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The Elijah Interfaith Institute



# RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP: An Interreligious Summer School

June 11<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012

at **Union Theological Seminary**  
3041 Broadway, New York  
(Broadway and West 121st Street)

## Summer School Program

### Monday June 11: Introductory

- 9:30 Welcome Addresses: R. Dov Linzer, Katharine Henderson, Lynn Swaja, Alon Goshen-Gottstein
- 10:00- 11:15 introductions, personal narratives
- 11:15 – 11:30 *tea break*
- 11:30 - 12:00 description of objectives of the program
- 12:00 – 13:00 Interfaith education as a component of present-day leadership formation - Thatamanil and Gottstein
- Lunch break*
- 14:30 - 16:00 Concerns, guidelines and boundaries in the study and engagement of other religions (Theology of Religions) - Gottstein
- 16:00 – 16:15 *tea break*
- 16:15 - 17:45 Concerns, guidelines and boundaries in the study and engagement of other religions (Theology of Religions) - Thatamanil
- 18:00 - 19:00 Open discussion with participants

### Tuesday, June 12: Judaism - Lecturer Alon Goshen-Gottstein

Assignment - portions of *Future of Religious Leadership* essay by Meir Sender

- 9:30 - 10:00 prayerful presence and debriefing
- 10:00 - 11:00 small group textual study of primary sources on nature of leadership
- 11:00-11:15 *tea break*
- 11:15 - 12:45 discussion, and question and answer on Jewish understanding of leadership
- 12:45 – 14:00 *Lunch break*
- 14:00 - 15:30 dialogue and facilitation skills – (general moderation skills) (Silverman)  
a. Listening skills  
b. Observation skills – the skills of a good moderator
- 15:30 – 15:45 *tea break*
- 15:45 - 17:00 Core dynamics of Jewish religion, explored through leadership
- 17:00 - 19:00 Open question and answer with lecturer and Jewish student body

### **Wednesday, June 13: Christianity, Lecturer - John Thatamanil**

Assignment - portions of *Future of Religious Leadership* essay by Miroslav Volf and Awet Andemicael

- 9:00 - 9:30      prayerful presence and debriefing
- 9:30 - 10:30    small group textual study of primary sources on nature of leadership
- 10:30-10:45    *Tea break*
- 10:45 -12:15    discussion, and question and answer on  
Christian understanding of leadership
- 12:15 – 13:30   Core dynamics of Christian religion, explored through leadership
- 13:30 - 14:30   *lunch break*
- 14:30 – 15:30   Open question and answer with lecturer and Christian student body
- 16:00 – 18:30   R. Dov Linzer: Perspectives of Jewish Law on Other Religions and Interfaith Visits.  
Response: Gottstein, followed by group discussion

### **Thursday, June 14: Hinduism, Lecturer - Anantand Rambachan (Skype)**

Assignment - portions of *Future of Religious Leadership* essay by Anantand Rambachan

- 9:00 - 9:30      prayerful presence and debriefing
- 9:30 – 11:00    discussion, and question and answer on    Hindu understanding of leadership (including textual reading)
- 11:00 – 11:15   *tea break*
- 11:15 – 12:45   Core dynamics of Hindu religion, explored through leadership  
Open question and answer with lecturer
- 12:45 – 14:00   *lunch break*
- 14:00 - 17:00   **Buddhism, Part I, Lecturer – Sallie King (Skype)**  
Assignment - portions of *Future of Religious Leadership* essay by Maria Reis Habito  
  
Small group textual study of primary sources on nature of leadership  
Discussion, and question and answer on  
Buddhist understanding of leadership
- 17:00 – 19:00   Intra-religious caucus  
(Christians and Jews talk among themselves, either over dinner or over tea, to be determined)

## **Friday June 15: Dialogue and facilitation skills: (interreligious moderation skills) Justus Baird**

- 9:00 – 9:30     prayerful presence and debriefing
- 9:30 – 12:45    ‘Taking a stand’ – respectful disagreement  
Case-study/ role-play and debrief
- 12:45 – 13:45    *Lunch*

### **Buddhism, Part II, Lecturer – Sallie King (Skype)**

- 13:45 - 15:00    Core dynamics of Buddhist religion, explored through leadership
- 15:00 - 16:00    Open question and answer with lecturer

Possibility for Shabbat hospitality, to be coordinated between students

## **Sunday June 17: Field day – The Interreligious Fabric of Flushing (and Queens)**

- 10:00 – 11:30    Visit to Jamaica Muslim Center
- 12:00 – 13:30    Visit to One Center, Buddhist Monastery (incl. Lunch)
- 13:45 – 15:30    Visit to Singh Sabha of New York Sikh Gurudwara
- 15:45 – 17:00    Visit to Hindu Temple Society of North America
- 17:00 onwards – private visits in pairs or small groups based on personal interest

Visits will concentrate on present day community challenges, and with meeting with local religious leaders who will share how they struggle in addressing them. Special emphasis will be paid to how these communities incorporate interreligious awareness into their broader community work.

