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MW 728 Understanding Religion

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ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Fall 2003

MW728 Understanding Religion
Meeting Time: Tuesday 6:00 to 9:00 Room: M307
Instructor: Terry C. Muck
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Office Hours: Wednesday afternoon, 2:00 – 4:30; before and after class; e-mail; special appointment.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION
A study of the distinctive characteristics of religion through systematic investigation of its basic structures. Provides tools to understand religion as it occurs across all faiths, and introduces the Christian faith as representing a unique religious structure.

II. COURSE GOALS
A. Students will articulate the basic scholarly methodologies used to study religion;
B. Students will develop tools of analysis enabling them to research the history, beliefs, and practices of religious traditions;
C. Through a study of the emerging field of the theology of religion, students will conceptualize and write their own approach to a theology of religion;
D. Students will create missiological models that incorporate both scholarly and theological approaches to people of non-Christian religions.

III. TEXTBOOKS

IV. ASSIGNMENTS
1. Read assigned texts.
2. Write a five page discussion paper on each reading assignment
3. Discuss each reading in class
4. A final examination
5. One major paper articulating your theology of religions
6. Write a one week religious diary
V. CLASS SCHEDULE

9/2  Introduction: Religion as Science, Theology, Experience

9/9  History of the History of Religion (Waardenburg, pp. 3-80)
     (Other parts of Waardenburg will be assigned as needed)

9/16 Religion as Religion (Thrower, pp. 1-92)

9/23 Human Religion (Thrower, pp. 93-125)

9/30 Psychology of Religion (Thrower, pp. 126-160)

10/7 Sociology of Religion (Thrower, pp. 161-206)

10/14 Philosophy of Religion

10/21 Theology and Religion (Knitter, pp. 1-18)

10/28 The Replacement Model (Knitter, pp. 19-62)

11/4 The Fulfillment Model (Knitter, pp. 63-108)

11/11 The Mutuality Model (Knitter, pp. 109-172)

11/18 The Acceptance Model (Knitter, pp. 173-237)

11/25 No Class: Reading Week

12/2 Final Examination