

## AFST 4550/6550 CHRISTIANITY AND COLONIALISM IN AFRICA

**COURSE INFO** Spring 2018  
Tu/Th 9:30-10:45am  
Holmes-Hunter, room 217

Dr. Ingie Hovland

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Office hours: Wed 1.30-3.30pm, or by appointment (if you intend to stop by at this time, please let me know). You are also always welcome to talk to me before or after class.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION** Africa is projected to have a majority of the world's Christians in just a few decades. How did the explosive growth of Christianity in Africa begin? How was Christianity introduced to sub-Saharan Africa in the nineteenth century by missionaries? How did these American and European missionaries perceive their own work, and what was the relationship between their agenda and the simultaneous colonial agenda? How did Africans see the missionaries' work, and what was the range of African responses to it? Which types of Christianity have been rejected and which have flourished in Africa, and how did this change from the colonial to the postcolonial era? What does Christianity/ies in Africa look like today?

**READINGS** *Mission Station Christianity* (this is my book, 2013): We will begin the course by diving into one in-depth case study of a European mission station in Southern Africa that exemplifies some of the trends among nineteenth-century Christian missionaries in Africa. We will read through the main chapters of my description of a nineteenth-century mission station, which draws out broader themes such as the missionaries' struggle with the material arrangement of the stations, language and translation, missionary and convert bodies, authority, and contradictory European and African perceptions of the station space. The book traces how missionary theology shifted over the course of the nineteenth century. It also raises historiographical issues that we will discuss more fully in class, including: Which types of sources are available to us as we try to understand the history of Christianity and colonialism in Africa? What is the genre of archival missionary sources? How are different voices framed in these sources, and what are the different ways of reading with and against the grain of their framing? How do we take into account contradictions within the sources?

Primary sources: Along with my book, I will provide a selection of the primary sources that I worked with. These include nineteenth-century missionary letters,

reports, magazines, and images (prints). I will show how I read these sources as an anthropologist doing “ethnography in the archive,” and we will discuss other possible ways of reading from different disciplinary and theoretical vantage points. You will develop your own interpretation as you weigh, evaluate, and interrogate the sources and form a thoughtful synthesis, leading to your own reasoned analysis.

Theoretical essays: In the second section of the course we will step back and consider different arguments that have been put forward by scholars in their attempts to theorize the relationship between Christianity and colonialism. We will read three essays (articles or book chapters) that theorize this relationship from different disciplinary standpoints and within quite different theoretical frames: history (Majeke’s “missionary imperialism” thesis), anthropology (the Comaroffs’ “colonization of consciousness” thesis), and religious studies (Robert’s “transfer of knowledge” thesis). We will also read an analysis of African religious traditions (Olupona) as a point of comparison. We will discuss these in class and you will develop your own evaluation of which of their arguments you find most convincing in relation to the material we are covering.

Historical overviews: In the third section of the course we will return to the historical narrative as we trace the waves of African responses to Christian mission during the colonial period and at the beginning of the postcolonial era. We will read narrative historical overviews of Ethiopianist, Zionist/Pentecostal, “mainline,” and syncretistic responses in sub-Saharan Africa. You will choose one Zionist/Pentecostal or “mainline” tradition to focus on, and you will present key causes and effects in the development of this particular institutional form to the class. Together we will reflect on the presentations in relation to the larger question of how Christianity is made and remade in a given historical and cultural context.

Postcolonial African Christianity/ies: In the fourth and final section of the course we will turn to the question of how the past has shaped the present. You will choose one book on a contemporary postcolonial African Christian community or movement for your “book project.” I will provide a list of possible books that contains a range of genres, from contemporary African memoirs and theologies to anthropological field studies. You are also welcome to choose your own book in consultation with me. You will develop your own analysis of the form of contemporary African Christianity presented in the book against the background of the work we have done on Christianity and colonialism in Africa, in relation to both sources and theories we have discussed. You will present your preliminary analysis to the class in the form of a poster presentation, and will receive feedback from the class. You will then develop it further into a final critical analysis for the take-home essay exam.

