

Thesis Proposal

Describe classes/experiences that give you a background suitable to undertake this project.

My work with Dr. Rebecca Todd Peters began in the spring of 2016. Since then, we have been developing this research together both formally and informally. In the fall of 2016, I produced a research paper for the class Approaches to the Study of Religion that outlined and critiqued the current goals and structures of the interfaith movement within the United States. I found that while the goals of interfaith organizations reflect a desire for social justice, the structures and programs do not create mechanisms for action. These findings became the basis for our continued work together. This semester, I am enrolled in Interreligious Encounters with Dr. Brian Pennington who teaches critically about the history of pluralism and the interfaith movement within the US. In order to prepare for the qualitative research aspect of my project, I am currently enrolled in “Qualitative Research Methods” with Dr. Mussa Idris to prepare for my participant-observation and semi-structured interviews this summer. Through this class, I have also earned CITI certification, which offers training in the proper procedures for research involving human subjects. This semester, I am also enrolled in four hours of 498 hours with my research mentor. We are focused on studying the historical and theoretical frameworks that influence the social justice and interfaith movements today.

In addition to academic proficiency, I also have significant experience in interfaith organizing that has helped prepare me for this research. For the last three years, I spearheaded the organization of Hijab Day at Elon through the Truitt Center, an event where non-Muslims could stand in solidarity and make a visible statement of acceptance regarding the presence of Muslims in this country. This organizing gave me experience navigating the nuances and difficulties involved in interfaith work. Additionally, I attended two prominent collegiate interfaith conferences: the Interfaith Leadership Institute through Interfaith Youth Core and Ripple through the Truitt Center at Elon University. These conferences allowed me to critically engage in dialogue about current critiques and trajectories of the movement. I am a member of the inaugural cohort of Multi-Faith Scholars at Elon University, which requires engagement in both global and local interreligious encounters through research and community involvement. Finally, in

the summer of 2017, I earned a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Interreligious Studies from the Ecumenical Institute of Geneva. In this program, I was part of an international cohort of scholars from Christianity, Judaism, and Islam who examined how different social, cultural, and historical contexts shape interreligious encounters. These experiences have helped prepare me for my research and allowed me to begin forming a network of interreligious professional contacts and colleagues.

How is the project related to your educational (and/or life) objectives?

In my life, I have witnessed animosity across lines of difference that has frustrated and perplexed me. My Christian church friends expressed their horror at the idea of me wearing a Muslim hijab at church, even if only for one day. My Democratic best friend passionately condemned the individual cops inside the cars we passed whom she assumed were Republican racists. My white family tried to stop me from studying abroad in black sub-Saharan Africa and my well-off friends dehumanized the working class who voted for our most current president. Since many of my relationships extend across partisan, racial, economic, and religious lines of difference, I feel a tension of cognitive dissonance: while perspectives and ideologies might clash, we must not lose sight of the humanity of those with whom we disagree. This cognitive dissonance has led to a desire to work on and address the problems of civil discord that are rampant in our world. Recognizing the important role that religion continues to play in the lives of a majority of the world's people as well as in seeing the increasing animosity directed at people across lines of religious difference has generated a personal passion for interfaith encounter, where people are encouraged to critically assess their own faith traditions while learning to understand opposing worldviews. These encounters theoretically spark cooperation across lines of difference to support community efforts. I see my research as an opportunity for me to understand the dynamics of those encounters and as well as how to facilitate better conversations- both as an individual and as a community organizer.

This research will also prepare me to accomplish long term personal and career goals effectively, since after graduation I am considering entering the field of interfaith work to help people navigate

difference while working together for social justice. By doing participant-observation within Interfaith Worker Justice, I will be immersed within the interfaith world, where I can begin to build the networks and relationships integral to such work. This research will help me understand the field as well as what my niche in the field might be. Thus, I will be better equipped to identify meaningful career options post-graduation.

Provide a brief summary of the qualifications that make your faculty mentor suitable to supervise this project, and attach the faculty member's curriculum vitae.

Dr. Peters has expertise in mentoring UR students in Religious Studies who use ethnographic and interview methodologies. She had training in these research methodologies in graduate school at the New School for Social Research in New York. The use of ethnography in ethics is a relatively recent development and it is distinctly different from the use of ethnography by social scientists. She is well-suited to mentor me as I explore how to code and analyze data and use it as data for examining my larger research question. In addition to her suitability for my research methodologies, she has successfully mentored eight undergraduate students at Elon, including one SURE student. She is also an expert in UR in the field of Religious Studies, having co-written two grants in the field of Religious Studies that funded pioneering work in Religious Studies on best practices in UR. She co-edited the primary book in the field on the subject as a result of those grants. Her research in social ethics is focused on questions of economics, globalization, and poverty is intimately connected to my focus on worker justice and community organizing. Additionally, Dr. Peters has worked with Interfaith Worker Justice and was able to connect me to the organization and to its founder, Kim Bobo.

