A painting of a city

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### Perez Rubio, “Interfaith Composition, City of Peace,” 2018.

REL 298 Interfaith Cooperation in a Multifaith World

Reinhardt University

Location: Tarpley 213

Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-10:45

Professor: Amy C. Cottrill, Ph.D.

Office Location: Tarpley 102

Visiting Hours: Monday and Wednesday 9-12 a.m.

Contact Information: I can be reached at amy.cottrill@reinhardt.edu. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you have any questions or concerns about the course.

**Course Description**

Religious traditions are often studied in isolation from one another. However, religious traditions have always developed in relation to the world around them. Because of this connection between religious traditions and the practices and beliefs of others, religious traditions are perhaps best understood when they are explored in relation to one another. Therefore, the objective of this course is to explore the ways that religious traditions develop in conversation with each other, both historically and in our present-day context. We will examine the points of connection between religious traditions as well as the reasons for their frequent tensions with one another. A major focus will be investigating ways to cultivate interfaith cooperation in the various communities in which students live; a practical goal of this class is to provide students with models of interfaith leadership that can address ongoing cultural and religious tensions.

At the end of this course, students should be able to

* recognize the diversity of perspectives within any particular religious tradition.
* demonstrate a working knowledge of the historical and cultural context that shaped Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and how those traditions have impacted each other over time.
* articulate the importance of this interconnected religious history and how that history affects modern cultural, political, and religious cultures.
* articulate acquaintance with Interfaith Studies and the potential for Interfaith Cooperation to positively impact situations of discord and conflict.

**The Classroom Community at Reinhardt University**

In this section of the syllabus, I describe the fundamental assumptions of the learning community that is the RU classroom, including my philosophy of teaching, statements of equity and inclusion, resources for success, as well as fundamental community commitments to honesty and integrity in the learning process. Reinhardt University is committed to your learning and we want to create opportunities for your development throughout your time here.

Statement of Inclusion & Equity

RU supports an inclusive learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized and respected. Reinhardt challenges students to engage in their community and the greater world, to examine diverse perspectives, and to live with integrity. Our intent is for all students to feel that they belong here and can succeed.

## Accommodation Statement and Academic Support

Reinhardt University is committed to providing all students equal access to learning opportunities. Academic Support Office is the campus office that works with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. Students registered with ASO, who have a letter requesting accommodation, are encouraged to contact the instructor early in the semester. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability (e.g., psychiatric, attention, learning, vision, hearing, physical, or systemic), are invited to contact ASO for a confidential discussion at 770.720.5567. Click [HERE](https://www.reinhardt.edu/academic-resources/academic-support-office/aso-programs-services/) to access the ASO website.

The Center for Student Success

The Center for Student Success (CSS) is located in Hill Freeman Library Room 313. CSS offers free peer and faculty tutoring to support Biology courses, Math, Spanish, and writing across the university curriculum, as well as other subjects with peer tutors for a variety of subjects depending on current peer tutor staffing such as Chemistry, Accounting, French, and more.

This service is free of charge to Reinhardt students. Appointments are preferred and are the best way to connect to the CSS, but there are walk-in hours that vary and are posted each semester. Students may request a tutoring appointment or request an update of current programming, please complete a tutoring request for specific tutors or a general inquiry at https://www.reinhardt.edu/academic-resources/center-for-student-success/, or email css@reinhardt.edu. Students receive an email from the CSS/Pharos that is their record of their meeting with a CSS tutor.

Faculty may refer students for tutoring or other academic success workshops through Pharos 360. From the Pharos screen, instructors would type in the student name/ID number in the search bar, select Student Updates from under the student photo icon, and then select CSS referral.

There is also the availability of online tutoring through brainfuse, through the specific to Reinhardt link https://www.brainfuse.com/highed/helpNow.asp?a\_id=68F429E2&ss=&r=

Brainfuse is an online platform where students can receive specific subject area tutoring or access other study supports. Please contact css@reinhardt.edu or schedule a general request appointment in the CSS for more information on how to register for and use Brainfuse.

Sexual and Gender-Based Misconduct

Reinhardt University is committed to the creation and maintenance of a safe learning environment for students and the campus community. The University forbids any type of sexual or gender-based misconduct among its students, faculty, and staff. The University encourages all members of the academic community to report suspected sexual and gender-based misconduct to the appropriate authorities so that it can be investigated, remedied, and eliminated. See the Reinhardt’s Title IX website at <https://www.reinhardt.edu/student-life/student-services-resources/Title-IX-Coordinator> for more information, including an online report form.

