

Interfaith Leadership
SESP 351-0-21

Instructors:

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Time and Location:

2 to 4:40 on Wednesdays at 1834 Chicago Ave. (between PARC and Allison Hall).

Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to discover the skills and strategies necessary to lead in a religiously diverse world. We will examine both the leadership challenges and opportunities that religious diversity presents to building and sustaining a just and peaceful world.

Methodology:

Almost every week the course will be split into three segments: (1) a video, case study, or small group activity,(2) a mini lecture, and (3) a discussion of the readings. From time to time students will be asked to bring in current materials relevant to the class.

Readings:

There will be a course pack available from Quartet in the first week of class. Other readings will be assigned as needed.

Requirements:

1. Each week students will write a max one page typed response to some aspect of the readings. The responses will be copied and shared with the class members. 10 points
2. At the end of each class students will write a max one page essay reacting to what was discussed in class. The essays will be used to begin the next class session. 5 points
3. Students will be placed in 4 person groups to explore real life stories of interfaith leadership. The final group project will be a case study of interfaith leadership in a religiously diverse context. With the authors' permissions, the case studies will be posted on IFYC's online network, Bridge-builders, to be used by other students and campuses around the country to explore interfaith leadership. (100 points)

Tentative Schedule

Week 1 (3/31): Introductions to the Course and Each Other

Outline:

1. Leadership Assumptions
2. Learning Expectations
3. Exploring Narratives of Our Religious/Philosophical Backgrounds
4. Walk through course syllabus and structure

Readings:

1. Arntson handout

Week 2 (4/7): Leadership in a Diverse World

Outline:

1. Case study exercise, with small group discussion
2. Basic listening and communication systems for leadership
3. Leadership to build and sustain consensual interdependence

Readings:

1. Jersey City Case Study
2. Barak Obama on Community Organizing

Week 3 (4/14): The Challenges and Opportunities of Religious Diversity

Outline:

1. Video: *Beyond Our Differences*
2. Case study project fair

Readings:

1. Martin Luther King Jr., *Where do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community*, chapter 6
2. Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence*, Chapters 1-4

Week 4 (4/21) – The Problem of Religious Diversity

Outline:

1. Discussion – three visions of the response to religious diversity
2. Moving from diversity, to divergence, to convergence, to action, and learning
3. Choosing case study projects

Readings:

1. Samuel Huntington, "A Clash of Civilizations?"
2. Diana Eck, *A New Religious America*, pp. 27-79
3. Eboo Patel, *Acts of Faith*, xi-xix (Introduction)
4. Grand Island Nebraska Case Study

Week 5 (4/28) – Building Religious Pluralism – Social Capital and Networks of Engagement

Outline:

1. Discussion – Social Capital, Networks of Engagement
2. Project proposals shared

Readings:

1. Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*, pp. 3-22 (intro)
2. Robert Putnam, "E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the 21st Century"

Week 6 (5/5) – Religious Resources for Interfaith Cooperation

Outline:

1. Text – Theologies of Interfaith Cooperation
2. Project work plans discussed

Readings):

1. Greg Epstein, "Can We Be Good *With* God?" from *Good Without God*
2. Or Rose, "In the Footsteps of Hillel: Judaism and Religious Pluralism" in *Tikkun*
3. Khaled Aboul El Fadl, "The Place of Tolerance in Islam."
4. Brian McLaren, forthcoming on why Christians need to engage other religions

Week 7(5/12) – Interfaith Leadership and Storytelling

Outline:

1. The dynamics of story telling
2. Project progress discussed

Readings:

1. Howard Gardner, *Leading Minds*, chapters 1-3
2. IFYC article on storytelling: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/6450386/Storytelling-as-a-Key-Methodology-for-Interfaith-Youth-Work>
3. IFYC Toolkit on storytelling

Week 8 (5/19) – Group Meetings on Case Study Projects

Week 9(5/26) – Group Meetings on Case Study Projects

Week 10 (6/2) – Case Study Project Presentations and Course Wrap Up

6/9 – Last Day to Turn in All Written Materials