Fall 2011
Dialogue in a World of Difference (MA-530)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: Students and faculty in a collegial setting will learn about the practice and models of interfaith dialogue; be introduced to critical substantive issues related to interfaith relations in today’s globalized context; and appreciatively encounter the diversity of Hartford Seminary’s student body through an ongoing experience of dialogical listening and conversation.

UNDERLYING COURSE ASSUMPTION: This is more than a course about dialogue. It is an invitation to engage in the practice of dialogue in a structured setting and thereby to develop the appreciative capacities that, among other things, will enable you to take maximum advantage of the diversity of students you will have in classes throughout your Hartford Seminary experience. Course outcomes focus on what is learned in the process.

OUTCOMES:
• A sense of collegiality and community across religious, cultural, gender lines
• An experientially grounded understanding of the principles of interfaith dialogue
• The ability to participate meaningfully and constructively in multi-cultural and interfaith conversations and learning
• The critical, intellectual capacity to address substantive issues from a dialogically appreciative perspective
• Familiarity with a spectrum of Hartford Seminary faculty

EXPECTATIONS:
• Complete assigned reading in preparation for the class session for which it is assigned
• Participate fully in class discussions and activities. Timely and regular attendance is especially important, as is familiarity with the assigned reading
• The nature and quality of classroom discussion is critical. Expectations include:
  ○ Sharing openly and respectfully
  ○ Empathetic listening (listening with an intention of hearing and understanding the others’ perspectives)
  ○ Creating and sustaining a safe space for open and beneficial conversations, including respecting the confidentiality of what is said in class.
• Attend and observe two worship services, first a worship at your regular place of worship in the U.S., and second, a worship in a faith tradition other than your own.
• Timely submission of one’s reflection and worship papers.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Attendance at all class sessions is expected. If, for any reason, a student cannot attend a session, notice should be given to the instructors as early as possible, so that any appropriate make-up experiences can be assigned.
THE GRADE FOR THE COURSE WILL BE PASS OR FAIL

COURSE READING: Primary course readings will consist of papers, book chapters and excerpts assigned by guest faculty for their respective sessions. These will either be handed out at the previous class, be available online or be made available to be copied in the library reserve section. Additionally, students should purchase Not Without My Neighbor: Issues in Interfaith Relations (S. Wesley Ariarajah), The Other in the Light of the One: The Universality of the Qur'an and Interfaith Dialogue (Reza Shah-Kazemi), and The Other (Ryszard Kapuscinski). We will be reading chapters from the following book, which students may purchase if they prefer having a book to an online copy of selective material: Jane Smith, Muslims, Christians, and the Challenge of Interfaith Dialogue (Oxford Univ Press, 2007).

Assigned reading should be read prior to and in preparation for the class session for which it is assigned

Session One: September 6—Why Dialogue? Why Me?

Heidi Hadsell—Introduction to Interfaith Dialogue in a Global Context
Yehezkel Landau—The Benefits and Risks of Interfaith Engagement

Readings: Ariarajah, Not Without My Neighbor (chapters 1 and 2)
Swidler, “The Dialogue Decalogue” (handout)
Smith, Muslims, Christians, and the Challenge of Interfaith Dialogue
(chapters 1 and 5)
Hadsell, Interfaith Dialogue in Christian Theological Education in North America: Opportunities and Challenges (pp. 213-222)

Session Two: September 13—Engaging the “Other” with our Multiple Identities

Yehezkel Landau and Heidi Hadsell, conveners and facilitators

Readings: Ryszard Kapuscinski, The Other
Amartya Sen, Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny (chapters 2 & 4)
Jonathan Sacks, The Dignity of Difference (prologue and chapters 10 & 11)

Session Three: September 20—Observational Skills for Dialogue

Guest faculty: Scott Thumma—How to be a participant observer at another faith community’s worship

Readings: (Read these descriptive chapters as observational visits into the worship and congregational realities of other faiths rather than for informational content.)
Community in a Black Pentecostal Church: An Anthropological Study, Melvin D. Williams pp. 82-108
Synagogue Life: A Study in Symbolic Interaction, Samuel C. Heilman pp. 25-62
Without Forgetting the Imam: Lebanese Shi’ism in an American Community, Linda S. Wallbridge, pp. 97-127
Ariarajah, Not Without My Neighbor (chapters 3 and 7)
Session Four: September 27—Scripture and Dialogue – Christians & Jews

Guest faculty: Ed Waggoner


“Grassroots Scriptural Reasoning on Campus," by Peter Ochs and Homayra Ziad, as found at www.irdialogue.org

If students have time, they are also encouraged to read:


Session Five: October 4—The Koran and Its Interpreters

Guest faculty: Mahmoud Ayoub

Readings: Ayoub, The Qur'an and Its Interpreters, Vol. 1
Gen 37-50 and Sura 12 (Yusuf) of the Qur’an
The Student Journal of Scriptural Reasoning (Vol. 1, No. 1, October 2006), 35 pages online at http://etext.virginia.edu/journals/abraham/sjsr/issues/volume1/number1/index.html

1st Paper Due: How do I make sense of a diversity of faith traditions, and how does this relate to my engagement of the religious other?

Session Six: October 11—Islam & Interfaith Relations

Guest faculty:

Readings: TBA

Session Seven: October 18—Christianity & Interfaith Relations

Guest Faculty: Lucinda Mosher


Session Eight: October 25—Judaism and Interfaith Relations

Yehezkel Landau, convener and facilitator

Reading: Magonet, Talking to the Other: Jewish Interfaith Dialogue with Christians and Muslims (chapters 2 and 8)
Yehezkel Landau and Yahya Hendi, Jews, Muslims and Peace
Yehezkel Landau, God as a Multiple Covenanter: Toward a Jewish Theology of Abrahamic Partnerships

Session Nine: November 1—Communitarian & Universalist Ethics

Heidi Hadsell convener.

Reading: Walzer, Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad (chs. 1 & 5)

Session Ten: November 8—Nigeria

Film and student contribution

Session 11: November 15 – Skills in Dialogue

Guest Faculty – Rev. Dr. Robert A. Evans, Executive Director, Plowshares Institute
Alice Frazer Evans, Director of Writing and Research, Plowshares Institute

Readings: Kraybill, Evans, Evans – Peace Skills for Community Mediators, chapters 11-12
Evans, Evans, Kraybill – How to Read a Case Study & Case Study “Giving Thanks”

2nd Paper Due: What does my faith tradition teach about ethical obligations to those within my tradition, and to those beyond my tradition?

Session 12: November 29 – Dialogue in Hartford
Guest Faculty – Reverend Edwin Ayala, Associate Director, Christian Activities Council
Reverend Charles Turner, Pastor, Shiloh Baptist Church
Readings TBA

**Session 13: December 6 – Models in Dialogue: International & Local**
Guest Lecturer – Ingrid Mattson

Reading: as many documents as possible from [http://www.acommonword.com](http://www.acommonword.com)

**Session 14: December 13 – Religious Traditions in Dialogue with the Secular World**

Watch the film, “Arranged”

**Session 15: December 20 – Wrap-up**
- ½ worship debrief in small groups
- ½ closing conversation

Evaluation

3rd Paper Due: Reflection on worship observations in your tradition and in another tradition

4th and Final Paper Due (January 6th): What lessons in this course would you apply in your life and work? What questions do you still find challenge you?