DI 610 Faith in the Neighborhood
An Introduction to America’s Religious Diversity
A Hartford Seminary course
meeting at
International Institute of Islamic Thought
Herndon, VA
3–7 April 2014

Instructor:
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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Meeting Times:
9:00 a.m. – 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. on Monday

Course Description and Goals:
The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the scope of religious diversity in the United States, to provide you with foundational information about the belief and practices of a number of the world’s religions as part of the fabric of 21st-century America, and to help you become better aware of the multi-religious nature of Metropolitan Washington, DC. To these ends, we will explore the concepts, vocabulary, and practices of several religions sufficient for engagement in intelligent dialogue, and sufficient to enable you to be an informed visitor to their religious settings. This course aims as well to equip you with tools to think theologically about your own faith in the presence of persons of other faiths. Grounded in personal encounter, you will learn techniques for developing interfaith relationship leading to collaborative action. Methodologically, this course will combine lectures and “book-learning” with experiential and dialogical learning.

Be Prepared:
It is essential that all participants be present for all sessions. Do not plan evening activities on April 3–6. (We will be using the evenings!) A detailed course schedule is provided at the end of this syllabus.

This course includes many site-visits. It includes evening sessions so that we will be able to visit houses of worship when “something is happening,” yet also have sufficient time for preparatory and follow-up lectures. This field work will take us to Orthodox Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, and Sikh houses of worship. Because the spaces we will be entering are sacred for a particular community, please keep the following points in mind as you decide what clothing to pack in your suitcase for your time in Herndon:
• Modest clothing is the norm throughout the week: not too casual; not too tight; not too revealing.
• Slacks for women will be fine; shorts for anyone may be problematic.
• Occasionally, long sleeves will be necessary.
• We will be asked to remove our shoes before entering certain houses of worship. (Bring socks if you don’t like to be barefoot.)
• Our Muslim and Sikh hosts will expect women will be expected to cover their hair before entering the house of worship. Women are encouraged to bring their own headscarf.
• Men may be asked to don a kippah at the synagogue. Wearing your own kufi will suffice.
• Men will be asked to cover their hair before entering the gurdwara. The traditional way of doing this is with a bandanna, and the gurdwara will have a supply. You, however, may prefer to bring your own bandanna. In your professor’s experience, a hat is not considered an adequate substitute.

**Required Reading**


Course booklet. (This will be provided on the first day of class. If it includes anything you need to read before our first session, that item will be sent to you via email.)

• Please read the three required books before the seminar begins. This will enhance your experience during the course and allow the class to go deeper into the subject matter.
• As you read, consider making color-coded vocabulary/question cards (a different color for each religion). This is an efficient way to keep track of new information you’d like to remember, but also to organize points of confusion or curiosity you hope we can clarify during the seminar week.

**Highly Recommended Reading**
Fisher, Mary Pat. *Living Religions*, ninth edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2013 (This is a superb and comprehensive reference book, but it is very expensive. If you decide to purchase a used copy, please note that the 4th edition is the oldest you should consider.)

Valkenberg, Pim. *World Religions in Dialogue: A Comparative Theological Approach*. Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2013. (This book is constructed dialogically. It is well written and interesting. It does not, however, include a “Christianity” unit.)

All of the items on the course bibliography below are, of course, “recommended reading”.

**Assessment**
Grades will be based on *class participation* and completion of *written assignments*.

**Class participation [70%]**
Because of the intensive nature of this course’s class time, students who participate fully in all sessions come expect a grade of no less than C- (or, for DMin students, “Low pass”).

1) “Full participation” begins with full attendance! *Please note: absence from any session of this week-long seminar will affect one’s final grade.*

2) “Full participation” includes completion of *assessments and short written exercises during the seminar week itself*. At the discretion of the instructor, this may include such items as an ungraded pre- and post-test of religious-diversity literacy or brief written reflections on particular experiences or topics.

