

Teaching Interfaith Relations to Doctor of Ministry Students

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I just returned from a one week teaching intensive for Doctor of Ministry students at the Unification Theological Seminary at its beautiful campus on the Hudson River near Kingston.

The environment was idyllic covered in the deep snows of our season in this beautiful part of the world.

The course is designed to support adult students who cannot interrupt life and work while pursuing their degree. The teaching intensive week means that all class time is covered in just five days. Instead of meeting the usual 3 hours a week, the professor and the students manage a full forty hours of lectures in just 5 days.

The 15 week course then includes several weeks of “pre-intensive” consultation and preparation, as well as post-intensive work needed to complete course requirements for evaluation (in this case a final thesis).

The course is entitled: *Contemporary Issues and Needs in Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations*. The purpose of the course is for students:

To establish the foundation for clear leadership in the fields of interfaith, conflict resolution, and peace activism

To become agents capable of effecting enduring, positive change through applying proven dynamics for peace and reconciliation

To be able to critically assess and review interfaith and ecumenical initiatives, make effective recommendations for improvement, and be able to engage and work collaboratively with “fellow-traveler” groups



The lecture schedule for each day was:

Monday: Introduction, overview, intensive week schedule, and course design

Tuesday: The elements of society and their structure and dynamics

Wednesday: The elements of religious life and belief

Thursday: The elements, dynamics, schedules, and varieties of conflict resolution and reconciliation

Friday: Religion in transition, the future of religion and spirituality in technological age

The students were engaged and responsive.