

**University of Florida  
Center for African Studies**

**Comparative Religion:  
Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa**

**REL 4933  
Section 0311**

Instructor: Dr. Terje Ostebo

Course Description

This course will give you insights and understandings about Christian-Muslim relations in general, and in particular – in Africa. The course will explore the theological/ideological aspects of these relations, but will have an emphasis on the empirical sides, i.e. pay attention to how this is played out in different historical periods and in various contexts within Africa. The course will also deal with the nature of Islam and Christianity in Africa, as well as investigate how local political, cultural and social discourses have impacted relations between Christians and Muslims in Africa. The course will moreover discuss different debates and attitudes on dialogue between the two religious communities.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course you should have

- Overview over Islam and Christianity in Africa
- Overview over Christian-Muslim relations from a historical perspective
- Knowledge of the important issues in Christian-Muslim relations in Africa
- Understandings of the religious, political, social, and cultural aspects relevant for Christian-Muslim relations
- Understandings of relevant issues connected to debates on dialogue between Christians and Muslims

Readings and course material

Books:

- An-Na'im, A. A. (ed) (1999): *Proselytization and Communal Self-Determination in Africa*, Orbis Books.
- Clinton, B. (2008): *Understanding Christian-Muslim Relations: Past and Present*, Continuum.
- Griswold, E. (2010): *The Tenth Parallel: Dispatches from the Fault line between Christianity and Islam*, Farar, Straus and Giroux
- Hock, K. (ed) (2004): *The Interface between Research and Dialogue: Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa*, Lit Verlag.
- Rasmussen, L. (1993): *Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa: The Cases of Northern Nigeria and Tanzania Compared*, British Academic Press.
- Robinson, D. (2004), *Muslim Societies in African History. New Approaches to African History*, Cambridge University Press.
- Siddiqui, A. (1997): *Christian-Muslim Dialogue in the Twentieth Century*, Macmillan Press.
- Soares B. (red.): *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*, Brill.

- *Tolerance and Tensions: Islam and Christianity in Africa*, Pew Forum on Religion and Public life, 2010.

Articles / chapters:

- Biljefeld, W. A. (1995): “Christian-Muslim Studies, Islamic Studies, and the Future of Christian-Muslim Encounter”, in Y. Haddad & W. Haddad (red.): *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, University Press of Florida.
- De Mey, M. (1997): “Controversial Issues in Christian-Muslim Relations in East Africa”, in *Exchange*, 26, 3.
- Haafkens, J. (1995): “The Direction of Christian-Muslim Relations in Sub-Saharan Africa”, in Y. Haddad & W. Haddad (red.): *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, University Press of Florida.
- Heilman, B. & Kaiser, P.J. (2002): ”Religion, Identity and Politics in Tanzania”, in *Third World Quarterly*, 23, 4.
- Ikengu Metuh, E. (2002): “Muslim Resistance to Christian Missionary Penetration of Northern Nigeria 1857-1960: A Missiological Interpretation”, in Ikengu Metuh, E. (ed): *The Gods in Retreat: Continuity and Change in African Religion*, Fourth Dimension Publ.
- Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, J. (2007): “‘Born of water and the spirit’: Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity in Africa“, in Ogbu, U. K. (ed.): *African Christianity: An African Story*, Africa World Press.
- Loimeier, R (2007): “Perceptions of Marginalization: Muslims in Contemporary Tanzania”, in Soares, B & Otayek, R (eds): *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa*, Palgrave.
- Ogbu, U. K (2007): “African Christianity: An Overview”, in Ogbu, U. K. (ed.): *African Christianity: An African Story*, Africa World Press.
- Onuwnwa, U.R (2002): “Christian Missionary Methods and their Influence on Eastern Nigeria”, in Ikengu Metuh, E. (ed): *The Gods in Retreat: Continuity and Change in African Religion*, Fourth Dimension Publ.
- Ostebo, T. (2008) “Christian-Muslim Relations in Ethiopia”, in Kubai, A. N. & Tarakegn Adebo (eds.): *Striving in Faith: Christians and Muslims in Africa*, Life & Peace Institute.
- Seesemann, R (2007) “Kenyan Muslims, the Aftermath of 9/11, and the ‘War on Terror’”, in Soares, B & Otayek, R (eds): *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa*, Palgrave.
- Westerlund, D. (2003): “Ahmed Deedat’s Theology of Religion: Apologetics through Polemics”, in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 33, 3.

