COURSE SYLLABUS

WM508: African Theology and Religions

Course Lecturer: Tite Tiénou, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President of Education at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

About This Course

This course was originally created through the Institute of Theological Studies in association with the Evangelical Seminary Deans’ Council. There are nearly 100 evangelical seminaries of various denominations represented within the council and many continue to use the ITS courses to supplement their curriculum. The lecturers were selected primarily by the Deans’ Council as highly recognized scholars in their particular fields of study.

Course Description

With the broad expansion of Christianity in Africa, the African Church and African theology should be understood by us all. This course examines Christian theological formation in Africa against the background of African cultures and religions, and in light of its contemporary context. Also considered are how to study and understand Africa, and the factors that led to the debate on Christian theologizing in Africa. Throughout the course, descriptions and analyses of African religions are provided.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, the student should be able to:

• Appreciate the continent of Africa as Christianity’s most fertile soil.
• Comprehend the major issues in the study of African religions.
• Sketch the history and development of African Christian theology.
• Examine specific African proposals for African theology.
• Ascertain what lessons can be learned from Africa by the rest of the worldwide Christian Church.
Accessibility

If you have particular accessibility needs, please contact the CUGN Registrar at the beginning of the course. This will allow us to work directly with you to make efforts to accommodate your situation and ensure as full as possible accessibility to the course.

Course Lecturer

Dr. Tite Tiénou is Senior Vice President of Education, Dean, and Professor of Theology of Missions at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL, where he has served since 1997. At Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Dr. Tiénou’s areas of expertise include missions, theology, and the church in Africa. Beginning in 1995 and prior to his work at Trinity, Dr. Tiénou served as President and Dean of Faculté de Théologie Evangélique de l’Alliance Chrétienne in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, West Africa. Dr. Tiénou taught on the faculty of Alliance Theological Seminary for 9 years where he has continued to serve off and on as a visiting professor. Furthermore, he has lectured or taught at various institutions around the world.

In addition to teaching, Dr. Tiénou has been a member of the African Studies Association since 1991 and the OMSC Study Group on Mission Issues since 1985. He has also served as the senior mission scholar in residence at Overseas Ministries Study Center in New Haven, Connecticut, and research fellow at Yale Divinity School. He received the Contextualization Award granted by the School of World Mission for Fuller Theological Seminary. His exceptional leadership is recognized globally.

Education:

- Nyack College, B.S.
- Faculté Libre de Théologie Evangélique, Maîtrise en Théologie
- Fuller Theological Seminary, M.A., Ph.D.

Online Professor

If you are taking this course for credit, CUGN will assign one of its faculty members as the online professor for this course. This professor will contact you upon enrollment in the course and will guide your study. Your online professor will be available to you by email and, at set times, by chat room or other real-time technology. Your online professor will do the following in order to stimulate student involvement and facilitate effective learning:

- Evaluate and assign grades to all coursework.
- Provide assistance with technological problems that may occur.
- Answer questions that may arise.
- Issue your final grades.

Course Texts

Required:


**Recommended:**


Textbooks can be ordered through our online store at CUGN.org, through your local bookstore, or through your preferred eReader when available.

**Academic Honesty**

At CUGN, we believe all we do is “as unto the Lord” and we thus hold to a high academic standard of honesty; we do not tolerate plagiarism and cheating. Students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty face consequences ranging from interaction with the Academic Dean to expulsion from CUGN.

Quizzes and Exams: Any student found guilty of cheating on a quiz or exam will automatically receive a score of zero for that quiz or exam. A second offense will result in automatic course failure and possible disciplinary action and/or expulsion from CUGN. Please view the [CUGN Academic Catalog](https://www.cugn.org) for a full definition and examples of cheating.

Plagiarism: If a student’s work is found to be plagiarized, consequences will vary depending on the nature of the plagiarism.

If an offense is deemed unintentional, the student will have an opportunity to resubmit the work. A second offense will result in an automatic score of zero for that assignment, which may also result in failure of that course.

More serious plagiarism offenses could result in automatic course failure, disciplinary action, or expulsion from CUGN. Please view the [CUGN Academic Catalog](https://www.cugn.org) for a full definition and examples of plagiarism. If you have questions about plagiarism, or would like to request resources for learning how to avoid plagiarism, please contact our Registrar’s Office at registrar@cugn.org or toll free at (888) 487-5376 ext. 3.

**Course Requirements**

1. **Time:** The student is required to spend a minimum of 120 hours in this course. All course requirements must be completed within 6 months of enrolling in the course.

2. **Recorded Lectures:** Listen carefully to all of the twenty-four recorded lectures by Dr. Tite Tié-nou. The Study Guide (found in the Before You Begin section of the course) provides study ques-
tions that are not factored into the grade but will help focus the lectures and prepare you for the examinations.