If this project involves human subjects, has a proposal been made to Elon's Institutional Research Board? YES

If yes, when was it submitted and has it been approved? Submitted and Approved 2/19/18

Thesis Narrative

Introduction and Review of Relevant Scholarship

This project is situated within social ethics, therefore critical theory shapes my research. Critical theory is an expanding field that considers various complex layers of both dominant and marginalized groups in order to study societies and their unjust systems more holistically. One important aspect of critical theory includes understanding the ways the present is shaped by history.¹ Therefore, in order to responsibly assess interfaith organizing and social justice within the United States, I begin with an historical account of the experience of pluralism.

Although many cite the World Parliament of Religions in 1893 as the beginning of the modern interfaith movement and pluralism in the US, the history of this country has been one of encounter with the culturally, ethnically, and religiously other since its beginning.² These original encounters of difference, though, were controlled and suppressed by the power of white Protestants. For example, instead of engaging with the cultures and religions of Native Americans, after pursuing a near complete genocide, the US government placed Native American children in boarding schools where they could not contact their families, speak their language, or practice their religion. Similarly, African slaves were prohibited from having their own religious services and forced to attend church services where white preachers would teach them Bible lessons of obedience and servitude.³ Despite the fact that many white Protestants were fleeing intolerance and persecution in coming to the American colonies, many used their power to attempt to strip other ethnic groups of their religious traditions and to teach a Christianity that served their own purposes.

¹ Other relevant and important aspects include understanding the politics behind knowledge production, the relationship between socialization and social stratification, and the inequitable resource and power distribution between dominant and marginalized groups. Özlem. Sensoy and Robin J. DiAngelo, *Is Everyone Really Equal?: An Introduction to Key Concepts in Social Justice Education*, Multicultural Education Series; Multicultural Education Series (New York, N.Y.) (New York: Teachers College Press, 2012), 6.

² Michaud, "World Parliament of Religions, 1893," Online Encyclopedia, Boston Collaborative Encyclopedia of Western Theology, accessed February 6, 2018,

³ Peter Randolph, "Plantation Churches: Visible and Invisible," in *African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness*, ed. Milton C. Sernett, 2nd ed. (63-68: Duke University Press, 1999).

In 1893, though, white Protestants invited religious leaders and scholars of ten prominent world religions to engage in dialogue. Notably, neither Native Americans nor African Americans were invited. The legacy of the Parliament was pluralism, but a pluralism in which progressive Christians condescendingly decided for all that religious differences are ultimately insignificant.⁴ Their opinion was that each religion worships the same God (thinly veiled and described in largely Christian theological ways), only with various cultural approaches.

Increasingly, scholars like Diana Eck, founder of the Pluralism Project identify the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which coincided with the Civil Rights Movement, as the turning point in the US for growth in diversity as well as modern pluralism.⁵ Eck describes diversity as a demographic fact, tolerance as acceptance of the presence of others, and relativism as a sort of apathy towards real differences, but she explains modern pluralism as engagement across lines of difference.⁶ In the last fifty years, modern pluralism has grown in the US because increasing amounts of immigrant and other minoritized communities preserve and share their own cultures instead of assimilating into the dominant culture.

The demographic shifts of the last fifty years have served as scapegoats for the recent socio-economic and political crises in the US. The collapse of dominant narratives has led to a loss of social trust in communities, which politicians exploit.⁷ First, Rebecca Todd Peters interprets the end of the hegemonic power of white Protestants as a result of the inability for Christians- both conservative and liberal- to remain morally relevant in a country where people increasingly reject organized religion.⁸ This decrease of social influence causes a sense of loss and mourning among many white Christians.⁹ Additionally, the failures of neoliberal capitalism compound the sense of loss for many US Americans as the job market transitions from an industrial to a service and technology economy, leaving behind the

⁴ Michaud, “World Parliament of Religions, 1893.”

⁵ Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America: How a “Christian Country” has Now Become the World’s Most Religiously Diverse Nation*, 1st ed. ([San Francisco]: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001), 22.

⁶ Eck, 22.

