



# INTERNSHIPS IN INTERFAITH AND INTERRELIGIOUS STUDIES

As part of a three-year project funded by the Teagle Foundation, IFYC has partnered with seventeen colleges and universities to develop academic programs in interfaith and interreligious studies. Utilizing grant funds, these institutions have garnered support and convened colleagues to create curricular programs – including majors, minors, concentrations, certificates, and course sequences – that focus on interfaith and interreligious engagement. The goal of this resource is to highlight internships in interfaith studies that now exist at three institutions in particular.

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## *FEATURED PROGRAMS*

This resource brings together materials from grant reports, program plans, and promotional materials developed by each of the profiled campuses. The following internship descriptions reflect the voices, character, and priorities of the individuals and institutions involved in these programs:

### **1. Elizabethtown College: “Internship in Interfaith Leadership”**

Elizabethtown College is a private institution affiliated with the Church of the Brethren. It is located in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, and serves about 1,900 undergraduate students. Elizabethtown launched the country’s first major in Interfaith Leadership Studies in the fall of 2015, which includes six required courses centered around interfaith leadership, two courses in religious literacy, three courses related to religious diversity and civil society, and two courses in professional skills and experiential learning. This internship serves as an opportunity to fulfill the professional skills and experimental learning requirements within the major.

### **2. Drew University: “Interfaith Studies Internship through Fellowship Program”**

Drew University is a private institution affiliated with the United Methodist Church. It is located in Madison, New Jersey, and serves about 1,500 undergraduate students. Drew has established a Junior Fellows program for interfaith leaders, which is housed in the campuses’ Center on Religion, Culture, and Conflict. Students in this program are expected to complete a 20-hour internship with an interfaith organization, non-profit, or committee. Because Drew also offers curricular opportunities for interfaith studies, students can complete the internship either within or outside of academic coursework.

### **3. Concordia College: “Forum on Faith and Life Interfaith Scholars Program”**

Concordia College is a private institution affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA). It is located in Moorhead, Minnesota, and serves about 2,500 undergraduate students. Concordia created an Interfaith Studies Minor, which consists of twenty-one credits: a foundational course called “Faith in Dialogue,” one course from the religion department, two non-religion elective courses, one practicum course, and one capstone course. The Interfaith Scholars Fellowship is an opportunity for students to participate in a robust interfaith internship either within or outside of the minor.

Tell us about the interfaith studies internships you are creating, or get in touch with us to learn more about others who have. Email Kristi Del Vecchio, Academic Initiatives Associate: [kristi@ifyc.org](mailto:kristi@ifyc.org), and visit [www.ifyc.org/resources](http://www.ifyc.org/resources) for more resources.

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# *INTERNSHIP IN INTERFAITH LEADERSHIP*

## **Elizabethtown College**

Project Lead: Rev. Dr. Tracy Sadd, Religious Life Chaplain and Lecturer in Religious Studies

Interfaith Leadership Studies 470-474

Credits: Variable, 0-12

### **Course Description**

Students work in an interfaith leadership internship and/or service setting for academic hours of credit. Internships are primarily unpaid experiences, but some organizations may offer a stipend or other form of payment. Course requirements are decreased or increased as deemed appropriate by the Internship Advisor.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this course, students will be able to

1. Describe the operations of interfaith organizations or the interfaith issues at a non-profit, political, educational, or other non-religious organization.
2. Analyze how such organizations impact societal problems.
3. Reflect on their own interfaith leadership, the organization's mission, and their day-to-day experiences.
4. Apply communication, problem-solving, teamwork and project management skills.
5. Conduct independent research related to a specific topic or issue that relates to the internship context.

### **Responsibilities**

#### **1. The Internship Advisor shall:**

- ▷ Explore student interests and discuss placement opportunities with the student during the semester prior to the internship.
- ▷ Assist the student in finding a placement in an organization suited to his/her skills and interests.
- ▷ Meet monthly with the intern during the placement.
- ▷ Maintain contact with the Agency Supervisor to discuss progress and problems.
- ▷ Assign a Pass/Fail grade for the student's work, upon completion of the internship.

