

HDS 2121 Trends in World Christianity, 1900–2050
Harvard Divinity School
Fall 2023 // Wednesday 9–11am // Rockefeller Hall 117

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Office hours: Tuesday 10:30am–12pm, Thursday 12:30–2pm, and by appointment. Any changes in office hours will be communicated via Canvas announcements and on the white board on my office door.

Course Description

In 1900, 82% of all Christians in the world lived in Europe and North America (defined by the United Nations as the “global North”) and 18% of Christians lived in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania (“global South”). However, by 2020, only 33% of Christians lived in the global North, and 67% lived in the global South. As a result, a “typical” Christian today is a woman of color living in the global South with lower-than-average socioeconomic status and physical safety. This represents a vastly different typical Christian than that of 100 years ago, who would have been a White affluent European. The demographic shift of World Christianity is poised to continue and has brought to the surface many long-standing tensions in Christian communities related to power, money, interpretation, and influence.

This course covers past (twentieth century) and present (twenty-first century) trends in World Christianity from historical and social scientific perspectives. It explores many of the tensions in World Christianity today related to, for example, colonial/post-colonial realities, contextual theologies, race/racism, and global issues such as the climate crisis and religious freedom. This course has a particular focus on gender in World Christianity, where women make up the vast majority of churches worldwide yet are often denied leadership roles and decision-making opportunities. The course addresses topics unique to each continent (with a global South focus) as well as major Christian traditions – Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox, Independents, Evangelicals, and Pentecostals/Charismatics. Students will interact with relevant literature, debates, methods, and conversations in World Christianity studies and have the opportunity to write a research paper on a topic of their choice with professor approval.

Course Goals

- Describe the expansion of and changes within World Christianity in the past 120 years from geographic and ecclesial perspectives.
- Explore the rise of indigenous expressions of Christianity around the world in terms of theology, worship, beliefs, and practices.
- Articulate the gendered dynamics and tensions within World Christianity and describe the challenges and opportunities women encounter in Christian communities worldwide.
- Explore the relationship of Western Christianity to the growth and diversity of Christianity in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific Islands.
- Increase knowledge of major themes, debates, and conversations in World Christianity studies.

Required Texts

- Sebastian C. H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim, *Christianity as a World Religion: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.
- Gina A. Zurlo, *Women in World Christianity: Building and Sustaining a Global Movement*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2023.
- Dorothy Hodgson, *The Church of Women: Gendered Encounters Between Maasai and Missionaries*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005.
- Felix Wilfred, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity in Asia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. **Part I only.**
- Todd Hartch, *The Rebirth of Latin American Christianity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Articles or chapters as assigned per class session, available for download on Canvas

Assignments

All assignments are due on the day and time indicated and should be uploaded onto Canvas. All assignments will be graded on Canvas. SAT/UNSAT: all assignments must be fulfilled at a passing grade (C or higher).

- **Class attendance (10%)**
 - Weekly attendance is crucial to get the most out of this course. Students are expected to complete the weekly readings on time and come to class prepared for discussion. We will often work in small groups where all students are expected to participate and reflect on course material.
- **One-on-one meeting (10%)**
 - Set up a time to meet with Dr. Zurlo for 30 minutes in the first month of class, preferably in person (Divinity Hall #411), but Zoom can be an option. This is an informal meeting to go over course expectations and get to know each other.
 - Meeting must be completed by **October 5**.
- **Weekly reading response (20%)**
 - Summarize your thoughts, reflections, and responses to the weekly readings in a 2-3 page paper (double spaced). Dr. Zurlo will read and comment on all papers every week.
 - Due **every Tuesday at midnight** on Canvas.
- **World Christianity in the news (10%)**
 - Students will be assigned a day to bring in a reputable news article highlighting Christianity outside of North America and Western Europe, preferably in Asia, Africa, Latin America, or the Pacific Islands, and present it to the class for discussion.
- **Biographical paper of a woman in Christian history (20%)**
 - Choose a woman in Christian history and write a 5–6 page (plus bibliography) biography of her life, including but not limited to her Christian influences, theological leanings, and key contributions to World Christianity. More details on this assignment are available on Canvas.
 - Biography paper due **October 27** at midnight on Canvas.
- **Final research paper (30%)**

- 12–15 pages, plus footnotes and bibliography (double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, Chicago Manual of Style notes and bibliography style) investigating a subject in World Christianity outside of your own context (e.g., if you are an American Baptist woman from Kansas you cannot write about American Baptist women from Kansas). You may take a historical, theological, or social scientific approach in your paper. More details on this assignment are available on Canvas.
- You must discuss your paper topic with Dr. Zurlo by **Tuesday, November 14** (one month before the final paper is due). Please upload your topic and draft thesis statement on Canvas.
- Final paper due **December 15** at midnight on Canvas.
- Assignments will be docked half a letter grade each day they are late. If you need an extension, please email Dr. Zurlo at least five days before the due date.

