The University of Oklahoma
College of Continuing Education
Advanced Programs – Course Syllabus

Course Title:
Toward a Global Ethic: A Dialogue with the World’s Religions

Course Number
HR 5113-490

Course Description:
This course is only available online and largely depends on the participation of students with a wide variety of backgrounds located in different parts of the world. To get started, please read or re-read the Syllabus (this entire document). It provides an outline of the course, as well as letting you know what to expect from yourself and others.

This is an unusual course in that it is deliberately designed to take on a life of its own, to grow and develop, as you and I (your instructor/facilitator) jointly explore a series of specific topics and, in that sense, become co-creators of the course. Most of the time, I will remain in the background, allowing you to discuss freely, without superimposing my prejudices (which will be fairly evident if you read my chapter in the book or some of my other writings available on the Web).

Think of our main text book, For All Life: Toward a Universal Declaration of a Global Ethic, as the central section of a large home with many additional empty wings and rooms. After familiarizing yourself with the characteristics of the central section (book chapters), you'll be free to start furnishing the home (and surrounding grounds) with your own contributions including group projects, individual projects, and additional suggested readings, all of which will become part of the course, and some of which may be integrated into future courses. As we discuss the initially assigned readings all of us will not only respond to them but actively search for and suggest additional readings and other materials (such as videos or films) to be shared and discussed. Each chapter will also be listed as a Discussion topic in the Discussion Board. In addition, you may write a personal journal in which you record your private reflections/reactions to the ongoing discussion. These journals are to be submitted to me via the Dropbox, will only be read by me, and can be used as extra credit if it is needed to improve a grade. Finally, part of the discussion may – if you so choose -- take place outside the D2L system, via e-mail, in a private mailing list, or even using Skype with or without video. This aspect of the course is explained fully in the Syllabus.

Formally, the course is a combination of seminar and workshop with a great deal of student interaction. Since most of the class discussion will take place via e-mail and D2L forums, it will be easy to keep a record of every aspect of the course, and everyone's messages will become part of the assigned texts. This also permits participants who have to be absent for extended periods of time to catch up when they return. All course materials will be provided on the web, by file attachments, or in the D2L site. While an overall framework and some specific topics will be suggested at the beginning of the course, I hope that most issues to be discussed and explored will be spontaneously developed by participants. I cannot imagine a more appropriate forum than the Internet for this kind of course.

Course Dates:
January 2- April 30, 2014
Last day to enroll or drop without penalty: December 4, 2013

Site Director:
This is a three-credit hour online course. Please see your local Site Director or e-mail our online site coordinator at aponline@ou.edu
Professor Contact Information:

Course Professor: Ingrid H. Shafer, Ph.D.
Mailing Address: 3470 Shangri La Rd.
Lafayette, CA 94549
Telephone Number: 925-954-1862 (Home)
E-mail Address: ihs@ionet.net or ihs@ou.edu
WEB: http://www.usao.edu/~facshaferi/ (USAO faculty homepage)
http://ecumene.org/ (domain and virtual server)
Virtual Office Hours: Daily. 9:00 pm to midnight.
Professor availability: The professor will be available via e-mail to students during the above listed Virtual Office Hours and other methods by arrangement.

Textbook(s) and Instructional Materials:

Materials posted on the OU Desire to Learn (D2L) system: Access D2L at http://learn.ou.edu; enter your OU NetID (4+4) and password, and select course to access material. Please contact your local Site Director if you require assistance.

OU E-Mail:

All official correspondence from distance learning instructors will be sent only to students’ ou.edu address.

Online Learning Resource Center:

The Online Learning Resource Center of the University of Oklahoma’s College of Arts and Sciences Online Program is here to serve you and assist you with any questions, problems, or concerns you may have. For assistance go to http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/ or contact us by telephone at: (405) 325-5854 or Email: casonline@ou.edu

Course Goals or Overview:

This course introduces students to the issues surrounding the development of a global ethic (including such topics as concern for the environment, social justice, violence, war and peace, religious and ideological extremism, and so forth) in the context of the major world religions, including Baha’i, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, and Taoism. Students will be expected to be active learners and creators of new content by discussing, analyzing, and comparing the work of authors from various faith perspectives all of whom were asked to reflect on existing global ethics proposals. In the process, we will highlight thematic convergences and divergences of those traditions as they intersect with the common theme. The course seeks to address the need for value clarification and assessment of the ethical implications of globalization while providing an opportunity to explore the dialogical dynamic within a broad multi-religious, pluralistic framework with a sharp focus on ethical issues.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will be expected to demonstrate the ability to:

a. Recognize that each of us views and constructs reality through different hermeneutical lenses shaped by our personal experiences, and hence lives within a distinct meaning network at best shared partially by others.
b. Engage in dialogue (not debate!) with other participants who may have very different ideological commitments.
c. Perform conceptual analysis and synthesis of a variety of texts, including some written or submitted as relevant to the course by fellow course participant or students in previous classes.
d. Describe what a Declaration of a Global Ethic is -- and what it is not.
e. Explain how the authors of our text view the Swidler and World Parliament/Kung drafts of a Global Ethic.
f. Explain how both the authors and they themselves view the relationship of religious traditions (positive and negative) to the development of a Global Ethic.
g. Explain the ways in which such notions as “Golden Rule,” “human rights,” “human responsibilities,” “globalization,” ”democracy" are related to a Global Ethic.

h. Collaborate with others to develop a group version of a particular aspect of a Global Ethic. If needed a separate mailing list outside the D2L system will be set up and such developing technologies as blogs or Google docs may be used.

**Course Outline:**

Early versions of several of the book chapters are available in the website of the Dialogue Institute at Temple University. Readings that are available on the web (including those book chapters) are marked with an asterisk and listed below.

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<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>READING</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Write a 300-word essay, telling us about yourself, your interests, course of study, and why you are enrolled in this course. Read and think about the Dialogue Decalogue and the introductory material on the field of Ethics.</td>
<td>Our way of learning/teaching: Leonard Swidler: The Dialogue Decalogue* Ingrid Shafer: What is Ethics? An Overview*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Carefully analyze specific points in the Swidler proposal and respond to the reactions of your fellow students.</td>
<td>Leonard Swidler: Toward a Universal Declaration of a Global Ethic*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Carefully analyze specific points in the two proposals and respond to the reactions of your fellow students.</td>
<td>Parliament of the World's Religions: Declaration Toward a Global Ethic* InterAction Council (UN): Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Carefully analyze specific points in the Nkulu proposal and respond to the reactions of your fellow participants in the dialogue.</td>
<td>Mutombo Nkulu: African Religions*</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Carefully analyze specific points in the two proposals and respond to the reactions of your fellow participants in the dialogue.</td>
<td>Kana Mitra: Hinduism* Moojan Momen: Baha'i</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Carefully analyze specific points in the two proposals and respond to the reactions of your participants in the dialogue.</td>
<td>Chung Ok Lee: Buddhism Brian (Daizen) A. Victoria: Zen Buddhism</td>
</tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Carefully analyze specific points in the two proposals and respond to the reactions of your fellow participants in the dialogue.</td>
<td>Shu-Hsien Liu: Neo-Confucianism Zhao Fu San: Taoism and Confucianism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Carefully analyze specific points in the two proposals and respond to the reactions of your fellow participants in the dialogue.</td>
<td>Michael S. Kogan: Judaism Khalid Duran: Islam*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Carefully analyze specific points in the two proposals and respond to the reactions of your fellow participants in the dialogue.</td>
<td>John Hick: Protestantism* Ingrid Shafer: Catholicism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Carefully analyze specific points in the two proposals and respond to the reactions of your fellow participants in the dialogue.</td>
<td>2 Class Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Carefully analyze specific points in the two proposals and respond to the reactions of your fellow participants in the dialogue.</td>
<td>2 Class Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Carefully analyze specific points in the two proposals/papers and respond to the reactions of your fellow participants in the dialogue.</td>
<td>Class Projects or Individual Papers</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Carefully analyze specific points in the two proposals/papers and respond to the reactions of your fellow participants in the dialogue.</td>
<td>Class Projects or Individual Papers</td>
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### Assignments, Grading, and Due Dates:

Please note that D2L does not contain an e-mail utility that would allow us to contact one another as part of an e-mail list or permit you easily to collaborate on your group projects. Personal mailing lists, Yahoo groups, Google groups, or other such emergent technologies to collaborate can be used. Outside of D2L participants will be able to use any e-mail address (military, personal, OU student).

1. Write a ca. 200-500 word essay in which you introduce yourself to the course community and explain why you are interested in this class, and what you might be able to contribute.

2. Complete all assignments.

3. Take an active part in the class "discussion" via our class forum(s). This means reading all messages on a daily or almost-daily basis, and responding thoughtfully and consistently to several of them. Please, post at least an average of 3 extended messages a week (100-300 words). Make sure you read and comment on all group and individual projects.

