

**CANADIAN SCHOOL OF PEACEBUILDING**  
**CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY**

**Peace Resources in Islam and Christianity**

*PCTS/BTS-3950C*  
*SESSION II: JUNE 19 – 23, 2017*

**Course Syllabus for Undergraduate Credit**

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Lecture times: 8:30am-5pm, Monday to Friday  
Last date for voluntary withdrawal without academic penalty: July 15, 2017.

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is a course on inter-religious dialogue. It is taught by two professors: an Iranian Shia Muslim and a Canadian Mennonite Christian, who have collaborated over 10 years in giving expression to their respective faiths in the presence of scholars for the other religion. This course will examine the rich resources that each faith tradition offers on the important topics of peace and justice, focusing on both the practices and the theological resources that undergird these practices. We will discuss the history of how peace and justice are embodied within our respective communities as well as theological convictions like God, sin, redemption, forgiveness, mercy, war, and so on. The course will include more than a presentation of ideas and beliefs. It will also seek to embody and model interfaith dialogue itself and invite class participants into a respectful process of engagement with difference. The course will bring into the class a small cohort of students (approximately 6-8) from the International Institute for Islamic Studies in Qom, Iran, several local Muslim students, and perhaps students from Hutterite communities in Manitoba. Others interested in participating in this course are welcome.

*The course is offered either for training or for 3 hours of academic credit.*

**OBJECTIVES**

This course has four objectives:

1. A primary objective for this course is to respectfully bring together voices in one classroom that represent different religious traditions and perspectives. This difference will be represented by both the professors and the students.

2. The course will explore a Christian and Muslim understanding of peace and justice, both differences and similarities. The hope is that this may deepen the understanding for both.
3. The course will also seek to model the manner in which different religions can engage. Both instructors will bring their experiences of interfaith engagement into this process.
4. The course will explore the philosophy and theory of peace and justice as well as the multiple practices of peacebuilding.

**TEXTBOOK AND OTHER REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED READING**  
**(Student must order these books ahead of time – either on line or from local booksellers)**

Harry J. Huebner and Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen, eds. *Peace and Justice: Essays from the Fourth Shi'i Muslim Mennonite Christian Dialogue*. Winnipeg, MB: CMU Press, 2011. Available at the CMU bookstore, CommonWord. For ordering information go the CommonWord website: <http://www.commonword.ca/Home>

Harry J. Huebner. "Mennonite-Shia Engagement: Proclamation, Friendship, Peacebuilding." *Direction: A Mennonite Brethren Forum* Spring 2016 Vol 45 No.1. pp 47-59. Available as a PDF from author. See email address above.

Mohammad Ali Shomali. *Unity of God and Unity in God*. London: Institute of Islamic Studies, 2017. Available at the CMU bookstore, CommonWord. For ordering information go the CommonWord website: <http://www.commonword.ca/Home>

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES** (for credit)

The following are the general outlines of requirements for those taking the class for credit. Others are encouraged to read as much as possible, however, in order to receive maximum benefit from the course. Assignments can be submitted in person during the course or via email to the instructors. More details will be provided in the class.

ASSIGNMENTS	DUE DATE	VALUE
#1. Book review	June 19, 2017	30%
#2. Major essay	August 17, 2017	70%

**ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES** (for credit)

1. Book Review: Credit students will be asked to write a short book review (1000 words) of the text – *Peace and Justice*. This should be done prior to the start of the course. The review may reflect on either one or a few of the essays or the entire book. It is particularly important that the review comment on the introduction which reflects on what is going on with interfaith dialogue.  
 Length: 1000 words                      Due: Monday, June 19, 2017

2. Major Essay: For the major essay (3000-4000 words) students should select a topic that has emerged out of classroom lectures and discussions, and develop a thesis (argument) about this topic. The topic and essay approach should be discussed with the professors in advance of writing the essay. Students may request a list of potential topics from the professors at the beginning of the course.  
Length: 3000-4000 words                      Due: August 17, 2017

## STYLISTIC REQUIREMENTS

CMU as adopted the following as its standard guide for all academic writing:

Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*. Sixth edition. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012.

The final paper should follow an accepted academic format for citations, bibliography, etc. (e.g. APA, Chicago). You may choose the format but whichever you use, be sure to use it properly and consistently.

## ADDITIONAL NOTES

1. All material referred to in any assignment MUST be appropriately referenced. Plagiarism is a serious matter. Students should be aware of CMU Academic Policies, particularly those regarding academic misconduct (plagiarism and cheating), which apply to all University courses. These are detailed on CMU's website (<http://www.cmu.ca/students.php?s=registrar&p=policies>) and in the CMU Calendar (also available online: <http://www.cmu.ca/academics.php?s=calendar>).
2. Assignments are due as scheduled.
3. I encourage all students to take up any concerns/questions regarding grades, first with the instructor, then with the Associate Dean of Program, Ray Vander Zaag. The CMU Calendar outlines its appeals process clearly.
4. Email: Substantive discussions are best done person to person, not electronically. During the CSOP, participants are encouraged to engage in substantive discussions in person.

## EVALUATION

In general, I expect you to *follow the guidelines* of the assignment and to discuss deviations from them with me before turning it in. In evaluating your work, *quality* is more important than quantity. I appreciate creativity, clear expression of ideas, evidence of engagement with the reading and class sessions, and projects that are of real interest and value to you.