## LEARNING GOALS

At the successful completion of this course, you will have gained knowledge, skills, and an ethnographic orientation toward the social world. Since this is an upper-level seminar, I will build on and explain my own research and disciplinary background, and this will form a sounding board for you to develop your own thinking.

1. Knowledge: Part of my research has been on Christianity in Southern Africa. One of the reasons this topic is so interesting is that Christianity has had such surprising, contradictory effects in this society – and I would like to share this material with you. After working through the content that we will cover in the course, you will be able to *identify* key facts about the history of Christianity and colonialism in Africa (terms, events, and characteristics), *discuss* key concepts that can aid our understanding, and draw on a variety of sources to *analyze* complex situations from this history that do not present a single clear answer.

2. Skills: I am also engaged in research on learning (in the sub-field known as the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning), and in this area I am especially interested in how college-level students and teachers to varying degrees use – or fail to use – reading to construct knowledge. In humanities and social science courses we often encourage a range of reading practices that can be summed up as “critical reading,” and in class we seek to use this as the basis for forming “complex thinking.” I will draw on my research on the links between reading and thinking in the university classroom in this course, and by the end of it you will be able to *use* specific strategies for reading – and working with readings – to develop different facets of complex thinking, *transfer* this work into verbal communication in a small group and written communication in your “analyses for a friend,” and present a metacognitive *reflection* on how you did this.

3. Orientation toward social phenomena: My discipline is cultural anthropology. In anthropology we use a methodological orientation called “ethnography,” which, amongst other things, refers to paying attention to the everyday lives of other people (in other geographical regions, in other social contexts, or in other historical time periods). As we pay attention to “the other,” we try to avoid two traps: on the one hand, the trap of assuming that the other is the same as the self, and on the other hand, the trap of assuming that the other is abnormal when compared to the self. Similar methodological issues concerning how to understand human differences are raised in history, as well as other related disciplinary fields. In this course we will therefore work with methodological questions around “the other,” “otherness,” and “othering” as we seek to understand complicated phenomena in the social world, such as religion. By the end of the course, you will be able to articulate your own informed *evaluation* and *response* to the material, while also becoming more adept at articulating other people’s responses and worldviews. As a critical thinker with commitments, you will be able to give your own answer to the question of how to think about human differences in the social world.

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES

I have put together a workbook for this course, which you can purchase from Bel-Jean Copy & Print Shop, at 163 E Broad Street (across the street from the Arch, to the left).

## WORKBOOK

The workbook contains four different types of learning activities:

1. Reading logs (4-5 in each unit): For each reading, you will complete an ICE QQ reading log. Each log is 1 page in the Workbook, and includes space for you to jot down (1) three ideas, (2) a connection, (3) an experience, (4) a quote, and (5) a question related to the reading. This provides a framework for reading critically and for integrating what you are learning from the reading. During the first 10 minutes of each class period you will talk about your reading log in pairs or threes.

2. In-class exercises (10-12 in each unit): The rest of each class period will be centered around one or two in-class, active-learning exercises based on the reading. Each exercise is 1 page in the workbook – e.g. turning the reading into a concept map or a set of cause-and-effect diagrams; working through a close reading of an excerpt to draw out inferences; or developing lower-order and higher-order questions from the reading using Bloom’s taxonomy or Ideas-Connections-Extension. Some class periods we will watch short film clips related to the reading, take Cornell notes, and then compare notes. During the third unit of the course, the in-class exercises will include the “African responses” project and presentation. During the fourth unit of the course, the in-class exercises will include the “book project” and poster presentation. At the end of each unit we will work through a set of integration exercises that includes drawing out four summative inferences, sketching a lesson plan for teaching the material to someone else, and a brief reflection on the content and format of your own learning during that unit (what did you learn that was important, and how did you learn it). If you miss class, please complete the exercises for that day in the workbook by consulting the reading and your group members.

