

DI 610 Faith in the Neighborhood
An Introduction to America's Religious Diversity
A Hartford Seminary Intensive Course

June 1–5, 2015

Instructor:

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Office Hours: by appointment

Guest instructors: Rev. Claudia Ramisch, D. Min. and Joe Colletti, M.Ed., M.Div., S.T.M.

Course Meeting Times:

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. on Monday and Thursday
9:00 a.m. – 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday
9:00 – Noon on Friday

Email Policy:

The instructor will use the official HartSem student email addresses for all communications. Please check your HartSem email account regularly.

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the scope of religious diversity in the United States, to provide you with foundational information about the belief and practices of a number of the world's religions as part of the fabric of 21st-century America, and to help you become better aware of the multi-religious nature of Connecticut. To these ends, we will explore the concepts, vocabulary, and practices of several religions sufficient for engagement in intelligent dialogue, and sufficient to enable you to be an informed visitor to their religious settings. This course aims as well to equip you with tools to think theologically about your own faith in the presence of persons of other faiths. Grounded in personal encounter, you will learn techniques for developing interfaith relationship leading to collaborative action. Methodologically, this course will combine lectures and “book-learning” with experiential and dialogical learning.

Goals:

Completion of this course will enable the student to:

- 1) Name at least ten religions which are part of 21st-century America's religious landscape.
- 2) Articulate or identify foundational information about core beliefs and practices of at least five religions other than one's own (thus make measurable improvement on an objective “religious literacy” test).
- 3) Articulate at least three aspects of America's “interfaith infrastructure”.
- 4) Articulate a personal theology of religious difference

- 5) Give an account of America's history of interfaith cooperation.
- 6) List the three core aspects to making interfaith cooperation a "social norm"
- 7) Explain and employ several methods of interfaith collaboration and leadership in multifaith contexts.

Be Prepared:

It is essential that all participants be present for all sessions. *Please note:* course time includes the *evenings* of June 2 & 3. (We'll do our best to wrap up by 7:30 on both nights.)

This course includes many site-visits, with preparatory lectures, in some cases, and follow-up sessions to process what we've seen. This field work will take us to Orthodox Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, and Sikh houses of worship. Because we will be entering sacred spaces for particular communities, please keep the following points in mind as you decide to wear:

- Modest clothing is the norm throughout the week: not too casual; not too tight; not too revealing. Women are welcome to wear slacks.
- Wearing shorts may be problematic. (This concern applies to men as well as women.)
- Occasionally, long sleeves will be necessary.
- We will be asked to remove our shoes before entering certain houses of worship. (Bring socks if you don't like to be barefoot.)
- With regard to head-coverings:
 - Our Muslim and Sikh hosts will expect women will be expected to cover their hair before entering the house of worship; bringing your own headscarf is best.
 - Our Sikh hosts will ask men to cover their hair with a bandanna before entering the gurdwara. The gurdawa will have a supply. However, you are welcome to bring your own. In your professor's experience, a hat is not considered an adequate substitute.
 - Men may be asked to don a kippah at the synagogue. Your own kufi will suffice.
- We'll be walking HartSem's labyrinth (weather permitting). Our labyrinth's paths are of crushed stone. You may prefer to bring close-toed shoes for this.

Required Reading

Ashley, Willard W. C. *Learning to Lead: Lessons in Leadership for People of Faith*. SkyLight Paths, 2012. ISBN: 9781594734328.

Eck, Diana L. *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2001. ISBN: 0060621591.

Mabry, John R., ed. *Spiritual Guidance Across Religions: A Sourcebook for Spiritual Directors and Other Professionals Providing Counsel to People of Differing Faith Traditions*. SkyLight Paths, 2014. ISBN: 1594735468.

Mosher, Lucinda, *Faith in the Neighborhood: Belonging*. New York: Seabury Books, 2005. ISBN: 1596270101.

Patel, Eboo. *Sacred Ground: Pluralism, Prejudice, and the Promise of America*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2012. ISBN: 0807077526.

Miscellaneous additional required or useful items will be made available as needed via a dedicated course website.

Highly Recommended Reading and Listening

Fisher, Mary Pat. *Living Religions*, ninth edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2013
(This is a *superb* and comprehensive reference book, but it is *very* expensive. If you decide to purchase a used copy, please note that the 4th edition is the oldest you should consider.)

