Religious Pluralism in Tennessee
Bridging Cultures at Community Colleges Program

Creating a More Perfect Union in the Bible Belt:
Building Community and Cultural Understanding
Through the Study of Religion and Civil Society

Opening Workshop July 13-17, 2015

Monday, July 13, 2015
8:30 a.m., MTSU Student Union Building 224
Coffee and Continental Breakfast, compliments of the MTSU University Provost
MTSU Welcome by Dr. Peter Cunningham, Office of the University Provost, and Dr. Antoinette van Zelm, Center for Historic Preservation
Welcome, Introductions, Housekeeping

9:30-11:30 a.m.
History: National Historic Context: The Founding Fathers, the First Amendment, and the Starting Point for U.S. Discussions of Religion and Politics
Distinguished Humanities Scholar Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, Ph.D.
Archer Alexander Distinguished Professor in the Humanities, John C. Danforth Center on Religion and Politics, Washington University in St. Louis

Provided Faculty Readings:

For Use in General Education Classrooms:

Additional Sources:

Digital Resources:
• On Common Ground, The Pluralism Project, Harvard University, www.pluralism.org/ocg/. [The About page provides a good overview of all the resources throughout the website: http://www.pluralism.org/ocg/about.]

Monday, July 13, 2015
11:45-12:45 p.m., Student Union Building 224
Box Lunch, compliments of the MTSU Department of History, Dr. James M. Beeby, Chair

1:00-4:00 p.m., Campus Tour, Departs from SU 224
Research Orientation
In three groups, participants will tour key campus facilities where resources are available to them during the workshop and throughout their involvement in the program:
• Center for Popular Music, with Greg Reish (Group A 1:00, Group B 2:00, Group C 3:00)
• James E. Walker Library, with a focus on electronic resources, such as Trials & Triumphs, Tennessee State Library and Archives, and Library of Congress Teaching with Primary, with Susan Knowles and Ken Middleton; quickly LT&ITC, Walker 348, then down to meet Susan and Ken in computer room, Walker 272 (Grp B 1:00, Grp A 2:00, Grp B 3:00)
• Albert Gore Research Center, with Jim Williams and Mary Hoffschwelle (Group C 1:00, Group B 2:00, Group A 3:00)
Group A led by Amy Sayward: Center for Popular Music/CPM 1:00, Walker Library 2:00, Gore Center 3:00
Group B led by Antoinette Van Zelm: Walker Library 1:00, Gore Center 2:00, CPM 3:00
Group C led by Mary Evins: Gore Center 1:00, CPM 2:00, Walker Library 3:00

—Group Assignments are in the blue workshop folder—

4:15-5:15 p.m., Student Union Building 224

Community College Curriculum Review
Focusing on the humanities content of the courses offered, we will discuss what is offered in the curriculum as well as what is not offered. How can the morning session content, readings, and dialogue be worked into current curriculum? In what ways can the humanities content help to understand other religions and cultures? How can the morning content connect to local issues at each college? What concepts in these materials link to state, local, and global issues that our students need to evaluate and integrate into their learning?

5:15-5:30 p.m., SU 224
Housekeeping

Dinner on Your Own
Tuesday, July 14, 2015

Breakfast on Your Own

8:30-11:00 a.m., MTSU Student Union Building 224

Religion and Ethics: Religious Freedom, Pluralism, and Expression: Overview of Religion and Ethics, including Case Studies of Religious Freedom and Freedom of Expression

Distinguished Humanities Scholar M. Christian Green, Ph.D., J.D., M.T.S. Senior Fellow, Center for the Study of Law and Religion, Emory University

Provided Faculty Readings:
• Leila Ahmed, "Backlash: The Veil, the Burka, and the Clamor of War," Ch. 9, in Leila Ahmed, A Quiet Revolution: The Veil’s Resurgence, from the Middle East to America (Yale U Press, 2011), 199-232. —Available online on password-protected site—

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Additional Sources:


**Digital Resources:**

• Combating Religious Prejudice, Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding, [https://tanenbaum.org/programs/interreligious-affairs/](https://tanenbaum.org/programs/interreligious-affairs/).


• Teaching Resources, Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, [http://raac.iupui.edu/teaching-resources/](http://raac.iupui.edu/teaching-resources/).