3. Analysis for a friend (1 in each unit): At the end of each unit you will write an analysis for a friend. The analysis should be typed, single spaced, on one page (500 words). For the analysis you should choose one or two issues in the readings or class activities/discussions that you were struck by, and that you wish to consider further. You will practice asking higher-order questions and developing your own sustained line of critical thought on these issues/problems. I suggest that you address your analysis to a friend because this forces you to try and explain your reasoning more clearly. This is another integrative exercise which will help you to form your own thoughtful response to what you are learning. I have written out a page of more specific prompts for this assignment, and you can also consult the self-assessment rubric (both are included at the end of this syllabus).

4. Key concept quiz (1 in each unit): At the end of each unit there will be a quiz. The dates for the quizzes are on the schedule. For each quiz I will select 10 of the key concepts or key questions that we have discussed in class during that unit. The quizzes are open-book because the focus is not on memorizing facts; instead, you

will be asked to provide a brief surface-level description in your own words *and* your own brief deeper-level analysis of each concept.

**TAKE-HOME  
ESSAY EXAM**

The course will end with a take-home essay exam: The essay should be typed, double spaced, 7-9 pages (2,500 words altogether). It will have two parts: (1) Your final critical analysis of the book you have worked on for your book project, in relation to the material we have read and discussed throughout the course (2,000 words); and (2) Your final metacognitive reflection on the content, format, and value of your learning in the course (500 words). We will talk more about the essay during the last weeks of class.

**ASSESSMENT**

Undergraduates will receive 5 grades. Each of the 5 grades is worth 100 points.

	<b>Points</b>	<b>Your points</b>
<u>1. Workbook unit I</u> Reading logs (25 points) In-class exercises (25 points) Analysis for a friend (25 points) Key concept quiz (25 points)	100	
<u>2. Workbook unit II</u> Reading logs (25 points) In-class exercises (25 points) Analysis for a friend (25 points) Key concept quiz (25 points)	100	
<u>3. Workbook unit III</u> Reading logs (25 points) In-class exercises, incl. presentation (25 points) Analysis for a friend (25 points) Key concept quiz (25 points)	100	
<u>4. Workbook unit IV</u> Reading logs (25 points) In-class exercises, incl. poster (25 points) Analysis for a friend (25 points) Key concept quiz (25 points)	100	
<u>5. Take-home essay exam</u>	100	
<b>Total points</b>	<b>500</b>	

**FINAL GRADE**

[Your total points] ÷ 5 = [Your final grade]

For example, if you get 420 total points, then  $420 \div 5 = 84\%$

GRADING SCALE	94-100% = A	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+	60-69% = D
	90-93% = A-	84-86% = B	74-76% = C	0-59% = F
		80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-	

**GRADUATE STUDENTS** If you are enrolled in AFST 6550, we will draw up an individual agreement regarding your reading and assignment schedule. In accordance with the Graduate School guidelines, readings for graduate students will be more extensive and more advanced in nature. Graduate students will be expected to complete a research assignment that is more substantial than undergraduate assignments in both length and critical engagement with primary and secondary literature. You will also be required to demonstrate advanced understanding of the subject matter through a more extensive essay exam. In short, you will be expected to produce work that conforms to the higher standards of scholarship that guide the Graduate School. The graduate-level research assignment may take the form of e.g. a research paper that can contribute to one of the chapters of your thesis, a comprehensive annotated bibliography that can contribute to the literature review for your thesis, a conference paper that has the potential to be turned into a peer-reviewed article, or something else that matches your research interests and will be useful to you.

**COURSE POLICIES** Attendance: Each absence over 3 will lower your final grade by one “notch” (e.g. from A to A-, or from A- to B+). I will not keep track of excused versus unexcused absences, barring exceptional circumstances (such as hospital stays, being overrun by wild baboons, etc.).

Cellphones: If your cellphone is visible after class begins, I will mark you absent for that day. If you have cellphone addiction, I will be sympathetic. (But I will still mark you absent.)