Helpful Digital Resources

- Center for the Study of Global Christianity (www.globalchristianity.org)
- World Religion Database (www.worldreligiondatabase.org)
- World Christian Database (www.worldchristiandatabase.org)
- The Association of Religion Data Archives (www.thearda.com)
- Dictionary of African Christian Biography (www.dacb.org)
- Boston University School of Theology missionary biographies (www.bu.edu/missiology/missionary-biography)
- The Global Church Project (<https://grahamjosephhill.com/worldchristianity/>)

Schedule of Classes (subject to change)

Readings are due the day they are assigned. It is a good practice to take notes when you read so you are ready to discuss the readings during class. See Canvas for a Further Reading document of major texts in World Christianity studies.

September 6

- Introduction to the course
- World Christianity overview: 1900–2050

September 13

- World Christianity as an academic discipline
- Relationship of mission studies, missiology, mission history, and World Christianity

Readings

- Joel Cabrita and David Maxwell, “Introduction: Relocating World Christianity,” in *Relocating World Christianity: Interdisciplinary Studies in Universal and Local Expressions of the Christian Faith* (ed. Joel Cabrita, David Maxwell, and Emma Wild-Wood), 1–46. Leiden: Brill, 2017.
- Martha Frederiks, “World Christianity: Contours of an Approach”, in *World Christianity: Methodological Considerations* (ed. Martha Fredericks and Dorottya Nagy), 10–39. Leiden: Brill, 2021.

- Jehu J. Hanciles, “World Christianity Interrupted: Green Shoots and Growing Pains,” in *World Christianity: History, Methodologies, Horizons* (ed. Jehu J. Hanciles), 8–18. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2021.
- Emma Wild-Wood, Carlos F. Cardoza-Orlandi, and Dyron Daugherty, “World Christianity: History, Conception, and Interpretation,” in *World Christianity: History, Methodologies, Horizons* (ed. Jehu J. Hanciles), 34–48. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2021.
- Lalsangkima Pachuau, “Introduction: World Christianity and its Studies” and “Modernization, Modern Missions, and World Christianity” in *World Christianity: A Historical and Theological Introduction*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2018.
- Brian Stanley, “Visions of the Kingdom: Edinburgh 1910 and the History of Christianity,” in *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2009.
- Kim and Kim, chapter 1

September 20

- Women in World Christianity overview
- Introduction to women’s history, gender and mission, and World Christianity

Readings

- Zurlo, introduction and chapter 1
- Hodgson, preface and introduction
- Dana L. Robert, “World Christianity as a Woman’s Movement,” *International Bulletin of Mission Research*, 30, no 4 (October 2006): 180–188.
- Dana L. Robert, “Women in World Mission,” in *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2009.

September 27

- Christianity in Africa

Readings

- Kim and Kim, chapter 3
- Zurlo, chapters 2 and 14
- Hodgson, chapters 1 and 2

October 4

- Christianity in Asia

Readings

- Kim and Kim, chapter 2
- Zurlo, chapter 3
- Felix Wilfred, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity in Asia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Part I only: Western Asia (Teule), South Asia (Wilfred), Central Asia (Peyrouse), Southeast Asia (Evers), and East Asia (Tang)

October 5: Complete one-on-one meeting with Dr. Zurlo

October 11

- Christianity in Latin America and the Caribbean

Readings

- Kim and Kim, chapter 5
- Zurlo, chapter 5
- Hartch, introduction and chapters 1, 2, 3
- Laënnec Hurbon, “Afro-descendant Populations,” in *Christianity in Latin America and the Caribbean* (ed. Kenneth R. Ross, Ana María Bidegain, and Todd M. Johnson), 453–463. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022.
- Sofia Chipana Quispe, “Indigenous Populations,” in *Christianity in Latin America and the Caribbean* (ed. Kenneth R. Ross, Ana María Bidegain, and Todd M. Johnson), 464–476. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022.

