



School of Humanities and Social Sciences
A Common Word: Interfaith Dialogue, Encounter, and Engagement
May 17-25, 2022

Course Code	HUM 2306/3309	Credit	3 semester hours
Textbook (or materials)	<p><i>A Common Word Between Us and You</i> (PDF). <i>Acommonword.com</i>. The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, January 2009. https://www.acommonword.com/downloads/CW-Booklet-Final-v6_8-1-09.pdf</p> <p>Volf, Miroslav, et al. <i>A Common Word: Muslims and Christians on Loving God and Neighbor</i>. William B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2010.</p> <p>Cornille, Catherine. "Conditions for Interreligious Dialogue." <i>The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue</i>, John Wiley & Sons, 2013, pp. 20-33.</p> <p>Knitter, Paul F. "Inter-Religious Dialogue and Social Action." <i>The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue</i>, John Wiley & Sons, 2013, pp. 133-148</p> <p>Avci, Halil. "The Relevance of the Arts in Interreligious Dialogue" https://www.transpositions.co.uk/the-relevance-of-the-arts-in-interreligious-dialogue/</p> <p><i>Of Gods and Men (Des Hommes et Des Dieux)</i>. Directed by Xavier Beauvois, Why Not Productions and France 3 Cinema, 2010.</p>		
Professor	Dr. Brian Seilstad and Rev. Karen Thomas Smith with Dr. Rob Nash and Dr. Nathan Myrick	Contact Details	Building 14, Room 118 Email: ka.smith@aui.ma Phone: Ext 3191

Course Description:

This course is designed to be an engaged learning experience in interfaith dialogue and encounter organized in cooperation with AUI's long-time international partner, Mercer University in Georgia, USA. The first part of the course will focus on classroom learning/training on interfaith dialogue and

encounter for both AUI and Mercer students and study together of the document “A Common Word between Us and You” published by Muslim scholars and intellectuals around the world as a response to a controversial discourse by Pope Benedict XVI. AUI professors and Mercer professors will help students reflect on the document and its implications from different perspectives (theological, sociological, political, spiritual, cultural). The second half of the course will focus on experiencing interfaith engagement together through music, culture and service, and encountering groups and places that embody the living of this “Common Word” (Tijanniya brothers and the Little Sisters of Jesus in the Fes Medina, refugees and migrants in Fes, the AUI mosque and a Fes church, the Trappist Monastery in Midelt, desert musicians in Merzouga) with daily recorded reflections on these experiences and a final creative assignment.

1. Intended learning outcomes

By the end of this course, students will:

- Understand and appreciate foundational tenets and values of both Christianity and Islam
- identify and understand potential sources of conflict and misunderstanding in interfaith and intercultural exchange and how to address these productively
- develop skills in meaningful interfaith dialogue and exchange, including the ability to maintain an atmosphere of respect and safety, the ability to formulate and pose honest but non-threatening questions, the art of expressing your convictions and concerns in ways that can be heard by others,
- Be able to articulate well their understanding of the role and value of music, art, and beauty in creating spaces for interfaith and intercultural exchange,
- Be able to articulate well their understanding of the role and value of contemplative traditions (Benedictine Monasticism, Sufism) in creating fruitful interfaith appreciation
- Be able to articulate well their understanding of the relationship between faith and social action and how interfaith engagement can further shared societal goals
- Be able to interact constructively with peers of different faith and cultural backgrounds and worldviews

2. Teaching Method

This course is taught through a series of lectures, discussions and exercises in the classroom followed by experiential and practical experiences of interfaith dialogue and exchange. The course will promote the action-reflection model of learning, equipping students to process and benefit from interfaith experiences. The students will have daily reflective assignments and will construct a final essay, podcast, or creative project based on the cumulative experience of the course.

3. Assessment

The grade for this course will be based on the following:

Assignment	Percentage of grade	Description
Final creative project	33%	A creative presentation of your response to A Common Word in dialogue with a partner: podcast, film, powerpoint, including a written component summarizing your convictions and questions around A Common Word.
Homework: Short written assignments, Oral journals and recorded partner discussions	33%	Students will be asked to compile some written responses and record reflections or partnership discussions dealing with the issues.
Class participation and quality of engagement in experiential learning	33%	Instructors will record a daily participation grade for all students based on their contributions to the day's formal learning and experiential learning.

4. Course Schedule

Days	1 st session of the day 9:00 am – 1230:pm	Topic	2 nd Session of the day 1:00-4:30	Topic
1 5/17	Introduction to the class, participants, and instructional approach. Introduction to the Common Word Document, historical context, and the need for interfaith dialogue and encounter		Yale's response to ACW HW: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Make a list of questions for the authors of the ACW and the Yale response AND make a bullet point list of what you really resonated with you, what surprised you, what bothered you, and what left you unsatisfied. 2) Read “Conditions for Interreligious Dialogue” by Catherine Cornille (WBC pp. 20-31) and pp. 144-147 of “Interreligious Dialogue and Social Action” by Paul Knitter (ACW). Use their insights in common with what we already came up with in class to bullet point some guidelines for dialogue in your own words. 3) Read the Commentary on the Christian response from Yale (ACW, pp. 56-75). 	

