

*“Today we are faced with life-killing civilization, manifested in economic injustice, ecological destruction, the threat of Empire, and the escalation of religious conflicts [I would like to add here the recent global trends of increasing misogyny, religious fundamentalism, right wing populism and ethnocentric nationalism]. This compels us to urgently explore the possibility of life-giving civilization which affirms relationships, co-existence, harmony with creation, and solidarity with those who struggle for justice.”*

*World Council of Churches/Council for World Mission, Jangseong,  
Jeollanam-do, Korea, 2007*

### **I. Course Description**

Our current political reality, in which religious conflict and tensions persist, offers a unique opportunity for students to learn about religious diversity and the importance of unmasking the perversion of religion and spirituality into implements of obtaining and exercising power. Concomitantly, the current context reveals the importance of interreligious solidarity and interreligious alliances. This course is about interreligious encounters, collaboration and dialogue, and some historical examples where this dialogue have positively occurred in a variety of ways and in diverse contexts. Therefore, students will be learning about religious diversity, interreligious theology, and they will learn how to engage with interreligious dynamics as they occur in real communities. In the first section of the course, we will explore some proposals on efficacious methods of teaching and learning about interreligious dialogue and theology. In the second section, we will turn to specific initiatives in fostering positive relationships across religious boundaries. This course applies interreligious theological approaches to conversations about social justice. This course aims at fostering ways to learn to engage relationally and ethically with different traditions to one’s own.

### **II. Course Objectives**

1. To reflect critically on personal experiences of interreligious collaboration and develop strong connections between theoretical understanding and practical application;
2. To generate a commitment to openness in dialogue with and learning from other traditions;
3. To acquire and demonstrate empathetic familiarity with at least one religious tradition other than one’s own, including its history, diversity and distinctive presence in the USA, as well as with contemporary issues and initiatives in interreligious dialogue;
4. To develop knowledge and framework for interreligious solidarity against different forms of oppression;

### **III. Textbooks**

#### **Required Texts**

Moyaert, Marianne. 2011. *Fragile Identities Towards a Theology of Interreligious Hospitality*.

Eck, Diana L. 2001. *A New Religious America: How a “Christian Country” Has Become the World’s Most Religiously Diverse Nation*.

#### **Useful Resources:**

The Pluralism Project <http://pluralism.org/religions/>

Pew Research Center Religion & Public Life <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/>

Interfaith Power and Light <http://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/about/>

Parliament of the Worlds’ Religions <https://parliamentofreligions.org/>

### **IV. Course Requirements and Assessment of Student Learning**

#### **Attending and participating in class sessions and discussions: 15%**

The interactive seminar nature of this course makes regular attendance and contributions essential. Except for the most exceptional circumstances, excused absences from class sessions will not be granted. Any absence will negatively affect your final grade.

Weekly Questions: Students will find weekly questions throughout the course syllabus, the answers for which do not need to be written. However, students must come prepared to share their response in class. These weekly questions will assist students to do a structured and critical reading of the course's reading list. This method empowers students to develop their own views on each topic addressed in the prescribed readings and increase enormously the chance for a good class discussion.

*How to prepare yourself?* Pick out a quote from a text, or a theme from several texts, and explain how it answers or complicates the week's question.

Students will also find some extra weekly (not every week) activities. Follow the instructions as described. Those will count into your participation grade. In addition, credit will be given for engaged participation (quality, not quantity) in lecture, class attendance and preparation for class discussion. Engaged does not necessarily mean "voluminous;" students may be quite prepared and attentive without ever speaking up. I don't track who speaks up and how often, so students can focus on asking questions that matter to them and making comments that are helpful to everyone.

During class discussions, it is not likely or even desirable that we will agree on all issues. When challenging someone else's perspective or idea, keep in mind that your task is always to present a better, more compelling argument. Argue vigorously; disagree respectfully.

Should any issues or problems arise that trouble you during the course, please initiate a timely and candid consultation with the instructor. Be aware that last-minute appeals or concerns may not be addressed immediately.

**Class Education Responsibility: 15%**

Each week, one person will be responsible to educate the class on an interreligious related issue or projects, locally or globally. To do this, students must be prepared to present information on some interreligious topic that they wish the class to know about, from organizations, dialogues, social or environmental justice initiatives, current legislative issues, or interreligious success stories, resources, organizations, etc. In other words, each week it is a student's turn to teach the rest of us. Students will have 5-10 minutes. Please do not hesitate to consult me if on any uncertain aspect. Students may also include a poem, prayer or some other form of spiritual meditation. A roster will establish which students will go first. Please upload your presentation at Populi. Students need to upload their presentation under both Assignments and Discussions "Class Education Responsibility [Sharing Resources]."

**Interreligious Autobiography Assignment: 10%**

Write one-page autobiography (max.) looking at these various sources of influence in shaping your own attitudes, beliefs, values and practices toward other than your own religion tradition. Students must share their autobiography with the class by Sunday at 8pm the latest Week 2. This must be uploaded at Populi under both tabs Discussions "Autobiography" and Assignments "Interreligious Autobiography Assignment." Students may look at the various sources of influence in shaping their own attitudes, beliefs, values and practices toward other religions. This exercise is designed to: help you explore the ways in which your attitudes towards other religions have been shaped by a variety of influences, to come to know your own spiritual and religious experiences better, to recognize specific messages about values and behavior which you carry in your orientation toward other religious traditions, and to recognize the connections (and disconnections) between your attitudes, beliefs and values and your own actions and behavior toward other religious peoples. Although this is not a research project, it is still an academic paper. This means that you will need to develop a clear structured narrative and use language appropriate for academic papers. See more information at the end of this syllabus Addendum A. Although is imperative that you follow the instructions in the file, remember that here are no wrong answers. MAKE SURE that you opt to start getting email updates from this

Discussion tab so that you can learn about your classmates and help construct our classroom community.

**Due: Week 2 by Sunday at 8pm the latest.**

**Group Research Project: 40%**

During the term, student's will be exposed to many different topics. Students will have the opportunity to decide what religious traditions and interreligious organizations they want to research. Please find detailed information about the Research Group Project at Addendum B (at the end of this syllabus) and at Populi under the Assignment Tab. Please note that your Research Essay should be min. 3000 and max. 4000 words. At Week 14, groups will do a presentation on their research project. Do not wait to start this project in the middle the semester. Read and learn about the requirement for this assignment as soon as possible so that things do not snow ball.

