

Multifaith Leadership in the 21st Century

Spring 2015 Syllabus

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

GCASL, 238 Thompson Street, Room 365

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 25th.**
4. 20% Four 1-2 page response papers. Response papers should reflect concretely on the week's reading and add personal 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% Four 1-2 page response papers. Response papers should reflect concretely on the week's reading and add personal 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 Personal Narrative and the Art of Storytelling - January 28th

- Class overview and introductions
- Syllabus
- Assignment: Watch “The Power of Vulnerability” by Brene Brown
https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability
- Assignment - Read and Respond (Response 1): Marshall Ganz, *What is Public Narrative?* <http://www.wholecommunities.org/pdf/Public%20Story%20Worksheet07Ganz.pdf>
- Assignment- Personal Narrative Presentations. Each student will be prepare a 5 to 7 minute personal narrative to share with the class

Your Stories - February 4th

- In class presentation: Your Stories

Your Stories - February 11th

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

A Conversation on the Syrian Refugee Crisis - February 18th

- A Conversation on the Syrian Refugee Crisis - with Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks and Dr. Georgette Bennett (**Meet at 19 Washington Square North**)

Is There a Clash of Civilizations? - February 25th

- Discuss Samuel P. Huntington, "*The Clash of Civilizations*"
- Assignment: Read and Respond (Response 2): chapters 1,2,6, and 7 of Diana Eck's *A New Religious America*

A New Religious America - March 4

- Discuss *A New Religious America*
- Screening of *Obsession: Islam's War Against the West*
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-t2gzOCsHRk>
- Assignment- Read: *The Dignity of Difference* (esp. chapter 3) and
<http://www.bjpa.org/Publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=4393>

Dignity of Difference - March 11th

- Screening Soledad O'Brien, *Unwelcome: The Muslims Next Door*
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRlqz3e9OrA>
- **Midterm project assigned**
- Assignment: Read and Respond (Response 3): chapters 1-4, 7, 9, 10 of Robert Wuthnow's *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity*

SPRING BREAK - MARCH 18th

Are there limits to religious pluralism? - March 25th

- Discuss Robert Wuthnow, *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity* chapters 1-4, 7, 9, 10
- Assignment: Read and Respond (Response 4): chapters 1, 3-6, 8-9, 11, 13-15 of Robert Putnam's *American Grace*

How faith can unite and divide us - April 1st

- Discuss chapters 1, 3-6, 8-9, 11, 13-15 of Robert Putnam's *American Grace*
- **Midterm due**
- **Final project assigned**

World Faith - April 8th

- Frank Fredericks, *World Faith*

Know your story - April 15th

- Ariel Ennis

April 22nd

- Rev. Khadijah Matin

April 29th

- Fatima Shama

May 6th

- Bethany Godsoe, Associate Vice President for Student Leadership Initiatives at NYU

May 13th

- Final project due (no class)

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 25th** through the classes website.