4. Locate additional appropriate web-based readings and share them with the rest of the class.

5. Collaborate with others in the class to develop a group version of a particular topic germane to developing a global ethic (i.e., pertaining to gender roles, family, the environment, business, corporate ethics, globalization, the Internet, education, military action, and many more--use your imagination!). Once those participating in your group have been identified, use a private forum (which either you or I will set up) to communicate with one another to get ready for your formal presentation). This project should be shared with the class for discussion starting around the tenth week of the term. It will become a required course reading for all participants. Be sure to develop a bibliography (primarily web-based) of additional material to be used as resources. This project can be a traditional academic paper (use a consistent style throughout -- Chicago, APA, MLA, etc.), a Power Point presentation, a combination thereof, or in some other format you consider appropriate to your topic. Submit the finished project directly in the appropriate (“Group Projects”) discussion area and be prepared to reply to your colleagues’ comments.


7. Complete an essay final (sent out two weeks before the end of the term) and write a course evaluation with special focus on what you consider the most important thing you have learned. Submit your final via the DROPBOX and via email to BOTH of my personal addresses (ihs@ou.edu or ihs@.ionet.net).

8. Complete assignments in a timely manner and/or let me know why you are unable to do so.

**Grading:** This is a letter-graded course: A, B, C, D, or F.

**Notice:** Failure to meet assignment due dates could result in a grade of I (Incomplete) and may adversely impact Tuition Assistance and/or Financial Aid.
Readings and Resources on the web:

- Pre-publication draft of the For Life text: [http://www.usao.edu/~facshaferi/GlobalEthic/ForAllLife.pdf](http://www.usao.edu/~facshaferi/GlobalEthic/ForAllLife.pdf)

Internet Resources

(Important links or bibliographic information -- more may be added as the course develops):

- Religions in Renewal [http://www.usao.edu/~facshaferi/relren/relren4.htm](http://www.usao.edu/~facshaferi/relren/relren4.htm)
- Center for Global [http://www.globalethic.org/](http://www.globalethic.org/)

Please, keep in mind that this course is open-ended and interactive, a work in process. It will take on form as we explore the impact of religious traditions on developing a Global Ethic viewed through the specific lenses of the topics of your choice. Consequently, appropriate further readings and references to relevant current events will be added.

**Policy for Late Work:**

Contact professor before assignment due date to discuss reasons for inability to turn in assignment in a timely manner and any penalties associated with late work

**Attendance Policy:**

In addition to interaction via Desire2Learn and E-mail contact, students are required to contact the instructor via E-mail or telephone before the beginning of the course term for an initial briefing. Although physical class meetings are not part of this course, participation in all interactive, learning activities is required.

Student assignments and student/instructor communications will be conducted via Desire2Learn, although students may contact the instructor via telephone, postal mail, e-mail, or fax as needed
Incomplete Grade Policy:
A grade of “I” is not automatically assigned, but rather must be requested by the student by submitting to the instructor a “Petition for and Work to Remove an Incompleted Grade” form. An “I” can never be used in lieu of an “F” nor can an “I” be assigned because of excessive failure to participate in class activities.

Technical Support Information:
If you experience technical problems, contact Information Technology by visiting their website at: http://webapps.ou.edu/it/ or contacting them by telephone at: (405) 325-HELP (4357).

Procedures for Completion of Course Evaluation:
Upon completion of the course students should go to the Advanced Programs Distance Learning webpage and click on the applicable semester link under “Course Evaluations” which will direct them to the evaluation. The evaluation will take approximately five minutes to complete. Completion of the online evaluation is an important tool allowing Advanced Programs to gain information and student feedback for improvement of courses.

Your responses will be kept confidential. They will be reviewed by the department and only supplied to the professor once grades for the course have been submitted.

Important information you should know about online courses:

- To sign on to Desire2Learn (D2L), log in using your 4+4 and your OU network password (note that this is the same 4+4 and password that you use to access your OU email). Once you are logged in, please look for “My Courses,” locate your course and click on it. Remember to check your course site on D2L every day.

- Students enrolled in online courses may be required to take the CAS student orientation in Desire 2 Learn. To take the orientation, sign-on to D2L and then click on “Self Registration” at the top left corner of the page. Information about and instructions for the orientation can be found at http://casweb.ou.edu/olr/public/students/orientation.htm
POLICIES AND NOTICES

Attendance/Grade Policy

Note: Attendance/absences do not apply to online courses. However, participation in all course activities is extremely important to student success in online courses.

