

## **Interreligious Dialogue**

IR-4000

3 Units

Starr King School for the Ministry – Graduate Theological Union  
Spring 2020

### **Instructor Information:**

M. S. Pourfarzaneh, Ph.D.

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Office Hours: By Appointment

### **Meeting Dates and Times:**

Mondays, 2-5PM

### **Course Description:**

This course will present a framework for the practice of interreligious dialogue, in a collaborative and pluralist environment. It will draw upon contemporary texts and guest lectures representing a diversity of faith traditions to provide an integrative context for building bridges between and among religious boundaries. Students will be encouraged to share their interreligious experiences to foster discussion about ways in which to engage in interfaith work among and between different traditions and understand interreligious dialogue from a variety of perspectives.

### **Learning Objectives:**

During this course, students will:

- Learn about existing frameworks for engaging in interreligious dialogue
- Read about interfaith encounters that support pluralist engagement
- Hear from tradition experts about interfaith approaches from other religions
- Engage in interreligious dialogue with local faith communities
- Complete a research paper or project on a specific topic related to interreligious dialogue

### **Learning Outcomes:**

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

- Speak conversantly about methods for engaging in interreligious dialogue
- Engage in interreligious dialogue with practitioners from diverse faith traditions
- Distinguish interreligious dialogue from multireligiosity
- Advocate for building bridges between and among religious boundaries

### **Course Policies:**

#### **Academic Conduct and Plagiarism**

Please refer to the SKSM/GTU policy statement for guidelines on academic conduct and plagiarism.

## Privacy

Please refer to the SKSM/GTU policy statement for guidelines on privacy (FERPA).

## Disability

If you have a disability or requirement for special needs either inside or outside of the classroom, please make your needs clear both to the instructor and the SKSM/GTU center for disabilities, in accordance with the SKSM/GTU policy on disability.

## **Course Assignments:**

You are expected to attend all classes and engage in class discussions, having prepared the reading materials for the week. Each week, we will look at contemporary approaches to interreligious dialogue by referring to the readings along with guest lectures, sharing, and discussion. It is important that you come to class having prepared the readings as we will be building on the themes of the assignments in our lectures and discussions. Excused absences must be cleared with the instructor.

This course is structured around the production of a 10-15 page research paper or substantive interreligious dialogue project on a topic approved by the instructor. You will also be required to attend two interfaith events throughout the semester and provide a 1-2 page journal about your experience for each.

Weeks 14-15 are reserved for presentations. You will be required to give a 10-15 minute presentation on your research paper topic.

Due to the online component of this course, you will also be required to set up a Moodle account to help coordinate research paper drafts, notes, announcements, and discussions outside of class.

## **Grading:**

The grading for the class will be based on these areas:

*Class participation and attendance – 25%*  
*Research Paper/Project Presentation – 25%*  
*Research Paper/Project – 30%*  
*Interfaith Event Journals – 20%*

## **Required Texts:**

Required texts include *Encountering God* (ISBN 978-0807073018, \$21 Paperback / \$15.99 Kindle), *Global Religions* (ISBN 978-0195158748, \$10.89 Paperback / \$20.80 Kindle), and *Understanding Other Religious Worlds* (ISBN 978-1570755163, \$23.72 Paperback / \$12.49 Kindle).

Please see the section on “Course Readings” for more information about required texts.

## Course Schedule:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Readings and Assignments</b>
Week 1	Reading: Berling vii-17; Juergensmeyer 40-51
Week 2	<b>Guest Lecture: Deena Aranoff, Ph.D.</b> Reading: Berling 18-48; Juergensmeyer 3-13
Week 3	Reading: Berling 49-80; Juergensmeyer 17-27
Week 4	<b>*RESEARCH PAPER/PROJECT TOPICS DUE*</b> Reading: Berling 81-109; Juergensmeyer 63-77
Week 5	<b>Guest Lecture: Scott Mitchell, Ph.D.</b> Reading: Berling 110-126; Juergensmeyer 28-39
Week 6	Reading: Eck ix-21; Juergensmeyer 52-62
Week 7	<b>*RESEARCH PAPER/PROJECT FIRST DRAFT (~5 PAGES) DUE*</b> <b>Guest Lecture: Pravina Rodrigues, Ph.D. Candidate</b> Reading: Eck 22-44; Juergensmeyer 78-86
Week 8	<b>SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS</b>
Week 9	Reading: Eck 45-80; Juergensmeyer 87-92
Week 10	<b>Guest Lecture: Judith Berling, Ph.D.</b> Reading: Eck 81-117; Juergensmeyer 95-109
Week 11	<b>*RESEARCH PAPER/PROJECT SECOND DRAFT (~10 PGS) DUE*</b> Reading: Eck 118-143; Juergensmeyer 110-123
Week 12	Reading: Eck 144-165; Juergensmeyer 124-131
Week 13	Reading: Eck 166-199; Research Papers/Projects
Week 14	<b>*RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATIONS*</b> Reading: Eck 200-231; Research Papers/Projects
Week 15	<b>*INTERFAITH EVENT JOURNALS (1-2 PAGES EACH) DUE*</b> <b>*FINAL PAPERS/PROJECTS (10-15 PAGES) DUE*</b>

## Course Readings:

Course readings will be selected from:

Berling, Judith A. *Understanding Other Religious Worlds: A Guide for Interreligious Education*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004.

Eck, Diana L. *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2003.

Juergensmeyer, Mark, ed. *Global Religions: An Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

## Supplementary Materials:

Eck, Diana. *A New Religious America: How a “Christian Country” Has Become the World’s Most Religiously Diverse Nation*. New York: HarperCollins, 2001.

Ellwood, Robert, and Barbara McGraw. *Many People, Many Faiths: Women and Men in the World Religions*. New York: Routledge, 2014.

The Pluralism Project: <http://pluralism.org/>