

**Practical Theology and Interfaith Relations**  
**Senior Seminar Fall 2014**  
**Monday 2:00-4:50**

Instructors:

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Course Description

The Senior Seminar focuses on an area of theological study related to the practice of ministry, providing M.Div. students in their final year of study an opportunity to integrate the various elements of their theological education in a way that contributes to the ongoing discernment of their vocation. Students will produce a substantial essay or project that brings the methods of theological study to bear on problems and opportunities in ministry and that expresses the student's theological vision.

The focus of this Seminar is on practicing ministry in communities that are home to people of many faith expressions, including Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and others. How are Christians to relate to these new neighbors and how are pastors to lead their congregations in ministry in multifaith communities? Moreover, our "new neighbors" (to borrow an image from Paul Numrich) are not just next door. A growing number of households include family members who come from different faith traditions and expressions. They may go to a Christian Church *and* go to the Mosque or the Synagogue. How will you provide spiritual counsel and guidance for these families? How can you and your congregation provide pastoral care in times of need to people who don't believe as you do? What does God require of us as followers of Christ who live in communities where many faiths are represented? How do we act faithfully and relate to those of other or no faith respectfully, humbly, and reverently? That is the focus of this seminar.

Student Learning Outcomes and Means of Assessment

(These outcomes coincide with QEPSLOs 1, 2, and 3, now included in the D2D initiative)

1. Students will be able to describe at least 3 or 4 central characteristics and perspectives of one non-Christian religion based on their reading, **(assessment)** as evidenced by a classroom presentation to student colleagues.
2. Students will be able to articulate their theology of ministry with attention particularly to Christian faith and interfaith relations, **(assessment)** as evidenced by a **4-6 pp. paper. Due October 6**
3. Students will be able to identify core issues, insights, and contributions from the course common readings, **(assessment)** as evidenced by a written reflection of a

half page at least and no more than one page in length that indicate what the student perceives to be at the heart of each of the readings. **A copy of each student's writing should be submitted electronically to the instructors at least one day prior to the beginning of the class in which the reading is to be discussed.**

4. Students will design a project related to a practice of ministry that addresses a perceived congregational, chaplaincy, pastoral care, or educational need engaging Christian interfaith relations, **(assessment)** as evidenced by a classroom presentation that identifies the ministry need, shows evidence of critical theological reflection and integration of learning from seminary courses and experience, and describes how the need could be met, while preserving the integrity of the theologies and religious traditions of all parties.

### Required Reading

#### Books (available at Seminary's e-bookstore)

Eck, Dianna. *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993.

March, W. Eugene. *The Wide, Wide Circle of Divine Love: A Biblical Case for Religious Diversity*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004.

Numrich, Paul D. *The Faith Next Door: American Christians and their New Religious Neighbors*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA. 2009.

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

Prothero, Stephen. *God is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions that Run the World—and Why Their Differences Matter*. New York: Harper-Collins, 2010.

*Read the Introduction, plus the chapter related to the religion on which you are focusing, the chapter on Buddhism, and one other chapter of your choice, other than Christianity.*

### Reading on CAMS course site

Knitter, Paul F. *Without Buddha I Could Not Be Christian*. Oxford, England: Oneworld Publications, 2009. *See calendar for assigned pages.*

March, W. Eugene. "Sharing the Gospel in a Religiously Diverse World." *Journal for Preachers*. Volume XXXVI Number 4: Pentecost 2013. pp. 31-44 (including three responses to the article from Friedman, Rigdon, and Azumah). *See calendar for assigned pages.*

Volf, Miroslav, Ghazi bin Muhammad, and Melissa Yarrington, eds. *A Common Word: Muslims and Christians on Loving God and Neighbor*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2010. *See calendar for assigned pages.*

Websites to visit:

A Common Word <http://www.acommonword.com>

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

Interfaith Youth Core <http://www.ifyc.org>

“The Story of the Jews” with Simon Schama <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/story-jews/>

Seminary Policy Statements

1. 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. 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. See for further assistance, [http://www.lpts.edu/Academic\\_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp](http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp).

2. 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. Multiple occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For the Seminary policy, see The Code of Student Conduct, 6.11 in the Student Handbook, p. 19.

3. 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](mailto:kmapes@lpts.edu)) during the first two weeks of a semester and should speak with the instructor 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 instructor.

#### 4. Citation Policy

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

Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

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

#### 5. Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend and participate in class meetings regularly throughout the semester. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Six or more absences in a thirteen-week semester (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

Date	Topic	Reading	Other
Sept. 8	Syllabus and course intro; discussion of possible projects	TO BE READ PRIOR TO FIRST CLASS SESSION Prothero, Introduction; Listen to Ariarajah lectures on LPTS Chapel Sermons web site, Festival of Theology 2014 <a href="http://caldwellchapel.blogspot.com">http://caldwellchapel.blogspot.com</a>	Begin to consider which religious tradition they would prefer to focus on for their project.
Sept. 15	Our new neighbors; Pluralism Project DVD "On Common Ground" and project website;	Numrich, Introduction and chapters 1, 4, 6, 9, 11, and Conclusion; March, "Sharing the Gospel in a Religiously Diverse World" and Responses. On CAMS, Read pp. 31-46	Submit your rank ordering (first through fourth) of choices for your project focus from among Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Judaism.
Sept. 22	Christian Faith and interfaith; Initial discussion on religion of	Eck, 1-80; Prothero, chapter on religion of focus; resources from each student's denomination or sources of influence	Bring 2 page summary of your tradition's understanding of interfaith relations and

	focus for each student, based on Prothero reading at least		briefly locate yourself in relation to it
Sept. 29	Listening to others to learn who we are—Knitter's method of "crossing over and crossing back"	Knitter, <i>Without Buddha I could Not Be Christian</i> selections on CAMS. Read Preface, ix-xvii; Chapter 5, pp. 92-130.	Provide a beginning working bibliography of resources you will utilize to do your project
Oct. 6	Judaism "The Story of the Jews" (Selected episodes on DVD)	March, <i>The Wide, Wide Circle of Divine Love</i> ;	Interfaith perspectives in your theology of ministry paper (3-5 pp.) <b>Due</b>
Oct. 13	Research and Study		
Oct. 20	Islam and The Common Word Initiative	<i>A Common Word</i> selections on CAMS Read pp. 28-75; 79-87; 125-142	Progress reports on projects
Oct. 27	Pluralism and Prejudice;	Patel, Introduction; Parts I and II	Progress reports on projects
Nov. 3	Workshop on projects	Work collaboratively in class on project issues	
Nov. 10	Project reports		Three reports
Nov. 17	Project reports		Three reports
Nov. 24	Project reports		Three reports

Dec. 1	Project Reports and Course wrap up;		Two reports
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