Course Requirements and Grading Criteria

The final grade will be determined by the total scored for:

- Attendance (up to 10 points). We will circulate an attendance sheet, which you should sign. Signing for others is considered Academic dishonesty.
- Participation / In-class presentations (up to 20 points)
- Response papers (up to 30 points)
- Research paper (up to 40 points)

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Tot	96-	91-	86-	81-	76-	71-	66-	61-	55-	49-	43-	<42
%	100	95	90	85	80	75	70	65	60	54	48	

**Active Participation and In-class presentations:** Since the course will operate in a seminar format, students are expected to attend **ALL** classes and participate actively in class discussions. Active and informed participation demands that students **read the material carefully before coming to class**. In-class presentations mean that you do a 10-min presentation on a selected topic + acting as a discussant for other's presentation.

**3 Short Response Papers** (4-5 pp): These response papers will address key issues and methodological and theoretical questions raised in the readings, lectures and class discussions. The objective of these papers is to encourage students to read the materials closely and articulate their own informed and analytically nuanced positions. The more you engage the reading, the more likely you will receive a high mark.

**Research Paper:** focusing on a topic related to the course. The length of the research paper will be 10-12 pp. Topics will be selected in consultation with the instructor early in the semester. A one-page abstract detailing the topic and guiding questions/hypotheses as well as a one-page preliminary bibliography will be due in class on 2/11. The abstract and bibliography will be worth 5 points, while the paper will be worth 35 points of a total of 40%.

#### Make-ups and Attendance

Make-up tests will only be allowed in unavoidable circumstances or for compelling reasons that can be convincingly documented. Similarly, absence(s) will detract points except unavoidable ones proven with satisfactory explanation/documentation. Arriving in class late can cause you to be recorded as absent for that day. There will be no extra credit through additional work. Failure to present in class and/or not submitting paper on time would mean loss of 5 points (max).

#### Student Honor Code:

See <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>.

“If you are a student with a disability and would like to request disability-related accommodations, you are encouraged to contact me and the Disability Resource Center as early in the semester as possible. The Disability Resource Center is located in 001 Building 0020 (Reid Hall). Their phone number is 392-8565.”

#### Class Calendar and Reading Schedule

*Note: This document is subject to change, students are responsible for all changes announced in class.*

#### **Week 1: Course introduction, general introduction**

#### **Week 2: CMR in general – historical & current perspectives**

Reading: Clinton (2008); Biljefeld (1995);

#### **Week 3: Islam & Christianity in Africa**

Readings: Rasmussen (1993), pp. 1-15; Kwabena (2007); Ogbu (2007); Robinson (2004), ch. 1-6

*(Jan 17: Holiday – no classes)*

#### **Week 4: Islam & Christianity in Africa**

Readings: Rasmussen (1993), pp. 1-15; Kwabena (2007); Ogbu (2007); Robinson (2004), ch. 1-6

1<sup>st</sup> Response paper due – 1/28, 5pm

**Week 5: CMR issues and religious demography in Africa**

Readings: Soares (2006) intro. ch., 1; Haafkens (1995); *Tolerance and Tensions* (2010)

**Week 6: Film: Guelwaar**

Readings:

Abstract and preliminary bibliography due – 2/11, 5 pm

**Week 7: Case: Tanzania**

Readings: Loimeier (2007); De Mey (1997); Heilman (2002);

**Week 8: CMR, Mission & Dawa**

Readings: Rasmussen (1993), pp. 16-54; Soares (2006), ch. 3-6; Ikengu Metuh (2002); Onuwnwa (2002); An-Na'im (1999), ch. 1-3, 8;

**Week 9: Case: CMR, debates & comparative religion**

Readings: Soares (2006) ch. 7; Westerlund (2003); An-Na'im (1999), ch. 10

2<sup>nd</sup> Response paper due – 3/4, 5pm

*( March 5-13: Spring break)*

**Week 10: Nigeria**

Readings: Soares (2006), ch. 8-11; Griswold (2010), ch. 1-8

**Week 11: CMR and politics**

Readings: Griswold (2010), ch. 9-18; Seeseman 2007); Rasmussen (1993), pp. 55-106

**Week 12: Ethiopia – a unique case?**

Readings: Soares (2006) ch. 2; Ostebo (2008)

3<sup>rd</sup> Response paper due – 4/1, 5pm

**Week 13: CMR & dialogue**

Readings: Siddiqui (1997); Hock (2004)

**Week 14: CMR & dialogue**

Readings: Siddiqui (1997); Hock (2004)

**Week 15: Conclusions**

**Classes end – Apr 20**

Final Research paper due – 4/20, 5pm