



Hartford International
UNIVERSITY FOR RELIGION & PEACE



Syllabus

Fall Term 2026

Thursdays 7:00–8:50 PM (Eastern)

Synchronous Online Mode

with asynchronous activities

Instructor:

Professor Lucinda Mosher, Th.D., Director, Master of Arts in Interreligious Studies program

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Office Hours:

Professor Mosher's office is in Penney Farms, Florida. She may be "visited" there via Zoom or phone and is available at some point almost every day. Please use email or text-messaging to request a conversation. Typically, such requests are granted within 24 hours.

Course Description:

DI 550 is the gateway to the MA in Interreligious Studies program, a requirement of the MA in International Peacebuilding curriculum, and a recommended course for DMin students. Conducted in synchronous online mode, supplemented by asynchronous activities, it integrates theory and practice in exploring how diverse individuals and groups understand *religion* and how those with differing understandings relate to one another. As students learn about this field's history, its core principles, and its signature methodologies, they consider such themes as the meaning of *religion*, the discourse of *othering*, theologies of religious difference, comparative theology, interreligious hermeneutics, urban social history methodologies, interreligious dialogue, and faith-based collaboration—all the while improving their religious and interreligious literacy and developing skills necessary for interreligious engagement.

Outcomes:

By completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate command of the core principles and methodologies characteristic of the academic discipline of interreligious studies.

2. Demonstrate development or improvement of multireligious fluency—that is, respectful familiarity with beliefs, practices, or literature of religions other than their own (which they are at liberty to describe).

They will also make progress toward the MAIRS Program Outcomes:

1. Facilitation of critical investigation of relations between people who orient around religion differently which has led to deep understanding of at least one worldview different from their own.
2. Allowance for students' articulation of their own worldview or religious belief system while empathetically and respectfully engaging representatives of worldviews, religious practices, and religious beliefs differing from their own.
3. Expression of ideas and perspectives clearly in oral and written communication—writing a sustained, coherent arguments or explanations in clear academic English, with well-formed sentences and paragraphs; or creating or delivering clear, engaging, and succinct presentations that may utilize visual, written, and spoken elements.
4. Conduct research on the Masters' level in the field of Interreligious Studies.

Required Textbooks

Gustafson, Hans. *Everyday Wisdom: Interreligious Studies in a Pluralistic World* (Fortress, 2023) 1506486940

Hedges, Paul. *Understanding Religion: Theories and Methods for Studying Religiously Diverse Societies* (University of California Press, 2021). ISBN 9780520298910

Mosher, Lucinda, editor. *The Georgetown Companion to Interreligious Studies* (Georgetown University Press, 2022). ISBN 9781647121631

Mosher, Pierce, and Rose, editors. *With the Best of Intentions: Interreligious Missteps and Mistakes* (Orbis Books, 2024). ISBN 9781626985452

Additional course materials are provided on this course's Canvas website.

Course format, structure, and expectations:

The course is divided into modules, each of which examines a particular aspect of interreligious studies and addresses religious literacy in some way. Traditional lectures and discussions are supplemented by use of experiential methodologies (case method, site-visiting, and dialogue with a study-partner. As a semester-long, three-credit, synchronous online course, participation in a weekly two-hour Zoom meeting is required and is complemented by a third hour of asynchronous online (or some other sort of experiential) learning. You are to be in a secure location with adequate microphone, camera, and sound capabilities each Thursday at 7:00 PM (Eastern). You can expect to spend approximately six hours in preparation (through reading and writing) for each Zoom session. Generally, Thursday night Zoom sessions will provide an opportunity to process what you have been studying for the previous six days.

The course's Canvas site enables access the syllabus, reading materials, instructions, assignment descriptions and portals, discussions, and grades. If you have difficulty accessing or navigating the site, call the Canvas Support Hotline: (877) 249-4494. If you have questions about course content, contact your professor.