3) “Full participation” also includes entry into class discussion—which will take place in plenary and in small break-out groups. For those of you who are “allergic” to asking questions or making comments aloud, a “question basket” will be provided; also cards on which you may write your questions/comments. They’ll be addressed.

**Major written assignments [30%]**

1) *A short reflection paper (3 pages) summarizing your site-visit experiences.* [10%]
Your reflections should include such things as what you found surprising, what questions these visits answered for you, and what questions remain for you. Your paper should make specific references to Eck’s *A New Religious America*, Patel’s *Sacred Ground*, and some other course material.

2) *A project [20%]*
Complete a major project on a topic of your choice (and which Dr Mosher has approved), using a method of your choice (which Dr Mosher has approved). See below for descriptions of these options. Your topic should have a clear relationship to the themes presented in this course. The written component of your project must make a clear connection to the experiences and materials presented during our time together in class and on site-visits. Particularly, your writing should include substantial reference to each item on the required reading list and to at least one book of your choice from the recommended reading list provided below. Almost definitely, you will need to read and refer to other sources of your choosing as well. Online resources may be used, but must be given proper credit. The finished project should be 18–20 pages (or the equivalent, if illustrations or a PowerPoint presentation are involved).

Interview-driven research for papers and projects must make use of the policy developed by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research. Your professor can supply you with this document.
All papers, including the written component of a PowerPoint presentation (or other approved project) are to accord with the standards for academic papers posted on the Hartford Seminary website.

All papers and projects must accord with Hartford Seminary’s stated policy regarding the citing of sources. Plagiarism is to be avoided!

Again, your choice of project must be approved by Dr. Mosher before you begin it. Here are descriptions of project suggestions:

   a) **Mapping Project**: Explore a specific town or neighborhood, noting all religious institutions and other indications of the presence of specific religious traditions. Report this by pinpointing your findings on a map, with an accompanying explanatory essay which explains your research method, your findings, and your own reflections on your findings in conversation with the required reading for this course.

   b) **Book Review Essay**: Select one of the books marked with an asterisk in the bibliography below. Your paper will provide a synopsis of your chosen book, and then will bring it into conversation with the required reading for this course, with reference to site-visits and lectures.

   c) **Site Analysis**: Choose one of the places we visited as a group. Find a contrasting example from the same religion (e.g. two synagogues, or two Buddhist temples, or two whatever.) Investigate both sites in depth: when they were founded and by whom; who uses them; what happens there on a regular basis; what happens there occasionally. Your paper will report, compare, and reflect upon your findings.

   d) **Interview**: Choose a practitioner of a religion of interest to you (perhaps one of the people met on a one of our site visits). Conduct a formal interview with that person (30-60 minutes). The interview should be recorded and transcribed. The accompanying paper describes your research and contextualizes your findings.

   e) **PowerPoint or Prezi lesson (or instructional video)**: Develop an oral presentation on a topic relevant to this course. Submit the script as well as the slide-illustrations or video. As with the previous options, you must make explicit connections to assigned course material, show evidence of further reading, and follow good academic style.

   f) **Something else**: If you wish to do a project other than those mentioned above, I am happy to discuss this with you.

**Bibliography**

*NOTE: Entries marked with an asterisk (*) are suitable options for a book review essay.*


Course Schedule (with the right reserved to make last-minute revisions if absolutely necessary)

