

# INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

REL 4937 U04 / RLG 5495

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**“Dialogue is born from an attitude of respect for the other person, from a conviction that the other person has something good to say. It assumes that there is room in the heart for the person’s point of view, opinion, and proposal.”**

-Pope Francis

## **Contact**

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## **What you’ll do**

- Feel inspired
- Think more broadly
- Make contacts
- Explore a topic
- Create change
- Reflect on your experience
- Present on your ideas
- Inspire others

## **Concerning this course**

What role does religion play in your community and in issues of social concern? How do different religious traditions understand current ethical controversies that call for justice? How do they work together to address these issues or conflicts between their traditions? Why is dialogue and cooperation between traditions important?

This hands-on course will explore the history of inter-religious dialogue, the conditions necessary for such dialogue, and the types of dialogues that are currently occurring around the world. As often as possible, we will include guests either in person or via Zoom who can share their experiences with us, particularly as they relate to both the benefits and the challenges of inter-religious dialogue. Today, more than ever, the ability to engage in dialogue in an increasingly pluralistic world is important.

## **Course Requirements**

The class, which is conducted in a seminar format, will include discussions of the readings, visits by outsider presenters, and student engagement in thinking about how inter-religious dialogue could be relevant to our community. Through readings, videos, and visits with guests, we will be exposed to different models of inter-religious dialogue over the course of the semester. Students will each propose one topic or situation that is ripe for inter-religious dialogue or engagement and prepare a short research paper that looks at the history of the issue, current efforts to address the issue, and the potential for future dialogue and cooperation among religious traditions in order to address the issue. Everyone will do a short presentation on their topic at the end of the semester.

## **Course Objectives**

Students will have the opportunity to widen their scope of knowledge about issues of importance to communities both in South Florida and in the wider community and to think about how inter-religious dialogue could be used as a practical tool to address some of these issues.

## Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students will have gained a greater knowledge of the interconnected nature of many of the issues that arise within our communities and our world. They will have acquired general knowledge of how various religious traditions intersect with community-based issues and will be able to conduct a multi-perspective analysis of various local, global, and intercultural problems, and demonstrate a willingness to engage in problem solving. Students will also be able to demonstrate an ability to write and present on a professional level on an issue of importance to them within the framework of the course.

## Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites, but an open, respectful mind with a certain passion for community awareness is assumed. What is important is how we engage with one another in the class and how we represent ourselves with our guests. Inter-religious dialogue, particularly around issues of social concern, can be challenging, and I think the crucial point to remember is to be respectful of others at all times, perhaps most importantly when we disagree.

## Changes

The instructor reserves the right to alter readings, assignments or the schedule below as dictated by the needs and interest of the class. Any changes will be mentioned in class and announced on Canvas.

## Course Readings

The primary text for this class is “The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue” (ISBN 978-1-119-57259-6) although we may also use outside readings and videos. We may need to be somewhat flexible as we accommodate the schedules of our outside guests, but, when possible, each guest will be matched to the reading for that particular week. There is also some flexibility built into the schedule to accommodate related current events that may arise during the semester. You should feel free to contact me with any articles or items of interest that you would like to share with the class.

## Grading

Attendance & Participation	60%
--including reading and discussion (questions & in class)	
Proposal for Paper	5%
Paper & Reflection	25%
Presentation	10%

Letter	Range %	Letter	Range %	Letter	Range %
A	93 - 100	B	83 - 86	C	70 - 76
A-	90 - 92	B-	80 - 82	D	60 - 69
B+	87 - 89	C+	77 - 79	F	59 or less

## Schedule

### Week One

Introduction, Syllabus Review, Expectations, Choosing Case Studies Together, Relationship of class to Arthur Vining Davis Fellowship

### Week Two

Readings include the history and conditions of inter-religious dialogue

### Week Three

Readings include comparative dialogue and scripture reasoning as part of inter-religious dialogue

### Week Four

Readings include inter-religious worship and how it fits within inter-religious dialogue

### Subsequent Weeks

Readings include cases studies on inter-religious dialogue that include multiple combinations of perspectives such as Buddhist-Hindu, Muslim-Hindu, Christian-Muslim, and many others.

*More readings and scheduling information will be added as the semester progresses and in consultation with the students as to the case studies that we will cover over the course of the semester. When possible, guests will join the class to engage in additional conversation related to the readings.*

**Course follow-up:** If anyone is particularly engaged with his or her topic and would like the opportunity to continuing working on an extended project after the semester is over, we can work on setting up an internship for credit for the following semester. Please let me know as soon as possible if you might like to pursue this option.

**Outside activities of interest:** As events come up, folks should feel to share them with the class. I certainly plan to do so!