensions will be made for any reason, apart from reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities (see below). All assignments are due in class on the due date listed on the syllabus. Of the three summary papers, the lowest grade received will be dropped for all students. If a family or personal emergency is interfering with your studies, make an appointment with the professor and your TA after meeting with your advisor. Any papers submitted after the deadline will lose 0.5 points each day it is late.

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a disability or a personal circumstance that will affect your learning in this course, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can discuss the best ways to meet your needs. Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, or learning disability, or is deaf or hard of hearing. The Center for Students with Disabilities can help you document your needs and create an accommodation plan. By making a plan through ODSS, you can insure appropriate accommodations without disclosing your condition or diagnosis to course instructors.

Moses Center for Students with Disabilities:

NYU’s Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities
726 Broadway, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10003-6675
Telephone: 212-998-4980
Voice/TTY Fax: 212-995-4114
Web site: www.nyu.edu/csd

NYU CLASSES

A host of course resources can be found on the NYU Classes site. On the introductory page, you will find the first five pages of the syllabus. Under the tab “Syllabus,” each day of the class has a folder with the readings for the week (except for those from the course text available in the NYU Bookstore). Following each lecture, I will also add the
slides and any handouts given out in class to the day's folder under the Syllabus tab. Under the “Resources” tab you can find a copy of the syllabus, and an assignment sheet for each assignment.

LAPTOP & CELL PHONE POLICY

Numerous studies have proven that, for most students, use of laptops for note taking does not, in fact, improve their success. In my experience, I have found my laptop to be a source of distraction rather than assistance during lectures. I strongly encourage you to use a paper notebook to take notes during class, but will ultimately leave that up to each of you. If you choose to use a laptop or any other electronic device, however, you must sit towards the back of the classroom and disable your Internet connection. Cell phone use in class is prohibited. If you must keep it with you for emergency reasons, keep it on silent and leave the classroom if you receive a call.

RESPECT IN THE CLASSROOM

Social Science and Humanities classes are spaces that strive to be open to hearing diverse opinions that challenge students and professors' ways of thinking. In order to do so, each course must also seek to maintain an environment where everyone feels respected and valued. In this class, we will discuss difficult and contentious topics and I hope that that we can both learn from each other’s perspectives and reflect on our beliefs and values, and whether or how these may be hurtful to others. These are not easy things to do, but please note that in this classroom speech that denigrates people by virtue of race, religion, gender, or sexuality will not be tolerated.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Compromising your academic integrity may lead to serious consequences, including (but not limited to) one or more of the following: failure of the assignment, failure of the course, academic warning, disciplinary probation, suspension from the university, or dismissal from the university. Students are responsible for understanding the University’s policy on academic honesty and integrity and must make use of proper citations of sources in all written work. Take care to keep accurate notes about where ideas you are developing are coming from while studying and researching.

It is the responsibility of students to learn the procedures for correctly and appropriately differentiating their own work from that of others. The full text of the policy, including adjudication procedures, is found: http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity. Check out this online tutorial to learn what plagiarism is and strategies to avoid it: http://library.acadiau.ca/tutorials/plagiarism/.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

As a nonsectarian, inclusive institution, NYU policy permits members of any religious group to absent themselves from classes without penalty when required for compliance with their religious obligations. The policy and principles to be followed by students and faculty may be found here: The University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Writing Center

We can all improve our writing; learning to write well is a never-ending process. Friends inside and outside of class can be helpful for proofreading, but the Writing Center at New York University has a host of tools to help you identify the areas in which you struggle and aid you in developing your skills: www.nyu.edu/students/undergraduates/academic-services/writing-center.html.

Me!
I am more than happy to meet with you to debate and discuss ideas and concepts we cover in the class, to offer suggestions on how to develop your essays, to answer any questions you may have, to find more helpful ways of describing theories we read about or discussed but which were unclear to you, or just to get to know you. Please come see me during office hours! I look forward to getting to know each of you.
Week 1, Day 1 --- What is Christianity?
(Tue Sep 04, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Tuesday, September 4 - Course Overview

- GC Week 1, Day 1.pptx
- Global Christianity Fall 2018.pdf

Week 1, Day 2 --- What is Christianity?
(Thu Sep 06, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Thursday, September 6


- Wilken, Spirit of Early Christian Thought, Chapter 1.pdf
- Walls, Missionary Movement, Pp 3-9.pdf
- Chidester, Chapters 1-2.pdf
- GC Week 1, Day 2.pdf
- Life of Brian Handout.pdf

Week 2, Day 1 --- Incarnation & Presence
(Tue Sep 11, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Tuesday, September 11


Week 2, Day 2 --- Incarnation & Presence
(Thu Sep 13, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Thursday, September 13


Week 3, Day 1 --- Resurrection & Absence
(Tue Sep 18, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Tuesday, September 18


