

Religion and Social Justice

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The best way to communicate with me is by e-mail. I will normally respond within 24 hours (unless the question can be answered by reading the syllabus or other course materials). I am also happy to speak with you by phone or on Skype. Sometime during the first three units of the course, I would like to meet briefly in person, on Skype, or by phone in order to get to know you a little better.

Course Description:

This course addresses a variety of issues both theoretical and practical in an effort to bridge crucial but abstract philosophical considerations with concrete efforts for social justice that course participants may be engaging in. The course is based on the idea that religion is a potent force which cannot be ignored. In spite of predictions that religion would simply disappear, it has not. Thus, it is important to reflect on the ways in which religious discourse has informed and continues to inform and shape the perspectives and actions of both individuals and groups. Specifically, we will consider the ways in which religious discourse may have hindered (or remained ignorant about or apathetic to) struggles for social justice and ways in which it may have helped them.

In addition, the course is based on the idea that human beings are shaped by their social context and thus do not come to issues from a purely objective point of view. Rather than attempting to demonstrate some kind of “pure” or completely neutral point of view, participants will be asked to situate themselves (to reflect on their own backgrounds and how ethical or religious commitments in interaction with other variables such as race, gender, and class shape their perspectives), to listen to and reflect on the ethical or religious commitments of others (including those who come from perspectives very different from their own), and to consider the ways in which particular religious discourses may be privileged or dominant (particularly white, Eurocentric ones).

Individuals will also have the opportunity to reflect on how they might harness their ethical and religious commitments in effectively working for social justice in their personal lives, in their workplaces, in communities of faith, and in the public sphere if they so desire. This course most definitely does not seek either to promote or hinder the practice of religion, but it does allow students to bring commitments which constitute crucial parts of their self-identity into the conversation of the classroom and to contemplate courses of action which will be meaningful to them as they take knowledge and apply it in broader contexts outside an academic one. Particular emphasis will be given to the ways in which diverse individuals or groups seeking social justice within a

specific social context in a particular place and time have formed or can form alliances with others whose ethical or religious perspectives diverge from their own.

Objectives:

1. To better understand and define terms such as “religion,” “religious discourse,” and “social justice.”
2. To gain a sense of the religious diversity (both past and present) in the U.S. and world-wide.
3. To gain understanding of the variety of ways in which religious discourse has hindered, helped, or remained ambivalent toward struggles for social justice in specific, historical contexts.
4. To gain understanding of the ways in which religious discourse continues to help or hinder struggles for social justice in specific, contemporary contexts.
5. To understand the ways in which religious discourse intersects with other variables such as race, class, and gender in the identity formation of both groups and individuals and shapes their *perspectives* regarding social issues.
6. To understand the way in which ethical and religious commitments have informed the *actions* of specific individuals and groups representing a wide variety of ethical and religious traditions, perspectives, and commitments.
7. To connect course readings and discussions to one’s own individual understanding of religion, ethics, and social justice and personal life experiences.
8. To read and reflect on the perspectives of those from other faiths (or with no particular faith commitments) or persons of the same faith but from different races, classes, genders, or sexual orientations.
9. To understand the ways in which white, Eurocentric thinking has dominated ethical and religious reflection and incorporate perspectives from marginalized voices that complement or challenge white, Eurocentric ones.
10. To practice engaging in difficult dialogues around issues of social justice with those whose ethical or religious commitments differ from one’s own.
11. To reflect on the ways in which one may harness one’s ethical or religious commitments appropriately in one’s community of faith, one’s workplace, and in the wider public sphere while also respecting the commitments of others.
12. To harness one’s own religious or ethical commitments in allying with others who may or may not share them in working for social justice.