Honor Code and Academic Misconduct:

Transformative learning occurs in a context of trust and respect, established not only between the teacher and the learner, but also between all the learners in a class. Academic misconduct is not only behavior that has serious ramifications institutionally, but also violates the spirit of trust that is the foundation for a positive learning experience for every individual in the course. In addition, it erodes one’s personal sense of integrity. In all areas of life, Reinhardt University students take responsibility for all areas of their lives, including academic integrity. All academic work must be your own. All students should adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and the[Reinhardt Honor Code.](https://www.reinhardt.edu/student-life/student-services-resources/code-of-conduct/)  Please see the following article for further discussion for the connection between mental health and ethical integrity: Victoria Williamson, Dominic Murphy, Neil Greenberg, Sharon Stevelink, "Moral Injury: Violating Your Ethical Code Can Damage Mental Health" <https://theconversation.com/moral-injury-violating-your-ethical-code-can-damage-mental-health-new-research-115654>.

If you are unclear about what academic dishonesty is, please ask! Plagiarism (using the ideas and phrases of others without crediting them, therefore claiming those ideas and phrases as your own) is not difficult to avoid. All you have to do is give credit to the book, article, website, blog, social media account, etc., that has influenced your thinking. Never type or cut and paste other people’s words and put them in your document unless you use quotation marks and indicate where the source came from. And, if you are referring to someone else’s ideas or putting someone else’s ideas in different language, give them credit, just as you would like to receive credit for your own ideas. You can give credit to others’ ideas in a footnote or with a parenthetical citation.

The consequences for academic misconduct are unpleasant. It is also important that they exist and are followed so that we maintain our integrity as individuals and as a community and learn from our mistakes. Please refer to the [University Catalog](https://www.reinhardt.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Official-2022-23-Undergrad-Catalog.pdf) and the [Student Handbook.](https://www.reinhardt.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2022-2023-Reinhardt-University-Student-Handbook-Revised-8.1.2022.pdf) Most importantly, reach out to your professor if you are confused about what constitutes academic misconduct.

Teaching Philosophy

I love what happens in the classroom. I love to facilitate a classroom experience that is empowering and generative for all students. And I earnestly want you to succeed. I see my role as a facilitator of your learning. I will work hard to provide you with resources, feedback, and support. I also have high expectations of you—I firmly believe you are capable of doing this work and doing it well. I expect that you will improve and strengthen your critical thinking skills, writing, oral communication, and ability to work through dicey (and interesting) issues with the class. I invite you to engage with this material and with your classmates in ways that embody the spirit of the tradition of collegiate education, which include listening attentively, allowing curiosity to guide you, practicing self-reflection, and facilitating a democratic and inclusive environment.

## Required Texts (Available in college bookstore)

Barbara Brown Taylor, *Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others*

Robert Ericksen, *Complicity in the Holocaust: Churches and Universities in Nazi Germany*

Eboo Patel, *Interfaith Leadership: A Primer*

\*\*Any additional readings will be made available to students on Canvas.

\*\*Please bring all relevant readings to class for every meeting.

**Course Expectations**

1. *Attendance*: Attendance should be a special priority for all students and I take attendance every day of class. Excessive absences diminish your learning experience. Please schedule appointments and other obligations around the class schedule. I know there are university-related reasons to miss class and I support your involvement in those university-related activities. Excessive absences that are not explained will damage the final grade, however.

* Please note: I will record you as either present or absent on Canvas. That attendance record will not translate directly to a grade, however. I will take into account your excused absences in the final grade. It is important for all of us to know when you are present in class, however, so that your progress in the class is contextualized.
* If you are an athlete, please contact me via e-mail before a missed class.
* My main concern is that you communicate with me should something come up that would require you to be out of class for several meetings, or if there is anything that is going on that will impact your attendance and your successful completion of the course. My interest is in helping you have a successful semester. Through communication, there are usually ways I can offer support or resources to help you be present and successful. So please communicate with me.

1. Participation: One of the main goals of this class is to help you develop your own voice as a reader and interpreter of class material. One goal in this class is to establish a “reading community,” in which each person takes responsibility for their participation as well as the progress of the class as a whole. This class will involve a mixture of lecture and discussion, both with the class as a whole and in smaller groups. I do not understand participation to be completely verbal; the ability to listen carefully and help to clarify the ideas of one’s peers is also part of discussion. A major element of this grade has to do with the student’s willing, respectful, and engaged presence as a member of the class. Classes are more enjoyable and more educational for everyone when we can talk to one another in thoughtful, considered ways. The practices of this kind of participation can be learned!