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**Tuesday, July 14, 2015**

11:30-12:30 p.m., Student Union Building 224

**Light Lunch**, compliments of the MTSU College of Liberal Arts, Dr. Dawn McCormack, Associate Dean

1:00-3:00 p.m., Student Union Building 224

**Female Religious Leaders, Their Communities, and Their Challenges**

What are the challenges of being a female leader in a faith institution traditionally dominated by men? How does gender impact how you exercise leadership in your religious tradition? How does gender affect your interaction with other religious leaders?; How does power allocation and marginalization impact your work within your own circles? In our wider Tennessee community, what is the biggest challenge you face being a person of your particular faith? For the benefit of our college faculty: When you yourself teach young people, what works best, from your own experiences as a religious leader, in terms of bringing intercultural understanding about/between/among people of different faiths?; How best do we bridge religious divides?

Panel Discussion, including
• Ms. Kasar Abdulla, Kurdish American community leader, civic activist, and recipient of President Obama’s Champion of Change award
• Mrs. Radha Babu, Sri Ganesha Temple, Nashville
• Minister Dorothy Matthews, Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, Walter Hill
• Sister Mary Sarah, president of Aquinas College, Nashville
• Rev. Stacy Rector, Presbyterian minister and executive director of Tennesseans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

3:00-3:15 p.m., SU 224
Civic Health Survey
Participants will take a brief civic health survey as an introduction to discussion on civic engagement, the role of individuals in communities, and how humanities content from the morning sessions can help bridge religious and cultural divides across disciplines.

3:15-3:30 p.m., SU 224
Housekeeping, with Special Focus on Appropriate Dress for Wed. Visit to Buddhist Temple

3:30-5:30 p.m.
Afternoon Research Session
Open and unstructured research time to explore the resources of the Library (until 10:00 p.m.), Center for Popular Music (until 4:30 p.m.), and Albert Gore Research Center (until 5:00 p.m.) in greater depth, to access materials for fall and spring classes. Support staff are available all afternoon to assist you. NEH support will be set up specifically in the Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center (LT&ITC, Walker Library room 348; thank you to Dr. Sheila Otto, Dr. Tom Brinthaupt, and Scott Haupt) and in the computer lab (Walker 272) to facilitate your research efforts, to provide a secure place to leave your belongings while you explore, and to help with anything else you need.

Dinner on Your Own

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Wednesday, July 15, 2015
Breakfast on Your Own

8:30 a.m., MTSU Student Union Building 224
Midweek Greeting by Dr. Brad Bartel, University Provost

8:30-11:00 a.m., SU 224
Philosophy: Creating Cultures of Debate across Cultural and Religious Boundaries
Key questions to be addressed include, Is it possible to discuss religion, in particular religious prescriptions such as divine commandments, rationally? Are disagreements on fundamental questions valuable? Can we be certain that what we believe to be right actually is right? Can we
institute a culture of debate as an intellectual space that allows us to discuss issues we deeply care about, but also deeply disagree on? How are the beliefs and values we hold contingent, the outcome of our upbringing? Does the internal diversity of religious traditions require deliberating and choosing between competing interpretations?

**Distinguished Humanities Scholar Carlos Fraenkel, Ph.D.**
The James McGill Professor of Philosophy and Jewish Studies, McGill University

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**Provided Faculty Readings:**
- Plato, *Euthyphro*. Available online on password-protected site
- John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (excerpts in the *Broadview Anthology of Social and Political Thought*, pp. 895 ff.) [Public domain, full text available online: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/34901/34901-h/34901-h.htm; other formats (PDF, Kindle) are available for download as well, https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/34901.] Available online on password-protected site
- Carlos Fraenkel, *Teaching Plato in Palestine: Philosophy in a Divided World* (Princeton U Press, 2015), Preface and Ch. 6 (Chs. 1 and 5 as supplementary reading).

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**Additional Sources:**

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11:00 a.m., SU 224 **Housekeeping**

**Lunch on Your Own**

1:30-3:30 p.m.

**Afternoon Research Session**
Open and unstructured research time, Walker Library, Albert Gore Research Center, Center for Popular Music

**Wednesday, July 15, 2015**
3:30-5:30 p.m., Lao Buddhist Temple, 5214 Old Nashville Highway, Murfreesboro
Community Leaders Dialogue, The Local is Global
What are the challenges of living in a community that does not have a formal place of worship? When you live in a dominantly Christian nation, when you’re not of that faith, are the challenges?; how do you “melt” into that melting pot? When you live in a dominantly Christian nation, when you’re not of that faith, how do you engage in civil dialogue with other community members around issues of religious difference? Since 9/11 in the United States, how have fear and discrimination against Muslims impacted you, even though you are of a different religious tradition? What one truth would you like people in Tennessee to know about your religious tradition that you think they do not?

