

IPI5/710 (3) Encountering the Other, Spring 2020

Instructor: Rabbi Dr. Laura Duhan Kaplan

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Office hours during term: T, W, Th 1:00-5:00 pm & by appointment

Purpose:

This course encourages students to identify issues in inter-faith communication, become aware of personal barriers, and develop skills for working with them. Students will be introduced to (1) critical concepts about the politics of identity and cultural complexes; (2) philosophical discussion of inner stances towards welcoming the other; and (3) practical techniques for listening and shared change. Discussions will emphasize Canadian cultural milieus, and faith-based contexts.

Competence Objectives:

Drawn from the IIS program:

- Articulate theoretical perspectives on the social dynamics of identity and prejudice
- Demonstrate personal awareness of these dynamics
- Articulate and demonstrate practices and strategies for respectful communication
- Articulate tensions and respectful approaches around inter-cultural issues such as collision, appropriation, and assimilation
- Develop the ability to strategize and plan in the areas of conflict resolution and inter-religious and cross-cultural communication and education approaches

Format: The course meets:

In the classroom and via Zoom:

Th Jan 30, 6:00-9:00 pm

Th Feb 13, 6:00-9:00 pm

Th Mar 12, 6:00-9:00 pm

Th Mar 26, 6:00-9:00 pm

Th Apr 2, 6:00-9:00 pm

At VST's on-site intensive:

Th Feb 27, 6:00-9:00 pm

Fri Feb 28, 9:00 am-5:30 pm

Sat Feb 29, 9:00 am-5:30 pm

Classroom activities will include lecture, discussion, reflective writing, small and large group-activities. The intensive weekend will also include group presentations by students and a field trip.

Identification of Levels at Which Course Can Be Taken: Audit, Certificate, Basic and Advanced.

Required Reading:

Please note: scheduling of topics may change slightly; you will be notified!

Classes before the On-site intensive: Introduction to Social Dynamics and Tools of Encounter

Available on Canvas:

Bohm, David. "On Dialogue," and "Participatory Thought and the Unlimited" in *On Dialogue* (New York: Routledge), 2004. [Available on Canvas]

DiAngelo, Robin. "The Challenges of Talking to White People about Race" and "Racism and White Supremacy" in *White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism* (Boston: Beacon Press), 2018. [Available on Canvas]

Available at the Library or via Amazon:

Rosenberg, Marshall B. *Practical Spirituality: Reflections on the Spiritual Basis of Nonviolent Communication* (Encinitas, CA: PuddleDancer Press), 2005.

Classes during the On-site intensive: Philosophy of the Other, Field Trip

Available on Canvas:

For Laura's philosophical introduction:

Levinas, Emmanuel. "The Name of a Dog or Natural Rights" in *Difficult Freedom*, trans. Sean Hand. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.

For student presentations: Please read your assigned chapter in advance; groups will prepare in class.

Abram, David. "Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the Participatory Nature of Perception" in *The Spell of the Sensuous* (New York: Vintage Books), 1997.

Buber, Martin. "I and Thou" (excerpt) in *The Martin Buber Reader*, ed. Asher D. Biemann (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 2002.

De Beauvoir, Simone. "Introduction," in *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage Books), 1989/1952

Duhan Kaplan, "Escape from Solipsism" in *Family Pictures: A Philosopher Explores the Familiar* (Chicago: Open Court) 1998.

Classes after the On-site intensive: Inter-Religious Issues

Available at the Library or via Amazon:

Mackenzie, Falcon, Rahman, *Religion Gone Astray: What We Found at the Heart of Interfaith* (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths), 2009.

Available after Feb 5 book launch, in modes TBA:

Aldred, Ray and Duhan-Kaplan, Laura, eds. *Spirit of Reconciliation* (Toronto: Canadian Race Relations Foundation), 2020.

Available via Canvas:

Excerpts from Duhan-Kaplan, Laura and Harry O. Maier, eds., *Encountering the Other: Christian and Multi-faith Perspectives* (Pickwick Publications), 2020.

Assignments:

For all students:

- Attendance meeting VST policies
- Attentive class participation

Additional for all students in certificate or degree programs:

- Thoughtful preparation of assigned reading
- **Three 500-word reflection papers**, due after each course unit (before intensive, intensive, after intensive), specific dates and topics TBA
- **One in-class group presentation**, guidelines below

Additional for Basic-level students (MATS, M.Div, MAPPL, MAIIS):

- **A 3000-word final paper** on a topic of the student's choice, demonstrating course competencies, and involving research (5 sources) beyond the assigned course readings.

Additional for Advanced-level students (Th.M.):

- **A 4000-word final paper** on a topic of the student's choice, demonstrating course competencies, and involving significant research (10 sources) beyond the course readings.

Guidelines for in-class group presentation:

Presentations will take place Friday February 28, in class during the on-site intensive weekend. Each presentation will be 20-30 minutes long, followed by 15 minutes of questions from the class to the presenters about their process and choices.

Preparation:

- Pre-read your assigned article carefully and thoughtfully.
- Meet as a group over email, zoom, or in person
- Be prepared to present on Friday February 28

Content of Presentation should include:

- Summary of the article's main ideas
- Something you experience and understand differently in light of the article
- A question or critical perspective on the article
- An activity for the class that helps us gain insight into the article's message

Process:

- Everyone in the group must participate in preparation and presentation.
- During the brainstorm phase: Try to value and respond to all interpretations & suggestions.
- During the decision-making phase: Use the assignment guidelines to make final decisions.
- During all phases: Be mindful of your responses to your co-presenters.

Course prerequisites: None