

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

2018 MINICOURSE  
**UNDERSTANDING  
OTHERNESS WITHIN  
RELIGIOUS  
COMMUNITIES**



**January 25 – February 15, 2018**  
**Thursdays, 7:00-9:00 PM**  
Seegers Union, GQ Annex  
Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA 18104

**Pres. Suleyman Eris**

**Rabbi Elsie Stern**

**Dr. Randall Zachman**

**Coordinated by the  
Rev. Dr. Peter A. Pettit**

 **Muhlenberg College  
Institute for  
Jewish-Christian  
Understanding**

**UNDERSTANDING  
OTHERNESS WITHIN  
RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES**

Religious communities, like all communities, have boundaries marking the line between who is part of "us" and who is other than "us." These boundaries serve crucial functions of identification, building cohesion, and articulating truth. Most religious communities have developed mechanisms for respecting others who are outside the community, based on shared humanity, common creation, moral standards, or the like. Interfaith dialogue often focuses on these dynamics.

Yet not all "others" are outside. People with whom we disagree about values, morals, beliefs, and practices still exist as part of "us" within our religious community. How do we understand and engage this "otherness?" How much do we accommodate it and when, on what grounds, might we decide that they are no longer legitimately part of "us?"

We will explore the question of otherness *within* the Muslim, Jewish, and Christian religious communities. Our presenters are all experienced in training religious leaders in their respective communities; they can lead us into the ideas and dynamics of negotiating internal otherness. By exploring these dynamics together in an environment of shared learning, we will come to greater understanding of other communities, and we can also learn something more about dealing with the "others" within our own communities.

## OUR PRESENTERS



Pres. Suleyman Eris   Rabbi Dr. Elsie Stern   Dr. Randall Zachman

Suleyman Eris has trained with influential sheikhs and scholars in his native Turkey and Egypt. His academic degrees in Islamic Studies are from Uludag University and the Univ. of Georgia; he is currently a Ph.D. candidate at Temple Univ. Having founded Respect Graduate School in 2012 in Bethlehem, he continues as its President. RGS offers the MA degree in Islamic Studies. Among Pres. Eris's publications is "*A Brief Guide: Islam, Belief and Practice.*"

Elsie Stern is VP for Academic Affairs at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, where she has served on the faculty since 2007 teaching courses in Bible and early Judaism. She has a gift for making Torah accessible. Stern earned her B.A. at Yale University and her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. Her publications include *From Rebuke to Consolation: Exegesis and Theology in the Liturgical Anthology of the Ninth of Av Season* and contributions to *The Jewish Study Bible*, *The Women's Torah Commentary* and *The Dictionary of the Bible in Ancient Media*.

Randall C. Zachman is Professor, Emeritus, of Reformation Studies at the University of Notre Dame. He currently resides in Lancaster, PA, where he is Adjunct Professor of Church History at Lancaster Theological Seminary. He is also a member of the International Theology Conference at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem.

## INFORMATION

January 25 – February 15  
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Seegers Union, GQ Annex  
2400 Chew St, Allentown PA 18104

### January 25, 2018

Orienting Questions  
Otherness within Islam - I

### February 1, 2018

Otherness within Islam - II  
Otherness within Judaism - I

### February 8, 2018

Otherness within Judaism - II  
Otherness within Christianity - I

### February 15, 2018

Otherness within Christianity - II  
Closing Questions and Discussion

Call or e-mail to register:  
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