**Due: Week 14 on Friday.**

*Assignments Due Dates: I understand that unforeseen situations may occur during the semester and impact your ability to submit an assignment on expected dates. I am happy to problem-solve with you before any assignment's due date. As a sign of commitment, please reach out and avoid waiting until due dates have passed to speak to me.*

**Detailed instructions for Interreligious Autobiography Assignment, see Addendum A.**

**Detailed instructions for Group Research Project at the end of this syllabus, see Addendum B**

**Grading Criteria for Group Research Project--Written Component, see Addendum C.**

**Grading Criteria for Group Research Project--Oral Component, see Addendum D.**

**See Requirements for Auditors at page 13.**

**See Policy on Children in Class at pages 13.**

**Hybrid learning**

**Interreligious Facebook Group (Closed Group) Discussion: 20%**

The ability to make and discuss connections between culture, theoretical and ethics work is an important skill that will help students to connect with and facilitate discussions with many different kinds of people across a variety of contexts. Part of our class session each week will be spent discussing some aspects of current issues in religion and society.

To generate material for these discussions, the student responsible for each week's **Class Education** will post in our course's Facebook Closed Group (in class I will explain how Facebook Closed Groups work) a link directly related to the topic he/she explored **in class**, e.g. link to news articles, op-eds, opinion pieces, research, songs, YouTube clips (i.e., from TV shows, movies, etc.), art etc. I strongly encourage students to use reliable sources. The student in charge will offer a sentence or two of explanation along with the posted link to clarify their rationale for the post and to generate conversation. Tell us how your post is related to that week's **Class Education**. Was it used during your presentation or as a source of information to prepare the presentation? Videos, songs, etc. that students post may be secular or religious in nature. Since our subject is on interreligious theology and dialogue, it is possible that some material may be rather explicit, such as those dealing with racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, xenophobic problems. If this is the case, please write a sentence warning about sensitive or explicit content. If you are unsure if your link is appropriate to post, you are welcome to email me first. In the email, provide a link to the material in question and a short description of how you understand its discussion-value. Then wait for my assessment before posting

Each week, all other students will comment on that week's post. Please note that students will be graded in their ability to connect their weekly posts with class-discussions and weekly readings. This is the space to continue our class-discussions. Comments must be thoughtful, coherent and make critical connections. It will not be counted as meeting this exercise requirements by posting comments such as: "awesome!" "seriously?" "this is terrible!" or simply clicking on like or laugh/sad/angry/love emoji.

*How to write a good reading comment?* Pick out a quote from a text, or a theme weaving through the weekly prescribed readings, and connect it with the discussion post. Explain how it addresses or complicates the week's topic. Or reply directly to the link with your own view, making sure that you draw on at least one of the weekly reading's topics as you do. Avoid writing more than 200 word. Posts must be uploaded no later than Sunday at 8pm.

**Due: Sundays by 8pm.**

*Students may skip writing a comment one day, without penalty.*

#### **V. Course Schedule and Format**

This schedule provides the general timing of topics, readings and assignment due dates. The online learning agenda found on Populi is always the most current and may vary from the schedule in this syllabus.

### **Religious Traditions and Religious Diversity in the United States Context**

#### **Week 1: Introduction to the Course**

##### **Topics:**

- Students Introduction
- Course Introduction
- Syllabus Discussion
- Religious Traditions: What are them?

**Weekly Question:** "What constitutes a tradition?"

##### **Reading Required Prior to Week 1:**

1. Course Syllabus
2. Moyaert, Marianne. 2014. *In Response to the Religious Other: Ricoeur and the Fragility of Interreligious Encounters*, Introduction pages 1-6. [ebook]

##### **Further Reading (Optional):**

Deming, Will. 2004. *Rethinking Religion: A Concise Introduction*, section 1 and 4. [PDF]

##### **Useful Resources:**

The Pluralism Project <http://pluralism.org/religions/>

Pew Research Center Religion & Public Life <http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/>

#### **Week 2: Religions of America**

##### **Topics:**

- Religious Diversity or Pluralism?
- Religious Diversity in the American Context

**Weekly Question:** "What is religious diversity and why is this question relevant?"

##### **Required Readings:**

1. Eck, Diana L. 2001. *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*, chapter 1 and 2.

2. Taylor, James Lance. 2005. "The Black Church: Sacred Cosmos Meets Sacred Ground." In *Taking Religious Pluralism Seriously: Spiritual Politics of America's Sacred Ground*, Barbara A. McGraw and Jo Renee Formicola (eds.), pages 149-172. [PDF]

**Further Reading (Optional):**

Gross, Rita. 2005. "Excuse Me, but What's the Question? Isn't Religious Diversity Normal?" In *The Myth of Religious Superiority: A Multifaith Exploration*, Paul F. Knitter (ed.), pages 75 – 88. [PDF]

**Week 3: Intercultural, Interreligious and Interfaith Dialogue**

**Topics:**

- The World Parliament of Religions: The First Interreligious Encounter?
- Interreligious Relations outside the Mainstream
- Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue
- Interreligious Pedagogy

**Weekly Question:** "What is intercultural dialogue and interreligious dialogue?"

**Required Readings:**

Aguilar, Mario. 2013. "Dialogue, Liberation and Justice." In *Understanding Inter-Religious Relations*, Cheetham, David, et. al. (eds.), pages 306-323. [PDF]

Wingate, Andrew. 2013. "Interreligious Conversation." In *Understanding Inter-Religious Relations*, Cheetham, David, et. al. (eds.), pages 175-192. [PDF]

Pratt, Douglas. 2013. "Fundamentalism, Exclusivism, and Religious Extremism." In *Understanding Inter-Religious Relations*, Cheetham, David, et. al. (eds.), pages 218-240 [check with Dr. E].

Eck, Diana L. 2001. *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*, Preface [6 pages].

**Further Reading (Optional):**

Leirvik, Oddbjørn. 2011. "Philosophies of Interreligious Dialogue: Practice in Search of Theory," *Approaching Religion* 1(17):pages. [PDF]

McCarthy, K. 1998. "Reckoning with Religious Difference: Models of Interreligious Moral Dialogue." In *Explorations in Global Ethics: Comparative Religions Ethics and Inter-Religious Dialogue*, S.B. Twiss and B. Grelle (eds.), pages 73-117. [PDF]

**Useful Resources:**

Parliament of the Worlds' Religions <https://parliamentofreligions.org/>

**Theology of Religions and Interreligious Theology**

**Week 4: Introduction to Theology of Religions**

**Topics:**

- Mapping Theology of Religions;
- Brief Discussion on Vatican II;
- Soteriology and
- Inclusivism, Exclusivism and Pluralism.

