

Wesley Theological Seminary
Doctor of Ministry Program

DM-S607 Engaging the Narratives of Other Religions

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Course Description:

In a world gifted with difference, the role of a Christian leader is often thought to be in successfully ironing out diversity to form a unitary Church community. Alternately, peoples' diverse narratives, as expressions of concrete and living spiritual journeys, can become resources rather than threats for Christian spirituality. In this course, using the narratives of other religions we will attempt to stretch the contours and content of spirituality. Such a spacious understanding of spirituality could both inform our own Christian spirituality and transform the way in which we understand and nurture the spiritual life of our parish members.

Required Texts:

Karen Armstrong, Muhammad: A Prophet for Our Time (HarperOne, 2007).

Deepak Chopra, Buddha: A Story of Enlightenment (HarperCollins, 2007).

Ekknath Easwaran, ed., The Bhagavad Gita, 2nd Edition (Nilgiris Press, 2007).

Stephen Prothero, God is not One: The Eight Rival Religions that Run the World - and why their Differences Matter (HarperOne, 2011)

Course Requirements:

1. Pre-Class assignment (40 marks): Submit an essay (6 typed, double-spaced pages) that discusses the similarities and differences in the notion of spirituality between Armstrong's story of Muhammad the Prophet and Chopra's story of Buddha the Enlightened One. Be sure to answer the question as to how this enriches you as a Christian committed to spiritual transformation in a world of religious bigotry and violence. To be submitted on the first day of class (May 13, 2014)

2. In-Class assignment (20 marks): The class will be divided into three groups. Each group will be responsible for leading a session to discuss the main insights from one of the books prescribed for the course on Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. No written work needs to be handed in for this contribution!
3. Post-Class assignment (40 marks): A final assignment (8 typed, double-spaced pages) of your choosing (short story/play/research paper) on 'Cultivating Christian Spirituality through engaging religious otherness.'