Multifaith Leadership in the 21st Century

Spring 2014 Syllabus

Meeting Time: Wednesdays 4:55pm – 7:25pm

GCASL, 38 Thompson Street, Room 461

Professors: Imam Khalid Latif & Rabbi Yehuda Sarna

Office Hours: By Appointment (email: kl442@nyu.edu & js1643@nyu.edu)

Course Description
In all spheres of society, individuals from different faiths are coming into contact with each other more and more often. Effective leadership plays an integral role in bridging communities that historically were separate, but today exist side-by-side in a culture that is religiously and spiritually diverse. This course seeks to prepare students to become aware of faith traditions other than their own, with a strong emphasis on learning techniques and theories of how to engage others. We will look at different theories of religions, current examples of leadership and communities based in NYC, influence of media, and movements around social justice and service, in hopes of laying a foundation for solid connections across religious communities.

Requirements

4 Credits
1. 25% Class participation – students are expected to attend all class sessions, to be on time, and to complete the assigned readings before each class. Students will be called upon to comment about the readings or the class discussion.
2. 15% Personal Narrative Presentation
3. 25% Midterm research paper. Due March 26.
4. 20% Four 1-2 page response papers. Response papers should reflect concretely on the week’s reading and add person insight. Each paper is due on the date when the reading will be discussed and will not be accepted late.
5. 15% Final Group Presentation.

2 Credits
1. 25% Class participation – students are expected to attend all class sessions, to be on time, and to complete the assigned readings before each class. Students will be called upon to comment about the readings or the class discussion.
2. 25% Personal Narrative Presentation
3. 25% Two 1-2 page response papers. Response papers should reflect concretely on the week’s reading and add person insight. Each paper is due on the date when the reading will be discussed and will not be accepted late.
4. 25% Final Group Presentation.

**Required Texts**

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference*

Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*

Diana Eck, *A New Religious America*

Robert Wuthnow, *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity*

Robert Putnam, *American Grace*

**Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory for all students except in documented cases of illness or family emergency. Students who have more than one unexcused absence or who are consistently late to class will receive a drop in their attendance grade. Students are expected to notify the professor of any absence in advance as early as possible.

**Course Content**

**Introduction - January 29th**

- Class overview and introductions
- Syllabus
- *Of Many Institute* presents: Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks: Dignifying Difference

**Personal Narrative and the Art of Storytelling - February 5th**

- Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks: Side to Side, Face-to-Face: In dialogue with Imam Khalid Latif
- Assignment- Personal Narrative Presentations. Each student will be prepare a 5 to 7 minute personal narrative to share with the class
Your Stories - February 12th

- In class presentation: Your Stories

Your Stories Continued - February 19th

- In class presentation: Your Stories
- Screening: In God’s Name
- Assignment - Read: Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations”
  http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/48950/samuel-p-huntington/the-clash-of-civilizations

Is There a Clash of Civilizations? - February 26th

- Discuss Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations”
- Screening of Obsession: Islam’s War Against the West
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-t2gzOCSHRk
- Read chapters 1,2,6, and 7 of Diana Eck’s A New Religious America

A New Religious America - March 5th

- Discuss A New Religious America
- Screening Soledad O’Brien, Unwelcome: The Muslims Next Door
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRlqz3e9OrA
- Mid-term project assigned
- Read chapters 1-4, 7, 9, 10 of Robert Wuthnow’s America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity

Are there limits to religious pluralism? - March 12th

- Discuss Robert Wuthnow, America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity chapters 1-4, 7, 9, 10
- Read chapters 1, 3-6, 8-9, 11, 13-15 of Robert Putnam’s American Grace

How faith can unite and divide us - March 26th

- Reverend Katharine Henderson, Auburn Seminary
- Discuss chapters 1, 3-6, 8-9, 11, 13-15 of Robert Putnam’s American Grace
- Midterm due

April 2nd

- Final project assigned

World Faith - April 9th
- Frank Fredericks, Founder of World Faith

**Know your story - April 23rd**
- Rev. Khadijah Matin
- Dr. Georgette Bennett, President of Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding

**April 30th**
- Fatima Shama, NYC Commissioner of Immigrant Affairs
- Troubleshoot final project

**May 7th**
- Final project due

**Midterm Assignment**

Identify someone in your life (a relative, a friend, a professor, a politician, a community leader) who, through their words or actions, contributes to increased religious *polarization* instead of increased religious *pluralism*.

Craft a 5 – 7 page letter to this person inviting him/her to change. As sections to your letter, utilize your own narrative and those of others of this course, films and documentaries that we watched in class, as well as the readings so far (Huntington, Eck, Wuthnow and Putnam.) Explore ideas around diversity and pluralism. Why do you feel this person’s behavior is problematic? What is the real impact of the behavior beyond this individual--on society on whole? How you suggest a systematic plan for change? What would be some of the challenges to that plan? Why you feel pluralism is a more desired outcome?

Please be sure to use proper citation when referencing texts and the films.

Due Date: March 26th through the classes website.