Topics: The course will proceed according to this calendar:

Module date-range, Name/Theme		Zoom
8/31 – 9/3	Opening Zoom Session: Orientation	9/3
9/4 – 9/10	1. Definitions	9/10
9/11 – 9/17	2. Identity, Othering, Intersectionality	9/17
9/18 – 9/24	3. Comparison-making	9/24
9/25 – 10/1	4. Lived Religion	10/1
10/2 – 10/8	5. Religion's manyness (focus on multireligious fluency	10/8
10/9 – 10/15	6. Religion, Violence, and the Margins	10/15
10/16 – 10/22	7. Dialogue: Theory and Practice	10/22
10/23 – 10/29	8. Ritual and Meaning-Making	10/29
10/30 – 11/5	9. Arts and Aesthetics	11/5
11/6 – 11/12	10. Experiential Learning	11/12
11/13–11/26	Pause for Reading; Thanksgiving	[No Zoom]
11/27 – 12/3	11. Interreligious Friendship, Collaboration; Review	12/3
12/4 – 12/10	12. Consolidation (final Zoom session)	12/10
	END OF TERM: 12/16	

Assignment/Assessment Categories

Reading: Most modules specify texts to be studied. The extent to which a student has engaged those items is demonstrated through writing assignments and oral participation.

Asynchronous lecture-watching (20% of final grade): AV-lectures to be watched independently are made available online. Points are earned for watching and commenting.

Participation (20% of final grade): Points are earned for Zoom attendance, attention, and involvement.

Discussion Forums: (20% of final grade) Some modules include an opportunity for students to participate in an asynchronous discussion by posting a response to a prompt concerning some aspect of the module's theme, then commenting on classmates' posts.

Reflections: (10% of final grade) Some modules request a brief (300–750 words) yet formal essay consolidating and interrelating learnings from material within a module or ideas derived from two or more modules.

Experiential Learning: (15% of final grade) Interactive assignments, such as case studies, conversations with an assigned partner, or field research (usually, site-visiting and reporting).

Summary essay: (15% of final grade) For the final class session, students are to submit a well-crafted essay in which they demonstrate progress toward course goals.

HIU Grading Scale for MA students

- A (95-100) Demonstrates excellent mastery of the subject matter, a superior ability to articulate this, and provides helpful connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.
- A- (90-94) Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter and ability to articulate it well; makes connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds course expectations.
- B+ (87-89) Demonstrates a very good understanding of the subject matter, able to articulate lessons learned in the assignment well. Meets course expectations.
- B (83-86) Demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter and the ability to articulate lessons learned. Meets expectations of the course.
- B (80-82) Demonstrates an understanding of the material at hand, has some difficulty articulating this, and basic connection of the material to daily life or contemporary issues/life. Meets basic expectations for the course.
- C+ (77-79) Demonstrates a basic comprehension of the subject matter, weak articulation and connections. Barely meets expectations for the course.
- C (70-76) Demonstrates a minimal comprehension of the subject matter and has difficulty making connections—or is egregiously late in submitting homework. Barely expectations of the course. {minimal connection}
- F (below 70) Is unable to meet the basic requirements of the course.

Recommended Reading

Bidwell, Duane R. *When One Religion Isn't Enough: The Lives of Spiritually Fluid People*. Beacon Press, 2018.

Frediani, Shannon. *Decolonizing Interreligious Education: Developing Theologies of Accountability*. Lexington Books, 2023.

Goshen-Gottstein, Alon, ed. *Friendship across Religions: Theological Perspectives on Interreligious Friendship*. Wipf & Stock, 2018.

_____. *Sharing Wisdom: Benefits and Boundaries of Interreligious Learning*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017.

_____. *The Religious Other: Hostility, Hospitality, and the Hope of Human Flourishing*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014.

Gustafson, Hans, ed., *Interreligious Studies: Dispatches from an Emerging Field*. Baylor University Press, 2020.

Kärkkäinen, Veli-Matti. *Doing the Work of Comparative Theology*. Wm B. Eerdmans, 2020.

Kripal, Jeffrey J. *Comparing Religions: The Study of Us that Changes Us*, second edition. Wiley Blackwell, 2024.

