

**THEO 116201**  
**The Religious Quest: Comparative Perspectives II**  
**Summer Session II, 2014, 3 Credits**  
**Tuesday and Thursday, 6-9:15**

**Instructor:** Jillian Maxey  
**Office:** Stokes N420  
**Telephone:** 610-507-1129

**Email:** jillianmaxey@gmail.com  
**Office Hours:** By appointment  
**Room:** Stokes Hall 115N



### **Boston College Mission Statement**

Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation's finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters God in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

## **Course Description**

This is the second session of a two-part course exploring the individual and communal search for wisdom about human nature, the world, ultimate realities and God, and secrets of love and death, as well as enduring values to live by and paths to spiritual maturity. Although each section is different, likely themes include symbols, myths, doctrines, rituals, holy texts, saints, comparisons and contrasts between traditions, relevance of classical religious traditions to issues in today's world, interreligious dialogue today, and religious diversity in the Boston area. Each section brings the Biblical and Christian tradition into conversation with at least one other religious tradition.

The classroom is a place for learning, conversation, challenge and community. In addition to lectures, we will spend a significant amount of time in discussion and small groups.

This course is an exercise in interreligious learning and conversation. Students are encouraged to draw upon their own experiences and to suggest particular topics that interest them.

Boston College students must obtain departmental permission before registering for this course.

## **Course Objectives**

1. The course aims to make you familiar with contemporary interreligious dialogue through a series of first-person narratives, as well through historical and theological background to these specific lived examples. We will use contemporary resources, including but not limited to news articles, case studies and demographic data.
2. The student will engage in critical self-reflection about his/her own cultural and religious background and develop competencies related to articulating his/her own background and identity through short reflections on the reading and longer essays and class presentations.
3. The student will demonstrate knowledge of how globalization affects religious identity across cultural settings and will learn the impact of culture, gender, and age in interreligious dialogue as demonstrated by the course readings and assignments.
4. The student will demonstrate ethical awareness of the impact of global communication and an interconnected global economy through the course readings and a special project researching and profiling a particular interfaith social service agency or initiative.

## **Grading**

Reading Reflections: 20%

Identity Essay: 20%

Interfaith Organization Project: 20%

Class Participation: 20%

Final Exam: 20%

The class participation grade is derived from two factors: 1) the degree to which a student has prepared for and remained active in class, and 2) contributed to group discussion. A student will receive an A for this grade if s/he contributes to small/large group discussion, asks questions in class, and is consistently prepared for the day's readings. A student will receive a low B or C for participation if the professor cannot identify ways in which the student contributed to the classroom discussion. Please do not sleep in class, use your phone, or use your laptop for non-class related activity. This doesn't go unnoticed, it is a distraction and it will negatively impact class participation grades. The professor can modify laptop practices and privileges if this guideline is not met.

### *Summer Grading System*

The undergraduate grading system consists of twelve categories: A (4.00), A- (3.67), excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67), good; C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67), satisfactory; D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67), passing but unsatisfactory; F (.00), failure; I (.00), incomplete; F (.00), course dropped without notifying office; W (.00), official withdrawal from course. The graduate grading system is A (4.00), A- (3.67), Excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), good; B- (2.67), C (2.00), passing but not for degree credit; F (.00), failure.

**Grade Reports.** All students are required to log into the web through Agora to access their summer grades. Students must utilize their BC username and password to log on. If your username or password is not known, the HELP Desk located in the Campus Technology Resource Center (CTRC) in O'Neill Library will issue a new one. The CTRC requires a valid picture ID (a BC ID, driver's license or passport) to obtain your password.

### **Text(s)/Readings (Required)**

1. Eboo Patel, *Acts of Faith*

Beacon Press (July 27, 2010)

ISBN-13: 978-0807006221

2. Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference*

Bloomsbury Academic; 2 edition (March 24, 2003)

ISBN-13: 978-0826468505

3. Jennifer Howe Peace, Or Rose, Gregory Mobley, *My Neighbor's Faith*

Orbis Books; First Edition (US) First Printing edition (March 20, 2012)

ISBN-13: 978-1570759581

The syllabus also include supplementary essays and recommended resources. These will be made available through the library or through a shared folder for this course on Google Drive.

### **Important Policies**

<http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html>

### Written Work

Graduate and undergraduate students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough, yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately, using APA, MLA, CLA format per instructors decision. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. You are encouraged to make use of campus resources for refining writing skills as needed [<http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html>].

### Scholarship and Academic Integrity

It is expected that students will produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to reference properly is plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not necessarily limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on examinations or assignments, and submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may also involve, but is not necessarily limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student's work.

### Request for Accommodations

If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Dr. Kathy Duggan ([dugganka@bc.edu](mailto:dugganka@bc.edu)), Associate Director, Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities or AHD) or Dean Paulette Durrett, ([paulette.durrett@bc.edu](mailto:paulette.durrett@bc.edu)), Assistant Dean for students with disabilities, (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations. <http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html>.