* Part of our ability to participate well is being able to give attention to the class and the people in the class. To that end, I would like to ask you to put away your screens during class. We can do this! It will help all of us focus and recognize our dependence on our phones in ways that are not productive for education and relationships with other people. Please purchase the books and copy the articles to bring to class. Please take notes by hand in class. It may feel awkward at first, but the benefits to your education are enormous. (If you must have a laptop due to an academic accommodation, please discuss this with me.)
* *Each student will be given a participation grade for each half of the semester.*

How does an effective student participate in class discussion? The following guidelines are borrowed and adapted from Kirk Hanson of Stanford University School of Business.  
•       Are the points made substantive, relevant to the discussion? Are they linked to the comments of others?  
•       Is the participant a good listener? Do comments show the participant has been listening?  
•       Do comments show evidence of analysis of the readings?   
•       Do comments add to our understanding within the context of the discussion goals?  
•       Does the participant distinguish among different kinds of data (i.e., facts, opinions, beliefs, etc.)?  
•       Is there a willingness to participate?  
•       Is there a willingness to test new ideas or are all comments “safe” (e.g., repetition of facts without analysis and conclusions)?  
•       Is the participant willing to interact with other class members?  
•       Do comments clarify and highlight the important aspects of earlier comments and lead to the clearer statement of the concepts being covered?

1. Encountering Religious Diversity: In this 2-3 page essay, describe an encounter you had with someone with a different religious identity than yourself. What happened in that encounter? What did you learn about the other person’s religion? What did you learn about your own religious identity, however you define that? What questions did that encounter provoke for you?
2. Reflection Notebook: Please purchase a notebook of any size or any type and bring it to class every time we meet. Just keep it in your backpack. During the last 5 minutes of every class, I will ask you to write in your notebook about aspects of the class that you found to be particularly noteworthy, interesting, confusing, irritating, surprising, etc. I will ask you to make note of any questions you have. These notes will be important in completing the Dialogue Preparation Essay, described below.

* I will collect your Reflection Notebooks at several point in the term, so please designate a notebook for this purpose that you do not need for another class.
* If you are absent for a class, you are still responsible for documenting your learning and engagement with the material in your notebook. If you must be absent for any reason, please write for 5 minutes in your Reflection Notebook after you complete the assigned reading for the day you missed.

5. Two Dialogue Preparation Essays and Participation in Dialogue Days:

Twice during the semester, students are asked to reflect on what they have learned and clarify what issues require further clarification. These assignments are 3-5 pages each. More specific questions to guide your writing will be provided closer to the due dates for the essays.

* Attendance and Participation on Dialogue Days is a special priority for all students. These assignments are a required element of the course. However, I realize that everyone has commitments outside of this class that might make participation in one of these Dialogue Days impossible. If that is the case, please notify me in writing of your inability to be in class on that day and indicate the reasons for your absence. Alternate arrangements for participation in the dialogue will be made.

6. Final Project: A final and comprehensive project that will serve as an opportunity to synthesize and integrate the major themes of the course in relation to the course readings.

*REMEMBER: To be successful in this course, the student must attend class, complete the readings, and engage with the course material and the class. Commit to developing these habits early in the course!*

Grade Distribution:

The breakdown of the final grade by percentage is as follows:

Attendance and Participation 15%

Encountering Religious Difference Essay 15%

Reflection Notebook 10%

Dialogue Preparation Essay#1 20%

Dialogue Day#1 Participation 5%

Dialogue Preparation Essay #2 20%

Dialogue Day#2 Participation 5%

Final Project 15%

Note: My hope is that every student takes responsibility for reading and class discussion. If it is clear that reading and preparation for class is not a top priority of many in the class, I will implement reading quizzes. (Should this happen, students will not be able to make-up the quiz after class. Absent students will simply receive a “0.”) Please come prepared for class.

## **Course Schedule**

Note: This schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. I will announce changes in advance in class and via e-mail. Please check your Reinhardt e-mail account regularly.

**All readings and assignments are to be completed on the day they are listed in the syllabus.**

Getting Started

Jan. 9 (Tues.) Introduction to the Course

Jan. 11 (Thur.) Negotiating Difference and Similarity

Read: Huston Smith, *The World’s Religions* (selections), Canvas

Read: Stephen Prothero, *God is Not One* (selections), Canvas

* + - * Available on Canvas; please print both excerpts and bring to class.

Jan. 16 (Tues.)  **Due**: Encountering Religious Diversity Essay

Please upload your 2-3 page paper on Canvas before class. In this 2-3 page essay, describe an encounter you had with someone with a different religious identity than yourself. What happened in that encounter? What did you learn about the other person’s religion? What did you learn about your own religious identity, however you define that? What questions did that encounter provoke for you?