- Kujawa-Holbrook, Sheryl A., *God Beyond Borders: Interreligious Learning Among Faith Communities*. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2014.
- Leirvik, Oddbjørn. *Interreligious Studies: A Relationship Approach to Religious Activism and the Study of Religion*. Bloomsbury, 2014.
- Morgan, David. *The Thing About Religion: An Introduction to the Material Study of Religions*. University of North Carolina Press, 2021.
- Mosher, Lucinda. *Belonging*. Seabury Books, 2005; *Praying*, 2006.
- Patel, Eboo, et al. *Interreligious/Interfaith Studies: Defining a New Field*. Beacon Press, 2018.
- Pierce, Elinor J. *Pluralism in Practice: Case Studies of Leadership in a Religiously Diverse America*. Orbis, 2023.
- Plate, S. Brent. *A History of Religion in 5½ Objects: Bringing the Spiritual to Its Senses*. Beacon, 2014.
- Segal, Robert A. and Nickolas P. Roubekas, eds. *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to the Study of Religion*, second edition. Wiley Blackwell, 2021.
- Thatamanil, John J. *Circling the Elephant: A Comparative Theology of Religious Diversity*. Fordham University Press, 2020.
- Voss Roberts, Michelle, ed. *Comparing Faithfully: Insights for Systematic Theological Reflection*. Fordham, 2016.

HIU Values for Collaborative Teaching and Learning

In our courses, we expect that instructors and students alike will strive to:

- Show mutual appreciation and respect for others—modeling the privilege to learn from and partner with each other.
- Engage in cross-disciplinary content and teaching
- Pay attention to the whole personhood of another—history, race, religion, knowledge, gender, and rank
- Demonstrate how to disagree respectfully and well
- Embody mutuality—learning to construct ideas and skills and experiences together

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Academic honesty and integrity are expected of all students. Plagiarism exists when: a) the work submitted was done, in whole or in part, by anyone other than the one submitting the work, b) parts of the work, whether direct quotations, ideas, or data, are taken from another source without acknowledgement, c) the whole work is copied from another source [especially a web based source], or d) significant portions of one's own previous work used in another course.

Inclusive Language

Hartford International University for Religion and Peace is committed to a policy of inclusion in its academic life and mission. All members of the community are expected to communicate in

language that reflects the equality of genders, openness to diverse cultural and theological perspectives, and sensitivity to one another's understandings of God.

Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act ensures equal access to qualified individuals with disabilities, and prevents discrimination on the basis of a disability. It is HIU policy to provide reasonable accommodations on a case-by-case basis, which may mean working with outside social and governmental agencies to provide the necessary range of services for student success. Students with disabilities who wish to receive accommodations must contact the Student Services Coordinator. Students with disabilities are eligible for disability support services when they are enrolled in courses and they have disclosed their disability and requested related accommodations during enrollment and/or before the start of each semester. All students seeking accommodation must fill out the Request for Disability Accommodations form.

Communication, Technology, Canvas

The instructor will use official HIU student email addresses for all course communications. Students are expected to check their *hartfordinternational.edu* email account regularly and to use it for communication regarding the course. Students will need to log into the course site several times per week to take part in discussions and to access other course materials. Within Canvas, the *Announcements* feature will be used to convey information "for the good of the order." The DI-550 Canvas website is your primary roadmap for this course. If you have difficulty navigating or operating any aspect of the site, do take advantage of the "Help" button (indicated by a question-mark). The "live chat" feature works very well; you can expect prompt and clear responses to your questions. You may also phone the Canvas Support Hotline: (877) 249-4494. If you have questions about course content (or you tried Canvas Help but are still mystified), please do email or text-message your professor right away. If the situation is better addressed voice-to-voice, request a specific time for a phone or Zoom call.

Attendance

Active attendance in Zoom class is required. If you know you will be unable to attend a session, please inform the professor in advance. In the case of an absence, the professor may ask the student for a brief essay (250–750 words) on the required reading for that session. Active use of the Canvas site is also required. Failure to log on for seven consecutive days is tantamount to absence from class and may incur a penalty.

Official Handbooks

For all other questions you might have regarding policies or procedures, please check the student handbook and university policies at *hartfordinternational.edu*. Academic policies are listed on the HIU website.