**Weekly Question:** "What is theology of religions?"

**Required Readings:**

1. Marianne Moyaert. 2011. *Fragile Identities Towards a Theology of Interreligious Hospitality*, chapter 1

2. Moyaert, Marianne. 2017. "Vatican II: Catholic doctrines on Jews and Muslims," *Lowain Studies*. 40(3):237-248. [PDF]

**Further Reading (Optional):**

Schmidt-Leukel, Perry. 2005. "Exclusivism, Inclusivism, Pluralism: The Tripolar Typology – Clarified and Reaffirmed." In *The Myth of Religious Superiority: A Multifaith Exploration*, Paul F. Knitter (ed.), pages 13-27.

**Activity: Dictionary**

List all new words and concepts (minimum 10 entries) that you found in this week's readings and provide a short definition to them. Bring your personal dictionary to class.

**Week 5: Religious Identity, the Other and Hermeneutical Openness**

**Topics:**

- The Relationship between the Theology of Religions and Interreligious Dialogue;
- Religious Identity, Perseverance and Faith Commitment;
- Interreligious Conflicts

**Weekly Question:** "What theological interpretation of religious plurality can promote friendly interreligious relations?"

**Required Readings:**

Marianne Moyaert. 2011. *Fragile Identities Towards a Theology of Interreligious Hospitality*, chapter 2.  
Marianne Moyaert. 2012. "Recent Developments in the Theology of Interreligious Dialogue: From Soteriological Openness to Hermeneutical Openness," *Modern Theology* 28(1):25-52 [PDF].

**Further Reading (Optional):**

Moyaert, Marianne. 2014. "Fragile Religious Identities." In *In Response to the Religious Other: Ricoeur and the Fragility of Interreligious Encounters*, chapter 2 [ebook].  
Sen, Amartya. 2009. "The Fog of Identity," *Politics, Philosophy & Economics* 8:285-88. [PDF]

**Week 6: Topics: Religious Pluralism and Normativity**

- Indifference to Religious Differences,
- Normativity, Reductionism and Sameness,
- Religious Differences and the Unique Nature of Faith Commitments,
- Equal Opportunities for Interreligious Flourishing?

**Weekly Question:** "How can you learn and be enriched by other religions?"

**Required Readings:**

Moyaert, Marianne. 2011. *Fragile Identities Towards a Theology of Interreligious Hospitality*, chapter 3.  
Moyaert, Marianne. 2010. "Interreligious Dialogue and the Value of Openness: Taking the Vulnerability of Religious Attachments into Account," *The Heythrop Journal*, pages 730-740. [PDF]  
Baughman, Amanda. 2018. "Interfaith Environmentalism and Uneven Opportunities to Flourish." In *That All May Flourish: Comparative Religious Environmental Ethics*, Laura Hartman (ed.), pages 239-252. [PDF]

**Further Reading (Optional):**

Moyaert, Marianne. 2014. "Fragile Religious Identities." In *In Response to the Religious Other: Ricoeur and the Fragility of Interreligious Encounters*, chapter 4 [ebook].

**Week 7: Religious Pluralism and Difference**

**Topics:**

- Universalism and Particularism
- Attention to the Particularity of Religious Traditions in Interreligious Theology
- Comparative Theology
- Vulnerability as a Starting Point

**Weekly Question:** “What is a theology of interreligious hospitality?”

**Required Readings:**

Moyaert, Marianne. 2011. *Fragile Identities Towards a Theology of Interreligious Hospitality*, chapter 6 and 7.

Moyaert, Marianne. (2005). “Interreligious Dialogue and the Debate between Universalism and Particularism: Searching for a Way out of the Deadlock,” *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 15:36-51. [PDF]

**Watch Ted Talk:**

Brené Brown: The power of vulnerability

[https://www.ted.com/talks/brene\\_brown\\_on\\_vulnerability?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability?language=en)

**Further Reading (Highly Recommended):**

Berger, Peter L. 1967. “Religion and Alienation.” In *The Sacred Canopy*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday. [PDF].

**Understanding Other religions in their Otherness:  
Learning from Other Religions**

**Week 8: Religions Traditions Interpretations of Religious Diversity**

**Topics**

- Religious Others
- Is There a Universal Truth Among All Religious Traditions?

**Weekly Question and Class Activities:** “How does other religions interpret religious plurality?” Choose three articles of the six below and write one-page (single space) summary on how those religious traditions interpret religious pluralism (you must submit one paper and be prepared to share in class).

**Required Readings:** All articles below are available through MTSO library’s portal.

1. Fredericks, James. 2003. “The Catholic Church and the Other Religious Paths: Rejecting Nothing that Is True and Holy,” *Theological Studies* 64(2):225-254.
2. Langer, Ruth. 2003. “Jewish Understandings of the Religious Other,” *Theological Studies* 64(2):255-277.
3. Huda, Qamar-Ul. 2003. “Knowledge of Allah and the Islamic View of Other Religions,” *Theological Studies* 64(2):278-305.
4. Clooney, Francis X. 2003. “Hindu Views of Religious Others: Implications for Christian Theology,” *Theological Studies* 64(2): 306-333.
5. Makransky, John. 2003. “Buddhist Perspectives on Truth in Other Religions: Past and Present,” *Theological Studies* 64(2):334-361.
6. Habito, Ruben, L. 2003. “Japanese Buddhist Perspectives and Comparative Theology: Supreme Ways in Intersection,” *Theological Studies* 64(2):362-387.

**Week 9: Comparative Theology and Interreligious Dialogue**

**Topics:**

- Comparative Religion Methods
- Phenomenology of Religion
- Comparative Theology

**Weekly Question:** “What is comparative theology main contribution to interreligious dialogue?”

**Required Readings:**

1. Fredericks, James L. 1995. "A Universal Religious Experience: Comparative Theology as an Alternative to a Theology of Religions," *Horizons* 22:67-87. [PDF]
2. Nicholson, H. 2005. "A Correlational Model of Comparative Theology." *Journal of Religion* 85:191-213. [PDF]
3. Thatamanil, John J. 2011. "Comparative Theology after 'Religion.'" In *Planetary Loves: Spivak, Postcoloniality, and Theology*. Stephen D. Moore and Mayra Rivera (eds.), pages 238-257. [PDF]

**Further Reading (Optional):**

Collins, Gerald O'. 2003. "Jacques Dupuis's Contributions to Interreligious Dialogue," *Theological Studies* 64(2):388-397. [PDF]

**Week 10: Seeing Through the Eyes of the Other.**

**Topics:**

- TBA

**Weekly Question:** TBA

**Required Readings:**

1. Schmidt-Leukel, Perry. 2017. "Interreligious Theology: Principles and Methodology." In *Religious Pluralism and Interreligious Theology: The Gifford Lectures – An Extended Edition*, chapter 9 pages 141-146.
2. Schmidt-Leukel, Perry. 2017. "The Prophet and the Son." In *Religious Pluralism and Interreligious Theology: The Gifford Lectures – An Extended Edition*, chapter 10.
3. Schmidt-Leukel, Perry. 2017. "The Son and The Buddha." In *Religious Pluralism and Interreligious Theology: The Gifford Lectures – An Extended Edition*, chapter 11
4. Schmidt-Leukel, Perry. 2017. "The Buddha and the Prophet." In *Religious Pluralism and Interreligious Theology: The Gifford Lectures – An Extended Edition*, chapter 12.

