



**Syllabus for SM 310-3, a D2D Course in Spring, 2015:
A Seminary Course Also Satisfying the Area C Requirement in Mission & Evangelism**

**Encountering the World's Diversity of Religious Faith and Practice
among Our American Neighbors**

**A Cooperative Formational Event for Seminary Students and Members of the Louisville
Community**

Sponsored by the Doors to Dialogue (D2D) Initiative at Louisville Seminary

Description and themes:

People of other faith traditions are no longer just on the other side of the world but are also our neighbors right here in Louisville and in other parts of the U.S.A. How to relate with these communities is now a pastoral issue for all of our congregations – one that all of us need to learn better to engage with “energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.”

As part of its Doors to Dialogue (D2D) program, Louisville Seminary has developed for spring semester in 2015 a sequence of study opportunities to address these questions. The innovative format combines an LPTS course with a series of public forums over the course over a series of weekends. These modules will focus on understanding the burgeoning religious diversity all around us – with a concentration on relations with and among Christian communities and an invitation to draw into this conversation interested members of other religious communities as well. They will bring to Louisville leading scholars (Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, Christian) who can share the deepest values of their own tradition and who are also deeply committed to interreligious dialogue. There are opportunities also to visit and have dialogue with a range of local religious communities. Faculty at Louisville Seminary will coordinate the experience and provide insights into the changing religious demography of the U.S.A., theological approaches to relating with people of other faiths, and pastoral insights into emerging issues in a multi-faith world like interfaith marriage, religion and public life, biblical interpretation in light of interfaith commitments, gender justice, and shared ministries of compassion and justice.

This is not an “introduction to world religious traditions” but rather an exploration of living and ministering faithfully amidst religious diversity.

Participants and Schedule:

Louisville Seminary will host on its campus five intensive modules during spring semester in 2015. The schedule has been chosen to be compatible with multiple religious calendars.

Sunday	4:30 – 6:00 p.m.	Session with guest presenter and all participants
	6:00 – 7:00 p.m.	Supper together
	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.	Dialogue
Monday	8:30 – 11:00 a.m.	Course session for guest scholar & enrolled students
	Noon	Community lunch – all are welcome

Participants:

Sunday sessions are open to the entire LPTS community and to people from the Louisville community who register in advance to commit to attendance and to some background reading. Partners for the series will include the Center for Interfaith Relations, the Festival of Faiths, and the Kentucky Council of Churches. Resources for preparation and reflection will be provided for all participants. Non-Seminary participants will pay a modest cost for the Sunday supper.

All interested people are invited to the community lunch which concludes each module on Monday. The Monday morning class periods with guest faculty are for LPTS students enrolled in the course.

Learning Goals and Outcomes for the Seminary Course:

Course goals are responsive to the three learning outcomes identified in D2D program related to interfaith relations, and now identified as Student Learning Outcomes for the M.Div. program at the Seminary. At the conclusion of the class students should be better able to:

- Describe and articulate important characteristics of the history, traditions, practices, and perspectives of one or more religious traditions other than Christianity (QEPSLO1), as evidenced by participation in discussions and in the module response papers;
- Articulate, orally and in writing, their own theological perspective, including a theology of ministry, mindful of their distinctive ecclesial tradition and the global, multicultural, multi-religious context of contemporary ministry (QEPSLO2), as evidenced through writing assignments, particularly the final paper and evaluative discussion;
- Participate in interreligious dialogue constructively, with appreciation and respect, as evidenced by a demonstrated ability to articulate the views of their dialogue partners and to identify similarities and differences with their own (QEPSLO3), as evidenced by participation in the discussion sections and student reflections in module papers and the final integrative paper.

Requirements and Expectations:

Required books:

Eck, Diana. *A New Religious America*. New York: Harper Collins, 2009. ISBN: 978-0060621599.

Granberg-Michaelson, Wesley. *From Times Square to Timbuktu: The Post-Christian West Meets the Non-Western Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2013. ISBN: 978-0802869685.

Levine, Amy-Jill. *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*. New York: HarperOne, reprint edition, 2007. ISBN: 978-0061137785.