⁷ Rebecca Todd Peters, “Renewing the Social Contract: Morality and Economic Theory for a Post-Industrial World,” in *Laws in Ethics, Ethics in Law* (unpublished paper presented at The Society of Christian Ethics, Portland, OR, 2018), 2.

⁸ Peters, 12.

⁹ Robert P. Jones, *The End of White Christian America*, First Simon & Schuster hardcover edition. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2016).

factory jobs that built the post-war middle-class. During his presidency, Ronald Reagan endorsed a policy that cut taxes for the wealthy in hopes that they would reinvest the extra capital into the local economy, ultimately benefiting the working class. This policy, though, has simply increased economic inequality.¹⁰ Decisions by large businesses in a globalizing economy to cut “middle-men” and outsource jobs or eliminate them via technological advances in order to maximize profit has also re-distributed wealth to the wealthy. Thus, the inequality gap increases, social mobility decreases, and working class white US Americans face real hardships. Politicians correlate these hardships with changing demographics, pitting communities against each other by exacerbating fault lines in societies. Efforts to regain a sense of economic stability and social influence associated with a previous era manifest themselves in urgently fought battles over LGBT rights, ethno-racial tensions, immigration policies, and gun laws.¹¹ These are some of the fronts on which the current socio-economic and political crises of the US unfold.

Various theoretical approaches attempt to make sense of and solve the current crises. One theory resembles Robert Nozick’s entitlement view. His view of justice advocates for minimal government involvement and fair individual interactions: with free choice and fair exchange, a circumstance is just if the original position was just.¹² As a libertarian, Charles Murray might subscribe to Nozick’s theory. According to Murray, the divisive conflicts in the United States are not due to poor distribution of resources or an unjust original position, but rather due to the moral deterioration among the lower socioeconomic classes. Rather than invoke more government action, he calls upon the higher socioeconomic class to revitalize their own religiosity and moral standard in order to set an example for the others.¹³ In his eyes, resolving the conflicts is not a concern of justice, but a concern of moral standards.

Reinhold Niebuhr’s theory on justice offers a more pragmatic approach. Rather than beginning with an assumption of a just original position, he begins and continues with an emphasis on the sinful

¹⁰ Peters, “Renewing the Social Contract: Morality and Economic Theory for a Post-Industrial World,” 18.

¹¹ Jones, *The End of White Christian America*, 42.

¹² Karen Lebacqz, *Six Theories of Justice: Perspectives from Philosophical and Theological Ethics* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 58.

¹³ Charles A. Murray, *Coming Apart: The State of White America, 1960-2010*, 1st ed. (New York, N.Y.: Crown Forum, 2012).

nature of humans.¹⁴ Free exchanges are not fair because people try to take advantage of the situation. For Niebuhr, striving towards justice means striving to achieve a balance of power. Even though, due to sin, all structures contain elements of injustice and a perfect balance of power will never be truly realized on earth, humans should continue to work for closer approximations towards “the harmony of love that is perfect justice.”¹⁵ In order to work towards justice in such a way, Dr. Peters advocates a theology of mutuality in which groups work together across lines of difference with the understanding that their well-being is interdependent.¹⁶ She argues that such an ethic of solidarity is necessary in order to transform the structural issues of society that create injustice. Though perfect justice may not be achievable, working together (solidarity) is the key to the kind of social transformation that helps shape a more just society.

With an increasing emphasis on addressing conflicts by bringing people together across lines of religious difference, the goals of the current and growing interfaith movement in the US express a desire for social justice and the common good. According to Eboo Patel, founder of Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), interfaith dialogue is even more significant in the US now as a response to increasingly common hate crimes, which are often religiously motivated. He writes that engaging in interfaith dialogue develops internal individual harmony, separates the good and bad aspects of religion, and provides space for pluralistic cooperation necessary in the United States.¹⁷ Patel’s approach to interfaith organizing, however, has been critiqued for irresponsibly focusing only on the religious aspects of social problems, promoting polarizing binaries between good and bad, supporting nationalism, and hiding other aspects of interfaith organizing.¹⁸ Clearly there is not a consensus on the objectives or role that the interfaith movement should have in the United States.¹⁹

¹⁴ Lebacqz, *Six Theories of Justice: Perspectives from Philosophical and Theological Ethics*, 91.

¹⁵ Lebacqz, 92.

¹⁶ Rebecca Todd. Peters, *Solidarity Ethics: Transformation in a Globalized World* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014), 40.

