Graduate Certificate Program in Multifaith Chaplaincy (GCMC)

Purpose
The GCMC was launched in January 2012, with foundational courses offered for the first time in June 2012. This 24-credit program is designed for persons (within whatever religious tradition) wishing advanced training for work as chaplains in settings such as universities, prisons, hospitals, fire and police departments, or the military. Its purpose is to promote the acquisition of knowledge and skills consistent with agreed-upon common standards for professional chaplaincy, pastoral counselors, and chaplain-educators in the U.S. and Canada, plus knowledge and skills essential to positive engagement of religious diversity. Consistent with Hartford Seminary’s mission to prepare leaders, students, scholars and religious institutions to understand and live faithfully in today’s multifaith and pluralistic world by affirming the particularities of faith and social context while openly exploring differences and commonalities, the GCMC prepares chaplains to understand and affirm the variety of religious commitments they will encounter as spiritual caregivers in (primarily) secular institutions and situations.

Program Goals
This program’s goals include the development of the student’s basic knowledge of several faith traditions; ability to conceptualize and articulate how one’s own religion makes sense of the existence and worth of other traditions; command of theology and ethics for the practice of spiritual care—leading to the articulation of the relation between one’s theology and one’s practice of spiritual care; understanding how sacred texts, teachings, and stories inform how faithful people approach important issues; knowledge of the Common Code of Ethics for Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors, Pastoral Educators and Students; ability to conduct a spiritual assessment so as to provide ethical and effective pastoral care and counseling; command of communication skills; ability to conduct public worship or spiritual practices appropriate to diverse settings and needs; sensitivity to the issues associated with the human life-cycle and social transitions; and skill in dealing with trauma and the administering of disaster spiritual care.

Program Content
GCMC presumes a previous theological degree at the Master’s level, or equivalent training through the institutions of one’s particular religious tradition, or other appropriate Master’s-level professional training (e.g., social work, counseling). It requires students to earn a total of 24 credits. To do so, they are to complete seven three-credit courses according to a distribution detailed in the Hartford Seminary Catalogue. In addition, students must complete one unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (usually in a hospital), plus field work for which three credits will be granted. Again, details related to this requirement can be found in the Catalogue. The Seminary regularly offers a range of courses on themes related to the four areas from which chaplaincy students should choose their electives. Because our student body is multireligious, almost every course becomes an experience in interfaith dialogue, which in itself furthers the goals of this particular program.

Educational Resources and Learning Strategies
Students enrolled in this program are encouraged to take all of the courses in the classroom on the Hartford Seminary campus. Occasionally it will be appropriate for students in the program to consider courses taught in other formats (e.g., off-site courses, online courses, travel seminars) with their advisor’s approval. The program provides a mechanism by which one three-credit course may be completed at another institution when need for particular course content cannot be satisfied by current Seminary offerings. The design of this program is such that it is possible to complete all 24 credits in 12-
13 months. However, it is assumed that most students will spend 18 months completing the program. Some may wish to take two or more years.

The success of the GCMC depends in part on student access to instruction about religions beyond the Abrahamic sphere. To that end, the program is directed and its foundational courses are taught by someone with recognized expertise in America’s religious diversity. A Buddhist chaplain has been engaged as an adjunct professor to provide a relevant elective course. The required course, “Understanding and Engaging Religious Diversity,” is embedded in an innovative Religious Diversity Leadership Workshop.