SKILLS AND SENSITIVITIES FOR INTERFAITH LEADERSHIP

COURSE SYLLABUS AND SCHEDULE

DI-635 -- Winter/Spring 2014
Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on 1/28, 2/25, 3/18, 4/8, and 4/29

Course Instructor/Facilitator: Dr. Yehezkel Landau, Associate Professor of Interfaith Relations and Holder of the Abrahamic Partnerships Chair, Hartford Seminary
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Course Rationale and Goals: This course is a laboratory for presenting and testing theoretical perspectives and practical methodologies for interfaith leadership. It presumes a familiarity with the beliefs and practices of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and some background in interfaith encounter and dialogue. The primary focus is on developing practical skills, including: facilitating interreligious encounters; compassionate listening and nonbelligerent communication; understanding group dynamics and multiple identities; joint study of sacred texts; designing interreligious worship; and spiritual resources for conflict transformation.

Anticipated Outcomes:

- Deepening an understanding of the beliefs and practices of the three Abrahamic traditions
- Developing strategies and methods to create a learning community in which adherents of different religious traditions can forge mutually beneficial relationships
- Acquiring knowledge, skills, and techniques useful in interfaith ministry

Methods of Learning: presentations; facilitated discussions; simulation exercises; small group exchanges; film screening and conversation; joint text study; intra- and interfaith worship/devotion experiences

Methods of Assessment: For those taking the course for credit, class participation will count for 20% of the course grade; a journal of one’s reflections throughout the course, focusing primarily on new learnings, will count for an additional 30% of the grade; and a final paper, approximating 15 double-spaced pages, or a creative project will count for 50% of the grade. The paper/project is due by the last class on April 29, 2014. The
journal is due one week later, on May 6. It is recommended that students consult with the course instructor before undertaking the final paper or project.

Attendance Policy: Attendance at all five class sessions is required. If you know you will be unable to attend a class, please inform the instructor in advance. Missing two sessions will result in an automatic lowering of your final grade by 10%. Missing three of more sessions will result in automatic failure of the course.

Plagiarism Policy: All submitted assignments must consist of original work, except for citations that are appropriately acknowledged and referenced. Disciplinary procedures will ensue if work is found to be excerpted, in whole or in part, from other sources without such acknowledgement.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Assigned readings should be read prior to, and in preparation for, the class session for which they are assigned

January 28: Facilitating Interfaith Encounters—Theories and Methods

The Little Book of Cool Tools for Hot Topics by R. Kraybill and E. Wright
“From Sage on the Stage to Guide on the Side” by Alison King, in College Teaching, Vol. 41, Issue 1, 1993, pp. 30-35

Recommended: The Little Book of Circle Processes by Kay Pranis

February 25: Intertextuality—Exercises in Comparative Scripture Study

Contesting Texts: Jews and Christians in Conversation about the Bible edited by Melody D. Knowles et. al. (selected chapters)
Scriptures in Dialogue: Christians and Muslims Studying the Bible and the Qur’an Together edited by Michael Ipgrave (selected chapters)

Recommended: Bearing the Word: Prophecy in Biblical and Qur’anic Perspective edited by Michael Ipgrave

March 18: Morning Session: Compassionate Listening and Nonbelligerent Communication

Assigned Readings: Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life by Marshall B.
Rosenberg (selected chapters)  
_That’s Not What I Meant!_ by Deborah Tannen

Recommended:  _Nonviolent Communication Companion Workbook_ by Lucy Leu  
_Speak Peace in a World of Conflict_ by Marshall B. Rosenberg  
_Connecting Across Differences_ by Jane Marantz Connor and Dian Killian

**Afternoon Session: Identities, Group Dynamics, and Trauma Healing**

**Assigned Readings:**  _Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny_ by Amartya Sin  
_(selected chapters)_  
_The Little Book of Trauma Healing_ by Carolyn Yoder

Recommended:  _Priest and Partisan: A South African Journey_ by Michael Worsnip

**April 8: Spiritual Resources for Conflict Transformation**

**Assigned Readings:**  _The Little Book of Conflict Transformation_ by John Paul Lederach  
_The Art of Forgiveness_ by Geiko Muller-Fahrenholz

_The Little Book of Strategic Peacebuilding_ by Lisa Schirch  
_Healing the Heart of Conflict_ by Marc Gopin  
_Nonviolence and Peace Building in Islam_ by Mohammed Abu-Nimer  
_The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace_ by John Paul Lederach

In-class screening of two DVD’s:  _Long Night’s Journey into Day: South Africa’s Search for Truth and Reconciliation_, directed by Frances Reid and Deborah Hoffman,  
and  _Delicious Peace Grows in a Ugandan Coffee Bean_, directed by Curt Fissel

**April 29: Interspirituality—Designing Interfaith Worship and Devotions**

Most of this session will be devoted to presenting and discussing interfaith worship and devotions designed by the students. Afterwards, we will discuss strategies for applying what has been learned in this course.

**Assigned Readings:**  _“Dialogue through Observation and Participation—Interfaith Prayer Services”_ by Rev. Dr. Clark Lobenstine, in _InterActive Faith: The Essential Interreligious Community-Building Handbook_, edited by Rev. Bud Heckman and Rori Picker Weiss, pp. 77-107  
_“Praying Together”_ in _Spiritual Companions: Jews, Christians, and Interreligious Relations_ by Padraic O’Hare, pp. 126-139  
_Out of Darkness Into Light: Spiritual Guidance in the Quran with Reflections from Christian and Jewish Sources_ by Jamal Rahman, Kathleen Schmitt Elias, and Ann Holmes Redding (selected chapters)