Deadlines: A missed deadline for an assignment will usually result in 0 for that assignment, barring exceptional circumstances. Come and talk to me, for example, if you have an unexpected emergency or if the wild baboons significantly delay your progress.

Honesty: All academic work at UGA must meet the standards contained in the policy document “A Culture of Honesty” (<https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty/academic-honesty/policy>). You are responsible for informing yourself about these standards, but I am happy to discuss them if you have any questions.

*This syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.*

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Readings are available through eLC or Library Reserve (except for the book project).

	<b>Prep before class</b>	<b>In class</b>
Jan	4	Introduction
	9 Hovland ch 2 + log	<u>Case study</u> : Setting up a mission station
	11 Hovland ch 3 + log	The missionary body
	16 Hovland ch 4 + log	Converts on the stations
	18 Hovland ch 5 + log	African perceptions of the stations
	23 Hovland ch 7 + log	Shifting theology
	25 <i>Analysis for a friend</i>	Integration
	30	<b>QUIZ + WORKBOOK DUE</b>
Feb	1 Olupona + log	<u>Theorizing Christianity and colonialism</u> : African traditions
	6 Majeke + log	Missionary imperialism?
	8 Comaroffs 1986 + log	Colonization of consciousness?
	13 Robert + log	Transfer of knowledge?
	15 Comaroffs 1997 + log	Defining colonialism
	20 <i>Analysis for a friend</i>	Integration
	22	<b>QUIZ + WORKBOOK DUE</b>
	27 Jacobsen + log	<u>African responses</u> : The trajectory of Christianity in Africa
Mar	1 Hovland + log	Ethiopianist responses
	6 Anderson 2001 + log	Zionist and Pentecostal responses (Presentations)
	8 Elphick and Davenport + log	Mainline church responses (Presentations)
		<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
	20 Anderson 1993 + log	Syncretistic responses
	22 <i>Analysis for a friend</i>	Integration
	27	<b>QUIZ + WORKBOOK DUE</b>
	29 Book: _____ + log	<u>Book project</u> : Postcolonial African Christianity/ies
Apr	3 Book: _____ + log	
	5 Book: _____ + log	
	10 Book: _____ + log	
	12 <i>Poster</i>	Poster presentations
	17 <i>Analysis for a friend</i>	Integration
	19	<b>QUIZ + WORKBOOK DUE</b>
	24	Checklist for take-home essay exam
May	3	<b>TAKE-HOME ESSAY EXAM DUE</b> in class at 11am

## APPENDIX 1: PROMPTS FOR THE “ANALYSIS FOR A FRIEND” ASSIGNMENT

Dear AFST 4550/6550-er,

What do you think?

This analysis should be a record of one or several things in the readings or class activities/discussions in this unit that you found stimulating, eye opening, strange, beneficial, disconcerting, interesting, etc. I’m interested in seeing if you can work with your thoughts and the readings in order to think more deeply about these issues.

Before starting, I recommend sitting down and thinking for a while. Maybe draw a concept map. Think of someone that you can write your analysis for – this can help you focus on explaining everything really clearly. Start off with “Dear friend” (or write the person’s name if you prefer).

Your analysis should be typed, single spaced. In the first paragraph, say which issue (or issues) you want to think about. Say why. Describe them clearly.

Draw on relevant readings from the class. Don’t take the readings as the last word. Instead think about them, question them, and respond to them, as if you were in a conversation with the author(s).

Explain what you think and what other communities think about the issues, and – most importantly – *why* you and others think the way you think (practice metacognition). Are there any influential assumptions behind your and their thoughts? Any important historical developments, or social influences?

It’s easy to stop there and not really think much more about how others might view the world, especially if their view is different from yours. But which higher-order questions (such as the ones we have practiced with Bloom’s taxonomy) could you ask to try and really understand others’ perspectives? What might their answers be, or your answers? Which various things are important to these other people – even if they are not important to you? Why are they important?