Mann, Guringer Singh, Paul Numrich, and Raymond Williams. *Buddhists, Hindus and Sikhs in America: A Short History*. Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN: 978-0195333114.

Patel, Eboo. *Sacred Ground: Pluralism, Prejudice, and the Promise of America*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2012.

Recommended:

Eck, Diana L. *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras*, 2nd ed. Boston, MA: Beacon, 2003. ISBN: 978-0195333114.

Kessler, Edward. *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Levine, Amy-Jill. *Short Stories by Jesus*. New York: HarperOne, 2014.

Levine, Amy-Jill, and Marc Z. Brettler (eds.). *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Patel, Eboo. *Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2010.

Course requirements:

1. Preparation for and participation in 5 modules (75%)

Students will complete assigned preparation for each module and participate thoughtfully in the discussions. Evaluation will be divided equally between this participation and written work for each module.

Engaging the assignments for each module, students will prepare a brief response (about 1.5-2 pp.) in advance of each session, identifying key points and questions to be anticipated during the module. This preparatory work will be reflected in a paper (3-5 pp.) written after each module, which will incorporate insights also from the presentations and discussions.

Papers will be submitted through the CAMS site.

Preliminary responses will be due on the Sunday afternoons of the modules by 3 p.m.; in no case will extensions be given for these papers, and failure to complete them will reduce the grade of the paper for the module by at least one full grade.

The paper for each module will be due one week after the module, i.e. by the end of the following Monday; note, however, that exceptionally the paper for the final module is due on the following Friday.

Because this course depends heavily on the leadership by guest scholars, commitment to attend all modules is essential. Any absence must be for only the most serious of personal or family emergencies and must be discussed in advance with the course faculty. Unresolved absence from one module will result in a reduction in grade; two such absences will lead to failing the course.

2. Final writing (15%) and evaluative discussion (10%).

Final writing will include both an integrative essay and also group reports on two visits to places of worship outside of one's tradition. (See descriptions for Module 1 and 4.) Students are asked to attend these services in groups of at least two and then *together* prepare a one-page reflection for each visit on what this experience contributed to their understandings of the themes of the course. (The composition of groups may of course vary for the two visits.).

For those wishing to attend places of worship in Islamic, Jewish, or Buddhist settings leaders of those communities have offered to arrange a special time for such visits where there will also be an opportunity to be in dialogue with the members of those communities and to learn more about those traditions. More details, including dates for such structured visits, will be included in the orientation session for this course.

Schedule of the Course

These descriptions of each module can be amplified or amended as the series proceeds.

Weekend # 1 (February 15-16): Theme: Christian Ministry amidst Religious Pluralism

Visiting faculty: Diana Eck, Director of the Pluralism Project and Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies at Harvard University and winner of the 1993 Grawemeyer Award in Religion.

This first weekend will introduce Christians (and people who follow other religious traditions) to neighbors and colleagues who may well be people of other faiths. Questions we will address include:

- What is religious pluralism? Does pluralism mean a watering down of our own faith? How can one be a Christian and a pluralist?
- What are some practical resources and approaches for Christian ministry in a world of religious difference (with particular focus on the resources of the Pluralism Project, <http://pluralism.org/>)? How are Christians involved in outreach and dialogue with people of other faiths?
- How are our neighbors of other faiths also reaching out to us for relationship and dialogue?
- What transformations of our understandings of Christian life and ministry are invited by thankful openness to the gifts of religious pluralism?
- Can encounter with people of other faiths lead one to be even more faithful in one's own walk with God?

Preparation required for enrolled students:

Read:

- Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America*.
- Browse at some depth the website of the Pluralism Project, www.pluralism.org, exploring its sections on "Encountering Religious Diversity", "America's Many Religions", and "A New Religious Landscape."

On CAMS (also required):

Diana L. Eck, "Prospects for Pluralism," Presidential Address at the American Academy of Religion, 2006.