Valkenberg, Pim. *World Religions in Dialogue: A Comparative Theological Approach*. Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2013.
(This book is constructed dialogically. It is well written and interesting. The current edition does not, however, include a “Christianity” unit.)

Common Knowledge: interfaith literacy podcasts. <http://www.ifyc.org/podcast>
Well worth your time to listen to some of the items posted here.

All of the items on the course bibliography below are, of course, “recommended reading”.

Assessment

Grades will be based on *class participation* and completion of *written assignments*.

Class participation [70%]

Because of the intensive nature of this course’s class time, students who participate fully in all sessions can expect a grade of no less than C- (or, for DMin students, “Low pass”). Please note:

- 1) “Full participation” begins with full attendance! *Please note: absence from any session of this week-long seminar will affect one’s final grade.*
- 2) “Full participation” includes completion of **assessments and short written exercises during the seminar week itself.**
- 3) “Full participation” also includes entry into class discussion—which will take place in plenary and in small break-out groups. For those of you who are “allergic” to asking questions or making comments aloud, a “question basket” will be provided; also cards on which you may write your questions/comments. They’ll be addressed.
- 4) Please read the required books before the seminar begins. This will enhance your experience during the course, your ability to participate fully in discussion, and the class’s ability to go deeper into the subject matter.
- 5) As you read, consider making color-coded vocabulary/question cards (a different color for each religion). This is an efficient way to keep track of new information you’d like to remember, but also to organize points of confusion or curiosity you hope we can clarify during the seminar week.

Major written assignments [30%]

- 1) **A reflection paper summarizing your site-visit experiences.** [15%]

Your paper should be 10-15 pages in length, written in proper academic style. Your reflections should include such things as what you found surprising, what questions these visits answered for you, and what questions remain for you. Your paper should make specific references to the five required books and some other course material.

2) **A project** [15%]

Complete a major project on a topic of your choice that has a clear relationship to the themes presented in this course (and that Dr Mosher has approved). See below for some options. The written component of your project must explain your own religious location and must make a clear connection to the experiences and materials presented in class and on site-visits.

Particularly, it should include substantial reference to each item on the required reading list and to at least one book of your choice from the recommended reading list provided below. Almost definitely, you will need to read and refer to other sources of your choosing as well. Online resources may be used, but must be given proper credit. The finished project should be 18–20 pages (or the equivalent, if illustrations or a PowerPoint presentation are involved).

Interview-driven research for papers and projects must make use of the policy developed by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research. Your professor can supply you with this document. All papers, including the written component of a PowerPoint presentation (or other approved project) are to accord with the standards for academic papers posted on the Hartford Seminary website. All papers and projects must accord with Hartford Seminary's stated policy regarding the citing of sources. Plagiarism is to be avoided!

Again, **your choice of project must be approved by Dr. Mosher before you begin it.** Here are descriptions of project suggestions:

- a) **Mapping Project:** Explore a specific town or neighborhood, noting all religious institutions and other indications of the presence of specific religious traditions. Report this by pinpointing your findings on a map, with an accompanying explanatory essay which explains your research method, your findings, and your own reflections on your findings in conversation with the required reading for this course.
- b) **Book Review Essay:** Select one of the books marked with an asterisk in the bibliography below. Your paper will provide a synopsis of your chosen book, and then will bring it into conversation with the required reading for this course, with reference to site-visits and lectures.
- c) **Site Analysis:** Choose one of the places we visited as a group. Find a contrasting example from the same religion (e.g. two synagogues, or two Buddhist temples, or two whatever.) Investigate both sites in depth: when they were founded and by whom; who uses them; what happens there on a regular basis; what happens there occasionally. Your paper will report, compare, and reflect upon your findings.
- d) **Interview:** Choose a practitioner of a religion of interest to you (perhaps one of the people met on a one of our site visits). Conduct a formal interview with that person (30-60 minutes). Get written permission to conduct, record, and transcribe the interview. Write a paper describing your research and contextualizing your findings.
- e) **PowerPoint or Prezi lesson (or instructional video):** Develop an oral presentation on a topic relevant to this course. Submit the script as well as the slide-illustrations or video. As with the previous options, you must make explicit connections to assigned course material, show evidence of further reading, and follow good academic style.
- f) **Something else:** If you wish to do a project other than those mentioned above, your professor is happy to discuss this with you.

Daily Schedule

Accurate as of 1 May; changes are inevitable!

You'll be given the "real" schedule" on Day One of the seminar.

