

**THEO5965 Special Topics on Christianity and Society II:  
Study Tour Hong Kong: Christian and other religious life in the global city**

**Course outline**

**TEACHER:** Rev. Prof. Tobias Brandner

**CREDIT:** 3 units

**TIME:** 26 May to 4 June 2026

**LANGUAGE:** English

**STUDY AREA:** (5) Christianity and Society for BD/ MDiv or Elective for MACS

**Description**

This special study tour allows us to (re-) discover aspects of Hong Kong Christianity and its social, cultural, and religious contexts. It is an opportunity to see in a new light what we think we already know and to discover new elements in our neighborhood that slipped our attention. The study tour will introduce the multiple faces of HK Christianity and the HK context. Topics will include:

- a large variety of denominational traditions, from spiritually progressive Christians to conservative evangelicals and Pentecostals
- lesser known parts of the larger Christian family: Orthodox, True Jesus Church, and others
- social and educational ministries of Christians and how they have shaped society
- people of other faith: major religions in HK
- local and international Christianity
- social justice in the global city

**Partners**

Note that this study tour will include students from the U.S. and from some of our Asian partners. The inclusion of participants from abroad allows us to see our familiar context simultaneously through the eyes of others.

**Course structure**

Learning happens primarily through following means:

- Encounters and discussion with church leaders
- Visits to cultural and religious sites
- Visits to NGOs
- Briefing and de-briefing sessions among study tour participants
- Lectures on Christianity in Hong Kong
- Independent study and writing of assignments

## ASSESSMENT SCHEME:

- 1) Oral participation (20%)
- 2) A book report or a reflection paper on a visit (30%; length up to 2000 words)
- 3) A final paper (50%; Length for reflection paper: around 4,000 words)

## ASSIGNMENTS:

### a) Book report or reflection paper on a visit

- Maximum 2,000 words
- Submission deadline: 10 June 2026
- Only English is allowed
- ***In case of book report***, choose one of the books marked with \* in the list of literature below and write a report about it:
- In case of a ***reflection paper on a visit***, systematically present your observations and reflect on these observations: What is surprising? What is difficult to understand? What exceeds your expectation? Connect your observations to scholarly literature.
- ***Assessment criteria:***
  - o Content and thought: Does the student show a proper understanding of the book / of the event or encounter? Does he/she engage in a thoughtful dialogue with the author of the book or with the relevant persons of an encounter? Does he/she draw from additional resource material to deepen his / her understanding and to put his / her observations into a wider context?
  - o Form: Neatness of the paper, good structuring, concise writing, mastering of language and proper use of source material
- Questions that you may consider taking into account in a book report:
  - o What is the value of the book you read?
  - o What is the core message of the book?
  - o What is the situation to which the book / the author responds?
  - o What are possible shortcomings of the book?
  - o How does the book position itself within the broader scholarship of the subject?

### b) Reflection paper

- Length: around 4,000 words
- Submission deadline: 20 June 2026
- Only English is allowed
- **Choose a topic within the broader topics listed below** and write a final paper about it.
  - 1) The material reality of HK Christianity (church buildings and other physical realities related to Christianity)
  - 2) HK Christian demography: Who are the Christians?
  - 3) Christianity and the care for HK society: How do Christians care for society?

- 4) Christianity and the education system in HK: How does Christianity contribute to the education system in HK?
  - 5) Christianity and other religions in HK: How do they compete? Where do they cooperate? How do they relate to and see each other?
  - 6) Christianity and popular culture in HK: What is the history of Christian presence in the entertainment industry? How do Christians from the entertainment industry contribute to the spread of Christianity?
  - 7) Denominations in HK: Map the diversity of Christian denominations. What are their respective characteristics? What social group do they attract?
  - 8) HK Christians and overseas mission: What role do HK Christians play in overseas mission?
  - 9) International Christianity in HK: Map the diversity of international churches.
  - 10) Theological education in HK: Map the diversity of Christian theological institutions and describe their particularities.
  - 11) Theology in HK: Is there something like a theology of Hong Kong? What are crucial 'building blocks' for a local theology?
- Assessment criteria:
    - o Value and richness of factual information
    - o Relevance and depth of thought
    - o Accurateness of observation
    - o Form: Neatness of the paper, good structuring, concise writing, mastering of language and proper use of source material
  - Further requirement: If making reference to Chinese material, for my convenience, please be so kind to add a pdf (or other) copy of the relevant reference material in a separate file.