3. **Reading:** Read all the required texts and the recommended text as they are assigned in the Lesson Assignments section of this Syllabus. Complete these **prior to listening to the particular lectures.** Submit with each of the examinations a cumulative reading report listing titles, authors, and pages read, each time adding to the previous list.

Having become familiar with these texts, refer back to them as needed, and use other books listed in the bibliography (found at the end of the Study Guide) as possible, throughout the course.

4. **Paper:** Write an evaluative paper for the textbook *Reinventing Christianity* by John Parratt. Evaluate Parratt’s work in light of the three-fold methodology advocated by Dr. Tienou. The paper should consider the following issues in approximately **five double-spaced pages:**

1) Are Parratt’s convictions correct in light of (a) the church, (b) the culture, and (c) Scripture?
2) Do you accept the notion described in his title, namely, “Reinventing Christianity” — why or why not?
3) What concepts regarding African Theology might be useful in other contexts around the world, including Western Christianity?

5. **Spiritual Formation Project**

**RATIONALE:** Ministry preparation and the Christian life require more than academic exercises. Learners also need personal, spiritual formation, which involves theological reflection and critical thinking on their current practices and assumptions. This process occurs as learners engage in self-reflection and interaction in a community of learning. With this in mind, CUGN includes in all courses a capstone project addressing these issues and facilitating interaction beyond the formal learning environment (ATS schools, note Standards 3.2.1.3; 4.1.1; 10.3.3.3).

Write a **five-to-six page reflective essay** and **interview a mentor,** discussing the spiritual impact of this course on your life. Identify your mentor early in the course, and submit the essay to your grader when you take the final exam. This last project should not be a summary of course content, but an application of course principles. **Complete the following:**

**A. Personal Reflection and Evaluation:** Reflect on the course – To integrate your academic studies with your walk of faith, reflect on the content of the course and evaluate your life in light of what you learned.

i. Follow these steps in your reflection:

   **Step 1:** What one theme, principle, or concept in the course is the most significant to you personally? Why is it significant?

   **Step 2:** What portion(s) of the course brought this theme/principle/concept to light?

   **Step 3:** Think about your past. Why is it vital now for you to deal with and apply this theme/principle/concept?

   **Step 4:** How should this affect your thoughts and actions, and what specific steps should
you take to concretely apply what you have learned?

ii. Write your answers to the above questions in full paragraph form. (Recommended length for this reflection: approximately three pages)

iii. Give a copy of this reflection to your mentor (see #2).

B. Community Reflection and Interaction: Interview a mentor – Since the Holy Spirit uses the input of others to guide and form His people, interview a mentor according to the following guidelines:

i. Who should you interview? (1-3 are required; 4-6 are recommended)

1. Someone with whom you have a reasonably close relationship.
2. Someone who is a mature Christian ministry leader (i.e. a pastor).
3. Someone who is not your grader or a family member.
4. Someone who values the spiritual formation process.
5. Someone who is familiar with and values the subject of the course.
6. Someone who has experience using the content of the course in ministry.

NOTE: Identify your mentor early in the course, and give him/her the page entitled “Guidelines for Mentors.”

ii. Focus of the interview – Your interview should focus on the issues and questions you raise in your essay. For example:
   • What feedback can your mentor give in response to your essay?
   • In light of the course content, are the conclusions you made appropriate? Why or why not?
   • What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications might he/she suggest from his/her own life and ministry?

NOTE: Conduct this interview either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do not use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc). Suggested length: 45 minutes.

C. Synthesis and Application: Draw your final conclusions – Having reflected on the curse and the discussion with your mentor, synthesize what you have learned in these three sections:

i. Section 1: Begin your essay with the personal reflection from #1 above. This should be exactly what you gave your mentor for the interview.

ii. Section 2: Comment on your interview, explaining what you discussed and the insights you gained from your mentor. Include the following:
   • What were the mentor’s comments regarding your essay?
   • What advice did he/she give?
• How did his/her comments expand or correct your application of the course?

• Include the person’s name, occupation, and the length of the interview.

iii. Section 3: Conclude with a synthesis of what you have learned. Answer the following:

• If your mentor corrected any thoughts in your “Personal Reflection and Evaluation”, how do you feel about these corrections? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

• Synthesizing your thoughts from section one and your mentor’s insight in section two, what final conclusions have you reached? How is this different from section one?

• In light of the interview and further reflection, what additional, specific changes need to occur in your life and what concrete steps will you take to implement them?