**Further Reading (Optional):**

Gross, Rita and Ruether, Rosemary Radford. 2001. *Religious Feminism and the Future of the Planet*.

**The Future of Interfaith Dialogue: Voices from the Margins**

**Week 11: Ritual Participation and Interreligious Dialogue**

**Topics:**

- Interreligious Ritual Participation
- Transgressing Boundaries and Innovations

**Weekly Question:** Group project ritual assignment.

**Required Readings:**

1. Moyaert, Marianne. 2015. *Ritual Participation and Interreligious Dialogue: Boundaries, Transgressions and Innovations*, choose one chapter from Part I and another chapter from Part II, III or IV.
2. Carvalhaes, Claudio. 2016. "Praying Each Other's Prayers: An Interreligious Dialogue." In *Postcolonial Practice of Ministry: Leadership, Liturgy, and Interfaith Engagement*, Kwok Pui-Lan and Stephen Burns (eds.), pages 137-150.
3. Syeed-Miller, Najeeba. 2012. "The State of the Heart in Multifaith Relationships." In *My Neighbor's Faith: Stories of Interreligious, Encounter, Growth, and Transformation*. Jennifer Howe Peace. OR N. Rose and Gregory Mobley (eds.), pages 106-108.

**Class Activity:** In class you will share your experiences in ritual participation (from the group projects).

**Week 12: Learning from Other Contexts: Interreligious Dialogue in Post-Apartheid South Africa.**



**Topics:**

- Interreligious and Intercultural Pedagogy
- National Policy on Religion and Education
- Tolerance or Interfaith dialogue?

**Weekly Question:** “What was the role of interreligious dialogue in promoting democratic values in post-apartheid South Africa?”

**Required Readings:**

1. Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. 2004. *Interfaith Solidarity: A Guide for Religious Communities*.
2. Chidester, David. 2006. “Religion Education in South Africa: Teaching and Learning About Religion, Religions, and Religious Diversity,” *British Journal of Religious Education* 25(4):261-278.
3. [National Policy on Religion and Education](#)
4. Nogueira-Godsey, Elaine. 2016. “Recent Observation on Religion and Education in South Africa.” In *British Journal of Religious Education* 38(3):230-235.
5. Mosha, Sambuli R. 2000. *The Heartbeat of Indigenous Africa: A Study of the Chagga Educational System*.

**Useful Resources:**

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation <http://www.ijr.org.za/>

**Further Reading (Optional):**

1. Preez, Petro du and Cornelia Roux. 2010. “Human Rights Values or Cultural Values? Pursuing Values to Maintain Positive Discipline in Multicultural Schools,” *South African Journal of Education* 30:13-26. [PDF]
2. Interview with Bishop Mvume Dandala. 8/27/1999. In *Religion & Reconciliation in South Africa*, pages 57-62. [PDF]

**Week 13: Voices from the Margins**

**Topics:**

- Gender, Race and Interfaith Dialogue
- Dialogue, Solidarity and Peacebuilding

**Weekly Question:** TBA

**Required Readings:**

1. Kwok Pui-Lan. 2012. *Globalization, Gender, and Peacebuilding: The Future of Interfaith Dialogue*, chapter 2 and 3 [enquire with Dr. E for copies].
2. Harris, Melanie. 2016. “Womanist Interfaith Dialogue: Inter, Intra, and All the Spaces in Between.” In *Postcolonial Practice of Ministry: Leadership, Liturgy, and Interfaith Engagement*, Kwok Pui-Lan and Stephen Burns (eds.), pages 199-214.
3. Munguía, Christa P. Godínez. 2007. “Indian Wisdom and Spirituality.” In *Feminist Intercultural Theology: Latina Exploration for a Just World*, María Pilar Aquino and Maria José Rosado-Nunes (eds.), pages 196-207. [PDF]

**Further Reading (Optional):**

Lázaro, Clara Luz Ajo. 2007. “Jesus and Mary Dance with the Orishas.” In *Feminist Intercultural Theology: Latina Exploration for a Just World*, María Pilar Aquino and Maria José Rosado-Nunes (eds.), pages 109-124.

**Week 14: Group Research Project Presentations**

**VII. MTSO Standard Syllabus Statements**

**ADA / Disability Services**

MTSO supports students of special populations in their efforts to reach their potential by encouraging self-advocacy and facilitating student accommodations, empowering students to help themselves, and providing the safe environment in which to do so. We commit to an inclusive learning environment and will support reasonable, documented requests for accommodations and learning adaptations. To request a reasonable accommodation, contact the director of student services at [klofrumento@mtso.edu](mailto:klofrumento@mtso.edu). For more information regarding 504/ADA Compliance, contact the ADA/504 coordinator at [kdickson@mtso.edu](mailto:kdickson@mtso.edu).

**Class Attendance**

Regular attendance is expected in all classes. During unavoidable absences, students are responsible for missed work. An excessive number of absences may result in grade reduction or course failure, despite successful completion of all assigned work. In most cases, a student will fail a course if he or she is absent for 25% of the class sessions. As it relates to blended courses, students may fail the course if they are absent for 25% of class meetings (including online meetings). Use of Skype or similar technology is not a substitute for attendance

Course credits	1 credit	1.5 credits	2 credits	3 credits
25%	3 hours	4.4 hours	5.8 hours	8.8 hours

**Electronic Devices**

As an institution dedicated to the advancement of learning, MTSO is firmly committed to a philosophy of mutual respect. To that end, we have established a policy regarding the use of mobile phones, computers, tablets, and other electronic devices. Instructors have the right to impose appropriate grading penalties for excessive classroom disruptions due to these devices.