In your papers, be sure to avoid any form of *plagiarism*. If you have doubts about what is appropriate, a useful website is <http://www.indiana.edu/~istd/>. Plagiarism is a serious issue and will result in grade reduction or action by the university (see university policy on this).

Good communication skills are essential for justice and peacebuilding work. Students will be expected to communicate knowledgeably, clearly, effectively, concisely and persuasively. All written work should be well informed, well organized and well documented.

Each completed assignment will be given a numerical grade (according to its value toward the final grade) and the corresponding letter grade. The final mark for each student is determined by the sum total of all numerical grades, which is then assigned a letter grade according to the scale below.

## LETTER GRADE/PERCENTAGE SCALE

Table A. Standard A

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Points	Descriptor
A+	90-100	4.5	Exceptional
A	80-89	4	Excellent
B+	75-79	3.5	Very Good
B	70-74	3	Good
C+	65-69	2.5	Satisfactory
C	60-64	2	Adequate
D	50-59	1	Marginal
F	0-49	0	Failure

<u>Criteria</u>	A - Excellent	B - Competent	C - Below Expectations
<b>CONTENT</b> (quality of the information/ideas and sources/details used to support them)	- has clarity of purpose - has depth of content - displays insight or originality of thought -demonstrates quality and breadth of resources	- has clarity of purpose - has substantial information and sufficient support - contains some originality of thought -uses quality resources	- has clarity of purpose -lacks depth of content and may depend on generalities or the commonplace - has little originality of thought -uses mostly quality resources
<b>STRUCTURE</b> (logical order or sequence of the writing)	- is coherent and logically developed -uses very effective transitions	- is coherent and logically developed -uses smooth transitions	- is coherent and logically (but not fully) developed -has some awkward transitions
<b>CONVENTIONS</b> (appearance of the writing: sentence structure, usage, mechanics, documentation)	- has virtually no errors of conventions	- has minimal errors of conventions	- is understandable <u>but</u> has noticeable problems of sentence structure, usage, mechanics or documentation

<b>STYLE</b> (personality of the writing: word choice, sentence variety, voice, attention to audience)	<b>- is concise, eloquent and rhetorically effective</b> <b>-has nicely varied sentence structure</b> <b>-is engaging throughout and enjoyable to read</b>	<b>- displays concern for careful expression</b> <b>-has some variation in sentence structure</b> <b>-is generally enjoyable to read</b>	<b>- has some personality <u>but</u> lacks imagination and may be stilted and may rely on clichés</b> <b>-has little variation in sentence structure</b> <b>-is not very interesting to read</b>
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**NOTE:** The *CMU Student Handbook* is a useful guide for further information on CMU policies regarding grades, academic misconduct, and appeals. Grades are not final until vetted and approved by the Dean’s Office.

### **FINAL DATE FOR WITHDRAWAL**

Final date to withdraw from this course without academic penalty is July 15, 2017.

If a student is unable to complete the requirements of a course by the end of the semester, the student must submit a written appeal for an “incomplete” to the Registrar’s office: [spenner@cmu.ca](mailto:spenner@cmu.ca). The student should seek the instructor’s support for the appeal and submit the appeal before the last day of classes. If the student’s appeal is granted, the instructor will enter a grade of I (for incomplete) accompanied by a temporary grade (which is based on completed work and assigns a value of zero for uncompleted work). Instructor grades are due by August 21st. If the student completes the remaining work within the extension period, the grade will be recalculated and the incomplete status will be removed. If the student does not complete the work within the extension period, the incomplete status will be removed and the grade will remain as originally entered. The maximum extension is: December 1, for courses ending in August.

## **SCHEDULE AND TOPICS & Readings List- Draft– Subject to change**

Comment on class process: The course will bring together several different parts: content presentations by the instructors on different theological topics, presentations by the instructors and discussions on what interfaith engagement is and modelling helpful ways of doing it, and student involvement in the discussions and in some cases presentations, especially, graduate students. The normal pattern of class will be: instructors will present in the mornings and structured classroom interaction will take place in the afternoons. These discussions may vary in format, sometimes led by students, sometimes with small groups with students from different faith perspectives in dialogue, perhaps occasional panel discussion, and so on. Background readings for classes will be from the texts corresponding to the topics discussed.

### **Monday, June 19, 2017**

Morning – Introductions of students and instructors. Presentation of syllabus. Review of texts. Introduction of course. Etc.

Afternoon – Presentations by instructors focusing on the ongoing Christian – Muslim dialogue and on general learnings along the way. Reflections on what interfaith dialogue is and why it is important. If there is time there will be lectures on peace and justice in general.

### **Tuesday, June 20, 2017**

Morning – First round of presentations by instructors on peace and justice – introducing topics like God, sin, war, mercy, forgiveness, and redemption.

Afternoon – Structured discussion on same topics.

### **Wednesday, June 21, 2017**

Morning – Second round of presentations by instructors on peace and justice – introducing topics like God, sin, war, mercy, forgiveness, and redemption.

Afternoon – Structured discussion on same topic.

### **Thursday, June 22, 2017**

Morning – Interfaith dialogue – what is it, conceptually and practically? Presentations by both professors.

Afternoon – Structured discussion led by a panel of students.

### **Friday, June 23, 2017**

Morning – Summary reflections on outstanding topics.

Afternoon – Student responses.

Note: Coffee Breaks are normally 10:30-11:00 am and 3:30-4 pm.