NOTE TO STUDENTS: Your effort in this assignment will determine its benefit. If by the end of this course you have not yet reflected critically on your life in light of what you have studied, allow this assignment to guide you in that process. The instructor for this course will not score your essay based on the amount of spiritual fruit you describe; so do not exaggerate (or trivialize) what you have learned. The primary grading criteria is that you have thoughtfully considered the principles of the course and realistically sought to apply them to your life. If you have done this and met the minimal requirements (as noted above), you will earn the full points for this assignment.

Note on confidentiality: Perhaps the Holy Spirit is dealing with you in some very personal areas of your life. Because of this, your grader will keep your essay entirely confidential and either return or discard it.

Objective: to stimulate reflection and interaction on course principles in order to enhance personal spiritual formation.

6. **Exams:** There are four examinations for this course that will be taken after the following lectures: 6, 12, 18 and 24.

**Course Grading**

Your grade for the course will be determined as follows:

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<th>% of Course Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Study Guide Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluative Paper</td>
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<td>Spiritual Formation Project</td>
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<td>Examinations</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Grades will be issued within two weeks of the end of the course.
Guidelines for Mentors

(Student, give this sheet to your mentor for the Spiritual Formation Project.)

Thank you for your involvement in this student’s CUGN coursework. We believe the Christian life is more than an academic exercise, so we encourage students to critically reflect on their life in light of what they learn and then apply those insights to the daily life of faith.

Therefore, students taking CUGN courses are required to complete a final assignment called the “Spiritual Formation Project.” This assignment involves **two parts**: an essay and an interview:

The ESSAY: After completing their coursework, students reflect on the content of the course, evaluate their lives, and discuss the one theme, principle or concept that is most significant to them and why. Students are to identify specific ways this theme/principle/concept should apply to their lives and what action steps they plan to take in order to make these changes a reality.

The INTERVIEW: After writing this reflection, students give a copy to their mentor and meet with him/her to discuss their thoughts and get feedback. The goal of this interview is to facilitate the student’s growth through interaction with a mature believer.

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NOTES ON THE INTERVIEW:

- You do not need to be familiar with the course to participate in this interview. You will primarily respond to the thoughts of the student. (However, general knowledge of the subject matter of the course and/or experience applying it to ministry is valuable.)

- Prior to meeting with the student, read his/her “Personal Reflection and Evaluation” and prepare to discuss the following:

  1. What feedback can you give the student in response to his/her essay?
  2. Are the student’s conclusions from the course appropriate? Why or why not?
  3. What additional advice, deeper insights or broader applications would you suggest from your own life and ministry?

- Meet with the student either in person (preferred) or over the phone. Do not use electronic communication (i.e. email, instant messenger, etc.).

- Suggested length of the interview: 45 minutes

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Thanks again for participating in this project! You have a real opportunity to guide this student in the application process and to help him/her connect academics to life – a valuable process for all who wish to grow in Christ.

**NOTE:** If the student’s school makes any changes to this assignment, their requirements should replace those described here.
Lesson Assignments

Lecture 1

Required Reading: Bediado, Kwame. Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 1, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Lecture 2

Required Reading: Isichei, Elizabeth. A History of Christianity in Africa.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 2, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Lecture 3

Required Reading: Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 3, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Lecture 4

Required Reading: Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 4, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Lecture 5

Required Reading: Ray, Benjamin. African Religions.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 5, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.
Lecture 6

**Required Reading:** Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 6, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

**Request a copy of Examination 1. Complete and return to your instructor.**

Lecture 7

**Required Reading:** Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 7, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Lecture 8

**Required Reading:** Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 8, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Lecture 9

**Required Reading:** Dickson, Kwesi. *Theology in Africa.*


After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 9, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.
Lecture 10

**Required Reading:** Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 10, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Lecture 11

**Required Reading:** Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 11, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Lecture 12

**Required Reading:** Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 12, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Request a copy of Examination 2. Complete and return to your instructor.

Lecture 13

**Required Reading:** Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 13, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Lecture 14

**Required Reading:** Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 14, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.
Lecture 15

**Required Reading:** Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 15, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Lecture 16

**Required Reading:** Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 16, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Lecture 17

**Required Reading:** Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 17, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Lecture 18

**Required Reading:** Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 18, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

**Request a copy of Examination 3. Complete and return to your instructor.**

Lecture 19

**Required Reading:** Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 19, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.
Lecture 20

Required Reading: Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 20, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Lecture 21

Required Reading: Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 21, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Lecture 22

Required Reading: Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 22, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Lecture 23

Required Reading: Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 23, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Lecture 24

Required Reading: Read whatever interests you from the bibliography found in the Study Guide. You will report to your instructor which book(s) and which pages you read.

After listening to the lecture, answer the questions for Lecture 24, found in the Study Guide. Your instructor will determine when he/she would like you to submit your answers to the Study Guide questions for each lesson. Your answers will also be helpful in studying for the four Examinations.

Request a copy of Examination 4. Complete and return to your instructor.