Week 3, Day 2 --- Resurrection & Absence --- SUMMARY PAPER #1 DUE IN CLASS
(Thu Sep 20, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Thursday, September 20


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Week 4, Day 1 --- Mission & Conversion
(Tue Sep 25, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Tuesday, September 25


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Week 4, Day 2 --- Mission & Conversion
(Thu Sep 27, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Thursday, September 27


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Week 5, Day 1 --- Salvation & Transcendence
(Tue Oct 02, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Tuesday, October 2


Week 5, Day 2 --- Salvation & Transcendence --- THEMATIC PAPER #1 DUE IN CLASS
(Thu Oct 04, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Thursday, October 4 – THEMATIC PAPER #1 DUE IN CLASS


Week 6, Day 1 --- Sin & Immanence (NO CLASS, MONDAY SCHEDULE)
(Tue Oct 09, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Tuesday, October 9 - NO CLASSES, UNIVERSITY MEETS ON MONDAY SCHEDULE

Week 6 Day 2 --- Sin & Immanence --- MIDTERM STUDY GUIDE DISTRIBUTED
(Thu Oct 11, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Thursday, October 11 - MIDTERM STUDY GUIDE DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS


Week 7, Day 1 --- Doctrine & Heresy
(Tue Oct 16, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Tuesday, October 16 - Film in Class - *Joan of Arc*


Week 7, Day 2 --- MIDTERM IN CLASS
(Thu Oct 18, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Thursday, October 18 - MIDTERM IN CLASS

Week 8, Day 1 --- Circulations & Empires
(Tue Oct 23, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Tuesday, October 23


[Elliot,EmpiresoftheAtlanticWorld,Epilogue.pdf]

Week 8, Day 2 --- Circulations & Empires
(Thu Oct 25, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)


Week 9, Day 1 --- Critique & Reform
(Tue Oct 30, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Tuesday, October 30


[Twelve Articles of the Peasants.pdf]

Week 9, Day 2 --- Critique & Reform --- SUMMARY PAPER #2 DUE
(Thu Nov 01, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Thursday, November 1 - SUMMARY PAPER #2 DUE IN CLASS

2. King Jr., Martin Luther. 1963. "Letter from Birmingham Jail." April 15
   [https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html](https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html) (NYU Classes)

Week 10, Day 1 --- Politics, Global & Local
(Tue Nov 06, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Tuesday, October 5


Week 10, Day 2 --- Politics, Global & Local
(Thu Nov 08, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Thursday, October 7


Week 11, Day 1 --- Mystics, Saints, & Prophets
(Tue Nov 13, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Tuesday, November 13 --- THEMATIC PAPER #2 DUE IN CLASS


Week 11, Day 2 --- Mystics, Saints, & Prophets (NO CLASS)
(Thu Nov 15, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Thursday, November 15 - AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION MEETING CLASS CANCELLED
RECIATION ALSO CANCELLED

Week 12, Day 1 --- Objects, Spaces & Scripture
(Tue Nov 20, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Tuesday, November 20

Kieckheffer, Theology in Stone.pdf
Engelke Reading and Time.pdf

**Week 12, Day 2 --- THANKSGIVING NO CLASS**
(Thu Nov 22, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Thursday, November 22 - THANKSGIVING, NO CLASS.

**Week 13, Day 1 --- Bodies & Words --- SUMMARY PAPER #3 DUE**
(Tue Nov 27, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Tuesday, November 27 - SUMMARY PAPER #3 DUE IN CLASS


Brahinsky.pdf
Mitchell,ACatholicBody?,AnthropologyofCatholicism.pdf

**Week 13, Day 2 --- Bodies & Words**
(Thu Nov 29, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Thursday, November 29


Robbins, God is Nothing but Talk.pdf
Pulis,IntheBeginning?...pdf

**Week 14, Day 1 --- Christian Economies --- CHRISTIANITY IN THE CITY PAPER DUE IN CLASS**
(Tue Dec 04, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Tuesday, December 4 -- CHRISTIANITY IN THE CITY PAPER DUE IN CLASS

Weber, Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism.pdf

Week 14, Day 2 --- Christian Economies --- FINAL EXAM STUDY GUIDE DISTRIBUTED
(Thu Dec 06, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Thursday, December 6 --- FINAL EXAM STUDY GUIDE DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS


Bandak, Opulence and Simplicity.pdf
Haynes, Morality of Money.pdf

Week 15, Day 1 --- Final Exam Review
(Tue Dec 11, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Tuesday, December 11 --- FINAL EXAM REVIEW IN CLASS

Week 15, Day 2 --- FINAL EXAM
(Thu Dec 13, 2018 02:00 PM - 03:15 PM)

Thursday, December 13 --- FINAL EXAM IN CLASS!

Timezone: America/New_York