¹⁷ Eboo Patel, “Why Interfaith Efforts Matter More Than Ever,” *The Huffington Post*, April 23, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eboo-patel/3-reasons-interfaith-efforts-matter-more-than-ever_b_3134795.html.

¹⁸ Lucia Hulsether, “Can Interfaith Dialogue Cure Religious Violence?,” *Religion Dispatches*, April 26, 2013, <http://religiondispatches.org/can-interfaith-dialogue-cure-religious-violence/>.

¹⁹ In response to Patel’s effort to establish an academic field of interfaith studies, a group of professors at Elon University wrote a chapter for his book in which they articulate the responsibility of such an academic field. Analogous to the role of sociology in poverty alleviation programs might, the role of interreligious studies is to critically understand and critique the interfaith movement so that it may

My interest is in examining the role of the interfaith movement in addressing the current socio-economic and political crises previously identified. In choosing a theoretical framework around which to situate my research, I assessed both the entitlement view and pragmatic view described earlier. Since, the entitlement view as explained by Nozick is focused on equality of opportunity, this view is not consonant with how interfaith organizations approach addressing injustice in society. Furthermore, Nozick's focus on micro-level interactions is at odds with a critical theoretical approach that stresses the value of evaluating inequitable structures at the macro-level. Since Murray doesn't adequately take into consideration non-white people in his assessment of the nation's situations, nor does he see the crises as ones of injustice, his framework does not make space for significant aspects of the US interfaith movement essential to my research. Thus, the entitlement theory of justice does not provide the needed mechanism to support my research.

On the other hand, the pragmatic theory of justice as advocated by Niebuhr and Peters reflects an equality of outcomes approach that seeks to ensure structural equality and equity in social relationships. This perspective provides my research with the necessary mechanisms to analyze interfaith organizations in the United States that are trying to enact change. The interfaith movement within the US theoretically starts from a point of recognizing the need to come together across lines of difference to benefit the common good. Like Niebuhr, many interfaith organizations state that they desire to address injustices that have been caused by the imbalance of power between social groups. Similarly to Peters, they recognize a needed ethic of cooperation and solidarity across lines of difference to produce transformative action. Since the goals align within such a framework, these pragmatic theories provide the mechanisms necessary to evaluate the structures of the interfaith organizations involved, the majority of which do not currently produce the political actions they desire.

Instead of critiquing the ineffective structures of many interfaith organizations within the US, and in order to enact a pragmatic approach, I decided to analyze the structures of an effective organization with the goal of identifying effective community organizing strategies that are able to produce meaningful

develop more effectively. Amy Allocco, Geoffrey Claussen, and Brian Pennington, "Constructing Interreligious Studies: Thinking Critically about Interfaith Studies and the Interfaith Movement," in *Towards a Field of Interfaith Studies*, ed. Eboo Patel, Jennifer Peace, and Noah Silverman (Beacon Press, 2018).

results in specific communities. Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) is an interfaith organization in the US that does indeed produce effective social justice action. Kim Bobo founded the organization in 1996 as a grassroots movement that builds alliances with congregations among affiliates around the country.²⁰ Its approach to organizing is also what Bobo describes as pragmatic: religious communities are seen as significant to the United States public and therefore they are necessary to supporting social justice movements. The organization pulls local religious communities together to not only address the symptoms of injustice through worker centers, but also to effect change for social justice on the structural level.²¹ Since IWJ does effectively enact social justice action at both local and national levels as well as stressing the importance of faith community involvement, it provides the opportunity for me to study how interfaith organizations in the US may support social transformation for justice by bringing people together across lines of religious difference.

Main Goal of the Project

In an increasingly interconnected world, even more so in an increasingly pluralistic US, religious communities inevitably come in contact with the “other” at a higher frequency than before. Thus, since the majority of people are people of faith, interfaith dialogue and organization is an important civic opportunity necessary for communities to develop healthy ways to live and work together. As the field of Interreligious or Interfaith Studies is currently emerging, research on intentionally focused encounters across lines of difference is lacking. Therefore, the main goal of this project is to explore the possibility for effective cooperation across lines of religious difference. In order to achieve this, I strive to better understand how interfaith organizations effectively work with faith congregations to further social justice. By examining IWJ, through its national office as well as five local affiliates, I hope to identify strategies and structural or programmatic approaches that can help more communities engage faith congregations in interfaith work that focuses on a model of building relationships of solidarity that contribute to the common good.

