

Practical Theology and Interfaith Relations
Senior Seminar Spring 2013
Monday 1:30-4:20

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 those for 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, including especially Christology, soteriology, and ecclesiology, and interfaith relations, **(assessment)** as evidenced by a 4-6 pp. paper.
3. 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 describes how the need could be met, while preserving the integrity of the theologies and religious traditions of all parties.

Common Reading

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

Heschel, Abraham Joshua. *The Sabbath*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 2005 edition.

March, W. Eugene. "Sharing the Gospel in a Religiously Diverse World Forthcoming. Copy available on CAMS.

_____. *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. [at least 58 pp. total plus the two elective chapters]

Websites to visit:

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

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

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%20Resources/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; 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) 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*, 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

_____. *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

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
Feb. 11	Syllabus and course intro; discussion of possible projects	TO BE READ PRIOR TO FIRST CLASS SESSION Prothero, Intro and Buddhism chapters;	Students need to choose the religious tradition on which they will focus, in consultation with the instructors.
Feb. 18	Our new neighbors	Eck, pp. 1-44; Numrich, Intro.; Prothero, chapter on religion of focus	Pluralism Project DVD or website;
Feb. 25	Christian Faith and interfaith; Presentations on religion of focus for each student, based on Prothero reading at least	Eck, 44-143; resources from each student's denomination or sources of influence	Bring 2 page summary of your tradition's understanding of interfaith relations and briefly locate yourself in relation to it
March 4	Case studies in interfaith choices	Numrich	
March 11	Judaism and Sabbath meaning Guest: Rabbi Gaylia Rooks	Heschel	Interfaith relations in a theology of ministry paper (4-6pp) Due by 3/14
March 18	Research and Study		
March 25	God's Wide Circle of Love	March	1-2 pp. response to March's interpretation of one scripture text. (Easter recess this week)
April 1	Pluralism and Prejudice; Guest, Martin Brooks	Patel, Introduction; Parts I and II	
April 8 no class	Students required to attend Prothero lectures, barring	Prothero lectures on 9 th and Grawemeyer	1 page response to each lecture

	course conflicts	lecture on 10th	
April 15	Project reports		Three reports
April 22	Project reports		Three reports
April 29	Project reports		Three reports
May 6	Wrap up;		