All electronic devices should be silenced during class. Unless there is an emergency requiring immediate attention, phone calls should be returned during classroom breaks in an area of the building that is not disruptive to other classes. The noise created by playing audio equipment so that others can hear it, or by using mobile phones in areas where others are attempting to study or to do research is disruptive.

Notebook and tablet computers have become commonplace in the classroom. However, the use of such devices should be restricted to course-related purposes. General browsing of the Internet or engaging in email or social network conversations during class time is inappropriate.

**Human Subjects Research**

Research by MTSO faculty, students, or affiliated personnel that collects non-public information from and/or about living individuals or contemporary organizations/groups for purposes of publication or public presentation (including class assignments) must be approved by the Human Subjects Research Committee. MTSO faculty, students, or affiliated personnel should err on the side of caution and apply for committee approval of any activity that may fit this description.

**Inclusive Language**

In accordance with MTSO’s inclusive language policy, all students are expected to use gender inclusive or gender neutral language in their writing and in classroom discussions when referring to human beings. Inclusive language is carefully and deliberately chosen to break barriers of exclusivity. It is for everyone and against no one. It focuses on the message given by guarding against inaccuracy in the vocabulary of the sender. Inclusive language is an intentional attempt to communicate in a universal way.

**Grading Scale**

MTSO’s grading scale uses letter grades (A, B, C, D and F, with plusses and minuses as appropriate).

Outstanding work			Substandard but passing work		
A+	4.0	>=97%	D+	1.3	67%-69.9%

A	4.0	93%-96.9%	D	1.0	60%-66.9%
A-	3.7	90%-92.9%	D-	<i>not used</i>	
<b>Good work</b>			<b>Failing work</b>		
B+	3.3	87%-89.9%	F	0.0	
B	3.0	83%-86.9%			
B-	2.7	80%-82.9% ( <i>lowest pass for D.Min.</i> )			
<b>Work meets minimum standards</b>			<b>Other grades</b>		
C+	2.3	77%-79.9%	P	Pass (equates to C- or higher)	
C	2.0	73%-76.9%	WP	Withdrawn Passing	
C-	1.7	70%-72.9%	WF	Withdrawn Failing	
			IP	In Progress	
			I or EX	Incomplete / Extension	
			AU	Audit	

### Pass/Fail Grading Option

Within certain limits, a student may complete up to nine credit hours at MTSO on a pass/fail basis, rather than for a letter grade (A, B, C, D or F). Dual degree students may take three additional hours pass/fail. All students seeking ordination are encouraged to check with their annual conferences (or appropriate judicatory) before exercising the pass/fail option in any courses, since they may have limitations on pass/fail courses that are different from those prescribed by MTSO.

The deadline for pass/fail applications is the end of the second week of the course. For weekend courses, the deadline is prior to the second weekend. For intensive courses, the deadline is by the end of the second day of class. Requests should be made with the Application for Pass/Fail Credit or via email showing faculty advisor approval. Requests to change to pass/fail grading in a course received after the deadline for these requests will not be accepted. Once a course has been changed to pass/fail, the course may not be reverted to standard letter grading. When exercising the pass/fail option, to receive a grade of pass the student must do at least the equivalent of C- work in the course. For example, if the student opts for pass/fail grading and his or her performance in the course would have earned a D+ grade and would have earned the student credit for the course within the letter grade system the student will fail the course and will not receive credit.

### Incomplete Grades

The grade of I (Incomplete) may be used under special circumstances on a temporary basis when a student needs additional time on course assignments. To receive a temporary course grade of Incomplete, students must petition the professor, their faculty advisor, and the dean. Students must complete the petition and obtain the appropriate signatures unless they are physically unable. The completed petition must be delivered to Academic Affairs before the last day of regularly scheduled classes (before finals week) as listed on the Academic Calendar. It is strongly recommended that students deliver the petition to Academic Affairs for review at least one week prior to this deadline as lack of sufficient lead time may result in the denial of the petition. The dean may ask to confer directly with the student, faculty advisor, and/or instructor before making a decision.

The date by which all course work must be completed will be no later than four weeks after the last day of the term as listed on the Academic Calendar. For incomplete courses in which a new letter grade has not been submitted after one week has passed from the date by which all course work was to be completed, the grade will be recorded as an F.

### Grade Changes and Appeals

Students who believe that they have not been graded fairly should first speak to the instructor who gave the grade. If, after this conversation, the student still believes that the grade is unfair, the student may file a written appeal with the dean, within 30 days of having received the grade, and set forth the reasons for the appeal. The dean will consult with both the student and the instructor. If the dean finds

grounds to support the student's claim that the grade is unfair, the dean may modify the grade. The dean will render the decision regarding the appeal in writing.

Faculty members may change grades within 30 days after the final grade deadline for the term in which the course was taken. After the 30-day period, no grades will be changed unless there is a petition because of extenuating circumstances.

#### **Documenting written work at MTSO**

All written work submitted for courses at MTSO must conform to the Note-Bibliography style in the Chicago Manual of Style (17<sup>th</sup> edition) or, for MACM students, the American Psychological Association (6<sup>th</sup> edition). A standardized format enables the readers to have full and immediate information concerning works cited and consulted by the writer. The format must be followed consistently throughout the paper, including footnotes, endnotes, in-line notes, and bibliography. Mixing the two styles in the same paper is not permitted. Papers not conforming to a proper and consistent style may be returned to the writer for a re-write or with a grade that reflects failure to follow the required format. If you have questions, please consult with the school's writing instructor, the dean, or a faculty member.

Instructors may designate one of the two styles as mandatory for assignments in a course. Papers not conforming to a proper and consistent style may be returned to the writer for a re-write or with a grade that reflects failure to follow the required format. If you have questions, please consult with the school's writing instructor, the dean, or a faculty member.

See [https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html#cg-journal](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html#cg-journal)

For a helpful discussion of how to avoid academic misconduct, see the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) website at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/02>.

#### **Academic Misconduct Policy**

Freedom of inquiry and expression are essential to the educational process, but this freedom must operate within a system of order. Accordingly, academic misconduct in any form will not be tolerated and may result in failure of course work or other sanctions up to and including expulsion.

The following are specific (but not all-inclusive) examples of academic misconduct:

1. Cheating on examinations of any kind by whatever means, including preparation for an examination by means of obtaining copies of examination, past or present, and copying from other students.
2. Use of oral and/or written private research of a paid or voluntary person and representing this work as one's own, whether within the classroom or in any context of the academic program.
3. Borrowing without attribution (plagiarism or misuse of sources) from published and unpublished works, including writings and media in any format taken from websites, apps, and other online sources. Plagiarism is defined for these purposes in a broad rather than a narrow sense and therefore is not limited to definitions found in Civil Law which apply to Copyright Laws, the commercial reproduction of books, articles, images, and audio and video recordings.