Required Texts and Materials:

- 1) DeYoung, Curtiss Paul. *Living Faith. How Faith Inspires Social Justice*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007. (This text details the lives of three individuals from three different countries, times, and religious traditions—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Malcolm X, and Aung San Suu Kyi).
- 2) Burgess, Michael D. and Stanley M. Palmer. *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Religion and Social Justice*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. (Note: **The text may be borrowed as an e-book from the UCCS library**. Therefore, you do not need to purchase it. The hard copy is also on reserve. If you wish to purchase your own copy, the Kindle edition is much cheaper than the print version.)
- 3) Selected readings posted on Blackboard as detailed in the **Course Schedule** below. *Additional readings will be listed as the semester progresses.*

Note: The readings reflect the perspectives of those who belong to a variety of different faiths and those who hold a range of ethical perspectives (including those who do not come from a faith-based or religious stance). In order to engage effectively with the course material, students must strive for openness toward and full consideration of other perspectives even those with which they may heartily disagree and articulate their opinions and ideas respectfully in all contributions to class discussions.

Course Assignments:

- 1) **Reflections (15%)** (combination of personal reflection and *reflection on the course readings*) and **Final Reflection Paper (20%)**. (At the end of the course, thoughts from your journals may be incorporated into the final reflection paper. This paper will be an opportunity to reflect on and discuss what you have learned from the course as a whole in 3-5 pages.) Suggestions for journal reflections for the first four units are given in the Course Schedule below for the first four units.
- 2) Participation in **Discussion Forum (15%)** For each unit, students will be asked to post a response to a question(s) posed by the instructor and then to respond to either the instructor's response or that of another student who is taking or has already completed the course. Student responses will be available to others taking the course in the future unless you ask for your response to be kept confidential. Suggestions for the posts for the first two units are already specified in the Course Schedule. Suggestions for units 3 and 4 will be sent to you by your instructor. In units 5-15, you will do one combined journal reflection/discussion forum response. You will receive suggestions for the response for units 5-11 from your instructor. See the Course Schedule below for Units 12-15.
- 3) **Book Review** (post on Amazon) (**5%**): Choose a book pertinent to your field (social work, education, etc.) or a topic of special interest (perhaps the topic you

are using for your final project) which relates to the topics discussed in this course. After reading it, post a one page review on Blackboard and on amazon.com. See below for suggested books. You may also ask the course instructor for additional ideas or suggest a book you would like to read. Your goal is to inform those who are considering whether or not to read the book regarding its main ideas and why (and for whom) you would recommend it.

4) **Response Summary (15%)** for one of the following:

a) Attend or participate in an activity, lecture, demonstration, or religious service related to social justice concerns.

OR

b) Interview a person of faith about the ways in which ethical or religious commitments/values inform their struggles for social justice.

Then, write a **Response Summary** describing the group or individual, what took place or what you discussed, what stood out to you in experiencing the activity or doing the interview, and how you felt about the experience. In particular, how do the religious or ethical values/beliefs of the community/individual inform the way in which the group/individual approaches struggles for social justice? Tie in relevant information from our readings and discussions that pertains to this experience.

5) **Media Analysis (5%)**: Choose ONE of the following:

a) Review the website or the blog of an organization which focuses on issues of religious diversity or work for social justice done from a faith-based perspective in a 2-3 page analysis

(examples of sites you could use: the Pluralism Project (at Harvard), Interfaith Youth Core (founded by Eboo Patel in Chicago), Sojourners (founded by Jim Wallis in Washington, D.C.), the Human Rights Campaign, Speaking on the Side of Love, Project Nur, and St. Paul's Reconciliation and Equality Centre founded by Bishop Senyonjo).

OR

b) Find and summarize five news articles related to conflict over an issue of social justice—articles that reflect diverse religious and ethical perspectives—in a **Current Events Log** (summaries should be approximately one-half page long).

6) **Final Project (25%)** (see next page for the choices)

Case Study: Choose an issue related to social justice. Present two or more perspectives regarding this issue. Specifically, analyze the ways in which religious beliefs, discourses, or practices inform the perspectives of those engaging the issue. What insight have our readings and discussions given you regarding these motivations? (see below for a list of suggested topics) (10-12 pages) Can you suggest any ideas for meaningful interaction or collaboration among those whose perspectives are so different from each other?

OR

Syllabus/Set of Lesson Plans (25%) – Put together educational materials for a series of training/education sessions you plan to do in your community of faith or your workplace which allow participants to listen to and reflect on the diverse perspectives regarding an issue of social justice.