In class: Discussion of current religious and political conflict in Gaza and

Israel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRYZjOuUnlU>

Jan. 18 (Thur.)  Barbara Brown Taylor, *Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others*

Read: pp. 1-60

Jan. 23 (Tues.)  Barbara Brown Taylor, *Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others*

Read: pp. 61-120

Jan. 25 (Thur.)  Barbara Brown Taylor, *Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others*

Read: pp. 121-185

\*Collect Reflection Notebook

Jan. 30 (Tues.)  Barbara Brown Taylor, *Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others*

Read: pp. 186-228

Feb. 1 (Thur.)  Jewish and Christian Relations

Lecture: Historical Origins and Development of Relationship

Feb. 6 (Tues.)  The History of Anti-Semitism

View for Class: “European Antisemitism from its Origins to the

Holocaust” on the website of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: http://www.ushmm.org/confront-antisemitism/european-antisemitism-from-its-origins-to-the-holocaust

Listen to this Podcast for Class, available on the United States Holocaust

Memorial Museum: <http://www.ushmm.org/confront->antisemitism/confronting-hatred-70-years-after-the-holocaust/podcast-special

Feb. 8 (Thur.)  Christian Complicity in the Holocaust

Read: Robert Ericksen, *Complicity in the Holocaust*, pp. xiii-23

\*Collect Reflection Notebook

Feb. 13 (Tues.)  Christian Complicity in the Holocaust

Read: Robert Ericksen, *Complicity in the Holocaust*, pp. 24-60

Feb. 15 (Thur.)  Christian Complicity in the Holocaust

Read: Robert Ericksen, *Complicity in the Holocaust*, pp. 94-138; 229-235

Feb. 20 (Tues.)  Dialogue Day

Please upload your Dialogue Preparation Essay before class.

Feb. 22 (Thur.)  View in Class: *Elisabeth of Berlin*

Feb. 27 (Tues.)  Islam, Judaism, and Christianity in Conversation

A Brief Introduction

Reading to be announced

Feb. 29 (Thur.)  Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac in Jewish, Christian, and

Muslim Perspective

Read: Genesis 16 and 21

\*Collect Reflection Notebook

March 5 (Tues.) Spring Break

March 7 (Thur.) Spring Break

March 12 (Tues.)  Abraham, Sarah, Hagar, Ishmael, and Isaac in Jewish, Christian, and

Muslim Perspective

Read: Genesis 22

March 14 (Thur.)  Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in Conversation

Read: Khalidi, *The Muslim Jesus,* Introduction and pp. 3-45

Read: Khalidi, *The Muslim Jesus* (Selections on Canvas)

* + - * Available on Canvas; please print your assigned section and bring to class.

March 19 (Tues.)  View for Class: *Koran by Heart* (available on YouTube)

March 21 (Thur.)  Read: Michael Birkel, *Qur’an in Conversation*, pp. 1-3; 21-32

* + - * Available on Canvas; please print and bring to class.

March 26 (Tues.)  Read: Michael Birkel, *Qur’an in Conversation*, pp. 33-63

* + - * Available on Canvas; please print and bring to class.

March 28 (Thur.)  Read: Michael Birkel, *Qur’an in Conversation*, pp. 77-114

* + - * Available on Canvas; please print and bring to class.

\*Collect Reflection Notebook

Introducing Interfaith Studies

April 2 (Tues.)  Eboo Patel, *Interfaith Leadership*, pp. 1-66

April 4 (Thur.) Spring Day-class cancelled

April 9 (Tues.)  Eboo Patel, *Interfaith Leadership*, pp. 67-105

Note: Janisse Ray, author of *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*, will be visiting Reinhardt on

April 10-11. Please keep your schedule as open as possible during these days so that you can attend events.

April 11 (Thur.)  Eboo Patel, *Interfaith Leadership*, pp. 106-170

\*Collect Reflection Notebook

April 16 (Tues.)  Case Studies in Interfaith Leadership

Specific assignment for preparation will be given before class.

April 18 (Thur.)  Case Studies in Interfaith Leadership

Specific assignment for preparation will be given before class.

April 23 (Tues.) Second Dialogue Day

Please upload Dialogue Preparation Essay to Canvas before class.

April 25 (Thur.) Final Project: 11:15 a.m.-2:15 p.m.

Student Survey

Note: This survey is for the instructor’s use only. Please be assured that all information is completely confidential. The student should feel free to withhold any information that he or she does not feel comfortable sharing, however.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Major (if known):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What pronouns do you prefer?

Do you have any learning challenges, concerns, or disabilities of which you would like the instructor to be aware? If you answered “yes,” do you have a plan and/or assistance in dealing with your particular challenges? (If you would like to consult with the instructor about developing a learning strategy that might assist you in successful completion of the course, please make an appointment.)

Identify your strengths and challenges as a student. What are the particular academic skills you would like to develop over the course of this class?

Is there anything else you would like the instructor to know about you as a student?

Do you have any particular areas of interest regarding the topic of this class?