Thursday, April 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Introductions to each other, to the course, and to America’s religious demographics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
<td>Lecture: America’s history of interfaith cooperation; strategies toward making interfaith cooperation a social norm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30</td>
<td>Lunch &amp; salat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>Lecture: Hinduism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15</td>
<td>Lecture: Jainism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:45</td>
<td>Salat break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>Site visit prep: How to Be a Perfect Stranger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Depart for Rajdhani Hindu Temple 4525 Pleasant Valley Road, Chantilly, VA 20151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30</td>
<td>Arrive at Rajdhani Hindu Temple for supper and puja [Some accommodation will be necessary for salat @ 7:30]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:45</td>
<td>Salat; return to IIT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Friday, April 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Debriefing; resources for a theology of religious manyness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30</td>
<td>Lecture: Interfaith literacy’s four aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
<td>Lecture: Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15</td>
<td>Lunch at IIIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15</td>
<td>Depart for ADAMS Center for 1:30 Jumah, 46903 Sugarland Rd, Sterling, VA 20164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>Depart ADAMS Center; return to IIIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30</td>
<td>Lecture: Judaism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:45</td>
<td><em>Salat</em> break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>Supper at IIIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:15</td>
<td>Depart for Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation, 1441 Wiehle Avenue, Reston 20190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30</td>
<td>Arrive at Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation for <em>Erev Shabbat</em> Worship Service at 6:45; Q&amp;A to follow. [Provision for 7:30 <em>salat</em> will need to be made]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>Return to Herndon for <em>salat</em> and dismissal</td>
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### Saturday, April 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Lecture: Christianity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
<td>Lecture: Buddhism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>Lunch, <em>salat</em>, and transfer to Fairfax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>Arrive at The Guhyasamaja Center, Fairfax Professional Center, 10875 Main Street Unit 108, Fairfax, VA; lesson with Venerable Losang Tendrol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45</td>
<td>Depart for St Nicholas Orthodox Cathedral, 3500 Mass. Ave NW, Washington, DC 20007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>Arrive at St Nicholas Cathedral; meet with Archpriest George Kokhno &amp; Priest Valery Shemchuk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:45</td>
<td><em>Salat</em> break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>Orthodox Vespers at St Nicholas Orthodox Cathedral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Return to Herndon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00</td>
<td>Late supper and discussion [<em>Salat</em> at 7:30]; assessing our multifaith literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>Adjourn [<em>Salat</em> at 8:45]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Sunday, April 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00</td>
<td>Optional: Dr Mosher will attend Eucharist at St Timothy’s Church, 432 Van Buren Street, Herndon (the Rev. Brad Rundlett, Rector); students are welcome (but not obligated) to accompany her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Debriefing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15</td>
<td>Lecture: Sikh Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
<td>Break &amp; travel to Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, 13814 Travilah Road, Rockville, MD 20850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>Arrive at Guru Gobind Singh Foundation for worship, Q&amp;A and langar (lunch)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>Depart gurdwara; break for <em>salat</em> before transfer to Herndon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>Lecture: Zoroastrianism</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Final Syllabus + Schedule: March 16, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3:30</td>
<td>Lecture: Baha’i Faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>Lecture: Afro-Atlantic religions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:45</td>
<td>Salat break and early supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00</td>
<td>Lecture: American Indigenous and earth-based religions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30</td>
<td>Break for salat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:45</td>
<td>Lecture: Taoism and Confucianism in relation to Buddhism</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:45</td>
<td>Adjourn for the evening; salat</td>
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**Monday, April 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00</td>
<td>Debriefing; sharing appreciative knowledge of America’s religious diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45</td>
<td>Lecture/Discussion: Thinking theologically about religious manyness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45</td>
<td>Lecture: America’s interfaith infrastructure and resources for collaborative action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>Salat &amp; (very short) lunch break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15</td>
<td>Discuss final projects; assess our multifaith literacy; wrap-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>Adjourn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interested in faith-based education? Our Canada-focused guide discusses the many unique features of faith-based schools. Religious-affiliated schools have a dual-track curriculum: they teach both secular and religious subjects. Most schools require students to take at least two religion courses a year, but in some schools, religion courses make up more than a third of the curriculum. In many religious-affiliated schools, students engage in religious practices, such as prayers and rituals. Westminster Classical Christian Academy (JK to Grade 10) is a private Christian school in the High Park neighbourhood in Toronto, for families seeking a rigorous, time-tested Christian education in the Classical model. [View profile]. Liberal Arts.