Grading Summary:

Reflections (10 points per unit): 150 points
Final Reflection Paper: 200 points
Discussion Forum (10 points per unit): 150 points
Book Review: 50 points
Response Summary: 150 points
Media Analysis: 50 points
Final Project: 250 points
Total: 1000 points possible

Class Policies:

- Regular, on-going participation is mandatory.
- Any act of plagiarism is grounds for failure. Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the college plagiarism policy and honor code (see LAS website)
- Netiquette must be adhered to (see below)
- All assignments must be submitted via blackboard unless otherwise specified.
- This class will follow the UCCS Non-Discrimination policy ensuring no one will discriminate against an individual or group on the basis of ethnicity, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, ability/disability, veteran status, or gender identity/expression.
- *Syllabus subject to change; readings may be added*

All students should be familiar with the following UCCS policies, which will be enforced in this class:

UCCS policies regarding: codes of conduct; classroom behavior; academic honesty (including plagiarism) sexual harassment, and other relevant policies:

<http://www.uccs.edu/~dos/studentconduct/academicdishonesty.html>

LAS Plagiarism policy:

http://www.uccs.edu/~las/prospective_students.html#PlagiarismPolicy

Accommodation for Physical or Learning Disabilities: If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact and register with the Disability Services Office, and provide them with documentation of your disability, so they can determine what accommodations are appropriate for your situation. To avoid any delay in the receipt of accommodations, you should contact the Disability Services Office as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that disability accommodations cannot be provided until an accommodation letter has been given to me. Please contact Disability Services for more information about receiving accommodations at Main Hall room 105, 719-255-3354 or dservice@uccs.edu.

Course Schedule

Unit 1

- 1) Make an appointment to meet with me in person or on Skype or by phone.
- 2) Discussion Forum: Introductions: Post a short introduction that gives us a sense of who you are. 10-15 PowerPoint slides can be a great way to do this. Animoto is another good resource for creating a short video slideshow about yourself.
OR Tell us a little about your family. One of my favorite professors often asked us students in his classes to tell a little bit about “your mama’s mama.” You can approach your introduction in this way if you wish.
- 3) Carefully review the course materials and assignments (preview the syllabus and the texts, asking yourself “where are we going?” and “what do I expect and wish to gain from taking this course?” Think about which assignments you wish to do (as certain choices are involved.) E-mail me if you have any questions.
- 4) Journal Reflection:
 - a) Do a little brainstorming in your journal. This is listed on Blackboard in the main menu as “Journals” and will be a space to express your thoughts informally. They will be visible only to yourself and to the instructor. How would you define the terms “religion,” “religious discourse,” and “social justice?” Can you think of ways in which religion has helped struggles for social justice? How has religion hindered struggles for social justice? How has religion oppressed people in a particular social context? Try to think in terms of specific examples, not generalities. At this point, just write down any and all thoughts that come to mind. **DO THIS BEFORE DOING ANY OF THE READINGS FOR THE COURSE.**

b) If you never have done so, read “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” by Peggy McIntosh (readily available on-line) and reflect on the following: Does one’s position of privilege (or lack of it) affect the way in which one perceives issues of social justice? Reflect on a recent case in which people from different backgrounds (in terms of race, gender, class, religion, educational background, or other variables) responded very differently to the same incident. In what ways did religious or ethical commitments inform their responses and any action they took? Also, how would you describe your own social location?

c) Take the interfaith literacy quiz on the Interfaith Youth Core website. How did you do? Reflect on this in your journal as well.

5) Read the introduction to the *Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Religion and Social Justice* (hereafter referred to as Wiley-Blackwell) as well as the introductions to each of the four parts and begin the readings for Unit 2.

Unit 2

Discussion Forum: Statistics: Who are We? Take a look at the statistics related to religious diversity in the U.S. at <http://religions.pewforum.org/reports>. Are there any statistics that surprise you? Which are most interesting to you and why? Similarly, what about the statistics in the intro to Wiley-Blackwell? Which do you find most interesting and why?

Readings: When you read for this course, always think about when and where the text was composed, what it actually says (and doesn’t say), who is speaking, and who is being addressed.

