DI 610 Faith in the Neighborhood
An Introduction to America’s Religious Diversity
A Hartford Seminary Asynchronous Online Course

Spring Term 2017

Instructor:
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Office Hours via Zoom: by appointment

Course Format: asynchronous online; with expectation of visits to several sites reasonably proximate to the enrollee’s location.

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 the scope of religious diversity in the United States, to provide foundational information about the belief and practices of a number of religions that are part of the fabric of 21st-century America, and to heighten awareness of the multireligiousness of one’s own region. To these ends, enrollees will explore the concepts, vocabulary, and practices of several religions sufficient for engagement in intelligent dialogue and sufficient for being an informed visitor to religious settings. They will be introduced to tools to think theologically about one’s own faith in the presence of persons of other faiths, and techniques for developing interfaith relationship leading to collaborative action. Methodologically, instruction will balance formal presentations with experiential and dialogical learning, facilitated by a Canvas website.

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) Conduct and report on an independent site-visit, using anthropology-of-religion methodology.
3) Articulate or identify foundational information about beliefs and practices of at least five religions other than one’s own.

4) Describe at least three aspects of America’s “interfaith infrastructure”.

5) Articulate a personal theology of religious difference

6) List the three core aspects to making interfaith cooperation a “social norm”

7) Explain several methods of interfaith collaboration and leadership in multi-faith contexts.

**Topics:** (1) mapping America’s religious diversity; (2) assessing religious literacy; (3) religion site-visiting; (4) introduction to theology of religious difference; (5) introductions to Abrahamic, Dharmic, Indigenous, East Asian, Persian, Caribbean religions; (6) America’s interfaith infrastructure; (7) skills of/models for leadership and collaboration in multi-religious contexts

**Assessment**

Grades will be determined by the quality of (a) responses to prompts and interaction with classmates via the online discussion board, (b) several brief but formal research reports, and (c) scores on two or three short online quizzes.

**Required Texts**


Additional required or useful items will be made available as needed via the Canvas website. See also the full bibliography at the end of the syllabus.

**Highly Recommended:**

Fisher, Mary Pat. *Living Religions.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall – any edition since 2002. [NB: This comprehensive reference book, while *superb*, is very expensive. If you decide to purchase a used copy, please note that the 5th edition is the oldest you should consider.]