		<p>Recommended reading: “God, the Loving” by Reza Shah Kazemi (ACW, pp. 88-109), “God is Love: Biblical and Theological Reflections on a Foundational Christian Claim” by Miroslav Volf (ACW, pp. 125-142), “The Concept of Loving Neighbor in the Qur’an and Hadith,” by His Excellency Judge Bola Abul Jabbar Ajibola (ACW 119-121), and “Loving Neighbor in Word and Deed: What Jesus Meant” by Martin Accad (ACW, pp. 157-161).</p>
<p>2 5/18</p>	<p>Going deeper: Loving God (using Reza Shah Kazemi and Miroslav Volf’s articles)</p> <p>Due: Your ACW response; Your bullet point guidelines for dialogue</p>	<p>Going deeper: Loving Neighbor (using articles by Ajibola and Accad) *****</p> <p>4:00 Evening visit/hike to Zawia for banquet at the cave with Mercer students, first exchanges</p> <p>HW</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Read “The Relevance of the Arts in Interreligious Dialogue” by Halil Avci https://www.transpositions.co.uk/the-relevance-of-the-arts-in-interreligious-dialogue/ 2) Out of yesterday’s and today’s experiences and all you have learned, what questions would you most like to explore with partners from the US? Make a list of at least 6 questions ; 3) Record a 3-5 minute oral journal focusing on what stands out to you from the day – what insights you have gained, what meant the most to you.

<p>3 5/19</p>	<p>Discovering our dialogue partners, setting guidelines. Presentation by Dr. Rob Nash, professor of World Religions from Mercer. Pair work and large group work. Begin to imagine a “Common Word Resolution” that our class might make.</p> <p>Due: Your list of top questions to explore; your audio journal</p>	<p>Mosque visit</p> <p>Imam Khaoua presentation on the Mosque and daily prayer</p> <p>Lesson on Recitation of the Quran</p> <p>Presentation on the role of beauty and space in constructing a faith worldview with Dr. Rossitsa Varadinova Borkowski</p> <p>5:30 PM Talk on The Ubiquity of Sound by Dr. Nathan Myrick</p> <p>+++++</p> <p>8:00 PM Film showing and discussion: Of Gods and Men</p> <p>HW: Partner journal recording in response to film and/or day’s experiences (15 min. max)</p>
<p>4 5/20</p>	<p>9:00 -10:00 Points of Access: Scripture and spiritual experience Abana/Fatiha discussion (KTS) 10:00-11:00 Gender and Interfaith Dialogue Presentation by Emily Niehoff (Mercer) 11:00-11:30 Adding to our “Common Word” Statement Break 12:00 Tiny intro to Arabic language and why it is Central to Muslim worship</p> <p>Due: Partner journal recording</p>	<p>1:15 Friday prayer at AUI Mosque followed by Couscous lunch in VIP room with Professor Kharroufi and VIPs</p> <p>+++++</p> <p>5:00 PM Transfer to Adghar for sheep shearing followed by dinner 8:00 PM departure to Fes Medina Riyad</p> <p>Partner journal recording on the day’s experiences. 15 minutes maximum.</p>
<p>5 5/21</p>	<p>Free Touring of Fes medina with partner – lunch on your own; tickets pre-paid to Medersa Bouanania; map with suggested stops provided but up to you. Bonus points if you send in pix of yourself in front of all the suggested sites. Lunch on your own.</p> <p>Take selfies of you and your partner exploring the medina and, at the end of the day, record a conversation about the experience.</p>	<p>Evening Visit with the Little Sisters of Jesus and Tijanniya Tariqa friends.</p> <p>Dinner together</p> <p>HW: Partner journal recording on Fes Medina experiences</p>

<p>6 5/22</p>	<p>Christian prayer at Fes church Dialogue around worship experiences After worship lunch with migrants</p> <p>Partner journal recordings on Friday experiences and on Fes Medina due</p>	<p>Return to AUI – optional Quaker-style meeting (Time to wash clothes)</p> <p>HW: Read Knitter, Paul F. “Inter-Religious Dialogue and Social Action.” <i>The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue</i>, John Wiley & Sons, 2013, pp. 133-148</p> <p>Partner journal recording on Christian-Muslim worship comparison</p>
<p>7 5/23</p>	<p>Departure for Midelt at 9:00, A day of dialogue and encounter with Christian monks</p> <p>Partner journal recording on Christian-Muslim worship comparison due</p>	<p>Dialogue and encounter with Christian Monks and Franciscan Sisters (maybe Boutchichiya friends)</p> <p>HW: Partner journal recording on experience with monks and sisters</p>
<p>8 5/24</p>	<p>Departure for desert – stopping for lunch in Erfoud (The Dunes restaurant) Partner journal recording on experience at the Monastery due</p>	<p>Dinner on site – stay in Auberge and ride out on camels in morning or stay on the dunes Desert Musicians</p>
<p>9 5/25</p>	<p>Sunrise camel trip to the dunes Discussion on the spirituality of the desert Final time of exchange and debriefing with Mercer students – sharing of one final common word</p>	<p>Lunch with Sufis? Return to AUI after lunch; Mercer students leave for Ait Benhaddou.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Write your final Open Letter to Muslims and Christians on ACW and compile your final creative project.</p>	