This policy applies not only to the production of written assignments, but also to oral, electronic, and digital work presented in any format. Students are always expected to attribute clearly and explicitly work that is the intellectual and creative property of others.

#### **Sanctions for Academic Misconduct**

When academic misconduct has been established to a faculty member's satisfaction, the faculty member may assign the student a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and may recommend stronger sanctions to the dean.

Faculty members are required to report all incidences of academic misconduct to the dean. The instructor must submit documentation of academic misconduct to the dean and to the student. The dean's determination of whether academic misconduct occurred is not subject to appeal. If the dean determines that no violation has been committed, the dean will address with the faculty member

penalties imposed in the class. The dean may impose additional sanctions to the student beyond those given by the instructor (e.g., required meetings with the writing instructor, reprimand, probation, suspension or dismissal). Sanctions will be communicated by the dean to the student and to the student's faculty advisor in writing with copies of all communications and documentation retained in the student's permanent record.

If a student is found to have committed academic misconduct a second time, the dean will typically impose the sanctions of suspension or dismissal. The dean shall initiate any suspension or dismissal for academic misconduct by giving the student written notice specifying the charge against the student and the sanctions imposed. The dean may in some circumstances meet with the student to communicate the charges and discipline prior to formal written communication.

#### **Academic misconduct disciplinary appeals process**

If a student wishes to appeal the sanctions imposed by the dean, the student shall inform the dean in writing within 14 days from the date contained in the dean's notification of sanctions.

The appeal shall be scheduled for hearing by an executive session of the Academic Affairs Committee of the School on or before the date of the Academic Affairs Committee's next regularly scheduled meeting. If a member of the Academic Affairs Committee must recuse themselves due to a conflict of interest, the Chair will ask another member of the Executive Faculty to serve in an *ad hoc* capacity, starting with members of the Faculty Personnel and Student Review Committees. The student shall have the right to present evidence of extenuating circumstances which would warrant leniency.

The Committee shall deliberate in private session and will decide by majority vote to accept, reject, or amend the discipline recommendation by the dean. The decision of the Committee shall be communicated in writing with documentation retained in the student's permanent record.

### **VIII. Supporting Materials**

#### **Requirements for Auditors**

Auditors must partially fulfil the course requirements. These entail weekly readings (only the required listed readings), class attendance and involved participation as well as preparation for in-class discussion. Students will receive weekly questions, the answers for which must be written or typed out and brought to the following class. Auditors will not submit any of the course's written projects for evaluation. Auditors must indicate to the course's professor if they wish to participate in the online discussions, e.g. Facebook Group and Introductions.

#### **Policy on Children in Class**

Currently MTSO does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described below is a reflection that came to me via Dr. Bridgeman. This was posted by an unidentified student who shared their professor's policy online, which I agree with and adopted for myself.

"The policy described here is just a reflection of my own belief and commitments to student, staff and faculty parents:

1. All exclusively breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as necessary;
2. For older children and babies, I understand that unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to miss class to stay home with a child. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.
3. I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status;
4. In all cases when babies and children come to class, I ask that you sit close to the door so that if your little one needs special attention and is disrupting learning for other students, you may step outside until their need has been met;
5. Finally, I understand that often the largest barrier to completing your coursework once you become a parent is the tiredness many parents feel in the evening once children have finally gone to sleep. While I maintain the same high expectations for all students in my classes

regardless of parenting status, I am happy to problem-solve with you in a way that makes you feel supported as you strive for school-parenting balance.

**ADDENDUM A – Interreligious Autobiography Assignment**

Write one-page autobiography (max.) looking at these various sources of influence in shaping your own attitudes, beliefs, values and practices toward other than your own religion tradition. Students must share their autobiography with the class by noon on Monday Week 2. This must be uploaded at Populi under Discussions “Autobiography.” Students may look at the various sources of influence in shaping their own attitudes, beliefs, values and practices toward other religions. This exercise is designed to: help you explore the ways in which your attitudes towards other religions have been shaped by a variety of influences, to come to know your own spiritual and religious experiences better, to recognize specific messages about values and behavior which you carry in your orientation toward other religious traditions, and to recognize the connections (and disconnections) between your attitudes, beliefs and values and your own actions and behavior toward other religious peoples. Although this is not a research project, it is still an academic paper. This means that you will need to develop a clear structured narrative and use language appropriate for academic papers. See more information at the end of this syllabus Addendum A. Although it is imperative that you follow the instructions in the file, remember that here are no wrong answers.

**Questions/Topics** to think about: *You do not have to answer each question. These are designed to stimulate your thinking and give some guidance to your essay’s structure. You may choose to spend more time on some of the categories than others.*

What were your family’s and ancestors’ religious attitudes toward and experience of other than your own religion tradition? Think back at least three generations of sides of your family. Where did they live, what did they do, how did they relate to others? What events shaped their attitudes? How has your upbringing/family background, economic class, race, ethnicity, gender or region/geography shaped how you think about religious traditions?

How do your attitudes relate to your own experience of “other religious traditions”? What do you care about the most? Have you had negative experiences? In other words, what have been some of the most important sources of your own positive or negative interreligious relationships? Is there a special place or person who has inspired you? Name one or two significant encounters.

Significant people: Who has most shaped your attitudes, feelings, values, both positively and negatively about interreligious concerns? Favorite authors/books that have shaped you?

Significant Events: in your own life, your family, your society, culture, etc. These can be positive or negative, and personal.

Faith, religion, spirituality: What religious/spiritual traditions have influenced you, specifically in terms of negative or positive attitudes toward other cultures and unfamiliar religious traditions to you? If you were raised within a particular religious tradition, did it promote a particular orientation toward others? Were there religious events, services, sermons that concerned aspects of interreligious relationships? How were interreligious issues discussed or referenced? Prior to coming to this class, what would you say was your sense of Christianity’s relation to other religious traditions? Don’t forget to include Indigenous Traditions. What is your theological/faith perspective towards interreligious conversation? Towards solving interreligious problems? What are the most important? Remember that here are no wrong answers.

Education: What have you been taught about religions? Who/What has taught you, explicitly or implicitly? Family, books, teachers, pastors, media/culture? Have you gotten implicit or explicit messages that other than Christianity religions traditions were unimportant, dangerous, scary, heresy, fallacy and need to be converted to Christianity? Or messages to the opposite? As sacred?

