

## **CE650A Topics: Learning in the Presence of the Other<sup>1</sup>**

Term: January 2026 Intensive

Modality: Blended Synchronous + Asynchronous Online

Instructor: Mai-Anh L. Tran, PhD

### **Blended Synchronous meeting dates & times** (as posted on myGETS):

January 12-16, 12:00-5:00PM

In-Person Location: Main 107

Teams link to be provided on Canvas

**Asynchronous assignments** to be completed between Jan. 5-9 and Jan. 20-23.

Canvas course will open on Dec. 29, with instructions for asynchronous work.

**DUE date for all course work: Friday, Jan. 23**

### **Course Description**

What does it mean to be a religious people in a pluralistic yet increasingly polarizing context? How do religious leaders facilitate critical intercultural and interreligious awareness, solidarity, engagement, and co-existence among individuals, communities, and societies? What are foundational principles that would lead to commitments and practices of critical learning “across boundaries of difference and sustained mutual trust even when confronting painful issues”? What is the “power of [religious] education in healing religious division”?

This special topic seminar invites exploration of the above questions (which were framed by religious education scholars Mary Boys and Sara Lee), as we trace the contours of intercultural and interreligious learning from multidisciplinary perspectives. The exploration follows the organizing thesis that “religions must become a catalyst in reducing the world’s conflicts,” bridging divisions across complex and complicated *otherness*, and ushering individuals and communities toward reconciling virtues of “humility, generosity, and wonder” (Niles).

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<sup>1</sup> Upon approval of the CE field faculty, this course may fulfill a CE requirement for the MDiv and MAPM (Educational Leadership).

## Booklist

### Required texts:

1. Boys, Mary C., and Sara S. Lee. *Christians and Jews in Dialogue: Learning in the Presence of the Other*. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2006.
2. Fernandez, Eleazar S., ed. *Teaching for a Multifaith World*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2017.
3. Kujawa-Holbrook, Sheryl A. *God Beyond Borders: Interreligious Learning Among Faith Communities*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014.
4. Niles, Damayanthi. *Doing Theology with Humility, Generosity, and Wonder: A Christian Theology of Pluralism*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2020.
5. Phan, Peter C. *Being Religious Interreligiously: Asian Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004.

Texts from which selected chapters will be assigned for required reading (and made available in PDF on Canvas), along with other essays/articles on Canvas:

6. Berling, Judith A. *Understanding Other Religious Worlds: A Guide for Interreligious Education*. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 2004.  
<http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0410/2003022542.html>.
7. Nguyen, Viet Thanh. *To Save and to Destroy: Writing as an Other*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2025.
8. Patel, Eboo, Jennifer Howe Peace, and Noah Silverman, eds. *Interreligious/Interfaith Studies: Defining a New Field*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2018.
9. Religious Education Association 2013 Conference Proceedings: “Coming Out Religiously: Religion, the Public Sphere, and Religious Identity Formation.”  
<https://religiouseducation.net/papers/proceedings-REA2013.pdf>
10. Religious Education Association 2017 Conference Proceedings: “Learning in Encounter: Crossroads, Connections, Collaborations.”  
<https://religiouseducation.net/papers/proceedings-REA2017.pdf>
11. Selçuk, Mualla. *Teaching Islam within a Diverse Society (Taaruf)*. First edition (English translation). Ankara: Pegem Akademi Yayıncılık, 2020.

### Recommended for additional research (not required):

1. Ammerman, Nancy Tatom. *Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes: Finding Religion in Everyday Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
2. Arbuckle, Gerald A. *Culture, Inculturation, and Theologians: A Postmodern Critique*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010.
3. Cohen, Charles L., and Ronald L. Numbers, eds. *Gods in America: Religious Pluralism in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
4. Matsuoka, Fumitaka. *The Color of Faith: Building Community in a Multiracial Society*. Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1998.

5. Pieterse, Hendrik R., ed. *Locating US Theological Education in a Global Context: Conversations with American Higher Education*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2019.
6. Thompson, Norma H., ed. *Religious Pluralism and Religious Education*. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1988.