Also: <http://jaar.oxfordjournals.org/content/75/4/743.full.pdf+html>

Write:

1. Using the resources of the pluralism website and, as available, other resources you identify, write a brief reflection looking forward to the topics of this module. **Due Sunday February 15 by 3 p.m.**
2. Drawing on all the resources of this module, write a 3-5 page paper giving a working understanding of religious pluralism and articulate particular opportunities and challenges which you see emerging in the contexts in which you are (or anticipate being) in ministry. **Due Monday February 23 by midnight.**

Weekend # 2 (March 1-2)

Theme: Christians and Jews – Deepening Unfinished Dialogues

Visiting faculty: Amy-Jill Levine, University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies, E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies, and Professor of Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School and College of Arts and Sciences.

This module will focus on distinctive challenges and opportunities that arise between Christians and Jews. Both historical issues and models for mutual understanding and common joint work for peace and justice will be explored. Questions will include:

- What are the dominant misunderstandings Jews and Christians have of each other, how did they arise, and how might they be corrected?
- How can we understand the distinct messages of the Tanakh in relation to the Christian “Old Testament”?
- How does locating Jesus in his Jewish context have value for Christians and Jews today?

Preparation required for enrolled students:

Read (required):

- Levine, Amy-Jill. *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*.

Recommended to read:

- Kessler, Edward. *An Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*.
- Levine, Amy-Jill. *Short Stories by Jesus*.
- Levine, Amy-Jill, and Marc Z. Brettler (eds.). *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*.

Write:

1. Drawing on the readings for this module and on other resources available to you, write a brief reflection on the distinctive challenges and opportunities of Jewish-Christian relations. **Due Sunday March 1 by 3 p.m.**
2. In conversation with *The Misunderstood Jew* and insights gained through the teaching sessions, write a 3-5 pp. paper identifying ways that some New Testament interpretations contribute to anti-Judaism and explaining how you would offer more helpful interpretations. **Due Monday March 9 by midnight.**

Weekend # 3 (March 22-23)

Theme: Buddhists and Hindus in the Midst of America’s Diversity

Visiting faculty: John Thatamanil, Professor of Theology and World Religions at Union Seminary in New York

This module will emphasize the transformations of classical Hindu and Buddhist themes, practices, and institutional structures when they move from Asian contexts to American ones. Questions will include these:

- What do Christians need to know about North American Hindus and Buddhists in order to be good neighbors?
- What are common misunderstandings that might impede understanding (i.e. Are Hindu images “idols”? Are Hindus polytheists?)
- What about the growing number of Christians who are also deeply shaped by their commitments to Hindu and Buddhist modes of practice (yoga, TM, vipassana, Zen, etc.)?
- What are the possibilities for and challenges to Christian interreligious engagement with Hindu and Buddhist communities?

Preparation required for enrolled students:

Read:

Gurinder Singh Mann, Paul Numrich, and Raymond Williams. *Buddhists, Hindus and Sikhs in America: A Short History*.

Write:

1. In response to the assigned reading, reflect on and identify questions about the topics identified for this module. **Due Sunday March 22 by 3 p.m.**
2. Using resources from the presentation and discussion as well as from your reading, write an essay on the ways in which Christians can faithfully respond to practices from Hindu and Buddhist religious traditions which they find helpful in their own practice. What implications does this have for their Christian self-understanding? **Due Monday March 30 by midnight.**

Weekend # 4 (April 12-13)

Theme: Christian Diversity and Multiple Pluralism in the American Context

Visiting Faculty: Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, with panel of local religious leaders.

Granberg-Michaelson, former general secretary of the Reformed Church in America, is active in ecumenical initiatives, including Christian Churches Together in the USA and the Global Christian Forum.

This session will turn to new forms of inner-Christian diversity. Questions will include:

- How are the dramatic shifts in world Christianity impacting the composition, life, and witness of churches in the United States?
- If “every Christian migrant is a potential missionary,” how might our understanding of *mission dei* be transformed in our present context?
- What questions and challenges might we expect to be raised by the growth of non-Western Christianity as the predominant expression of Christian faith in today’s world?

Preparation required for enrolled students:

Read:

- Wesley Granberg-Michaelson. *From Times Square to Timbuktu: The Post-Christian West Meets the Non-Western Church*.

