

**Building Interfaith Community and Leadership: The Boston Seminar
June 1-14, 2012**

Course number: CMLE 717J

Instructors:

Dr. Diana Eck, of the Pluralism Project at Harvard University
Dr. Jennifer Peace, of Andover Newton Theological School

Course Overview:

Through case discussion, public narrative, small group work, and site visits to local religious communities, seminar participants will explore the interesection of religious and civic life and reflect on their role as religious leaders in the public square. Local Sikh, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Jewish community leaders/practicioners/scholars will introduce participants to their respective houses of worship and religious practices. We will collectively reflect on the theological and practical challenges and opportunities of interfaith leadership and community-building.

Course Goals:

- To gain knowledge about and experience with a range of religious communities in the Greater Boston area
- To develop critical thinking and leadership skills through the use of Pluralism Project case studies and Public Narrative
- To reflect theologically on the implications of being a religious leader in a multi-religious society
- To develop skills for interfaith organizing and community-building
- To build multi-religious literacy

Texts:

- *My Neighbor's Faith: Stories of Interreligious Encounter, Growth and Transformation*, Peace, Rose, & Mobley eds. (Orbis 2012).
- *On Common Ground: World Religions in America*, CD-ROM/Website Diana Eck, The Pluralism Project, Harvard University
- Pluralism Project Case Studies (provided by instructors)
- Additional articles and online resources (provided by instructors)

Assignments:

- Daily Journal Entries – theological and practical reflections on site visits and class sessions
- A story of “self, us, and now” (From Public Narrative Workshop)
- A “Seed Case” and facilitation questions
- Final Integrative Paper or Project (This can take the form of a sermon, adult education series, or other formats relevant to one’s vocational goals). Final projects will be shared on the last day of the seminar.

Daily Session Details

Friday, June 1st

Description: Our opening day of the seminar will begin at the Pluralism Project offices in Harvard Square for introductions, an overview of the course, and lunch. Then we will travel together to a mosque in Roxbury, MA for our first site visit. In preparation for our visit, participants are encouraged to visit the ISBCC website and read the material listed below. In addition, the Pluralism Project website has a lot of valuable information about being a guest in someone else's house of worship and is a useful resource for all of our site visits.

Schedule

10:30 – 12:00 Seminar Overview & Lunch (Diana Eck and Jennifer Peace)

12:00 – 3:30 Jum'ah, tour and discussion at Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center (ISBCC)
(Guest Instructor: Nancy Khalil)

Locations: Pluralism Project Offices to ISBCC (We will use public transportation)
2 Arrow Street, 4th Floor, Cambridge, MA 02138
Enter through the first set of double doors and dial #400 on the call box
(Take the Red Line to Harvard Center Stop)

Readings:

1. *On Common Ground*: Excerpts on Islam
2. Reading about participant/observation (PDF posted online)
3. Reading about ISBCC (PDF posted online)

Websites:

- ISBCC website: <http://isbcc.org/>
- Pluralism Project website: <http://pluralism.org/>
- ISBCC Profile on PP site: <http://pluralism.org/profiles/view/74890>

Assignments:

- Review Assignment Guidelines; Begin thinking about your Final Integrative Paper or Project
- Journal Entries: Reflection on your site visit (See hand out for questions to guide your reflection). Due: Saturday, June 2nd

Saturday, June 2nd

Description: On day two of our seminar we will have our second site visit – to a Jewish synagogue. We will meet at Temple Beth Zion in Brookline, MA. (Accessible on the Green line – See their website for directions). Following services, we will have a break for lunch on your own and travel to Andover Newton for a conversation with Rabbi Or Rose.