#### **2. The Organization Supervisor shall:**

- ▷ Provide the intern with interesting and meaningful tasks.
- ▷ Supervise and evaluate the student intern on a periodic basis (form provided by the Internship Advisor).
- ▷ Maintain contact with the Internship Advisor to discuss progress and problems.

### **3. The Intern shall:**

- ▷ Work with the Internship Advisor to find and secure a suitable placement that matches the Intern's interest and skills.
- ▷ Perform tasks and functions at the internship placement as if he/she were a regular employee of the organization (neat, punctual, productive, cooperative, team player, etc.).
- ▷ Manage any projects assigned by the Organization Supervisor, while also recognizing that routine tasks and clerical work are part of any job.
- ▷ Pay expenses incurred (gas, meals, etc.), with the exception of those handled by the host organization in relationship to accomplishing a specific work project.
- ▷ View himself/herself as a representative of Elizabethtown College who has the responsibility to perform effectively on behalf of future students who may participate in the same internship placement.
- ▷ Complete the Course Requirements (listed below).

## **Course Requirements**

1. Intern's Job Performance: 25%
2. Journal/Log: 25%
3. Monthly Meetings: 10%
4. Applied Research Paper: 40%
5. Intern's Job Performance: 25%

The Internship Advisor and the Organization Job Supervisor will jointly assign this grade, based on written reports and regular conversations throughout the semester.

### **Journal/Log (25%)**

The Intern will write a log and journal for each day worked to 1) keep a record of hours work and projects accomplished, 2) write about experiences and observations of the organization's activities, 3) gather ideas and data for the research paper, 4) reflect on the purpose, mission, and function of the organization, and 5) reflect theologically and philosophically on vocation.

Other journal topics include decision-making practices, research techniques used, conflict management methods, management styles and techniques, financial management, supervisor-worker relations, formal structure, informal networks, interaction with Board of Directors, public relations practices, goals of the organization, and problems in the organization.

### **Monthly Meetings (10%)**

The Intern will meet with the Internship Advisor once a month to track progress, consult, and share experiences.

## **Applied Research Paper (40%)**

The intern will write a 20-25 page applied research paper on a topic relating to the internship. The intern will select a paper topic in consultation with the Internship Director. Paper topics must be approved by the Internship Director. Topics may include a significant problem relating to the intern's role or the functioning of the organization. The paper might relate to the purpose of the organization to the larger societal issues. Other research topics might be more appropriate depending upon the type and scope of the internship.

### **Course Outline**

- Week 1** Begin orientation at internship site and begin Journal/Log
  - Week 3** Appointment with Internship Advisor to discuss problems, issues, questions, or other items that might constitute applied research paper topics
  - Week 4** Turn in Journal/Log for review and comment
  - Week 5** Turn in one-page description of applied research paper topic
  - Week 8** School on Break
  - Week 9** Turn in first draft of applied research paper
  - Week 12** Turn in second draft of applied research paper
  - Week 15** Final Applied Research Paper and Completed Journal/Log Due
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# *INTERFAITH STUDIES INTERNSHIP THROUGH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM*

## **Drew University**

Project Lead: Dr. Jonathan Golden, Professor of Anthropology and Comparative Religion and Director of the Center on Religion, Culture, and Conflict

### **Description**

Universities, as incubators for social change, must prepare students for life after college in an America that is increasingly diverse with regard to religion and faith-based identities. Graduates will face both new challenges and opportunities in this arena, demanding that academic institutions offer education for both their professional and social lives. The Interfaith Studies program-in-progress at Drew aims to achieve this goal, by complementing traditional classroom studies with experiential learning and incorporating hands-on, practical experience into the college curriculum, emphasizing internships and off-campus learning opportunities.

Many of these internships are a part of a Junior Fellows program through the [Center on Religion, Culture, and Conflict \(CRCC\)](#), a platform for students who wish to get involved with interfaith leadership and/or peacebuilding work. The Center provides opportunities for these students to grow as leaders by involving them in the organization of campus events; both those run by the Center and, likewise, by supporting programming they create on their own. Students learn vital teamwork/team-building skills by working in groups, and are afforded various opportunities to develop leadership skills (e.g. CRCC has sponsored 10 students to attend the Interfaith Youth Core [Interfaith Leadership Institute](#) training). Students also have the opportunity to travel and study abroad by attending CRCC's [Peacebuilding Conference in Ireland](#), for example, while meeting with various interfaith and peacebuilding leaders from around the world that visit Drew. The CRCC Junior Fellows also work directly with CRCC partner organizations, either in the form of formal internships (see below) with these organizations or by serving as a student liaison. The CRCC Fellows program is young, but has already cultivated alumni who are participating in important peace-building initiatives around the world, including Israel-Palestine, Afghanistan, and the Congo.