Basic topics will remain, but the times at which things happen may indeed be altered.

Each day will begin and end at the times indicated.

Note that the schedule involves Tuesday and Wednesday evenings!

Monday, June 1

- 8:30 Coffee/Tea and conversation; religious and interfaith literacy self-assessment
- 9:00 Introduction to the Workshop (and to each other): intro to America's multifaith landscape; religious self-descriptions; identifying the expertise in the room
- 9:45 *Toward Religious and Interfaith Literacy*: assessing our competency; establishing a base-line
- 10:15 Break
- 10:30 *Theology as a Second Language: religious multilingualism as a spiritual caregiving resource I* – Claudia Ramisch
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 "Abrahamic" & "Dharmic"—pros and cons of the umbrella terms
- 1:30 *Dharmic Religions I*—Hinduism
- 2:30 Break and intro to the labyrinth
- 3:00 *Comparative Iconography*: a visit to All Saints Orthodox Church
- 4:15 Return to HartSem
- 4:30 *Interfaith Taize*
- 5:00 Adjourn for the day



Tuesday, June 2

- 8:30 Coffee/Tea and conversation
- 9:00 Centering – (Labyrinth)
- 9:15 *Dharmic Religions II* – Buddhism
- 10:15 Break
- 10:30 *Dharmic Religions III* – Jainism and Sikhism
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 *Theology as a Second Language: religious multilingualism II*
- 2:30 Break
- 3:00 *Interfaith Collaboration as a social norm; Interfaith engagement*: models and rationales
- 4:30 Transition to synagogue visit (West Hartford)
- 6:00 Supper Break
- 7:00 *Of Many* – Screening + discussion of an award-winning documentary on religious leadership in a multifaith context



Wednesday, June 3: Site Visit Day

- 8:30 Gather (NOTE: If you will be late or absent, call or text 646-335-2951)
- 9:00 Depart for CT Valley Hindu Temple – Sri Satyanarayan (Middletown)
- 9:45 Site Visit: CT Valley Hindu Temple – Sri Satyanarayan
- 11:30 Depart for CT Sikh Association – Gurdwara Nanak Darbar
- Noon Site Visit w/lunch: CT Sikh Association – Gurdwara Nanak Darbar (Southington)
- 1:30 Transition to Farmington Valley American Muslim Center (35 Harris Road, Avon, CT 06001)
- 3:15 Continue to Dae Yen Sa (Jogye Order) Buddhist Temple (15 Kinsey Road 06057, New Hartford)
- 4:00 Arrive at Buddhist Temple for introduction, meditation, Q&A, and simple supper
- 6:00 Reflection on our busy day: delights, surprises, challenges; explore temple grounds
- 7:00 Adjourn for the day (return to HartSem)



Thursday, June 12

- 8:30 Coffee/Tea and conversation
 - 9:00 Centering; Debriefing; Labyrinth-walking
 - 10:00 Break
 - 10:30 *Theology as a Second Language: religious multilingualism III* – Claudia Ramisch
 - Noon Lunch
 - 1:00 *Leadership Strategies in a Multifaith Context* -- Joe Colletti (presentation and small-group work on “Project Sequence Charts”)
 - 3:00 Break
 - 3:30 Centering
 - 3:45 *Multifaith Leadership Walk-About* [sharing Sequence Charts] – Joe Colletti
 - 5:00 Adjourn for the day
- Prep for tomorrow: plan your 15-second elevator pitch and your 7-second sound bite; choose a blessing, prayer, or offering from your tradition [Dr. Mosher will hold office hours tonight]



Friday, June 13

- 8:30 Coffee/Tea and conversation
- 9:00 *America’s Interfaith Infrastructure*: resources for multifaith education, ritual, dialogue, counseling, advocacy – with Lucinda Mosher & Wakoh Shannon Hickey
- 10:15 Break
- 10:30 Self-evaluation (religious and interfaith literacy re-assessment); seminar evaluation
- 11:00 Sharing our resources for multifaith education, ritual, dialogue, counseling, advocacy (our 15-second elevator speeches; our 7-second sound bites)
- 11:30 Tying loose ends; offering of blessings/prayers from our traditions (at the labyrinth, weather permitting)
- Noon Workshop adjourns



Recommended Reading

NOTE: Entries marked with an asterisk () are suitable options for a book review essay.*