Schedule

- 10:00 -12:30 Services at Temple Beth Zion, Brookline, MA
12:30- 2:00 Break for lunch on your own and travel to ANTS
2:00 – 4:00 Integrative Session and Case Discussion (Guest Instructor: Rabbi Or Rose)

Locations: We will meet at Temple Beth Zion. After services we will travel by T to Andover Newton for our session with Rabbi Or Rose

Andover Newton Theological School
210 Herrick Road, Newton Centre, MA 02459
(Take Green line to Newton Centre stop and walk up the hill behind the station)

Readings:

1. *On Common Ground*: Excerpts on Judaism
2. Case Study: *Sign of Division (A)* (PDF posted online)
3. (A) Case Response (PDF posted online)
4. Case Study: *Sign of Division (B)* (PDF posted online)
5. *My Neighbor's Faith* (Choose 5 from the following Chapters: 3, 8, 9, 12, 13, 17, 30, 41, 45, 47 49, and 50.)
6. Excerpts from *These Are the Words: A Vocabulary of Jewish Spiritual Life*, Arthur Green (PDF posted online)

Website:

- Temple Beth Zion website: <http://www.tbzbrookline.org/>

Assignments:

- Journal Entries: Reflection on your site visit (See handout for questions to guide your reflection). Due: Sunday, June 3rd
- Review *Public Narrative Handbook* (online PDF) in preparation for Monday's workshop at the Kennedy School. Note: You do not need to read this in detail, just familiarize yourself with the content.

Sunday, June 3rd

Description: After two whole-group site visits, participants will choose from a list of church services to attend separately or in small groups. Taking a break for lunch on your own and travel to Andover Newton, we will gather in the afternoon for conversation and debrief with Rev. Dr. Mary Luti.

Schedule:

AM – Specific times depend on the particular church you choose to visit. (See handout for options. Participants may arrange to go on their own or in small groups.)

2:00 – 3:30 Integrative Session (Guest Instructor: Dr. Rev. Mary Luti)

Location: Andover Newton Theological School

Readings:

- *On Common Ground*: Excerpts on Christianity
- *My Neighbor's Faith*, (Choose 5 from the following Chapters: 1, 6, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22, 24, 28, 29, 32, 35, 39, 42, 46, 52, 53)
- "Christian Worship," (PDF posted online) Mary Luti

Website:

- Explore the website of the church community you are planning to visit

Assignment:

- Journal Entry: Reflection on your site visit (See hand out for questions to guide your reflection). Due: Monday, June 4th
- Finish reviewing *Public Narrative Handbook* (online PDF) in preparation for Monday's workshop at the Kennedy School. Note: You do not need to read this in detail, just familiarize yourself with the content.

Monday, June 4th

Description: This day of the seminar will mark a change of pace. Rather than a site visit, we will spend the day with Marshall Ganz and his team at Harvard's Kennedy School as we learn about a powerful leadership tool known as "Public Narrative." You will leave the workshop having created a "story of self," a "story of us," and a "story of now," as well as an integrated narrative that will help you understand and communicate to others with greater clarity about the unique work you are called to do.

Schedule

8:30 – 6:00 Public Narrative Workshop led by Dr. Marshall Ganz and Team

Location: Harvard Kennedy School (John F. Kennedy School of Government) 79 JFK Street, Cambridge, MA. Main meeting room: Littauer 280.

Reading:

Public Narrative Handbook – PDF posted online (Note: Printed copies will be provided for you on the day of the workshop.)

Assignment:

Your “story of self/us/now” will be completed as part of the workshop.

Tuesday, June 5th

Description: Back at the Pluralism Project offices, we will explore the range of theological responses to religious pluralism as we think collectively about what it means to be a person of faith in a religiously diverse country. To extend the conversation, we will discuss a case study that explores the limits of inclusion.

In the evening, participants will choose from a list of Buddhist temples/communities to visit separately or in small groups (site visits can take place this evening or tomorrow evening)

Schedule:

9:30 – 12:30: Integrative Session and Case Discussion (Eck & Peace)
“Responses to Religious Diversity”
Case: *Invocation or Provocation?*

Location: Pluralism Project Offices
2 Arrow Street, 4th Floor, Cambridge, MA 02138
Enter through the first set of double doors and dial #400 on the call box
(Take the Red Line to Harvard Square stop)

Evening: Independent visits to Buddhist temples in Greater Boston this evening or tomorrow evening. (See hand out for options. Participants may arrange to go on their own or in small groups). Note: *Complete Readings listed for June 7th in preparation for your visit to a Buddhist community*

Readings:

1. Case Study: *Invocation or Provocation? (A)*
2. Eck, Chapter 7 from *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras*, “Exclusivism, Inclusivism, and Pluralism.” (PDF posted online)
3. Eck, defining pluralism: <http://pluralism.org/pages/pluralism/meanings>
4. S. Mark Heim, “The Pluralism of Religious Ends Dreams Fulfilled,” *The Christian Century*, January 17, 2001, p. 14-19. <http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=2139>