**c) Submission guidelines**

For *submission of assignments*, please follow the following rule:

1. Upload your assignment on the Blackboard website. **Only word-format is allowed. PDF is regarded as non-submission.**
2. Please write your name and your language into the file name (e.g., "John Doe - e" or "Lee Tai Man - ch") - this makes it easier for me to identify the author of the papers.
3. At the same time also upload a soft copy of the completed assignment to the plagiarism detection engine VeriGuide, at the URL: <https://veriguide2.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/cuhk/>
4. The system will issue a receipt which also contains a declaration of honesty, which is the same as that in <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/p10.htm>. The declaration should be uploaded in pdf to the blackboard system.

AI may only be used **with explicit acknowledgement and proper citation**. Students are required to acknowledge all functional uses of a generative AI tool and cite it when they paraphrase, quote, or incorporate into their own work any content (whether it is text, image, data, or other format) that was created by it.

**d) A note on the use of AI**

**All written assignments need to include a statement about whether you used AI or not** and if you used it, what it was used for.

Additionally, you need to indicate individual passages where you used AI (see instructions below).

Note that ignoring a statement on the use of AI will result in a deduction of 10% from your marks.

- i. An example of acknowledgement  
'I acknowledge the use of (name of AI tool – e.g. ChatGPT (<https://chat.openai.com/>)) to (specify the support, e.g. plan my essay, generate some ideas for the content, ask for examples of data collection instruments, get the dates of historical events, etc.).
- ii. An example of citation:  
OpenAI. (2023). ChatGPT (Mar 20 version). <https://chat.openai.com/chat>  
(Students are reminded that due to the rapid developments of generative AI tools, some citation formats may be updated regularly.)
- iii. An example of including texts generated by an AI tool in their work:  
"The following text was generated by an AI tool / language model (ChatGPT):"[Insert the text generated by ChatGPT here.]
- iv. An example of including texts generated by an AI tool and the prompts that were used to elicit the text from the AI tool:  
"[The prompt], as generated by an AI language model (ChatGPT):" [Insert the text generated by ChatGPT in response to the prompt.] Students are reminded to learn and use the AI tools responsibly and ethically and be aware of the limitations. Students are reminded to clarify with the course teacher and obtain permission if necessary when in doubt.
- v. **Note the information that acknowledgment and citations of AI use need to include:**
  - a. **Tool name**
  - b. **Brief / question that you asked AI**
  - c. **Indicate the text that was produced by AI**

**STUDY LITERATURE:**

(\* indicates books that may be considered for book report)

**a) Textbook**

- Brandner, Tobias. 2023. *Christians in the City of Hong Kong: Chinese Christianity in Asia's World City* (Christians in the City: Studies in Contemporary Global Christianity). Bloomsbury Academic.

**b) General on Christianity in Asia**

- Lamport, Mark A. a.o. (eds.). 2018. *Encyclopedia of Christianity in the Global South*. Rowman and Littlefield.
- Moffett, Samuel Hugh. 2005. *A History of Christianity in Asia. Vol. 2. 1500-1900*. Orbis. Both volumes are also available in Chinese.
- Phan, Peter C. ed. 2011. *Christianities in Asia*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Sunquist, Scott W. 2001. *A Dictionary of Asian Christianity*. Eerdmans.
- Wilfred, Felix (ed.). 2014. *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity in Asia*. Oxford University Press.
- Ross, Kenneth R., Alvarez, Francis D., Johnson, Todd M. 2020. *Christianity in East and Southeast Asia*. Edinburgh University Press.