- 1) Abraham Lincoln’s “Second Inaugural Address” (easily found on-line) –If you ever have trouble finding unabridged texts on-line, e-mail me ASAP, but classics such as this are widely available.
- 2) Martin Luther King’s “Letter from the Birmingham Jail” (available on-line)
- 3) Skim David Walker’s *Appeal* (available on-line at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/walker/walker.html>)
- 4) chapter six from Robert Dabney’s “The Defense of Virginia” (posted on Blackboard)
- 5) the League of the South website: <http://dixienet.org/>
- 6) “The U.S. Civil War as a Theological War: Confederate Christian Nationalism and the League of the South.” Available at http://www.theocracywatch.org/civil_war_canadian_review.htm
- 7) Vincent Harding’s “Out of the Cauldron of Struggle: Black Religion and the Search for a New America.” *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. Vol. LXI, No. 3, fall 1978. Pages 339-354. (Harding worked alongside Martin Luther King in the civil rights movement. The book, *America Will Be!*, listed in the bibliography is a great resource if you wish to read more by him and his conversation partner, Daisaku Ikeda. This book itself is a great example of interfaith dialogue.)
- 8) Chapter 34, “Religion, Civil Rights, and Social Justice” in Wiley-Blackwell.

Possibilities for Journal Reflection for Unit 2:

Lincoln says that all those involved in the war “read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other.” Can you think of other examples in which this is true? Why do you think this is possible? What variables besides religion influence perspectives (race, class, gender, language, education . . .)?

Thomas Merton once said that the civil rights movement was the greatest example of Christian faith in action in the social history of the United States (Marsh, 2). Our second reading, Martin Luther King’s “Letter from the Birmingham Jail” comes from this movement. As you read, think about when and where and to whom he is writing. The letter poignantly illustrates the fact that religions are not monolithic—that is, not all adherents practice a particular faith in the exact same way or hold the same positions with regard to an issue. Reflect on King’s two great disappointments.

How does David Walker articulate certain inconsistencies or hypocrisies on the part of those who call themselves Christians?

In what ways is religion invoked to justify slavery in the “Defence of Virginia.” In what ways do sites such as that for the League of the South still promote discrimination, bigotry, and prejudice? Do you know of other examples?

What do you think about Vincent Harding’s discussion of America as a work still in progress? In what ways do you resonate with Langston Hughes’ poem?

Unit 3

1) Read Chapter 3, “Christianity: Historical Expressions” and Chapter 4, “Christianity: Contemporary Expressions” in Wiley-Blackwell.

2) Start reading DeYoung’s *Living Faith* (the introduction and the material on Bonhoeffer, chapters 1-4). This text was chosen because it includes individuals from diverse religious traditions, different countries, periods of time, and a woman as well as men. Keep this in mind as you read.

Journal: One thing we will see is that self-awareness and self-consciousness of one’s own social context and commitments must be acknowledged. Some of the most effective writers and activists are those who situate themselves—those who tell us who they are and self-consciously acknowledge their own social location and their ethical and religious commitments. In what ways does DeYoung do this in the introduction to the book? Is there anything you would add or change in describing your own social location as you did in unit one?

Discussion Forum: see assignment from your instructor

Unit 4

- 1) Read material on Malcolm X in DeYoung's *Living Faith* (chapters 5-6).
- 2) Read Chapter 9, "Islam: Historical Expressions" and Chapter 10, "Islam: Contemporary Expressions" in Wiley-Blackwell.
- 3) Chapter 15, "The Muhammadiyah: A Muslim Modernist Organization in Contemporary Indonesia" and Chapter 21, "Zakat: Faith and Giving in Muslim Contexts" in Wiley-Blackwell.

(As you read, think about the diversity within Islam and the ways in which the history, society, and culture of a particular place and time influence the ways in which Muslims participate in struggles for social justice.)

Journal for Unit 4: Could MLK have succeeded without the threat that some perceived as coming from Malcolm X? (James L. Cone reflects on this in *Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or a Nightmare*.)

Discussion Forum: see separate assignment from your instructor

Unit 5

- 1) Read Chapters 1, "Buddhism: Historical Expressions" and Chapter 2, "Buddhism: Contemporary Expressions" in Wiley-Blackwell.
- 2) Finish DeYoung's *Living Faith* (the material on Aung San Suu Kyi in chapters 7 and 8 and the concluding chapter 9 and the epilogue).
- 3) Do Journal/Discussion Forum. See assignment from your instructor. For units 5-14, you will be asked to do only one combined journal/discussion forum response.

