AM-645 Resilience for Spiritual Leaders  
Hartford Seminary  
Proposed Syllabus (as of 10/11/19)

**Instructor:**  
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**Bio:** Tracy Mehr-Muska serves as a University Chaplain at Wesleyan University and is an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA). She is a Board Certified Chaplain with the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) and was certified by the State of Massachusetts as a Behavioral Health Disaster Responder. Prior to beginning at Wesleyan, Rev. Tracy was a full-time chaplain in an acute care trauma hospital and served as the Coordinator of Pastoral Care in hospice, where she served the hospice population as well as the pediatric palliative care patients. During her training, did internships as a chaplain in a prison, psychiatric hospital, trauma hospital, and non-profit advocacy agency. Before entering Princeton Theological Seminary to pursue her call to ministry, she served as an officer in the U.S. Coast Guard, working closely with the several military chaplains, and as a marine scientist in the private sector. She received her Doctor of Ministry degree from Hartford Seminary.

**Course Meeting Times:**  
Wednesdays, 9:00am – 5:00pm  
January 29, 2019; February 19, 2019; March 18, 2019; April 22, 2019; May 6, 2019

**Course Description and Goals:**  
This course is designed for people of any faith background who are leading faith communities, providing chaplaincy care, working on justice issues, or seeking additional self-care practices. This course about resilience teaches the participants about the characteristics of resilience, invites the participants to engage in reflective self-assessment, and provides the participants with tools and resources to enable them to develop strategies to help the people they serve in their contexts build resilience. The course includes lectures, individual reflection, resilience-building workshop exercises, and small-group discussion. 3 credits.

Completion of this course will enable the student to:

- Articulate and understand the characteristics of resilience and evaluate some of the related scholarship.
- Articulate the relationship between resilience and spiritual/religious identity, and identify the ways in which resilience is relevant to their ministry contexts or community organizations.
- Identify barriers to resilience.
- Engage in the practice of “resilience building” by assessing their own resilience, identifying areas of strength and areas in need of growth, and employing practices that can help build their own resilience.
- Develop a research-based plan to engage their faith communities or organizations in the practice of resilience-building using these strategies.
Through this course, students should be able to achieve the following Learning Outcomes for Hartford Seminary’s programs:

- Demonstrate foundational and critical knowledge of one’s own religion [as it relates to resilience].
- Demonstrate the knowledge, capacities, and willingness to respectfully engage other religions and worldviews.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the practices of one’s own religious tradition and the capacity to appreciate the practices of other religious traditions.
- Demonstrate the ability to relate theory and practice in the social contexts in which a religion’s communities exist.
- Share the transformed consciousness of one’s own spirituality in ways beneficial to the wider world.
- Develop an appreciation of living in a pluralistic world and dialogical skills needed to work in multi-faith and diverse settings.
- Enhance abilities related to spiritual/pastoral care and community service.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the larger social and cultural dynamics affecting religious life and organizations in the 21st century and their implications for ministry setting.
- Demonstrate the ability to assess with concrete evidence the local contextual, identity, process dynamics and to formulate new approaches.
- Demonstrate the knowledge, capacities, and willingness to respectfully engage the religious pluralism of contemporary American society through exposure to the teachings of other faiths and those who practice those faiths.
- Demonstrate reflective and intentional critical assessment of their style of ministry in effecting change of their ministry setting.

Assessment:

It is expected that all aspects of this course will be completed by May 15, 2019. Grades on essays and projects submitted after that date may be affected negatively. Grades will be based on completion of pre-seminar assignments, attendance, meaningful participation in class discussion, and completion of written assignments as detailed below.

Please be mindful of the student handbook: “Hartford Seminary strictly adheres to the Plagiarism Policy. Written papers and theses must be typed and should conform to the styles and format for footnotes and acknowledgments announced by the course instructor. For additional information on format, proper footnotes, acknowledgments, etc., students are directed to consult the Hartford Seminary General Guidelines for a Research Paper. These guidelines can be picked up in the student forms center or downloaded from our website at: http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-writing-resources/. Students may also consult Kate L. Turabian’s, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, (6th Edition, University of Chicago Press, 1996), upon which the guidelines are based.”

The requirements are as follows:

**Pre-seminar requirements [10%]**

- Prior to the start of class, explore the Canvas website and complete the first discussion-board prompt which will be the following:
  - Read Mehr-Muska’s *Weathering the Storm* or Southwick and Charney’s *Resilience* and reflect on one insight from the book that was most surprising to you and/or most resonated with you and why. (approx. 400 words) – Due by 8am on Friday, January 24, 2019.
o Respond respectfully and thoughtfully to two of your classmates’ responses (approx. 200 words) – Due by 8am on Tuesday, January 28, 2019.

Attendance & Class Discussion Participation [35%]
Presence and participation during the course meetings and participation online via the Canvas discussion board accounts for 35% of your final grade. Because this class meets only five times face-to-face, missing even part of a class session will result in an automatic lowering of your final grade, unless an adequate manner of making up the time and covering the material is negotiated with the instructor. Participation in all online components is expected; failure to do so is considered an “absence” and will affect one’s final grade.

