

**HT280W      ENGAGING THE RELIGIOUS OTHER: BUDDHIST-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE**

Instructor: Kristen Largen

Elective

1 credit hour; credit/no-credit only

Interreligious and ecumenical dialogues present a variety of rich opportunities for growth, friendship, community engagement and faith formation. These dialogues can occur around religious beliefs, rituals and practices, and issues of justice, among other things, and they offer tangible benefits to public ministers and congregations alike.

It is, however, not always easy to engage in these dialogues. Especially in the case of interfaith dialogue, one doesn't always know where to begin, and Christians can be hindered both by their own lack of knowledge of another religion (and the fear of offending) and also by theological misgivings, wondering if one is giving something away or betraying one's own faith in interreligious conversations.

In this course, we will talk about these and other practical issues in Interreligious engagement, through the lens of one specific dialogue—Buddhist-Christian dialogue. We will discuss the concepts of holy envy," and "multiple religious belonging;" we will learn the foundational beliefs and practices of Buddhism, and how they have been popularly incorporated in the West (a mixed bag, frankly); we will learn some specific points of engagement common in Buddhist-Christian dialogue (like comparing the Buddha and Jesus); and we will learn how Interreligious dialogue can strengthen one's own faith.

*"There are a hundred paths through the world that are easier than loving. But, who wants easier?"*

Mary Oliver