Interactions and encounters with people doing interfaith work in the community offers students a close-up look at the inner workings – the challenges and hurdles – of interfaith engagement outside the university setting. In one such learning experience, students discovered that interfaith groups are often founded in response to negative impetus. For example, community members have formed interfaith organizations in response to negative instances, pushing diverse religious groups to come together in a more intentional manner. Students have also learned that some groups are more inclusive than others; given how new interfaith efforts are across the country, for example, there are differing opinions as to is welcome in interfaith spaces, and who is not. Overall, students are learning critical lessons about the challenges of doing interfaith in the “real world,” lessons that will no doubt be invaluable after they graduate.

### **Program Requirements**

1. To complete the Junior Fellows program, all students must perform 20 hours of service in an off-campus interfaith environment, typically in the form of an internship with an interfaith organization. Internships can be incorporated directly into an academic course or not. For example, the introductory course to the Interfaith Studies program requires students to identify, meet with,

and study an interfaith organization. In some cases, the students may spend time working with the organization, or may attend membership meetings and events. In other cases, the students might help publicize and organize the event. These types of efforts may be considered contributions to the internship.

2. At the end of the internship, students are expected to write a paper on their experience, describing the organization, its origins and composition, focus, and what types of events they have planned and/or executed. In this paper, students will also have explored the organization's relationship with the broader community, as well as the organization's effectiveness (i.e. what type of impact they were having, what they seemed to do that was particularly effective, and what strategies seemed to be less effective).

### **Examples of Internship Possibilities:**

1. One student, independent of a specific academic course, served in an internship with the [Foundation for Ethnic Understanding](#) and New Jersey [Muslim-Jewish Solidarity Committee](#). The student performed some of the service hours working at the offices of the organization in New York City, while also helping them to bring programming to New Jersey and to Drew's campus, including organizing a panel discussion with leaders from three different faiths. The panelists each spoke about the connection between their own faith and that of others and after a short discussion, and then moved to a group breakout format where each of the students in attendance were able to actively participate.
2. Another student is completing an internship with a Muslim-Jewish women's dialogue group called the [Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom](#). This is a national organization with chapters in cities across the United States, and they currently have plans to expand to college campuses. One of the intern's duties is to create a curriculum for how to conduct discussions about Israel-Palestine in an interfaith setting. She will also be coordinating with the Sisterhood to help pilot a chapter on Drew's campus. Upon completion of the internship, this student will write a reflection piece on her experience.
3. Another major internship opportunity will be available for students during the summer. The CRCC will continue to run the [Drew Institute on Religion and Conflict Transformation](#), a three-week seminar for interfaith engagement with Jews, Muslims, Christians from around the world. Ten of the CRCC Junior Fellows will serve as interns, and for those planning to do the Interfaith Studies program, these hours will count toward the internship requirement.

### **Other Considerations:**

It is important to note that requiring an internship and/or off-campus experience for an Interfaith Studies program can necessitate additional resources. The program must have the right assets on and off-campus; for example, an office that helps coordinate travel for off-campus experiences, in addition to a network of local interfaith organizations and faith leaders accessible as a resource for students. Despite the potential challenges that come with these requirements, the internship component of the program affords a set of learning opportunities that are vital for students training to be interfaith leaders after college by providing experience that simply cannot be replicated in the classroom.

# FORUM ON FAITH AND LIFE INTERFAITH SCHOLARS FELLOWSHIP

## Concordia College

Project Lead: Jacqueline Bussie, Director of the Forum on Faith and Life and Professor of Religion

### Description

In the strategic plan for Concordia College, President William Craft states that as a community we will “promote interfaith conversation and service as a primary function of our identity as a college of the church.” The Interfaith Scholars<sup>1</sup> play a crucial role in the college’s interfaith initiative, by assisting in creating and implementing the Forum on Faith and Life’s interfaith programming. The Interfaith Scholar will also build relationships with interfaith partners on and off campus, work closely with Concordia’s Better Together chapter, and develop resources to support interfaith activities and cooperation on campus.