- Prior to each class, the instructor will assign a reading and will expect a response to the question prompt that will be provided. (approx. 400 words) – Due by 8am on Friday of the week prior to the next course meeting.
- Respond respectfully and thoughtfully to two of your classmates’ responses (approx. 200 words) – Due by 8am on Tuesday prior to the next course meeting.

Project [15%]
Choose one of the following:

- Develop a program that you can implement in your context related to helping people build their resilience. Be sure to include the following:
  o Detail the audience.
  o Describe your rationale for this proposed project by citing at least four sources (books or journal articles).
  o Propose how you might introduce the program to stakeholders.
  o Consider and propose how you intend to assess the success of the program.

- Create an instructional resource about resilience that incorporates theology and Holy Writ from your spiritual/religious tradition. Describe your audience. Your research for this project should cite at least four sources (books or journal articles).

- Other: If you have another idea for a project (group or individual), see instructor for approval.

Final Paper [20%]

- Write an essay of approximately seven pages (approx. 2500 words, double spaced) in which you reflect on the resilience of a character you choose from a fictional or non-fiction book from a list below (or one of your choosing, with instructor’s approval). This reflection should use sources (books or journal articles) from this course and sources that you discover in your research/reflection. The paper should follow the following format:
  o Introduction: Provide a very brief summary of the book (not to exceed 200 words). What were the key themes of the book? What did the author want you to learn or understand about her/his experience?
  o Background: What aspects of this book’s physical context is relevant to the characters’ experience? What cultural considerations affected this character’s story? What aspects of the social context were pertinent (related to the character’s immediate relationships as well as the broader social contexts in which he/she exists)? What aspects of the political or religious context influenced this individual’s story?
  o Conflict: What sorts of conflicts was the protagonist facing? What required her/his resilience? Which of the conflicts were actual, and which were perceived?
- Resilience characteristics: How were each of the characteristics of resilience employed in this story? What internal and external resources were accessed? Which additional characteristics were evident?
- Learnings: What could the protagonist done differently? What ultimately led to their success or failure? What did they learn about yourself? What did they learn about the world? What do they wish they had done differently?
- Theological reflection: Using your own personal theology, imagine and articulate your understanding of the role of the Holy in this protagonist’s story. How do your own spiritual/religious beliefs and texts relate to this person’s journey/struggle? How did your spiritual/religious tradition/theology inform this experience?
- Conclusion: Tie together the above in a cohesive conclusion. Answer any additional questions that are not listed above and are relevant to your character.

Personal Reflection [20%]

Choose one of the following (approx. seven pages or 2500 words).
- Follow the above Final Paper protocol using your own autobiography.
- Choose two of the characteristics of resilience covered in the course and do a self-evaluation.
  - Conduct a self-assessment using the questions that will be provided.
  - Establish a very specific list of short- and long-term goals that will help you build those specific characteristics of resilience. (Goals must be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound.)

Email Policy:
The instructor will use the official Hartford Seminary student email addresses for all course communications. Please check your hartsem.edu email account regularly.

Required Reading:

NOTE: In addition to the above, each student’s required reading includes a book or three journal articles that relate to resilience from the perspective of the student’s content, area of interest, or personal spiritual or religious tradition.

Recommended Reading:

**Book Ideas for Final Assessment:**
Abulhawa, Susan – Mornings in Jenin: A Novel
Angelou, Maya - I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings
Bakr, Salwa – The Man From Bashmour
Brooks, Geraldine – Caleb’s Crossing
Brooks, Geraldine – March
Brooks, Geraldine – People of the Book
Doerr, Anthony – All the Light We Cannot See
Eugenides, Jeffrey – Middlesex: A Novel
Falcones, Ildefonso – The Hand of Fátima
Frank, Anne – Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl
Hall Kelly, Martha – Lilac Girls: A Novel
Hannah, Kristin – The Nightingale
Hosseini, Khaled – The Kite Runner
Kurban, Said – Ali and Nino: A Love Story
L’Engle, Madeleine – A Wrinkle in Time
Lalami, Leila – The Moor’s Account
Lee Shetterly, Margot – Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race
Maalouf, Amin – Leo Africanus
Maalouf, Amin – Ports of Call
McCain, John – Faith of My Fathers: A Family Memoir
Monette, Paul – Becoming a Man: Half a Life Story
Morrison, Toni – Beloved
Obama, Michelle – Becoming
Stedman, M.L. – The Light Between Oceans
Strayed, Cheryl – Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail
Tartt, Donna – The Goldfinch
Toibin, Colm – Brooklyn
Tolan, Sandy – The Lemon Tree
Hillenbrand, Laura – Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption
Wiesel, Elie – Night
Yehoshua, A. B. – A Journey to the End of the Millennium: A Novel of the Middle Ages
Yousafzai, Malala – I am Malala
Zusak, Markus – The Book Thief