Culture: How do you feel aspects of the culture shaped your attitudes and values on religion and/or interreligious solidarity? What historical or contemporary events, movies, TV shows have shaped your attitudes?



**ADDENDUM B – Group Research Project**

**Group Research Project General Instructions:**

This project is divided in three parts: ritual participation (qualitative research), written component and oral presentation. The group project is worth 40% of your course-work (17% for the written assignment, 17% for the oral presentation and 6% for the report on ritual participation). Each group will have about 15 minutes to speak and 10 minutes to answer questions by their classmates, presentation duration may change according to the number of groups. The project presentations will take place **on Monday Week 14**. The written submission of the project is **due on Friday Week 14**.

**Group research Project – Written Component Instructions:**

Final research paper must be double spaced (min. 3000 and max. 4000 words). It must be well structured, this includes paper's cover, abstract, clear introduction, conclusion and bibliography. Make sure that you send your project to the writing structure for final editing before submission.

➤ Projects that do not follow academic structure and proper editing will be returned.

**Final Research Paper must follow this format:**

1. Paper's font size 12p, margins are justified and the standard fonts for academic papers are Times New Roman, Arial and Helvetica, paper's body must be double spaced. Please note that paper's cover, abstract and bibliography are not double spaced.
2. Papers must have a cover page, which includes the research paper's title, students' name, instructor's name, date and institution. Let me know if you need assistance with templates.
3. Paper's abstract (200-250 words max.) has its own page. It is likely that your abstract will undergo some changes after you conclude your paper and this is fine. Remember that abstracts and Introductions are not the same. You still have to write a proper introduction to your paper even though you have an abstract.
4. Paper's body must be well structured with a clear introduction, body, conclusion and bibliography. See at Populi attachments on how to structure a research essay, write an introduction and conclusion. They can be found under the Assignment tab "Group Research Project – Written Component."
5. In order to guarantee good grade and learning process, make sure that you send your project to the writing structure for final editing before submission.

**Research Question:**

Critically examine the relationship between the practice of interreligious dialogue and the emergence of interreligious theology. Identify a *minimum of two examples* (for a passing grade) of contemporary interreligious theological positions (from the course readings) to illustrate the alternative ways that theologians are proposing to generate peacebuilding and flourishing co-existence between different religious traditions while also tackling social injustice. Groups will choose at least one *interreligious/interfaith organization* that operates in Columbus or surroundings (preferably) and analyze how (or if) interreligious theology is reflected in the day-to-day practice of these organizations. For example, does this interreligious organization have a specific goal which reflects the need and benefit for adopting interreligious dialogue and collaboration? Do this organization's practices reflect a theology of interreligious dialogue and/or spirituality? Does interreligious dialogue contribute to the promotion of human rights, civic consciousness and solidarity? Students may want to use as a resource Oddbjørn Leirvik's book, *Interreligious Studies: A Relational Approach to Religious Activism and the Study of Religion* (2014) and/or Farid Esack's *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism: An Islamic Perspective of Interreligious Solidarity against Oppression* (1996).

**Research Project Methodology (Qualitative Research):**

After choosing an interfaith/interreligious organization, the groups' task will be to collect information about these organizations, their objectives, projects, activities, strategic areas etc. If the organization you choose has offices in Columbus (or the surrounding area) you might want to schedule an appointment in order to get the information that you need (not all organizations have a website or other easily accessible information—it might be a good idea to go directly to them to get handouts, flyers, newsletters etc.). If you decide to also schedule interviews, then a meeting needs to be organized with Dr. Nogueira-Godsey (Week 6-7) so that you can get approval for Human Subject Research. Informal conversation with those involved with those organizations and observation do not require approval for Human Subject Research.

**Ritual Report:**

As a group, you will have to become familiar with one of the religious traditions involved in the organization other than one's own. The group as a whole can choose the same tradition or this can be individually chosen. Nonetheless, each group member will learn about the history, diversity and distinctive presence in the USA of one of those religious traditions. Individually or as a group, you will participate in one of the rituals practiced by this religious tradition, it could be in the space of the interreligious organization or in the chosen religious tradition's own sacred space. If you choose Buddhism, for example, then you could visit a Buddhist center and participate in meditation. If you choose Catholicism, you could go to mass and participate in the Eucharist (this can be organized with the priest in advance). You might want to use as a resource Marianne Moyaert's *Ritual Participation and Interreligious Dialogue: Boundaries, Transgressions and Innovations* (2015). Each person will submit two pages essay, including a description of what you learned about this faith tradition and a reflection on your ritual experience by 12pm on Monday Week 11. Students will also have 5 minutes to share their experience in class on Monday Week 11.

**Group research Project – Oral Component Instructions:**

Please note that the points below must be included in your Written Research and Oral Project presentation.

1. A general presentation of the interreligious organization and the religious traditions involved (Do not linger on this introduction. Sometimes groups spend so much time on this point and run out of time for their critical analysis).
2. Their engagement with interreligious issues; do they conduct projects, organize workshops, or does the organization incorporate other forms of community involvement? If yes, what are they doing? If no, why?
3. From what you have learned about the organization(s), what is the theoretical relationship between *interreligious dialogue and social justice* that is being conveyed? And/or is there a relationship between *interreligious practice and social issues* within this organization(s)? Is social justice a concern for those organizations? If yes, in what ways? Develop an analysis that explains these relationships or lack thereof. Your analysis must clearly show how the organization(s)' theology, ethics or forms of spirituality influences/guides their mission and day-by-day practices.
4. Draw on course reader(s) and information gathered about the organization(s) to illustrate some of the complexities between interreligious theology and spirituality, gender, race, class and ecology that you have identified.

**Individual Report for Groups:**

Together with the written project, students from each group will submit an individual report that includes:

- What was your role in the group project?
- How did you contribute in the process of this group project?
- How did you experience working in a group?
- What did you learn from this experience?

The individual report must not exceed one typewritten page.

*The group written project, the ritual reflection, the individual report, and the presentation counts for 40% of your final mark.*

**The Group Project written-component will be self-graded.<sup>1</sup> Here is how this will work and the steps to be followed so that we can get the most possible out of this assignment:**

**Step 1: Identify** 1 or 2 organizations that you will research and post their names at Populi under the Discussion tab titled “My Interreligious Organizations” on (Week 5) by 12:00pm.

**Step 2: Research Method**, post at Populi how your group plan to learn about these organizations (e.g. interviews, visiting, observation, online research). Upload this information under the Discussion tab titled “Research Methods” on Monday Week 6 by 12:00pm. Remember to make an appointment with Dr. Nogueira-Godsey during Week 6 if you decide to schedule interviews with an organization, a meeting needs to be organized so that you can get approval for Human Subject Research.