*\*Please note that the Interfaith Scholar position is **open to all students, regardless of major**. Interfaith studies is an interdisciplinary field! Interreligious understanding is crucial for responsibly engaging the world in all walks of life. Interfaith Scholars in the past have represented different disciplines including nursing, business, music, world languages, and religion. All are welcome to apply!\**

### Fellowship

For this exciting study and experiential learning opportunity, each student will receive a fellowship in the amount of \$1000, \$500 each semester, received in weekly paychecks.

### Supervision

The Interfaith Scholar’s primary supervisor will be Dr. Jacqueline Bussie, Director of the Forum on Faith and Life.

### Possible Responsibilities

- ▶ Help coordinate the visit of interfaith speakers, or other speakers on our campus as hosted by the Forum on Faith and Life.
- ▶ Create and blog regularly Forum on Faith and Life’s/Better Together interfaith blog site: [www.interfaith.cord.edu](http://www.interfaith.cord.edu).
- ▶ Organize, train, and lead Interfaith Educators who give 20-25 presentations per year in Religion 100 classes.
- ▶ Regularly provide the Office of Communications with current information for the Forum website as well as maintain and create other social media pages (e.g. Facebook) for Forum special events.
- ▶ Plan and lead at least one on-campus interfaith event per semester, one of which per year will be a service project; events can be planned in conjunction with Better Together or other organizations on campus.
- ▶ Travel to relevant conferences with Dr. Bussie and write reports as needed for the conference.

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<sup>1</sup> The Interfaith Scholars Fellowship is an opportunity for students to participate in a robust interfaith internship either within or outside of the Interfaith Studies minor. For this fellowship, students serve as interns at Concordia’s interfaith resource center, the Forum on Faith and Life.

- ▶ Assist in planning interfaith and intrafaith spirituality discussions, as based on assessment of student interest in a particular topic.
- ▶ Assist in planning and co-lead an interfaith alternative spring break trip and/or worship site field trips for interested students, to locations such as the local synagogue and mosque, as well as the Hindu Temple and Buddhist monastery in Minneapolis.
- ▶ Research and create a database of religious communities/diverse sites of worship in the Fargo-Moorhead metro area, making initial contact with some of these communities to develop connection between community members there and the Forum on Faith and Life.
- ▶ Research and create a database of the top ten organizations pursuing interfaith cooperation globally (e.g. Interfaith Youth Core, Parliament of the World's Religions).
- ▶ Write an academic paper on interfaith cooperation and service and submitting a proposal to an academic conference to present this paper (e.g. American Academy of Religion, National Council on Undergraduate Research, Vocation of a Lutheran College Conference, Concordia's Celebration of Student Scholarship). **Note:** For the last three years, the interfaith scholars' work was accepted for presentation at the National Council on Undergraduate Research! The Interfaith Scholars have been selected to give national presentations at the American Academy of Religion, Peace Prize Forum, Syracuse University conference on Religion and Culture, North Dakota State University, and the White House-sponsored President's Campus Challenge Conference.
- ▶ Explore and report on five peer liberal arts/ELCA institutions' "best practices" for interfaith programming.
- ▶ Meet weekly with Dr. Jacqueline Bussie for supervision and critical reflection on the scholars experience from a theological/spiritual perspective.

## Position Timeline

Each fellowship year runs from April of one year to May of the next (i.e. April 2015-May 2016). Each scholar will engage in this experience for an average of 4 hours / week during the academic year, maintaining a written log of ongoing activities. Please note that intense programming weeks will require more than four hours; however, other weeks may have only one hour.

## Application Requirements

Students should submit a résumé and a 300-500 word essay answering the following:

1. Why are you personally committed to interfaith dialogue and cooperation both at Concordia and in our world? Why do you consider this work valuable, necessary and meaningful?
2. Why do you want to be Concordia's Interfaith Scholar? What skills, qualities, gifts, and experience in particular do you possess that qualify you for this position?