### c) Christianity and other Religions

- Chan, Kim-kwong. 2021. "Multi-faith Dynamics in Hong Kong: From Pluralism to Politicization." *The Review of Faith and International Affairs*. 19:1, 27-41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15570274.2021.1874128>
- Formichi, Chiara & Paul O'Connor. 2015 . "Introduction: Overlooked Religions in Hong Kong", in *Asian Anthropology*. 14:1, 3-7.
- Fleming, Kenneth. 2002. *Asian Christian Theologians in Dialogue with Buddhism. Religions and Discourse, v. 11*. PLang.
- Gross, Rita M. and Terry C. Muck. 2000. *Buddhist talk about Jesus, Christians talk about the Buddha*. Continuum.
- Harris, Elizabeth J. 2013. "Buddhism and the Religious Other." In David Cheetham, Douglas Pratt, and David Thomas (eds.). *Understanding Interreligious Relations*, Oxford University Press. 88-117.
- Ho, Wai Yip. 2015. *Islam and China's Hong Kong: Ethnic Identity, Muslim Networks and the New Silk Road*. Routledge.
- Ho Wai-Yip. 2015. "The Emerging Visibility of Islam through the Powerless: Indonesian Muslim Domestic Helpers in Hong Kong", in *Asian Anthropology*. 14:1, 79-90.
- Ingram, Paul O. 2009. *The Process of Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*. Cascade Books.
- \* O'Connor, Paul. *Islam in Hong Kong: Muslims and Everyday Life in China's World City*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012.
- Schmidt-Leukel, Perry. 2013. "Christianity and the Religious Other." In David Cheetham, Douglas Pratt, and David Thomas (eds.). *Understanding Interreligious Relations*. Oxford University Press. 118-147.
- Thích Nhất Hạnh. 2000. *Going home. Jesus and Buddha as brothers*. Riverhead Books.
- Ibid. 1996. *Living Buddha, living Christ*. Simon & Schuster.

### d) History of Hong Kong

- Carroll, John M. 2007. *A Concise History of Hong Kong*. HKUP.
- Faure David. 2004. *Colonialism and the Hong Kong Mentality*. Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong.
- Faure, David, ed. 2003. *Hong Kong: A Reader in Social History*. Oxford Univ. Press.
- Tsang, Steve. 2004. *A Modern History of Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: HKU Press.

**e) Church, state, and politics in Hong Kong**

- \* Chan, Shun-hing and Jonathan W. Johnson (eds.). *Citizens of Two Kingdoms: Civil Society and Christian Religion in Greater China*. Series: Religion in Chinese Societies, Volume: 17. Brill 2021.
- Kung, Lap Yan. "Parent–Child and Center-Edge Metaphors: A Theological Engagement with the Social Imaginary of “One Country, Two Systems”." *Political Theology* 20, no. 5 (2019): 392-410.
- Kwok, Pui-Lan and Francis Ching-Wah Yip. *The Hong Kong Protests and Political Theology*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2021.
- \* Leung, Beatrice & Chan, Shun-hing. *Changing Church and State Relations in Hong Kong, 1950-2000*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003. BR1295.H6 L386 2003 leung
- \* Nedilsky, Lida V. 2014. *Converts to Civil Society. Christianity and Political Culture in Contemporary Hong Kong*. Waco, Baylor University.
- Wong, Kwok Sonia. "Social Movements in Hong Kong and the Bible." *Activist Hermeneutics of Liberation in the Bible: A Global Intersectional Perspective*. Edited by Jin Young Choi and Gregory L. Cuéllar, 83–105. New Critical Thinking in Religion, Theology and Biblical Studies. London: Routledge, 2023.