Finally, try to pull all these strands of thought together. Everyone has a complex view of themselves and the world – in other words, everyone’s view contains some things that don’t quite match up but that they make work, or some issues that they address well while others are addressed more hastily. Objections from others might be answered coherently or incoherently. Try to include this nuance when you present your concluding view on the issue you’ve examined, as well as when you present others’ perspectives. Discuss objections to your view, and its limitations, and respond to these. Discuss the differences that exist between your view and others’. Show that in the midst of this complexity, you are able to form a well-grounded and thoughtful position that you can commit to. Sign off with your name.

If, at the end of this line of thought, your analysis is shorter than 1 single-spaced page, you likely do not have a sufficiently sustained line of thought, or a sufficiently deep one. I recommend going back to the beginning to help you step back for a moment. Return to your original motivation: what drew you to this issue or these issues in the first place? If your analysis is longer than 1 page, revise and shorten it.

When you are done, leave it for a few hours. Then come back, read through the self-assessment rubric at the end of the unit, and then read through your own analysis again.

Print it out. Staple it into your workbook on the “analysis for a friend” page.

All the best,  
Dr. Hovland



## APPENDIX 2: SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

At the end of each unit, I will ask you to circle the descriptions below that most closely resemble your work in that unit. If I agree with your self-assessment, I will simply give a check mark and brief feedback. If I disagree, I will circle the descriptions that seem most accurate to me, assign a grade, and suggest that we talk about which criteria you are using to assess your work.

<b>Reading logs</b> (25 points)	I did not complete all the logs, or several answers do not demonstrate thinking.	I completed all the logs, but some answers do not demonstrate thinking.	I completed all the logs and clearly demonstrated that I was thinking about the readings.
<b>In-class exercises</b> (25 points)	I did not complete all the exercises, or several answers do not demonstrate thinking.	I completed all the exercises, but some answers do not demonstrate thinking.	I completed all the exercises and clearly demonstrated that I was thinking in class.
<b>Analysis for a friend</b> (25 points)	<p>I stated which issue(s) I would consider.</p> <p>I made no or little reference to readings.</p> <p>I mentioned present assumptions (sometimes assertions are labeled as assumptions).</p> <p>I asked surface questions about others' perspectives, and demonstrated surface understanding of what is important to them.</p> <p>I stated an obvious position, and mentioned surface objections. I framed my own and others' perspectives in a black and white way.</p>	<p>I stated which issue(s) I would consider, with a brief description.</p> <p>I made some specific references to relevant readings, but took them as "the last word."</p> <p>I questioned some of my own or others' assumptions, and mentioned historical/social contexts for my own or others' perspectives.</p> <p>I asked surface questions about others' perspectives, articulated answers, and demonstrated partial understanding of something that is important to them.</p> <p>I stated a position and acknowledged different sides of an issue, but did not respond. I framed my own and others' perspectives as all being the same ("Everyone agrees"), and/or all being equally valid ("Everyone is right").</p>	<p>I stated which issue(s) I would consider and explained why, with a full description.</p> <p>I made several specific references to relevant readings, and considered them critically.</p> <p>I systematically analyzed my own and others' assumptions, and carefully evaluated the relevance of historical/social contexts for my own and others' perspectives.</p> <p>I asked deeper questions about others' perspectives, sought out and articulated answers, and demonstrated sophisticated understanding of the complexity of elements important to them.</p> <p>I stated my own and others' perspectives with nuance; I acknowledged significant objections to and limitations of the perspectives, and the complexity of differences that exist. I presented a coherent position in the midst of this complexity.</p>
<b>Key concept quiz</b> (25 points)	I did not complete all answers, or several lack a coherent surface-level description.	I provided a coherent surface-level description of each concept, but some lack deeper analysis.	I provided a coherent surface-level description in my own words <i>and</i> deeper analysis of each concept.
<b>Grade</b>	C, D, or F	B	A