Methods

²⁰ Joseph A. McCartin, “Building the Interfaith Worker Justice Movement: Kim Bobo’s Story,” *Labor* 6, no. 1 (March 20, 2009): 87–105, <https://doi.org/10.1215/15476715-2008-046>.

²¹ McCartin, 95.

As a project in social ethics, this research will be grounded in a historical understanding of interfaith encounter in the United States. Therefore, complemented by participant-observation, I will pay attention to related literature in ethics, philosophy, and history as well as relevant literature concerning the interfaith movement throughout the research process.

Over the summer of 2018, I will engage in participant-observation at the national Interfaith Worker Justice office as well as four local affiliates located in Madison, WI, Los Angeles, CA, Memphis, TN, and Portland, ME. These affiliates were chosen based on the following criteria 1) visible emphasis on faith investment; 2) evidence of structural stability and support; 3) involvement in both charity and justice work; 4) demographic and geographic variety. I will also work with the local Greensboro affiliate during the spring term of 2018. This methodology allows me first-hand access to examining the structures and practices of my partner organizations instead of relying solely on written materials by the organization. By visiting multiple local affiliates, I will have the opportunity to observe different organizational models and consider how their work is shaped by local contexts. My goal is to analyze and evaluate these affiliate organizations that share the common cause of worker justice in order to ascertain if there are strategies, best practices, or other structural or programmatic emphases that mark an effective interfaith model of social justice organizing across these different contexts. In dialogue with IWJ staff, we have decided that during this time, I will also participate in the work of local projects. Participating in the work of local affiliates embodies the approach of building solidarity through relationships and social action that I am investigating. It also models reciprocity by giving back to the organizations in addition to researching them as a case study.

At the national office, I will interview all nine staff members, focusing on the mission, vision, and goals that guide the organization as well as details of how they interact with local affiliates. At the local level, I will interview two to three key staff members with similar questions. These interviews will also allow me a formal opportunity to ask about personal faith commitments, specific involvement within the organization, and how they see IWJ interacting with and affecting their community. I will also identify three to four individual volunteers at each site to interview as a key informant. The criteria for identifying

these key informants include 1) strong faith and justice commitments; 2) willingness to be interviewed; 3) representative of the range of faith communities that work with each local affiliate.

During the fall semester of 2018, I will organize my field notes and code and analyze the data from my participant-observation and semi-structured interviews. This analysis will identify common structural and programmatic approaches to organizing across lines of difference, strategies to engage faith communities in social justice action, and other newly emergent themes that arise among the various local affiliates. These themes will form the basis for my thesis.

Final Product

At the end of this research, I will produce a 60- to 80-page thesis with multiple chapters based on the analyses of the data collected in the summer of 2018. These chapters will include theoretical and historical framing of my topic, results of my data analysis, and my conclusions. Parts of this research will be presented at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Toronto in the fall of 2018 as well as SECSOR (Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion) and SURF in the spring of 2019. Alongside this thesis, I plan on producing usable resources concerning strategies for effective action for other interfaith organizations.

Annotated Bibliography

Allocco, Amy, Geoffrey Claussen, and Brian K. Pennington. "Constructing Interreligious Studies: Thinking Critically about Interfaith Studies and the Interfaith Movement." In *Towards a Field of Interfaith Studies*, edited by Eboo Patel, Jennifer Peace, and Noah Silverman. Forthcoming, Beacon Press, 2018.

These three professors from Elon University explain the objectives and values behind the structuring of the Interreligious Studies minor at their university. They argue that it is the role of academia to critically understand interreligious encounters of all kinds and critique the interfaith movement. The objectives they set forth regarding interreligious academia guide my own approach to researching the interfaith movement.

Eck, Diana L. 2001. *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" has Now Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*. 1st ed. [San Francisco]: HarperSanFrancisco.

Through the evidence gathered from the Pluralism Project, Eck explored the diversity of the United States and the mutual transformation of religion and state. She argues for a pluralistic model in which the diversity of religion linked with intentional encounter can become the strength of US society. It is within this contextual understanding of the US as a pluralistic nation that the interfaith movement operates.

Hulsether, Lucia. "Can Interfaith Dialogue Cure Religious Violence?" Religion Dispatches, April 26, 2013. <http://religiondispatches.org/can-interfaith-dialogue-cure-religious-violence/>.

Responding to Patel's Huffington Post article that followed the Boston Bombing, Hulsether is skeptical of Patel's approach to interfaith work. She questions his methods and objectives by pinpointing many of the problematic implications that they have. This article was the second in an online debate between these two prominent figures that reflects the current shifting frameworks of interfaith in the United States.

