

INTERFAITH CASE-STUDY EVALUATION

Dr. Hans Gustafson, University of St. Thomas (Saint Paul, MN)
hsgustafson@stthomas.edu

ABOUT THIS ASSIGNMENT

The following assignment was developed by Dr. Hans Gustafson as a part of his [“Jesus Christ and Interreligious Dialogue”](#) course at the University of Saint Thomas (Saint Paul, MN), where case study methodology is utilized to explore interfaith topics.

In 2015, Dr. Gustafson participated in a Teaching Interfaith Understanding faculty development seminar, run in partnership between the Council of Independent Colleges and Interfaith Youth Core, and generously funded by the Henry Luce Foundation. For information on future seminars, and to access more resources created by seminar alumni, visit www.ifyc.org/content/ifyc-cic-resources.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION

These two assignments address our learning objective of “learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view” within the context of interreligious encounter. Begin by carefully reading through this assignment sheet and making note of the due dates. We will examine and discuss the two following case studies on their due dates.

ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS

Adding Eid: The superintendent of Cambridge Public Schools in Massachusetts deals with the request to add a Muslim holiday to the school calendar. Pretend that you have been contracted by your local city’s superintendent to become an expert on the case and then prepare an evaluation to inform her as she prepares to deal with a similar controversy in your city. In other words, you are to become the expert on the case, teach her the essentials of the case, and finally offer her your position among other possible positions. Be sure to state why you defend the position you do. Begin by reading the case-study documents on Blackboard (the course website).

A Question of Membership: How multiple religious belonging poses a challenge for religious organizations in America. Pretend that you have been contracted by the local Jewish community to become an expert on the case and then prepare an evaluation to inform them as they prepare to deal with a similar dilemma in their congregation, teach them the essentials of the case, and offer your position among other possible positions. Be sure to state why you defend the position you do. Begin by reading the case-study documents on Blackboard.

Please bring a hard-copy of your case-study evaluation on the due dates indicated in the course syllabus. Our evaluations will be used to inform our class discussion on that day. Structure your evaluation in the following way:

1. First-Level Analysis (descriptive perspective as an outside observer)
 - ▶ *What do we know?* Summarize the essentials of the case for your intended audience by providing the main issue of conflict, all of the relevant facts, and the key parties involved.
 - ▶ *What is the context?* What is relevant about the time and place of this controversy?
 - ▶ *What don't we know?* What information is needed or left out of the documents that would allow one to make a more informed decision on this case?
2. Second-level Analysis (perspectives of the main parties involved)
 - ▶ Identify the main parties involved in the conflict.
 - ▶ Attempt to offer a perspective from each party and defend their specific actions or opinions from their point-of-view if applicable (given their interests and knowledge).
 - ▶ How and why are these views important for your audience to know about?
3. Third-level Analysis (your prescriptive perspective)
 - ▶ Given all of the information you do and do not have, what would you do or recommend in this specific situation especially if you were in a position of leadership?
 - ▶ Perhaps you ought to include the missing information and questions you raised from the first-level analysis (*what don't we know*). Gathering the missing information will require you to consult resources beyond the provided case-study documents.
 - ▶ *After our class discussion, you are to revise this third-level analysis based on that discussion and email to me within one week. In your revision, indicate what you changed and why.*

Format requirements

Put your name on it, 950-1600 words (3-5 pages); 12-point font, single or double spaced, 1" margins, cite your sources using Chicago, Turabian, MLA, or APA; hard-copy due in class on date of scheduled class discussion above.

Grading Evaluation Guide

- ▶ A **strong paper** (90-100 points) will demonstrate clear understanding of the case by reporting it accurately and summarizing the essentials of the case. It will directly identify the main issue of the conflict. It will sort out the relevant facts from the irrelevant. It will take into account the context of the case and comment on its importance and implications, if applicable. It will identify what is not known and suggest areas where more information is needed and why. It will identify the major parties involved and attempt to offer sympathetic perspectives from their points of view while clearly stating why these views are important for a proper understanding of the case. It will offer a clear position of what the writer would do if she or he were in a similar leadership position. It will defend this position. If needed, it will consult outside sources in gathering that information (if possible). It will offer a revised third-level analysis that clearly articulates what was changed after class discussion and why. It will have little to no spelling, grammar, and/or syntax errors.
- ▶ An **adequate paper** (70-89 points) will demonstrate a basic understanding of the case by reporting it mostly accurately and summarizing many essentials of the case. It will make an attempt to address the main issue of the conflict. It will sort out most of the relevant facts, but may include one or two irrelevant facts. It will address the context of the case but may not comment on its importance and implications, if applicable. It will identify at least one unknown item and suggest an area where more information is needed but not say why. It will identify some of the major parties involved and attempt to offer sympathetic perspectives from their points of view but may not state why these views are important for a proper understanding of the case. It will offer a clear position of what the writer would do if she or he were in a similar leadership position, but may not offer a defense of this. If needed, it may consult outside sources in gathering that information (if possible). It will offer a revised third-level analysis but may not articulate what was changed after class discussion and why. It may have only a few spelling, grammar, and/or syntax errors, but they will not distract the reader from the main content.
- ▶ A **weak paper** (0-69 points) will demonstrate a misunderstanding of the case evidenced by an inaccurate summary of the majority of the case essentials. Little to no attempt is made to address the main issue of the conflict. It does not sort out relevant facts as evidenced by including many (more than two) irrelevant facts. There is little to no mention of the context of the case nor its importance and implications. It identifies little to no unknown information and does not suggest areas where more information is needed. It identifies very few, if any, of the major parties involved and shows no attempt to offer sympathetic perspectives from their points of view. It offers a very vague personal position, if any, of what the writer would do if she or he were in a similar leadership position. It gives a vague defense, if any, of this position. It consults no outside sources in an attempt to gather missing information. It does not include a revised third-level analysis or an explanation of any or lack thereof. It may have several, grammar, and/or syntax errors to the point of distracting the reader from the main content.