Panel Discussion
• Mr. Balbir Darar, Indian American Sikh, owner of The Clay Pit restaurant, 1813 Memorial Blvd.
• Commissioner Chantho Sourinho, Lao Buddhist Temple, Murfreesboro
• Dr. Ravi Singh and Mrs. Meena Singh, Indian American Hindu, Murfreesboro physician
• Hanumatpresaka Swami, International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Murfreesboro

5:30 p.m., Lao Buddhist Temple, 5214 Old Nashville Highway, Murfreesboro
Housekeeping, with Special Focus on Appropriate Dress for Thursday Iftar Dinner at Mosque

Dinner on Your Own

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Thursday, July 16, 2015

Breakfast on Your Own

6:45 a.m., Sidewalk on North Side of MTSU Student Union Building
Board Tour Bus

7:00 a.m.
Depart Campus for Nashville on Tour Bus
Handout on bus: Auerbach, Odyssey Project Course Reader
Video on bus: Freedom Riders

8:30 a.m., Downtown Nashville Public Library, on board bus
Humanities Tennessee Greetings and Introduction, Melissa Davis, Director of Community History Programs, Humanities Tennessee

9:00 a.m., The Commons, Third Floor, Nashville Public Library
Welcome by NPL Special Collections/Civil Rights Collection and Humanities Tennessee, Luke Herbst, Special Collections Librarian, and Melissa Davis, Humanities Tenn., respectively
Coffee, compliments of Humanities Tennessee
Thursday, July 16, 2015
9:00-11:30 a.m., The Commons, Third Floor, Nashville Public Library Literature: Transformations, The Power of Literature to Change Lives Distinguished Humanities Scholar Emily Auerbach, Ph.D.
Professor of English, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Director, Odyssey Project, University of Wisconsin Clemente Course in the Humanities

Provided Faculty Readings:

- Emily Auerbach, ed., Odyssey Project Course Reader (Madison: UW Odyssey Project, 2014).

For Use in General Education Classrooms:

- Collection of selected readings compiled by Emily Auerbach for Odyssey Project Course Reader (Madison: UW Odyssey Project, 2014), including:
  - William Blake’s Songs of Innocence and Experience—attacks religious tyranny and celebrates notion of love/brotherhood
  - Courage to Write sampler of early women authors—poems and prose that celebrate the courage of women who wrote at a time when they were told to be silent, including Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, Anne Bradstreet, Phillis Wheatley, Emma Lazarus, Emily Dickinson, Jane Austen, and others—poetry by Emily Dickinson in particular explores religious questions, strictures, and acting in faith
  - Frederick Douglass, Narrative—escaped 19th century slave recalls his flight from brutal slavery, his struggles to learn to read, his recognition that Christianity could be misused by slave owners. [Full text, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/23/23-h/23h.htm; http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/23.]
  - Thoreau, Civil Disobedience [full text, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/71/71h/71-h.htm; https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/71], and Martin Luther King Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail [http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html]—a higher law than the law of the land
  - Walt Whitman’s poetry—celebrates inclusivity, diversity, embracing cultures. [Full text: https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/8388/pg8388.html; https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/8388.]

Additional Sources:
• Anne Frank, Diary of Anne Frank (1952), and Tatiana de Rosnay, Sarah’s Key (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2007). Holocaust experiences.
• Toni Morrison, Recitatif (1983). A short story of black and white girls meeting at five different stages in their life; Morrison’s short story doesn’t tell us which girl is black and which is white, so the story creates an interesting awareness of our own stereotypes.

Digital Resources:
• University of Wisconsin Madison, Forward Motion – The Odyssey Project, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqddlNO90bs&feature=youtu.be.

Thursday, July 16, 2015
11:45-12:15 p.m., Civil Rights Room, Second Floor, Nashville Public Library
Introduction to Civil Rights Collection and Mr. Earnest (Rip) Patton, Luke Herbst, Special Collections Librarian
Overview and Reflections, Rip Patton, community leader, civil rights activist, and original member of the Nashville Student Movement and a Freedom Rider

12:25 p.m., Provence Café on First Floor of Library and Sixth Avenue North
Pick Up Box Lunches and Board Bus
Lunch compliments of Humanities Tennessee

12:30-2:15 p.m.
Lunch on Board Bus
Civil Rights Driving Tour, North Nashville
Mr. Rip Patton, Narrator, Historian, and Tour Guide
Mr. Patton speaks regularly on his years as a young civil rights activist with the Nashville Student Movement and his experiences as a Freedom Rider that resulted in his incarceration at Parchman prison, the Mississippi state penitentiary. He did civic work, he says, because “It was the right time,” and he was guided by these spiritual words:

• Romans 12:1-2: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.
• Isaiah 6:8: Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I. Send me.
Psalm 23:4: Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

2:30-4:45 p.m., Nashville Public Library

**Interfaith Community Dialogue**, hosted by Faith and Culture Center, Our Muslim Neighbor Initiative, and A Seat at the Table, moderated by Mr. Daoud Abudiab and Mr. Aaron Stauffer

Interfaith leaders will offer their ideas and experiences with building communities through dialogue, mediation, and engagement. Workshop participants will be asked to address the ways in which the traditions and values of the humanities are reflected in the work of these community leaders who provide a language to bridge religious and cultural divides. How can stories of these community leaders be worked into classes at community colleges? How can these reach beyond the classroom to the local community? What lectures might we want to host in the coming semesters related to this project? Moderators will:

- Address strategies and tools to help professors respond in the classroom to unhelpful generalizations and stereotypes about Muslims (such as "I heard that all Muslims...").
- Provide attendees with a chance to engage in rich conversations with local Tennessee Muslims, to get to know Muslims and hear from Muslims themselves in their own voices.
- Make available resources so the professors can create similar experiences of getting to know their Muslim neighbors or familiarize themselves with Islam in America, by offering to bring A Seat at the Table to their classrooms and the like.

**Thursday, July 16, 2015**  5:00 p.m.

**Depart Nashville Public Library for Murfreesboro**

5:00-7:00 p.m.

**Video** on bus: Unwelcome: The Muslims Next Door, CNN documentary with Soledad O’Brien, and Welcome to Shelbyville, PBS Documentary

7:00-9:30 p.m., Islamic Center of Murfreesboro, 2605 Veals Road, Murfreesboro

**Dialogue and Iftar Dinner**, hosted by Dr. Ossama Bahloul, Imam of the Murfreesboro Mosque
The Final Day of Ramadan, Breaking the Fast

9:30 p.m., Board Bus

**Return to Campus**, to Cars **Housekeeping**

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**Friday, July 17, 2015**

**Breakfast on Your Own**
9:30-11:30 a.m., The Heritage Center of Murfreesboro, 225 West College Street, Murfreesboro
Free Public Parking: City Parking Deck, Corner of West Vine and South Church; Enter from
West Vine or Northwest Broad Streets.
—Location Map and Parking Map are in the blue workshop folder—

**History: Integration of Global and Local: Tying It All Together**

**Distinguished Humanities Scholar Ronald Messier, Ph.D.**

Director, Moroccan-American Archaeological Project in Aghmat, Morocco; Professor Emeritus,
Department of History, Middle Tennessee State University

Professor Messier will address classical Islam versus Islam in America today; Jesus, one man, two
faiths; and the context of the mosque controversy in Tennessee, issues and conflicts in our
communities, and how we as professors in the classroom can positively contribute.

**Provided Faculty Reading:**


**Additional Sources:**

* Kenneth Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008).

Digital Resources:

Friday, July 17, 2015 12:00-1:15 p.m.

Lunch on your own in Downtown Murfreesboro

1:30-3:00 p.m., The Heritage Center, 225 West College Street

Faculty Learning Communities

FLC Introduction, Modeling by from MTSU FLC Members, and Calendaring for AY15-16

To ensure sustainability of the program, beginning with the 2015-2016 academic year and long beyond, workshop participants will discuss the role of FLCs in supporting the objectives of the program and providing a route to curriculum re-design focused on the role of humanities in bridging cultures in a civil society. How are civic learning and civic engagement integrated into every classroom? Creating FLCs in individual community colleges allows workshop participants to continue studying together and supporting each other, in order to intentionally put into classroom use the ideas and information generated during the workshop.

3:15-4:45 p.m., Heritage Center

Synthesis and Review

On this final afternoon, referencing the readings, discussions, presentations, and other activities of the workshop, and led by our Jackson State and Cleveland State facilitators, participants will discuss our own implementation for fall and winter semesters, how to upgrade use of humanities materials in our teaching, finding more ways to enrich civic life and civil discourse in our courses
that in turn move course content toward bridging gaps in religious and cultural divides. How will the readings, research, and workshop influence and concretely change curricula offered to the students in our own college classrooms?

4:45-5:00 p.m.
Final Housekeeping

5:00 p.m.
Departure for Home Dinner on Your Own