Following group visits students are free to explore other aspects of the rich interreligious life of Flushing, according to their interest. Detailed background information on opportunities, the interreligious history of Flushing and more will be provided.

## **Monday, June 18: Islam, Lecturer - Timothy Gianotti**

Assignment - portions of *Future of Religious Leadership* essay by Timothy Gianotti

- 9:30 - 11:00     prayerful presence followed by debriefing  
on yesterday's experiences
- 11:00-11:15     *tea break*
- 11:15 - 12:15    small group textual study of primary sources on nature of leadership
- 12:15 - 13:30    *Lunch break*
- 13:30 – 15:00    Discussion, and question and answer on Muslim understanding of leadership

15:00 – 15:30 *Tea Break*

15:30 - 17:00 Core dynamics of Islam, explored through leadership

17:15 - 19:00 Open question and answer with lecturer

### **Tuesday June 19 - Panel:**

**Neelima Shukla Bhatt, Sallie King, John Thatamanil, Timothy Gianotti, Alon Goshen-Gottstein**

Theme for the day - What are the contemporary challenges that the leadership of the specific religion are struggling with today and what theological understandings are brought to bear upon their resolution?

9:30 - 10:00 prayerful presence and debriefing

10:00 - 12:30 The World of Dialogue + rules of Dialogue + dialogue Decalogue (interreligious dialogue)  
(Peta, by Skype)

12:30 – 13:45 *Lunch*

13:45 – 16:15 Panel 1

16:15 – 16:45 Break

16:45 – 19:00 Panel 2

### **Wednesday June 20 - Panel:**

**Neelima Shukla Bhatt, Sallie King, John Thatamanil, Timothy Gianotti, Alon Goshen-Gottstein**

Theme for the day - What is the social vision for which future leadership of that religion is being trained, what is its theological foundation and what room is there for collaboration between religious leadership of different religions?

9:30 - 10:00 prayerful presence and debriefing

10:00 - 12:30 Panel 1

14:00 - 15:30 Panel 2

16:00 - 19:00 Leaders' Discussion - Engaging the Challenges of Present day religious leadership.  
Participants: Rabbi Avi Weiss, Bishop Frank Griswold, Imam Shamsi Ali

### **Thursday June 21 - Panel:**

**Neelima Shukla Bhatt, Sallie King, John Thatamanil, Timothy Gianotti, Alon Goshen-Gottstein**

Theme for the day - What are the historical, institutional and theological precedents and resources that either impede or support collaboration?

9:30 - 10:00 prayerful presence and debriefing

10:00 – 12:30 Studying and Teaching the texts of another tradition (interreligious textual dialogue) (Peta, by Skype)

12:30 – 13:45 *Lunch break*

13:45 - 16:00 Panel 1

16:30 – 19:00 Panel 2

### **Friday June 22: Summary**

9:30 - 10:00 prayerful presence and debriefing

10:00 - 11:30 Student compose brief essays, synthesizing their learning, challenges and open issues – possible creation of 'Elijah Rules of Dialogue'.

11:30 - 14:00 (*over lunch*) sharing and discussion of student essays with faculty

14:00 - 15:30 Discussion of possibilities for future collaboration, ongoing work and partnering in practicum for participants of summer school.

15:30 – 16:00 Conclusion

## FACULTY



**Rabbi Justus Baird**

Director, Center for Multifaith Education, Auburn Seminary

Rabbi Justus N. Baird has served as the Director of the Center for Multifaith Education at Auburn Theological Seminary in New York City since 2007. He oversees the seminary's multifaith programming which strives to prepare religious leaders for a religiously diverse world.

Rabbi Baird was ordained at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion where he studied as a Wexner Graduate Fellow. He received a B.S. from Rice University and holds a certificate in Strategic Human Resource Management from Harvard Business School. He brings an entrepreneurial approach to his work; before entering rabbinical school he co-founded Questia.com, a successful and far-reaching academic online library.