- Albanese, Catherine L. *America: Religions & Religion*, 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2007.
- *Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2006.
- Ashley, Sr., Willard W. C. *Learning to Lead: Lessons in Leadership for People of Faith*. SkyLight Paths, 2012.
- *Berthrong, John. *The Divine Deli: Religious Identity in the North American Cultural Mosaic*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999.
- *Chittister, Joan. *Welcome to the Wisdom of the World and Its Meaning for You: Universal Spiritual Insights Distilled From Five Religious Traditions*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007.
- Eck, Diana L. *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2001.
- Fisher, Mary Pat. *Living Religions*, fourth edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1999.
- *Kujawa-Holbrook, Sheryl A. *God Beyond Borders: Interreligious Learning Among Faith Communities*. Pickwick, 2014.
- *McCarthy, Kate. *Interfaith Encounters in America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007.
- Mosher, Lucinda, *Faith in the Neighborhood: Belonging*. New York: Church Publishing, 2005.
- _____. *Praying*. New York: Church Publishing, 2006.
- *Niebuhr, Gustav. *Beyond Tolerance: Searching for Interfaith Understanding in America*. New York: Viking, 2008.
- Patel, Eboo. *Sacred Ground: Pluralism, Prejudice, and the Promise of America*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2012.
- *Sacks, Jonathan. *The Home We Build Together: Recreating Society*. New York: Continuum, 2007.
- *Schaaf, Kathe, Kay Lindahl, Kathleen Hurty, and Guo Cheen, eds. *Women, Spirituality and Transformative Leadership: Where Grace Meets Power*. SkyLight Paths, 2014.
- Smart, Ninian. *Worldviews: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Beliefs*, third edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2000.
- *Steinkerchner, Scott. *Beyond Agreement: Interreligious Dialogue amid Persistent Differences*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010).
- *Valkenberg, Pim. *World Religions in Dialogue: A Comparative Theological Approach*. Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2013.
- Wuthnow, Robert *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity*. Princeton University Press; 2005, 2007.

Due to a planned power outage, our services will be reduced today (June 15) starting at 8:30am PDT until the work is complete. We apologize for the inconvenience. The image : a guide to pseudo-events in America. Item Preview. Renewable every hour, pending availability. More info. Log In and Borrow. Get print disability access. Preview. (1 of 324). Flip left. Flip right. this cultural diversity well I think. first we need to realize that culture. involves the rights of people it's the. rights of indigenous people to determine. the future of their cultures rights that. have too often been ignored and. undermined.Â turned to me and she asked does the moon. shine in your land whoa yes I said that. the moon does shine in the United States. and then she didn't pause she. immediately turned and said do you know. Monica Lewinsky. now what's amazing about this story I. The scope of 21st-century America's religious diversity is breathtaking! It is reasonable to say that all of the world's religions "in fact" are "in fact" because fieldwork is an important component of this course, students receive preparation for being an informed visitor to other people's religious spaces. They choose their own interfaith adventures "but get plenty of help in doing so. Past enrollees have often described Faith in the Neighborhood as "œa pilgrimage" a journey they're glad they've taken! If you are not enrolled in a degree program but wish to register for this course, use the Online Registration for Special Students and Auditors. James W. Fowler (1940-2015) was an American theologian who was Professor of Theology and Human Development at Emory University. He was director of both the Center for Research on Faith and Moral Development and the Center for Ethics until he retired in 2005. He was a minister in the United Methodist Church.Â According to Fowler, there are seven primary stages of faith (including Stage 0) in the life of the individual. They are as followsÂ Religious metaphors are often taken literally thus leading to misunderstandings. Thus, passages in the Holy Bible that say: "If, then, you obey the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day, loving the Lord your God and serving Him with all your heart and soul, I will grant the rain for your land in season, the early rain and the late. Start by marking "œPraying: The Rituals Of Faith (Faith In The Neighborhood) (Faith In The Neighborhood: Understanding America's Religious Diversity)" as Want to Read: Want to Read saving! Want to Read.Â Start your review of Praying: The Rituals Of Faith (Faith In The Neighborhood) (Faith In The Neighborhood: Understanding America's Religious Diversity). Write a review.Â An ethicist in the Anglican Lucinda Allen Mosher, Th.D., is Hartford Seminary's Faculty Associate in Interfaith Studies, senior editor of the Journal of Interreligious Studies, and rapporteur of the Building Bridges Seminar (an international Christian-Muslim dialogue under stewardship of Georgetown University). The author of many scholarly books and articles, she is also the award-winning editor.