Unit 6

- 1) Read Chapter 31, "Colonialism" in Wiley-Blackwell.
- 2) Read Chapter 29, "Ojibwe Culture" in Wiley-Blackwell.
- 3) Do Journal/Discussion Forum: Reflect on the quotation from Vine DeLoria's *God is Red* or one of the other questions in the assignment from your instructor.

DUE: Website Analysis or Current Events Log

Unit 7

- 1) Read Chapter 25: "Central America: A God for the Poor—Folk Catholicism and Social Justice Among the Yucatec Maya" in Wiley-Blackwell
- 2) Read Chapter 32, "Abundant Life or Abundant Poverty? The Challenge for African Christianity" in Wiley-Blackwell.
Read Chapter 35, "Human Rights: The South African Experience" in Wiley-Blackwell.
- 3) Watch "Long Night's Journey Into Day" at www.hulu.com/watch/337499
- 4) Do Journal/Discussion Forum.

Unit 8

- 1) Read Chapter 5, “Confucianism: Historical Expressions” and Chapter 6, “Confucianism: Contemporary Expressions” in Wiley-Blackwell.
- 2) Do Journal/Discussion Forum.

DUE: a brief description of what topic your Final Project (case study or lesson plans/syllabus) will deal with – E-mail this to the instructor.

Unit 9

- 1) Read Chapter 7, “Hinduism: Historical Expressions” and Chapter 8, “Hinduism: Contemporary Expressions” in Wiley-Blackwell.
- 2) Do Journal.
- 3) Participate in Discussion Forum.

DUE: Book Review (to post on Blackboard and on amazon.com)

Unit 10

- 1) Read Chapter 11, “Judaism: Historical Expressions,” Chapter 12, “Judaism: Contemporary Expressions,” and Chapter 19, “*G’meelut Chasadim* (Deeds of Kindness)” in Wiley-Blackwell.
- 2) Do Journal.
- 3) Participate in Discussion Forum.

DUE: Interview or Reflection on Activity/Event

Unit 11

- 1) Read Chapter 20, “Hospitality” in Wiley-Blackwell
- 2) Read Chapter 22, “Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue” in Wiley-Blackwell
- 3) Read Chapter 37, “Gender and Sexuality in the Context of Religion and Social Justice” in Wiley-Blackwell.
- 4) Read Chapter 40, “Religion’s Influence on Social Justice Practices Relating to Those with Disabilities” in Wiley-Blackwell.
- 5) Do Journal: Reflect on opportunities for ecumenical and interreligious dialogue (including dialogue with the non-religious) and joint action in your own community.

Over the next four units, we will engage in a case study of a particular issue by watching four videos that deal with one particular issue—gay rights—and the ways in which it is framed in terms of religious discourse. Although these videos focus on Christian discourse, they provide a sampling of perspectives from different subgroups. The kinds of diverse perspectives reflected provide an example of the kind of diversity you should strive for in developing your own case study or lesson plans/syllabus for your Final Project.

5) Watch: “The New Holy War” (filmed in Colorado Springs): <http://billmoyers.com/series/the-new-holy-war/> (Click on the second picture that has an orange arrow on the left.) In 1993, Bill Moyers came to town and interviewed various people regarding Amendment 2. This program provides invaluable context and background regarding issues related to gay rights and shows the wide-ranging responses to these issues on the part of Christians in the U.S.

6) Participate in Discussion Forum.

Unit 12

- 1) Read Chapter 36, “The ‘Double-Conscious’ Nature of American Evangelicalism’s Struggle over Civil Rights During the Progressive Era” in Wiley-Blackwell.
- 2) Watch: “The New Black.”
- 3) Do Journal/Discussion Forum: In Units 1-11, you have been writing lengthy journal reflection and discussion forum responses. Since you are going to synthesize four films and the reading material assigned in units 11-14 in unit 14, just write a short summary/reaction to the chapter of reading assigned for unit 12. I don't expect it to be as long as for previous units since the assigned reading is much shorter. Then, just keep good notes regarding "The New Black" for the longer, synthesis assignment asked for in unit 14.