### Attendance

**Class attendance is required for this course.** Class attendance is an important component of learning. Students are expected to attend all classes and to arrive by the beginning of and remain for the entire class period. When an occasion occurs that prevents a student from attending class, it is the student's obligation to inform the instructor of the conflict before the class meets. The student is still expected to meet all assignment deadlines. If a student knows that he or she will be absent on a particular day, the student is responsible for seeing the instructor beforehand to obtain the assignments for that day. If a student misses a class, he or she is responsible for making up the work by obtaining a classmate's notes and handouts and turning in any assignments due. Furthermore, many instructors give points for participation in class. If you miss class, you cannot make up participation points associated with that class. Types of absences that are not typically excused include weddings, showers, vacations, birthday parties, graduations, etc. Additional assignments, penalties and correctives are at the discretion of the instructor. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. In all cases, students are expected to accept the decision of the instructor regarding attendance policies specific to the class.

Consistent with our commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. It is the responsibility of students to review course syllabi as soon as they are distributed and to consult the faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. If asked, the student should provide accurate information about the obligations entailed in the observance of that particular holiday. However, it is the responsibility of the student to complete any and all class requirements for days that are missed due to conflicts due to religious holidays.

There may be circumstances that necessitate a departure from this policy. Feel free to contact the Summer Session Office at 617-552-3800 for consultation.

### Deadlines

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the specified dates. Late papers will be penalized a half letter grade per day.

Extensions on assignments are rarely granted, but in instances where they are, requests must be made in advance of the due date in writing (via email) and a specific date for submission must be suggested and agreed upon by the professor.

### **Course Assignments** (readings, exercises and/or experiences)

To earn the credit hours associated with this course, it is expected that you will spend a minimum of 2 hours per week for every hour of instructional time. Our class meets for 6.5 hours of class time each week, so it is expected that 10-15 hours per week of your study time will be spent on out of class assignments and exercises. These are listed below. Please note that some weeks will require more time and some weeks less time but the average is approximately 13 hours per week over the semester.

Course readings, assignments and due dates are listed below.

You will also be given guidelines for the reading responses, a guide to using Google Drive and a citation guide for the longer written assignments during the first class.

[This syllabus is subject to change. The most up-to-date version will always be available on Google DRIVE.]

### 1. Tuesday June 24: Syllabus and Introduction

Reading:

Hill, Knitter and Madges, "Why Bother About Religion?" in *Faith Religion and Theology: An Contemporary Introduction*, p. 121-151. (Google DRIVE)

## UNIT I: Personal Religious Narratives

### 2. Thursday June 26

Reading:

Eboo Patel, *Acts of Faith (AofF)*, Introduction and Chapter 1, p. xi-18  
*My Neighbor's Faith (MNF)*, Part I, Jennifer Howe Peace and 1 of your choice

Reading Response 1: 1-2 pp. reading response (hard copy due in class)

### 3. Tuesday July 1

*AofF*, Chapter 2-3, p. 19-58  
*MNF*, Part II, Judith Plaskow and 2 of your choice

Reading response 2: 1-2 pp. reading response (emailed to Prof. Maxey by 9pm Tuesday July 1)

### 4. Thursday July 3: No class

*AofF*, Chapters 4-5, p. 59-100  
*MNF*, Part III, Paul Knitter and 1 of your choice

Reading response 3: 1-2 pp. reading response (emailed to Prof. Maxey by 9pm Thursday July 3)

Since we will not be meeting for class time, this time should be used over the course of the semester to schedule a visit to an interfaith social service agency.

### 5. Tuesday July 8

*AofF*, Chapters 6-7, P. 101-150  
*MNF*, Part IV, Abdullah Antepli, Mary Boys and Anantanand Rambachan

Reading Response 4: 1-2 pp. reading response (hard copy due in class)

## 6. Thursday July 10

*AofF*, Chapters Ch. 8, Conclusion, and Afterword, p. 151-188  
*MNF*, Part V, 1 of your choice (except Makransky)

Reading Response 5: 1-2 pp. reading response (hard copy due in class)

**\*\*Monday July 14 at noon: Personal Narrative Essay due via email\*\***

## UNIT II: The Personal and the Global

### 7. Tuesday July 15

*Dignity of Difference (DofD)*, Preface and Ch. 1  
*MNF*., Part V, Makransky

Reading response 6: 1-2 pp. reading response (hard copy due in class)

### 8. Thursday July 17

*DofD*, Chapters 2 and 3  
*MNF*: Part VI, Or N Rose and 2 of your choice

Reading response 7: 1-2 pp. reading response (hard copy due in class)

### 9. Tuesday July 22

*DofD*, Chapters 4 and 5

Reading response 8: 1-2 pp. reading response (hard copy due in class)

**Due in class: Interfaith Social Service Agency/Non-Profit Project**

### 10. Thursday July 24

*DofD*: Chapter 7 and 10  
*MNF*, Part VII, p. 48-end

Reading response 9: 1-2 pp. reading response (hard copy due in class)

**11. Tuesday July 29**

*DofD*, Chapter 11  
Final Exam Review

Reading response 10: 1-2 pp. reading response (hard copy due in class)

Assignment: bring a list of questions in preparation for the final exam

**12. Thursday July 31: Final Exam**

*Thank you for a great semester. Enjoy the rest of you summer.*