October 18

- Christianity in Europe & North America

Readings

- Kim and Kim, chapters 4 and 6
- Zurlo, chapters 4, 6, and 16
- Hodgson, chapters 3 and 4
- Soong-Chan Rah, “Evangelicals,” in *Christianity in North America* (ed. Kenneth R. Ross, Grace Ji-Sun Kim, and Todd M. Johnson), 250–262. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023.

October 25

- Christianity in Oceania
- World Christianity & the climate crisis

Readings

- Kim and Kim, chapter 7
- Zurlo, chapters 7 and 15
- Hodgson, chapters 5 and 6
- Cruz Karauti-Fox, “Indigenous Spirituality,” in *Christianity in Oceania* (ed. Kenneth R. Ross, Katalina Tahaafe-Williams, and Todd M. Johnson), 341–351. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021.

October 27: Women’s biography paper due by midnight on Canvas

November 1

- Catholics

Readings

- Zurlo, chapter 8
- Hodgson, chapter 7 and conclusion
- Hartch, chapter 4

November 8

- Orthodox

Readings

- Viorel Ionita and Hacik Rafi Gazer, “Orthodox, 1910–2010,” in *Atlas of Global Christianity* (ed. Kenneth R. Ross and Todd M. Johnson), 84–85. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009.
- Zurlo, chapter 9
- Leonie B. Liveris, “Women are Not Subordinate, But They Are Different,” in *Ancient Taboos and Gender Prejudice: Challenges for Orthodox Women and the Church*. Farnham: Ashgate Pub., 2007.

November 14: Choose final paper topic in email consultation with Dr. Zurlo

November 15

- Protestants & Independents

Readings

- Zurlo, chapters 10 and 17
- Hartch, chapters 5, 6, 7

November 22: No class, Thanksgiving break

November 29

- Evangelicals, Pentecostals, Charismatics

Readings

- Kim and Kim, chapter 8
- Zurlo, chapters 11, 12, 13, and conclusion
- Hartch, chapters 8, 9, 10, and conclusion

December 15: Final paper due by midnight on Canvas

Accessibility

Students requesting accommodations or with accessibility needs for this course should contact Drema Bowers, Assistant Director for Student Support, as soon as possible (dbowers@hds.harvard.edu, 617-496-3856). You will need to provide them with a request of the accommodations sought and documentation of the functional limitations due to medical circumstances or a disability that substantiates your request. Students who are registered in GSAS or FAS should contact the Accessible Education Office, AEO@fas.harvard.edu, 617-496-8707.

Policy on Collaboration

You are encouraged to consult with one another on papers, and you may also share library resources. You may find it useful to discuss your ideas with your peers, but you should ensure that the written papers you submit for evaluation are the result of your own research and reflect your own approach to the topic.

Religious Holy Days

Please speak with the instructor within the first two weeks of the semester if you must miss a class, examination, or course requirement due to a religious observance. Please know that Massachusetts state law specifies that all students who must miss a class, exam, or course requirement because of a religious observance shall be provided with an opportunity to make up the requirement on another day, so long as this does not create an unreasonable burden for the school.

Policy on Generative AI

HDS, and Harvard University as a whole, encourage responsible experimentation with generative AI (GAI) tools, but there are important considerations to keep in mind when using these tools, including (a) information security and data privacy, (b) copyright and intellectual property issues, (c) the trustworthiness of content they generate, (d) expectations of the specific instructors of courses for which you might use it, and (e) your own academic integrity. Using GAI can seriously undermine your ability to think and learn, but it can also be a helpful research tool and conversation partner. Any use of GAI in this course must be appropriately acknowledged and cited. It is each student's responsibility to assess the validity and applicability of any GAI output that is submitted; you bear the final responsibility for properly validating and citing the content of your work. Violations of this policy will be considered academic misconduct. I draw your attention to the fact that different classes at Harvard could implement different AI policies, and it is the student's responsibility to conform to expectations for each course.

Boston Theological Interreligious Consortium

This course has been pre-approved for the BTI Consortium International Mission and Ecumenism Certificate. If you would like to register for the certificate, or learn more, visit: <https://www.bostontheological.org/certificates>. Contact btioffice@bostontheological.org with any questions.