Assignment:

- Journal Entry: Please respond to the following question: How do you hold your own commitments while remaining open to encounters with those who hold different commitments? Due: Wednesday, June 6th

- Journal Entry: If you visit a Buddhist temple this evening, reflect on your site visit (See hand out for questions to guide your reflection). Due: Thursday, June 7th

Wednesday, June 6th

Description: Meeting at the Pluralism Project offices, our focus will be on case studies as tools for creative conversations in our respective communities. Ellie Pierce, our guest instructor and author of the Pluralism Project cases used in this seminar, will take us behind the scenes to help us understand how to think like a case writer. Rev. Marcia Sietstra, our second guest instructor, will share her research about using case studies in churches as we think collectively about how case studies might be useful in our respective contexts.

Schedule:

9:30 – 12:30 Writing Workshop: *Thinking like a Case Writer & Using Case Studies in your Community* (Guest Instructors: Ellie Pierce & Marcia Sietstra)

Evening: Independent visits to Buddhist temples in Greater Boston. If you did not visit a community on Tuesday evening, please do so this evening. (See hand out for options. Participants may arrange to go on their own or in small groups). Note: *Complete Readings listed for June 7th in preparation for your visit to a Buddhist community*

Location: Pluralism Project Offices

Reading:

1. Case Study: *In the Name of Jesus (A)* (PDF posted online)
2. “Creating a Case Study: A Brief Introduction” (PDF posted online)
3. “Writing a Seed Case,” (PDF posted online)
4. “Writing Good Facilitation Questions” (PDF posted online)

Assignment:

- Journal Entry: Describe a context in which you could see yourself using a case study. What kind of case study would you use? What would be your goals? Due: Friday, June 8th
- Journal Entry: If you visit a Buddhist temple this evening, reflect on your site visit (See hand out for questions to guide your reflection). Due: Thursday, June 7th

Thursday, June 7th

Description: Meeting at the Pluralism Project, we will hear from guest instructor Ji Hyang Padma, as we collectively reflect on our visits to Buddhist communities in the Boston area. Through a case study discussion, we will explore the realm of dual-religious identity as we consider the case of the Buddhist Bishop.

Schedule:

9:30 – 12:30 Integrative Session (Guest Instructor: Ji Hyang Padma)
Case Discussion

Location: Pluralism Project Offices

Reading:

1. *On Common Ground*: Excerpts on Buddhism
2. Case Study: *A Buddhist Bishop?* (A)
3. *My Neighbor's Faith* (Read Chapters: 33, 38, 40, 44, and 51)
4. Padma, Ji Hyang, "Changing Our Mind, Transforming Our World," in *Arts of Contemplative Care: Pioneering Voices in Buddhist Chaplaincy and Pastoral Work*, (Wisdom Publications, forthcoming)

Assignment:

Begin work on your final projects.

Friday, June 8th

Description: Today we will meet at the Pluralism Project Offices and discuss a case study about the proposed Muslim cultural center near "Ground Zero" in New York City. Reflecting on our group visit to the ISBCC last week, and the stories from Muslim authors in *My Neighbor's Faith*, we will consider the experiences of Muslims in the US post-9/11.

Schedule:

9:30 – 12:30 Case Discussion

Location: Pluralism Project Offices

Reading:

1. Case Study: *Center of Dispute* (A)
2. *My Neighbor's Faith* (Choose 5 from the following Chapters: 2, 4, 7, 16, 21, 23, 25, 27, and 48)

Assignment:

Continue work on your final projects.

Saturday, June 9th

Description: Returning to our site visits today we will travel together by bus from the Pluralism Project offices to Ashland, MA, home of the Sri Lakshmi Temple. After our visit, we will travel to the Wellesley College Multi-Faith Center for lunch together and a conversation with guest instructor and professor at Wellesley College, Dr. Neelima Shukla-Bhatt. Dr. Shukla-Bhatt will describe some of the ways Hinduism is practiced in the home in contrast to the temple. Finally, we will end the afternoon with a discussion of the case study, *Trouble in Troy*.