On CAMS (also required):

- Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, “Navigating the Changing Landscape of World Christianity.” Keynote address, Seminar on “Seeking Renewal of the Spirit and Fullness of Life for All

Creation as Witnessing Communities,” new WCC Statement on Mission and Evangelism, Bossey, Switzerland, July 14, 2014.

Recommended to read (also on CAMS):

- Andrew F. Walls, “Eusebius Tries Again: the Task of Reconceiving and Re-visioning the Study of Christian History,” in Wilbert R. Shenk, ed., *Enlarging the Story: Perspectives on Writing World Christian History*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books (2002), 1-21.

Write:

1. In response to the reading, write a brief paper anticipating the topics to be examined in this module. **Due Sunday April 12 by 3 p.m.**
2. In conversation with the readings, write a 3-5 pp. paper on either the transformation of understandings of “mission” invited by the changing demography of U.S. Christianity or the opportunities and challenges for local U.S. congregations of the growing diversity in their midst. **Due Monday April 20 by midnight.**

Visit:

If you have not already done so, by this class be sure that you have visited the worship service of a Christian community whose members are predominantly newcomers to the U.S. Consider especially communities worshipping in a language other than English. See the information under “final writing.”

Weekend # 5 (May 3-4)

Theme: Interfaith Leadership: Theory and Practice

Visiting faculty: Eboo Patel, Director of the Interfaith Youth Core in Chicago and winner of the 2010 Grawemeyer Award in Religion

Social theorist Peter Berger observes that “modernity pluralizes.” Affecting individual identity, community continuity, and social cohesion, this pluralization can lead to everything from profound confusion to outright conflict to inspiring cooperation. To achieve positive outcomes at all levels (individual, communal, and social) requires skilled and proactive leadership. In this final module, including interactive workshops as well as presentations, participants increase their fluency in the theory and practice of interfaith leadership. Christian-Muslim relations will be a particular though not the exclusive focus.

Preparation required for enrolled students:

Read:

- Eboo Patel, *Sacred Ground: Pluralism, Prejudice, and the Promise of America*.

Recommended to read:

- Eboo Patel, *Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim*.

Write:

1. In response to the readings, write a brief reflection (about 1.5 pp.) looking toward the topics of this module. **Due by 3 p.m. Sunday May 3.**
2. Write a 3-5 pp. paper reflecting on Dr. Patel’s view that prejudice against Muslims is not just a problem for Muslims but “a challenge to the very idea of America.” Why do you agree or disagree? What should be the role of leaders of communities of faith and practice in combating such prejudice, and what are the obstacles to such leadership? **Due Friday May 8 by midnight (note this earlier deadline).**

Final writing due: Monday, May 11 at midnight

This writing will include:

- An essay (about 5 pp.) written in response to integrative questions, as distributed.
- Brief group reports (about 1 p. each) on the two visits to worship services in communities other than one's own – see Module 1 and Module 4. These reports should reflect together on what was learned about the themes of the course from encounter with these communities.

Final Discussion (for enrolled students): Wednesday, May 13

What have we learned?

LPTS faculty: Sue Garrett
David Hester
Kathryn Johnson
Cliff Kirkpatrick

1.12.2015

LPTS CLASSROOM POLICIES:

As with all LPTS classes, this course will honor these Seminary policies:

Use of Inclusive Language

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. For more information:

<http://lpts.libguides.com/content.php?pid=469569&sid=4083885>

Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God.

Academic Honesty

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see The Code of Student Conduct, 6.11; the Student Handbook, p. 19.

Citation Policy

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:

- American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.
- Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

Special Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (kmapes@lpts.edu) during the first two days of class (or, even better, before the class begins) and should speak with the instructors as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructors.

Attendance Policy

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are notified the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session, and multiple absences may result in a lowered or failing grade. Because of the unique structure of this class, attendance will be especially important. Unexcused absence from one module will result in a reduction in grade; two such absences will lead to failing the course. Except in direst emergency, all absences must be discussed with one of the instructors in advance.