**Step 3: Research Paper Main Question**, post at Populi under the Discussion tab titled “Research Paper Main Question” your paper’s main question on Monday Week 7 by 12pm. If by that time, you already have your research paper’s title then post the title and a description of what it entitles. If not, a few sentences about the paper’s main question will do.

Please note that although the links below will help you to be prepared, the best resource is to consult with Dr. Trad Nogueira-Godsey.

1. How to Write a Research Question <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/guides/how-to-write-a-research-question>
2. How to Write an Effective Essay <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWqMQ26Gqi4>
3. How to Write a Thesis Statement <https://wts.indiana.edu/writing-guides/how-to-write-a-thesis-statement.html>

**Step 4: Bibliography**- write up your paper’s bibliography (working in progress) and share with us by posting it at Populi under the Discussion tab titled “Research Project’s Bibliography” by Week 9. Final research paper must have a minimum of 10 entries. Remember that a research paper’s bibliography is

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<sup>1</sup> The self-graded structure of the research has been developed by professor Yvonne Zimmerman and adapted this class by professor Elaine Nogueira-Godsey.

comprised by the list of titles that you referred to in your paper. If you have read something, but decided to not use it in your final paper, this resource will not make it into your final bibliography.

**Step 5: Learning Contract**, on Week 10 all students must email me a learning contract on Monday by the end of the day (midnight). This must be sent as a proper written attachment and not in the body of an email. A learning contract consists of a short paragraph for each point below that details:

What you intend to learn, develop, or construct with this assignment,

How you will know if you've achieved this,

How you will evaluate the quality of your reflection/construction, and

What grade you intend to achieve.

➤ *This paragraph will serve as the formal learning agreement between you and me.*

**Step 6: Abstract**, on Friday Week 12 post at Populi under the Discussion tab titled "Research Paper Abstract" your paper's abstract (200-250 words max.). It is likely that your abstract will undergo some changes after you conclude your paper and this is fine. Although some scholars argue that an abstract should be written after you finish writing your paper, I have found that to write it before helps to keep you focus in your topic. There are several online links on how to write a good abstract. See below a few:

<https://leo.stcloudstate.edu/bizwrite/abstracts.html>

<https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/guides/writing-an-abstract>

<https://wordvice.com/how-to-write-a-research-paper-abstract/>

Please note that abstracts and Introductions are not the same. You still have to write a proper introduction to your paper even though you have an abstract.

**Final projects due by midnight on Friday Week 14.**

**As an addendum to your final project**, and referring to your learning contract (above), you will provide me with a written evaluation that discusses how you think you achieved your goals, your evaluation of the quality of your work in the project, and what grade you would assign to your work. *This is not a full guarantee that I will give you the grade you choose for yourself. As the instructor, I retain the prerogative to adjust your grade if I feel you are being either too lenient or too harsh with yourself.* But this is an opportunity for you to set clear and specific benchmarks of scholarly accountability for the work you produce.

**ADDENDUM C – Final Research Paper Grading Criteria<sup>2</sup>**

Student Name: Topic/Title:

<b>**Paper-Specific Objectives:</b>	Strong	Satisfactory	Weak
SCHOLARLY RESEARCH: You have drawn on a minimum of 5-7 scholarly sources related to your selected topic, including standard reference works, primary sources, and/or secondary materials such as scholarly books and articles. Facts used are accurate, background details are provided as necessary, and you demonstrate grasp of the material.			
RESEARCH FOCUS: You have established a sufficiently narrow research question to fully develop 2-3 diverse perspectives on that question from within the selected organization. You clearly illustrate how shared principles or values inform these different perspectives, practices or positions.			
ARGUMENT: You have articulated a clear and original thesis related to your research question, and your paper stresses analysis (critical examination which brings out the essential elements) over narrative.			
CRITICAL SYNTHESIS: Your use of sources, argument, and conclusion reveals significant original insight(s) and/or creative connection(s) among the diverse views or practices you have selected for your paper.			
<b>General Academic Writing Standards:</b>	Strong	Satisfactory	Weak
INTRODUCTION: Your introduction establishes a context and background, clearly defines the question or problem you will address in the paper, and offers a strong statement and/or outline of your argument.			
STRUCTURE: Your paper has a logical structure: the paragraphs flow from one idea to the next and support the overall argument. This is maintained throughout the paper.			
CONCLUSION: Your conclusion sums up the preceding arguments, draws together the paper, and adds insight to the discussion.			
GRAMMAR AND USAGE: The paper displays a command of standard written English, with few errors in grammar or usage.			
TONE AND STYLE: The tone of the paper is reasonable, well-written and flows well from one section to the next. When referring to human beings, you avoid using gender-exclusive or prejudicial language.			
USE OF SOURCES: Your paper uses a combination of direct quotation, paraphrase and summary. Direct quotations are not overused and are relevant to your discussion. They are properly introduced and formatted.			
CITATION STYLE: The sources of direct quotations and paraphrased material are correctly cited using the Chicago style of citation (author-date).			
LENGTH: Paper is the proper length, without sacrificing content or style.			

\*\*These criteria will be given approximately double weight in evaluating the paper.

Base Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Late Penalty (if any): \_\_\_\_\_ Final Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Additional Comments:

<sup>2</sup> A special thank you to Professor Reid B. Locking for making his courses' syllabus available to colleagues at American Academy of Religion's Syllabus Project. This grading criteria has been adapted from his course Interreligious Dialogue and Practice at the University of Toronto.

**ADDENDUM D – Group Research Project Oral Component Evaluation Criteria:**

The group project is worth 40% of your course-work (17% for the written assignment, 17% for the oral presentation and 6% for the report on ritual participation). Each group will have about 15 minutes to speak and 10 minutes to answer questions by their classmates, presentation duration may change according to the number of groups.

Each group or individual will be evaluated according to the following categories:

1) Evidence of planning and group preparation

All members of the group are present and involved in the presentation

Clear evidence that each individual has played his/her role in the research process

2) Well Organized Presentation

The themes are presented in a coherent and clear manner, with a well-defined introduction, discussion and conclusion.

3) Mastery of the subject

Evidence of thorough knowledge of the researched organization.

Demonstrate a convincing and substantiated argument.

4) Connection with the course-material

Making clear connections of researched organization with issues raised in course-material.

5) Creativity “Extra mile”

This is an extra-point awarded for evidence of creativity, imagination and originality in presentation which goes beyond mere fulfilling of course-work requirements.