Unit 13

- 1) Read Chapter 33, “AIDS, Religion, and the Politics of Social Justice in Sub-Saharan Africa” in Wiley-Blackwell
- 2) Watch: “God Loves Uganda.”
- 3) Do Journal/Discussion Forum: Write a short response to Chapter 33 and keep good notes regarding the film for your unit 14 journal/discussion forum.

Unit 14

- 1) Read Pope Francis’s comments about gay people at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/speeches/2013/september/documents/papa-francesco_20130921_intervista-spadaro_en.html.
- 2) Watch: The Human Rights Campaign video on Latinos and gay rights (if available)
- 3) Journal/Discussion Forum: Discuss your thoughts and reflections after seeing the Bill Moyers special filmed in Colorado Springs, “God Loves Uganda,” “The New Black,” the

Human Rights Campaign's video on Latinos and gay rights (if available), and Pope Francis's comments.

Unit 15

2) Journal/Discussion Forum: See if you can put major figures we have studied in chronological order (your instructor will post a list), matching them with the dates of their life and birth. If you could have a dinner party, which three figures would you most like to invite? What is one crucial question you would ask each person?

THERE WILL BE NO FINAL EXAM PER SE, but the following will be due in order to complete the course:

- 1) Case Study or Syllabus/Lesson Plans**
- 2) Final Reflection**

More Info regarding Journals:

Each journal entry should be 2-3 pages (typed, double-spaced). Journals are an opportunity to reflect and relate the readings, discussions, and videos to your own life and experiences. Be sure to briefly summarize the main points of the readings (citing specific examples or giving short quotes with page numbers), but also go on to reflect on the issues and what resonates with your own experience and that of family or friends, what you have read in another class, in the news, or elsewhere. Discuss what brings new insights or what surprises or disturbs you. You may also wish to reflect on how the reading forces you to re-evaluate an issue and your stance with regard to it. Most importantly, reflect on the diversity of the perspectives you are exposed to and the ways in which religious discourse or practices serve to hinder or help struggles for social justice.

More Info regarding Final Reflection:

These are some of the questions you may wish to address in your final reflection (Be sure to give specific examples from readings or other course material or research you have done that inform your perspective.):

First, how would you define "religion," "religious discourse," and "social justice"? Have your definitions of these terms changed over the course of the semester? 2) What insights have you gained from learning about a specific struggle for social justice? (Note: It is better to reflect deeply and concretely on at least one example rather than to cite generalities. Citing specific examples from the readings or course materials is necessary in order to earn full credit.) 3) Have you gained any new insights into the ways dominant discourses (such as white, Eurocentric ones) have shaped your own perspectives? 4) Have you gained insight into why others may feel differently than you do regarding a particular social issue? 5) In what concrete ways have the readings and other assignments in this course affected the ways in which you may choose to ally with a

variety of others in working for social justice? 6) Who would those “others” be? 7) What are possible sources of common ground? 8) What might be difficult about working together? 9) Have you learned about new resources or new strategies which might be helpful as you engage social issues or seek to educate others about them?

Netiquette Guidelines (developed by Professor Abby Ferber, SOC/WEST)

1) Make your posts count.

- Be original. Don't just restate what other posts have written.
- Don't just repeat points from the readings.
- Pose questions that encourage thinking and dialogue, rather than questions that can be answered by simply looking at the reading.
- Post your discussion comments on time to allow your classmates to reply in a timely manner, so no one falls behind.
- Define uncommon words you use. Sometimes people try to make their posts sound overly intelligent or the post is padded with a lot of extra words to describe something simple which results in a lot of frustrated readers.
- Make sure you are using the class glossary so that we are all working with a common understanding of terms that may be confusing.

2) Practice respect.

- Debate keeps things interesting, but you must also be respectful. We all have our own opinions but the way we express them should be with respect towards others opinions.
- Don't hold grudges, and try to assume the best of each other. Always keep in mind that we are all on different points of our learning journey.
- Don't insult or belittle someone's opinion.
- Be real but not rude, forceful or arrogant.
- Don't use sarcasm to try to make your point. Some people might take it the wrong way.