He has taught, preached in, and consulted with seminaries, churches, synagogues, mosques, and interfaith organizations. He teaches the Multifaith Seminar in the Multifaith Doctor of Ministry Program (a partnership between Auburn and New York Theological Seminary).

Raised in Texas, Rabbi Baird lives in Princeton, NJ, with his wife Rabbi Julie Roth (Director of the Center for Jewish Life at Princeton University) and their two sons and daughter.



**Neelima Shukla Bhatt**

Assistant Professor of South Asia Studies - Wellesley College

South Asia Studies

B.A., M.A., Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda (India); M.Div., Ph.D., Harvard University



**Timothy Gianotti**

Dr. Timothy J. Gianotti is assistant professor of classical Islamic philosophy, theology and mysticism at University of Virginia. He teaches upper-level seminars that deal with Islamic mystical thought, Islamic political thought, medieval Islamic and Jewish philosophy and the language and imagery of war within the Abrahamic religious traditions. He has just completed an extended tenure as the Noor Chair in Islamic Studies at York University in Canada. Dr. Gianotti bridges



**Alon Goshen-Gottstein**

*Executive Director - Elijah Interfaith Institute*

Alon Goshen-Gottstein is founder and director of the Elijah Interfaith Institute (formerly the Elijah School for the Study of Wisdom in World Religions), and lecturer and director of the Center for the Study of Rabbinic Thought, Beit Morasha College, both in Jerusalem, since 1997. He has also lectured at the Ratisbonne Pontifical Institute in Jerusalem, 1997-2001; the School of Overseas Students, Tel Aviv University, 1997-99; the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies (branch of the Jewish Theological Seminary), 1996-98; the Dept. of Jewish History, Track for Jewish Thought, at both Haifa and Ben Gurion universities, 1996; and guest lectured at the University of Uppsala, 1996-97. He was a teaching assistant and lecturer in the Dept. of Jewish Philosophy at Tel Aviv University, 1991-95. Ordained a rabbi in 1977, he received his Ph.D. from Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1986. From 1989 to 1999, he was a member of the Shalom Hartman Institute for Advanced Studies, Jerusalem. Stanford University Press published his "The Sinner and the Amnesiac: The Rabbinic Invention of Elisha ben Abuya and Eleazar ben Arach" in 2000, and the Littman Library recently published his "Jewish Theology and World Religions" (edited with Eugene Korn). Forthcoming is his "Beyond Idolatry – The Jewish Encounter with Hinduism." His four score articles have appeared in edited collections and in such scholarly journals as Harvard Theological Review, Journal for the Study of Judaism, Journal of Literature and Theology, Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy, Ecumenism, and Studies in Interreligious Dialogue.



### **Sallie King**

Sallie B. King is Professor of Philosophy and Religion at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, USA. She is a practicing Buddhist and Quaker and a scholar of Buddhism. Her publications concentrate on the concept of Buddha nature, Engaged Buddhism, cross cultural philosophy of religion and interfaith dialogue. She serves as a Trustee on the International, Interfaith Peace Council, on the board of Sarvodaya USA, and on the Christian and Interfaith Relations Committee of Friends (Quaker) General Conference. She and her husband lead a small Buddhist meditation group in the Insight Meditation tradition.



### **Rabbi Dov Linzer**

Rosh HaYeshiva and Dean of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School

Rabbi Dov Linzer is the Rosh HaYeshiva and Dean of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School. He studied for many years at Yeshivat Har Etzion, was a member of Yeshiva University's Gruss Kollel Elyon, and received his ordination from the Israeli Rabbinate. He is a recipient of the Javits Graduate fellowship, and a doctoral candidate in Religion at Columbia University. Rabbi Linzer headed the Boca Raton Kollel for the first two-and-a-half years of its existence, giving classes to the rabbis of the Kollel, and lecturing throughout the South Florida communities. He has published halakha and machshava articles in Torah journals and lectures widely at synagogues and conferences on topics relating to halakha, Orthodoxy, and modernity. Rabbi Linzer spearheaded the development of the YCT Rabbinical School curriculum into an innovative four year seminar program which provides its students with rigorous halakhic study and sophisticated professional training in the context of a religious atmosphere which cultivates openness and inclusiveness. In addition to overseeing the Yeshiva's Torah curriculum, he teaches advanced halakha in a broad range of areas across all four sections of the Shulchan Aruch – including Kashrut, Ishut and Niddah, and Shabbat and Eruvin. Rabbi Linzer teaches advanced classes in Talmud and a year-long class in Contemporary Challenges of Modern Orthodoxy.