Jones, Robert P. 2016. *The End of White Christian America*. First Simon & Schuster hardcover edition. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Utilizing the data collected by polls the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI), Robert P. Jones describes and explains the hegemonic influence of White Christian America (WCA) on the US. He explains the fear of the "descendants" as well as predicts the trajectory of the future. His analysis of the current religio-political state of the US explains many of the tensions surrounding injustice that the interfaith movement desires to address.

Lebacqz, Karen. *Six Theories of Justice: Perspectives from Philosophical and Theological Ethics*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986.

Karen Lebacqz describes and explains six different theories of justice. First she explains three philosophical theories that support capitalist economics and assume an equal original position of all parties. Then, she dives into three different Christian theologies of justice that deal with addressing injustice. As my research focuses on how interfaith groups can work towards justice, understanding various justice frameworks is essential.

McCartin, Joseph A. "Building the Interfaith Worker Justice Movement: Kim Bobo's Story." *Labor* 6, no. 1 (March 20, 2009): 87–105. <https://doi.org/10.1215/15476715-2008-046>.

Based on an interview with Bobo, McCartin explains her personal history of activism and interfaith work; including how and with what objectives she began Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ). In the end, he includes an excerpt of the interview in which she discusses how she believes IWJ will navigate and develop within the next ten years. Working with IWJ, it is significant for me to understand the history and original intent of the organization as well as how they have developed in the ten years since the interview.

Murray, Charles A. *Coming Apart: The State of White America, 1960-2010*. 1st ed. New York, N.Y.: Crown Forum, 2012.

Murray is a social scientist who uses national statistics to support his claims. He recognizes the growing divide between higher and lower socio-economics cultures and argues that those of higher socio-economic status have the responsibility to set the moral standard for the rest of the nation. If they do not, he argues, the immorality of the lower classes will tear apart the nation. This alternative framework explaining the necessity and responsibility of social change serves as a contrast to the framework that I employ in my own research.

Patel, Eboo. "Why Interfaith Efforts Matter More Than Ever." The Huffington Post, April 23, 2013. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eboo-patel/3-reasons-interfaith-efforts-matter-more-than-ever_b_3134795.html.

Eboo Patel, founder of Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), responded to the Boston Bombing with an article to the Huffington post explaining in the context of the tragedy how interfaith issues are relevant and

pertinent in society today. He claims that interfaith cooperation provides individual internal harmony, separates the good elements of religion from the bad, and nurtures cooperation within the pluralistic US. The main influence behind the largest interfaith organization in the US, IFYC, understanding his perspectives and objectives is imperative to understanding current interfaith work in the US.

Peters, Rebecca Todd. *Solidarity Ethics: Transformation in a Globalized World*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014.

In this book, Peters outlines the current models of solidarity utilized by Christians in an effort to work towards transformation in a globalized world. She argues that while currently the models are of sympathy or responsibility, Christians should move towards a model of mutuality, in which social justice is seen as good for the entire community and not just the minoritized. This ethic allows people to come together across all lines of difference, including faith difference, to make strides towards justice for all.

Putnam, Robert D. *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*. 1st Simon & Schuster hardcover ed. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010.

In his book, Robert D Putnam analyzes the data collected by Pew Research center concerning the tensions of interreligious encounters within the US. He also outlines the trajectory of US demographics as the nature of both pluralistic and non-religious encounters increases. His argument for interfaith relationships and decreasing religious tensions based on polls explain and support the hopes of many interfaith organizations around the world.

Sensoy, Özlem, and Robin J. DiAngelo. *Is Everyone Really Equal?: An Introduction to Key Concepts in Social Justice Education*. Multicultural Education Series; Multicultural Education Series (New York, N.Y.). New York: Teachers College Press, 2012.

In their book, Özlem and DiAngelo explain critical theory and the ways that this theory approaches understanding and dealing with various structural forms of oppression. My research is rooted in a critical theory approach to social justice, as interfaith work recognizes the importance of the individual, the community, and their histories.

Tuna, Agnes. 2016. "Intercultural Dialogue: Only a Means, Not an End in Itself." *New-Med Research Network*, December, 1–17.

Based on her professional experience, Agnes Tuna critiques the intercultural and interreligious dialogue as practiced in Europe, along the Mediterranean. She critiques the current method of simply harmonization, but argues that it should be a political tool to cooperatively address controversial issues. Though not specifically within the context of US pluralism, her critique is useful in understanding the possibilities of action for the interfaith movement.