Schedule:

9:30 – 11:30 Sri Lakshmi Temple visit
11:30-3:30 Wellesley College Multi-Faith Center - Lunch, integrative session, and case discussion (Guest: Dr. Neelima Shukla-Bhatt)

Locations: Pluralism Project Offices to Sri Lakshmi Temple to Wellesley College Multi-Faith Center (the bus will return participants to the Pluralism Project Offices).

Reading:

1. *On Common Ground*: Excerpts on Hinduism
2. Case Study: *Trouble in Troy (A)* (PDF posted online)
3. *My Neighbor's Faith* (Read the following Chapters: 5, 18, 26, 31, and 36)

Websites:

Sri Lakshmi Temple website: <http://www.srilakshmi.org/>
Profile on PP site: <http://pluralism.org/profiles/view/67884>

Assignment:

Journal Entry: Reflection on your site visit (See handout for questions to guide your reflection).
Due: Sunday, June 10th

Sunday, June 10th

Description: Today we will embark on our final site visit of the course. Traveling together by bus from the Pluralism Project offices, we will attend services and a Langar (community meal) at the Milford Gurdwara of the New England Sikh Study Circle. Guest instructor Harpreet Singh will provide context and answer questions as we consider our experiences at the Gurdwara.

Schedule:

9:30 – 3:30 Sikh Gurdwara visit – Services, Langar (community meal) & Integrative Session (Guest Instructor: Harpreet Singh)

Locations: Our bus will leave from and return to the Pluralism Project Office

Readings:

1. *On Common Ground*: Excerpts on Sikhism
2. *My Neighbor's Faith* (Read Chapter 34)

Websites:

Entry on the Sikh tradition, from the Encyclopedia of Sikhism:

<http://www.academicroom.com/topics/sikhi>

New England Sikh Study Circle (NESSC) website: <http://nessc.org/>

NESSC Profile on the PP site: <http://pluralism.org/profiles/view/74869>

For more information on issues facing the Sikh community, please see the Sikh Coalition's 2010 Civil Rights Report for the Bay Area or the 2009 Civil Rights Report for New York:

<http://www.sikhcoalition.org/resources/reports-a-publications>

Assignment:

Journal Entry: Reflection on your site visit (See handout for questions to guide your reflection).

Due: Monday, Monday, June 11th

Monday, June 11th

Description: Back at the Pluralism Project offices, we will focus on our final case study: *Fliers at the Peace Parade*. In addition, participants will have an opportunity to practice and refine their own case facilitation skills, considering in particular, the kinds of questions that foster constructive discussion.

Schedule:

9:30 – 12:30 Case Discussion and Case Working Session (Diana Eck)
Case: *Fliers at the Peace Parade (A)*

Locations: Pluralism Project Offices

Reading:

1. Case Study: *Fliers at the Peace Parade (A)*
2. Additional resources about facilitating a case with a group

Assignment:

Work on final project

Tuesday, June 12th

Schedule:

10:00 – 1:30 Models of Interfaith Cooperation Panel & Lunch (Guest Instructors: Janet Penn, Latifa Ali, Victor Kazanjian, and Dan Berman)

Location: Harvard University, 60 Oxford Street, Room 330, Cambridge, MA

Reading:

1. Patel, Kunze & Silverman, “Storytelling as a Key Methodology for Interfaith Youth Work,” from *Interfaith Dialogue at the Grassroots*, Rebecca Katz, ed.
2. Additional articles TBA

Assignment:

Journal Entry: Write a response to the following question: Why is interfaith cooperation important? What are the challenges and rewards of this work according to the panelists?

Wednesday, June 13th

Schedule:

3:00 – 5:00 Harvard Art Museums field trip and gallery reflection (Guest: Erin Loeb and Corinne Zimmerman)

Location: Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard Art Museums, 485 Broadway, Cambridge, MA

Reading:

1. Porritt, Ruth. “Read This Poem from the Bottom Up.”
2. Collins, Billy. “Metropolis.”
3. “Guidelines for Group Visits to the Harvard Art Museums”

Website:

Harvard Art Museums website: <http://www.harvardartmuseums.org/home/>

Assignment:

Work on final projects

Thursday, June 14th

9:30 – 12:30 Closing Integrative Seminar (Eck & Peace)

Sharing final papers/projects

Location: Pluralism Project Offices