**f) Christianity in Hong Kong, its history, theology, and interaction with society and culture**

- \* Constable, Nicole. 1994. *Christian Souls and Chinese Spirits: A Hakka Community in Hong Kong*. University of California Press.
- Fung, Raymond W.M. 2005. *The Gospel is not for Sale. The Story of Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee*. HKCIC.
- Kung, Lap Yan. 2024. "A Politics of Re-existence: Christianity and Social Protest in Hong Kong." In Joshua Mauldin ed. *Political Theology in Chinese Societies*. Routledge.
- Kwan, Shui-Man Simon and John C. England. 2004. "Contextual Theology in Hong Kong." In *Asian Christian Theologies. Research Guide to Authors, Movements, Sources. Volume 3*. Edited by John C. England et al., 216-292. ISPCK; Claretian Publishers; Orbis Books.
- Lee, Tse-Hei Joseph. "Christian Witness and Resistance in Hong Kong: Faith-based Activism from the Umbrella Movement to the Anti-Extradition Struggle." *Tamkang Journal of International Affairs* 24, no. 3 (2021): 95-140.
- \* Nedilsky, Lida V. *Converts to Civil Society. Christianity and Political Culture in Contemporary Hong Kong*. Waco, Texas: Baylor University, 2014.
- \* Smith, Carl T. *Chinese Christians: Elites, Middlemen, and the Church in Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Oxford Univ. Press, 1984.
- Wong, Ho Lun Donald. 2022. "Hong Kong Protestant Theologies in the 1980s and 1990s Responding to the Handover of Hong Kong to China." *Asia Journal of Theology*. 36:1.

- 劉粵聲：《香港基督教史》（香港：香港浸信教會，1996 [1941]）
- 劉紹麟：《解碼香港基督教與社會脈絡：香港教會與社會的宏觀互動》（香港：基督教文藝，2018）
- 邢福增：《香港基督教史研究導論》（香港：建道神學院，2004）
- 香港教會更新運動編著：《2019 香港教會普查簡報》（香港：該會，2020）。

## PROGRAM

The itinerary is still in process of being finalized. It includes visits to churches, Christian NGOs, and religious sites of interest and encounters with persons engaged in Christian and other religious bodies.

### Draft program (as of 22 December 2025)

	Itinerary
25/5	Public holiday Arrival day
26/5 (Tue) Day 1	Morning: Welcoming activities and introductory meeting Welcoming Lunch Afternoon: Lecture 1 – Christianity in Hong Kong – an overview
27/5 (Wed) Day 2	Morning: The historical Hong Kong Afternoon: Migrants in the city – The Mission for Migrant Workers:
28/5 (Thu) Day 3	Religions in the global city (I) Taoism – visit to a Taoist Temple Buddhism – visit to a Buddhist preaching hall
29/5 (Fr) Day 4	The diverse expressions of Christianity – a church walk in Hong Kong <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Vine Church</li> <li>2. St Mary’s Church</li> <li>3. Methodist International Church</li> <li>4. St. Mark &amp; St. Thomas Coptic Christian Orthodox Church</li> <li>5. Evening with True Jesus Church</li> </ol>
30/5 (Sat) Day 5	Morning: Lecture 2 Christianity and society in HK Afternoon program arranged by local students in groups

31/5 (Sun) Day 6	Morning: Church visits with local students Afternoon: time for free program
1/6 (Mon) Day 7	Nam Chung "Reed Blossom" Eco-community 南涌蘆葦花開 Short river hike Nam Chung River
2/6 (Tue) Day 8	Religions in the global city (II): Sikhs and Zoroastrians Poverty and homelessness in Hong Kong: Visit to a museum on the homeless and sub-standard housing.
3/6 (Wed) Day 9	China in HK M+ Exhibition of modern Chinese art Tao Fong Shan and ISCS – lecture on Sino-Christian theology
4/6 (Thu) Day 10	Morning: Concluding lecture and discussion Closing lunch