Ecumenism and World Religions Syllabus
Spring Semester 2020
Drs. Michael Kinnamon and Michael Lodahl

Course Description: In this class students will be given a basic introduction to a selection of the world’s great faith traditions, focusing on those whose presence is prominent in our culture today. Students will also be introduced to the theological basis for and history of the Ecumenical Movement (the movement to promote unity and common mission within the one Church), with attention given to both the practical challenges and opportunities for Christian ecumenism in the 21st century.

Course Mission: To equip Christian ministers and laypeople to participate gracefully in both intra- and inter-faith activities and to bring ecumenical sensitivity to all facets of ministry.

Course Objectives: By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify several of the core texts and beliefs of at least five of the great world religious traditions.
- Demonstrate appreciation for the distinctive richness of each faith tradition studied.
- Participate in an informed way in ecumenical activities.
- Understand the basic history of the Ecumenical Movement.
- Articulate and assess the core theological commitments of the Ecumenical Movement.

Instructors Contact Information:

- Dr. Michael Kinnamon: mk.kinnamon@gmail.com; 347-277-9299
- Dr. Michael Lodahl: mlodahl@pointloma.edu
Readings: Students should purchase the following texts, as they will be used throughout the semester. Additional readings may be made directly available to the student by the professor.

- Huston Smith, *The World Religions*
- Philip Novak, ed., *The World’s Wisdom*
- Michael Kinnamon, *Can a Renewal Movement Be Renewed?: Questions for the Future of Ecumenism*

Procedures and Grading: Students are expected to read carefully all of the assigned materials, in advance of the class when they are to be discussed, and to participate fully and regularly in class discussions. Students are also required to present a plan for incorporating insights from the ecumenical portion of this course into their ministry. Fulfillment of this requirement can take various forms: e.g., a brief (5-6 page) paper, a detailed outline for a church school class, or a detailed proposal for a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity celebration. Ideas for the paper or project should be discussed with the instructor in advance. Papers/projects will be briefly presented and discussed in class on April 4. (Kinnamon)

Class Schedule

Week 1, Jan 11 – Kinnamon

*What is ecumenism and why should it matter to us?*

Readings: Kinnamon, *Renewal Movement*, chapters 1 and 15; Kinnamon, “Unity as Gift” (emailed in advance)

Week 2, Jan 18 – Kinnamon

*What are the major milestones of the Ecumenical Movement?*

Readings: Kinnamon, *Renewal Movement*, chapter 4; Kinnamon, “Highlights and Challenges of an Ecumenical Century”; other essays emailed or handed out in advance

Week 3, Jan 25 – Kinnamon

*How do we pursue peace and justice ecumenically?*

Readings: Kinnamon, *Renewal Movement*, chapters 3, 5, and 6; other essays emailed or handed out in advance

Week 4, Feb 1 – Lodahl

*The traditions of Hinduism*
Readings: Smith, cc. I (“Point of Departure”) and II (“Hinduism”); Novak, foreword (by H. Smith), Preface, & Chapter One (“Hinduism”)

Week 5, Feb 8 – Lodahl

*The traditions of Buddhism*
Readings: Smith, c. III (“Buddhism”); Novak, Chapter Two (“Buddhism”)

**Feb 15 – NO CLASS**

Week 6, Feb 22 – Lodahl

*The traditions of Confucianism & Taoism*
Readings: Smith, cc. IV & V (“Confucianism” & “Taoism”); Novak, Chapters Three and Four (“Confucianism” and “Taoism”)

Week 7, Feb 29 – Kinnamon

*What does ecumenism look like locally?*
Readings: Kinnamon, *Renewal Movement*, chapter 8; Kinnamon, “Issues and Challenges Facing Ecumenism in the United States”; other essays emailed or handed out in advance

Week 8, Mar 7 – Mann (Religious Pluralism and Interfaith Engagement)
Readings: selected essays by M. Mann and M. Lodahl

Week 9, Mar 14 – Lodahl

*The traditions of Judaism*

Week 10, Mar 21 – Lodahl

*The traditions of Islam*
Readings: Smith, c. VI (“Islam”); Novak, Chapter Seven (“Islam”); excerpt from Lodahl, *Claiming Abraham: Reading the Bible and the Qur’an Side by Side* (2010), 171-185 (to be provided).

Week 11, Mar 28 – Kinnamon

*What does the Ecumenical Movement have to say about prayer and worship?*
Readings: Kinnamon, “The Heart of Ecumenism”; other materials emailed or handed out in advance

Week 12, Apr 4 – Kinnamon

*How important is ecumenism for the Episcopal Church?*

Readings: Kinnamon, *Renewal Movement*, chapters 2, 10, and 14; other materials emailed or handed out in advance