

California Institute of Integral Studies

EWP7642/SCT7642: PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

Summer 2004 (1 unit)

Barcelona, Spain, July 7-13

Instructor: Jorge N. Ferrer, Ph.D. Teaching Assistant: Jake Sherman, M.C.S.

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Course Description:

In the framework of the Universal Forum of Cultures (UFC), this unique interreligious gathering will open with a moving ceremony as thousands of adherents of the world's spiritual traditions come together. In the days that follow, participants will engage in interreligious encounter and dialogue through lectures and workshops, plenary sessions and performances. Through shared observances, meditation and prayer, people of all walks of life will find inspiration and renewal. The 2004 Parliament will be the first official multi-lingual Parliament of the World's Religions (PWR), with English and Spanish as the two primary languages. The UFC is a 141-day event centered around the themes of: conditions for peace, cultural diversity, and sustainable development. The 2004 PWR is focused on the theme, *Pathways to Peace: The Wisdom of Listening, the Power of Commitment* (www.cpwr.org), and is organized by the Council for PWR, in partnership with the UFC and the UNESCO Center in Catalonia. Join 10,000 people of spirit and good will for this unique opportunity to deepen your spirituality, celebrate religious diversity, and actively work for a better world. (Previous PWRs: Chicago, 1983, Chicago, 1993, and South Africa, 1999). The course consists of an informational gathering on-campus (April 2, 11:45-1:45, room 311), an orientation session to prepare students for the journey (June 3, 3-5pm, CIIS), and a field trip to the PWR in Barcelona, Spain (July 7-13).

Summary of Educational Purpose:

The main purpose of this course is to foster participation in an international forum devoted to the cultivation of harmony among the world's religions. A second objective is to expose students to a rich variety of spiritual teachings and practical tools used for interreligious dialogue and for promoting a just, peaceful, and sustainable world.

Learning Objectives:

After completing the course, students will have:

1. Become familiar with the state-of-the-art of contemporary interreligious dialogue.
2. Learnt to live in harmony in the midst of religious diversity.
3. Appreciated the complexity of the existential, social, cultural, philosophical, and spiritual issues raised by religious pluralism.
4. Deepened their own spirituality and broadened their sense of community.

Learning Activities:

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| 1. Cognitive/Didactic (lecture): | 35% |
| 2. Practical/Applied (dialogue): | 35% |
| 3. Experiential: | 30% |

Criteria for Evaluation:

Presence and participation: 100%

Prerequisites:

None, but a respectful openness to learning from the many spiritual traditions of the world.

Grading Options:

Pass/Fail.

Level of Instruction:

MA and Ph.D.

Dates and Location:

Informational gathering: Friday, April 2, 11:45-1:45, room 311.

Orientation session: Thursday, June 3, 3-5pm, CIIS, room TBA.

Parliament: Wednesday, July 7 – Tuesday, July 13. The Parliament will take place in the Universal Forum of Cultures, at the northern seafront of Barcelona, Spain, in a 100 acre public park overlooking the Mediterranean sea.

Registration and Lodging:

Students need to register both at CIIS (1 unit) and for the Parliament. For information about lodging and registration for the Parliament: www.cpwr.org. WPR's Registration fee: \$325 (reduced rate). Scholarships may be available. Registration fees do not include travel, accommodation, or meals. Lodging at student residence: \$27/per night (single), \$32/per night (shared twin room: \$16 per person).

Students are responsible for purchasing their own air tickets; early purchase is advisable to obtain reduced fares. To make your travel plans in the States, the Parliament recommends to contact its travel partner: WORLDTEK TRAVEL, Tel. (Toll-Free): 877-562-1156, Fax (Toll-Free): 877-363-7688,

For general information about the course, contact Jake Sherman at JakeSherm@aol.com.

Class Activities:

First, participants will be able to attend any number of the more than 500 hundred dialogues, workshops, and events (religious, academic, artistic, ritual, etc.) offered at the Parliament. Second, they will also be able to optionally assist in the coordination of a workshop, "Holistic Meditation: An Embodied Inquiry into Integral Spirituality," co-facilitated by instructor. Finally, the class will meet with the instructor and teaching assistant a number of times throughout the Parliament for discussion and dialogue, community building and sharing. The specific content and structure of these group sessions will organically emerge from participants' needs and interests as they engage the rich tapestry of the Parliament's offerings.