Excused absences are given for professor mandated activities or legally required activities such as emergencies or military assignments. It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Unavoidable personal emergencies, including (but not limited to) serious illness; delays in getting to class because of accidents, etc.; deaths and funerals, and hazardous road conditions will be excused.

If you are obtaining financial assistance (TA, STAP, FA, VA, Scholarship, etc.) to pay all or part of your tuition cost, you must follow your funding agency/institution’s policy regarding “I” (Incomplete) grades unless the timeline is longer than what the University policy allows then you must adhere to the University policy. Students who receive Financial Aid must resolve/complete any “I” (Incomplete) grades by the end of the term or he/she may be placed on “financial aid probation.” If the “I” grade is not resolved/completed by the end of the following term, the student’s Financial Aid may be suspended make the student ineligible for further Financial Aid.

Students are responsible for meeting the guidelines of Tuition Assistance and Veterans Assistance. See the education counselor at your local education center for a complete description of your TA or VA requirements.

Academic Honesty

Honesty is a fundamental precept in all academic activities and … [you] have a special obligation to observe the highest standards of honesty. Academic misconduct in any form is inimical to the purposes and functions of the University and is therefore unacceptable and is rigorously proscribed. Academic misconduct includes:

- cheating (using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise), plagiarism, falsification of records, unauthorized possession of examinations, intimidation, and any and all other actions that may improperly affect the evaluation of a student’s academic performance or achievement;
- assisting others in any such act; or attempting to engage in such acts.

All acts of academic misconduct will be reported and adjudicated as prescribed by the student code of the University of Oklahoma. All students should review the Student’s Guide to Academic Integrity

Accommodation Statement

The University of Oklahoma is committed to making its activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, please contact your local OU Site Director.

Course Policies

Advanced Programs policy is to order books in paperback if available. Courses, dates, and professors are subject to change. Please check with your OU Site Director. Students should retain a copy of any assignments that are mailed to the professor for the course.

Copyright

Any and all course materials, syllabus, lessons, lectures, etc. are the property of professor teaching the course and the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma and are protected under applicable copyright.

For more information about Advanced Programs, visit our website at: http://www.goou.ou.edu/
INSTRUCTOR VITA

Ingrid H. Shafer, Ph.D.

Education

• 1984 Ph.D., Philosophy, University of Oklahoma
• 1975 M.A., Human Relations, University of Oklahoma
• 1967 M.A., German Literature, University of Oklahoma

Current Positions

• Advanced Programs Professor since 1998
• USAO Professor Emerita as of May 2009
• Professor of Philosophy and Religion, University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (1968-2009)
• Mary Jo Ragan Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma (1994-2009)

Frequently Taught Advanced Programs Courses

HR 5113 Toward a Global Ethic: A Dialogue with the World's Religions

Major Areas of Teaching and Research Interest

• History of Ideas
• Ethics
• World Religions
• Religion and Science

Representative Publications and Presentations

Books:


Articles and book chapters:


Presentations:


• Invited Participant in the "Delhi Consultation of South Asian Scholars and Activists on Peace Building in Islam and Other Religions." New Delhi, 5-6 January 2008. Trip funded by the U.S. Department of State.


• Invited Participant (as President of the Association for Communal Harmony in Asia) in "A Spiritual Agenda for Peace." United Nations Headquarters. 11 May 2007


Websites:
Technical administration, creation, and publication of several hundred websites and webpages designed to further dialogue between ideologically and religiously diverse groups. See links in my main domain at http://ecumene.org/. Resume: http://www.usao.edu/~facshaferi/RESUME.HTML

Representative Honors and Awards Received

- Distinguished Alumna Award, OU College of Arts and Sciences, Professional Schools (20 February 2003).
- Finalist, 2001 Oklahoma Medal for Excellence in Teaching and Administration (2001)
- Invited Resource Person. Public Religions Project (1997) that “maintains a comprehensive database of contact information about individuals who can address questions about religion and about the role it plays in public life… The database consists of internationally recognized scholars, experts, spokespersons and authorities who have agreed to be listed as resources.”
- Mary Jo Ragan Endowed Chair Professorship (1994)
- USAO Regents' Superior Teaching Award (1981)

Major Professional Affiliations

- Catholic Theological Society of America (CTSA)
- Popular Culture Association
- Institute on Religion in an Age of Science
- Institute for Interreligious, Intercultural Dialogue
- Association for Communal Harmony in Asia