3) Be clear and professional.

- Provide page numbers when referring to specific passages in texts.
- Provide links if possible when discussing current events or something interesting found on the web, and of course, never plagiarize.
- No online lingo or shorthand
- Use spell check.
- Avoid run-on sentences. Proofread and try to make sense of your post prior to submission.
- Avoid smiley faces. Don't use all capitals. That may be interpreted as yelling.

4) Be a good teammate.

- Encourage the shy, non-talkative people to post and comment more. Try to provide encouraging remarks. We want everyone to be the best they can be. There is a lot of hidden potential that needs to be revealed.
- Help your fellow classmates. If you see someone is lacking understanding in the class please offer guidance. We are all here to learn together.

(revised version of guidelines created by Sophie Staetzel, WEST)

Suggested Reading (for book reviews) (This list is in no way exhaustive. Students may choose another book or another edition of a book, but these suggestions comprise selections which reflect classics in the field as well as the voices of contemporary thinkers who come from a variety of perspectives.):

- Armstrong, Karen. *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*. New York: Anchor Books, 2011.
- Austin, Michael J. *Social Justice and Social Work: Rediscovering a Core Value of the Profession*. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2014.
- Cone, James H. *God of the Oppressed*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997.
- Day, Dorothy. *Loaves and Fishes: The Inspiring Story of the Catholic Worker Movement*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997.
- Dear, John, ed. *Mohandas Gandhi: Essential Writings*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002.
- De La Torre, Miguel A., ed. *Latina/o Social Ethics: Moving Beyond Eurocentric Moral Thinking (New Perspectives in Latina/O Religion)* Waco, TX: Baylor, 2010.
- Deloria, Vine. *For This Land: Writings on Religion in America*. Edited by James Treat. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Dorff, Elliott N. *The Way into Tikkun Olam: Repairing the World*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2005.
- Eck, Diana L. *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*. New York: Harper Collins, 2002.
- Elshtain, Jean Bethke. *The Jane Addams Reader*. New York: Basic Books, 2002.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Future of an Illusion*. Seattle: Pacific Publishing Studio, 2010.
- Haddad, Yvonne Hazbeck., Jane I. Smith, and John L. Esposito. *Religion and Immigration: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Experiences in the United States*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira, 2003.
- Han, Thich Nhat. *For a Future to Be Possible: Buddhist Ethics for Everyday Life*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2007.
- Harding, Vincent and Daisaku Ikeda. *America Will Be!: Conversations on Hope, Freedom, and Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Dialogue Path, 2013.
- Harris, Sam. *Letter to a Christian Nation*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006.
- Jacobs, Jill. *There Shall Be No Needy: Pursuing Social Justice through Jewish Law and Tradition*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2009.
- Kamrava, Mehran. *The New Voices of Islam: Reforming Politics and Modernity*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2009.
- Kahf, Mohja. *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*. New York: Carroll & Graf, 2006.
- Kivel, Paul. *Living in the Shadow of the Cross: Understanding and Resisting the Power and Privilege of Christian Hegemony*. New Society Publishers, 2013.

- Lean, Nathan. *The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims*. London: Pluto Press, 2012.
- Marsh, Charles. *The Beloved Community: How Faith Shapes Social Justice from the Civil Rights Movement to Today*. New York: Basic Books, 2005.
- Marty, Martin. *Pilgrims in their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America*. Boston: Little Brown, 1984.
- Memmi, Albert. *The Colonizer and Colonized*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.
- Niebuhr, Reinhold. *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013.
- Patel, Eboo. *Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2007.
- _____. *Sacred Ground: Pluralism, Prejudice, and the Promise of America*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2012.
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Possible issues for case studies (Again, these are by no means exhaustive, and course participants are free to choose another issue.):

access to education

access to health care
AIDS
civil rights
bioethical issues: abortion or euthanasia
death penalty
the environment
gay rights
immigration
indigenous rights
Islamophobia
women's rights
women's suffrage
economic justice—freedom from poverty
peace
rights for those who are physically challenged
rights for those who are mentally challenged
struggles for democracy