Required Readings:

1. Beversluis, J. (Ed.). (2000). Sourcebook of the World's Religions: An Interfaith Guide to Religion and Spirituality. (3rd ed.). Novato, CA: New World Library.
A comprehensive introduction to the comparative study of religions. This interfaith guide was originally created as a resource for the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions, and was revised and enlarged in 1995 and 2000.
2. Braybrooke, M. (1998). Faith and Interfaith in a Global Age. Grand Rapids, MI: CoNexus Press.
A readable account of the history of the previous three World's Parliaments of Religions (1893, 1993, and 1997).
3. Ferrer, J. N. (2003). Dialogical Inquiry as Spiritual Practice. Tikkun: A Bimonthly Jewish Critique of Politics, Culture & Society 18(1), 29-32. (Handout provided at the informational gathering.)
An outline of basic practical skills to engage in dialogue as a transformative practice.

Recommended Readings:

1. Baybrooke, M. (1992). *Pilgrimage of Hope: One Hundred Years of Global Interfaith Dialogue*. New York: Continuum.
This out-of-print work is considered the definitive history of the first World's Parliament of Religions.
2. Coward, H. (2000). Pluralism in the World Religions: A Short Introduction. Oxford: Oneworld.
A survey of six major world religions and their attitudes towards religious pluralism and tolerance.
3. Ferrer, J. N. (2002). Revisioning Transpersonal Theory: A Participatory Vision of Human Spirituality. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
An introduction to participatory spirituality and its implications for religious pluralism and interreligious dialogue.
4. Forward, M. (2001). Interreligious Dialogue: A Short Introduction. Oxford: Oneworld.
A readable guide to the past, present, and future possibilities of interreligious dialogue.
5. Juergensmeyer, M. (Ed.). (2003). Global Religions: An Introduction. New York: Oxford University Press.
An introduction to the state of worldwide religion in the twenty-first century in the context of the current global religious scene.
6. Panikkar, R. (1999). The Intra-Religious Dialogue (Rev. ed.). New York: Paulist Press.
A classic work on the encounter of religious traditions at the deepest and most personal level.
8. Swidler, L. & P. Mojzes (2000). The Study of Religion in and Age of Global Dialogue. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
A study of the implications of the emerging dialogical consciousness for the study of religion.
9. Seager, R. H. (Ed.). (1993). *The Dawn of Religious Pluralism: Voices from the World's Parliament of Religion, 1893*. Chicago: Open Court.
An out-of-print anthology compiling some of the most important speeches and addresses of the first World's Parliament of Religion.
10. Teasdale, W. & Cairns, G. (Eds.). (1996). The Community of Religions: Voices and Images of the Parliament of World's Religions. New York: Continuum.
This out-of-print book collects speeches, poems and essays presented at the 1993 World Parliament of Religions (Chicago). It includes a comparative historical overview of the 1893 and 1993 Parliaments.

Instructor:

Jorge N. Ferrer, Ph.D. is core faculty at the East-West Psychology Program. Formerly a fellow of “La Caixa” Foundation, a research fellow of the Catalonian Council, and an ERASMUS scholar at the University of Wales, he is also adjunct faculty at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology. Jorge is the author of *Revisoning Transpersonal Theory: A Participatory Vision of Human Spirituality* (SUNY Press) and editor of a monograph of the journal *ReVision* on “New Horizons in Contemporary Spirituality.” He was born in Barcelona, Spain, where he lived until 1993.

Teaching Assistant:

Jacob Sherman, M.C.S. is a doctoral candidate in the department of Philosophy, Cosmology and Consciousness. A certified instructor in the Christian contemplative practice of Centering Prayer, Jacob has also been involved interreligious exchanges and dialogue. His research interests are currently centered on the concept of participation, but include classical philosophy, mystical theology, the philosophy of religion, and contemporary continental thought.