### **Peta Pellach**

*Director of Educational Activities - Elijah Interfaith Institute*

Peta Jones Pellach is an educator with expertise in adult education and dialogue facilitation. She served in senior positions in Sydney's Jewish schools before making her career in Adult Education in 1997. Until Feb 2010, she was Director of Adult Education at The Shalom Institute, University of NSW, Sydney, and was the educator-in-residence. She conducted classes for the informal sector and the University of Sydney on the weekly Torah portion, Jewish Civilization & Culture, Biblical Studies, Jewish Studies Teaching Method and Arab-Israeli Conflict. Innovations under her leadership included the introduction of professionally-crafted programs of regular adult learning (Melton) and cross-generational community-wide learning 'experiences' (Limmud-Oz). She was a key player in inter-faith dialogue in Australia including in the Women's Interfaith Network, the (Australian) Uniting Church-Jewish Dialogue, the Jewish 'conversation' with the Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims and Jews. In 2004 and 2006 she was a member of the Australian delegation to the Regional Dialogue on Interfaith Cooperation, in Indonesia and the Philippines respectively. Her academic qualifications include BA (UNSW), Masters in International Affairs (Columbia University, NY), Jerusalem Fellow (1989-91). Publications include 'Human Rights, Religion & Gender –Jewish Perspective' for the Australian Human Rights Commission (2010), 'Without Prejudice – A Handbook for Teachers' (2009); We Offer Thanks in 'Mosaic: Favourite Prayers and Reflections from Inspiring Australians' (2008) Interfaith Dialogue and Israel and Adult Education (co-authored with Paul Forgasz) in 'New Under the Sun' (2006), The Contribution of Nehama Leibowitz in the Journal of Studies of Religion (Aus), (2006). In June 2010, she joined Elijah to develop the work of the Educational Network.





### **Anantanand Rambachan**

Chair and Professor of Religion, Philosophy and Asian Studies at St. Olaf College, Minnesota, USA. Anantanand Rambachan is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Religion at Saint Olaf College, Minnesota, USA, where he has been teaching since 1985. He received his M.A., and PHD degree in religion from the University of Leeds, in the United Kingdom. Prof. Rambachan is the author of several books, book chapters and numerous articles and reviews in scholarly journals.

Among these are: 'Accomplishing the Accomplished: The Vedas as a Source of Valid Knowledge in Shankara', 'The Limits of Scripture: Vivekananda's Reinterpretation of the Authority of the Vedas' and 'The Advaita Worldview: God, World and Humanity'. The British Broadcasting Corporation transmitted a series of 25 lectures by Prof. Anantanand Rambachan around the world.



### **John Thatamanil**

Associate Professor of Theology and World Religions - Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York. John J. Thatamanil has taught a wide variety of courses in the areas of comparative theology, theologies of religious pluralism, Hindu-Christian dialogue, Buddhist-Christian dialogue, the theology of Paul Tillich, process theology, and Eastern Orthodox theology and spirituality. Tying together these diverse interests is a basic commitment to a deeply metaphysical form of philosophical theology

which he takes to be essential for any Christian theology that seeks to be in conversation with non-Christian religious traditions. Professor Thatamanil seeks to revive in his work a commitment to speculative reflection as found in the work of Paul Tillich and Alfred North Whitehead. Specifically, he is on the hunt for a viable "process Tillichianism."

Professor Thatamanil's first book is an exercise in constructive comparative theology. *The Immanent Divine: God, Creation, and the Human Predicament. An East-West Conversation* (Fortress Press, 2006) provides the foundation for a nondualist Christian theology worked out through a conversation between Paul Tillich and Sankara, the master teacher of the Hindu tradition of Advaita Vedanta.

He is currently at work on his second book tentatively entitled, *Religious Diversity After "Religion": Rethinking Theologies of Religious Pluralism* (Fordham University Press). That book takes up the recent and extensive literature on the Western construction/invention of "religion" with the following questions in mind: If "religion" is a relatively recent invention of the modern West, then is the category applicable to non-Western cultures and traditions? Can we really divide the world up into a set of distinct and discrete world religions? If it is problematic to talk of "race relations" now that we know that race is a construct, a biological fiction, does it make sense to talk of interreligious dialogue if "religion" too is likewise a fiction? Does it still make sense to ask if the world's "religions" are paths up the same mountain or paths up different mountains? How should theology of religious pluralism (TRP) be reconfigured in light of these new questions and challenges?

Professor Thatamanil is a past-president of the North American Paul Tillich Society (NAPTS), and he is Chair of the American Academy of Religion's Theological Education Steering Committee (TESC).