Ecumenical education in a multicultural environment…

In order to face the challenges of living in increasingly pluralistic societies, in a world of economic and cultural globalization, climate change, neglect of human rights and attempts to justify growing violence in the name of religion, the churches need leaders with knowledge of other religious traditions and with a sensitivity to confessional and cultural differences.

A part of the World Council of Churches and attached to the University of Geneva, the Ecumenical Institute offers three distinct study programmes on the graduate level. Each year the Institute welcomes a group of no more than 40 students from around the world and from many different Christian traditions.

Under the guidance of a culturally and confessionally diverse faculty, students not only engage in academic studies but learn from one another and experience the oneness of Christ in an intensive community setting through common worship, group and individual study and many personal encounters. Many of them have borne witness later that their time at the Ecumenical Institute was life-changing. Their prejudices have been questioned, their identity strengthened and transformed. They have received an understanding of the diversity of religious traditions and a sensitivity for the other. They have learned to engage with diversity in creative and productive ways.

The Ecumenical Institute is a unique place for ecumenical education. The content of the teaching is focussed on the challenges for the churches in the 21st century and the responses given through the modern ecumenical movement. The methodology is a combination of academic teaching and experiential learning.

WELCOME!

REV. DR DAGMAR HELLER, ACADEMIC DEAN, PROFESSOR OF ECUMENICAL THEOLOGY
The Château de Bossey stands in the Swiss countryside between the Jura Mountains and Lake Geneva. Since the Middle Ages, this region has been known locally as “terre sainte” (holy land) due to its particular Christian history. Located 15 km from Geneva, the Château is close to the headquarters of international ecumenical organizations, United Nations agencies and the University of Geneva. It is a meeting centre that combines accommodation, modern meeting rooms and a welcoming environment for seminars, conferences and events aimed both at individuals and groups. The facilities of the campus include two chapels, a library, ten fully-equipped meeting rooms and 90 bedrooms. The self-service restaurant caters daily breakfast, lunch and dinner for students and all other guests.

Community life is very important for the style of teaching at the Ecumenical Institute. In addition to common class sessions, one of the main places for living community is Petit Bossey, a charming old mansion approximately 200 meters away from the Château, where the students are lodged. In addition to two sitting rooms for encounter and discussion, there is ample opportunity for leisure activities including volleyball, table tennis, cycling, relaxing in the garden, and walking, jogging or hiking in the surrounding countryside.

At the heart of the students’ life at Bossey is regular common prayer in the main chapel, where students discover their differences in faith and find ways to stand together in the presence of God.

Service learning is another component which strengthens community life in Bossey in two ways: Care of creation, and community service through gardening tasks and dish washing, raise sensitivity for the needs of others.

The campus hosts the library of the World Council of Churches, which holds about 100,000 volumes and 900 specialized periodicals. It includes a unique and comprehensive collection on ecumenism and the history of the ecumenical movement as well as collections in specialized areas such as missiology, contextual theology and interfaith dialogue. The library also gives access to various electronic sources, e.g. e-books, e-journals and online databases in the field of religious studies.

FR DR IOAN SAUCA, DIRECTOR OF THE ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE, DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE WCC
Make “every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”
(Ephesians 4:3)

Study Courses

The study programmes are conducted jointly with the Autonomous Faculty of Protestant Theology of the University of Geneva, which issues all the diplomas and certificates.

Bossey offers these programmes on the basis of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), established in 1989 by the European Commission and providing a way of measuring and comparing learning achievements and transferring them from one academic institution to another. ECTS credits are a value allocated to course units to describe the student’s workload.

Workshop on Intercultural Biblical Studies (3 ECTS credits)
Gives an opportunity to deepen exegetical competence and learn about the ecumenical relevance of traditional, modern, contextual and confessional interpretations of the Bible through practical exercises.

Workshop on Practical Ecumenical Theology (3 ECTS credits)
Provides space for reflection on the experience of communicating and translating theology practically into prayer, and the possibilities and difficulties of praying together.

Complementary Certificate (CC) in Ecumenical Studies

Intended for students who have completed a university Bachelor’s degree in Christian theology, or in a closely related discipline. Running from mid-September till end of January. Accredited with 30 ECTS credits by the University of Geneva, according to the following modules:

OBLIGATORY MODULES

Core Course on the History of the Ecumenical Movement (6 ECTS credits)
Offers an overview of the development of the modern ecumenical movement as well as an introduction to selected contemporary themes and challenges for the churches.

Ecumenical Study Visits (2 ECTS credits)
Provide an opportunity to reflect on practical insights into the practice, organization and spiritual life of the major Christian traditions. Usually, the study visits include: the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambéry (CH), the Vatican, the Taizé Community and local parishes of the Reformed Church in Switzerland.

MODULES OF CHOICE (TWO)
Students have to choose two among the following seminar courses (8 ECTS credits each)

Ecumenical Biblical Hermeneutics:
Introduction and study of exegetical research with regard to the vision of reconciliation and human unity in general and of the Christian churches in particular.
Ecumenical Missiology: Introduction and study of the theology of mission and research into reflections on mission in the ecumenical movement.

Ecumenical Social Ethics: Introduction and study of areas pertaining to the challenges arising from the complexity and plurality of globalized societies and the exploration of ecumenical ethical responses.

Ecumenical Theology: Introduction and study of ecumenical theological research in the search for ecclesial communion.

The study modules (except workshops and study visits) are evaluated through exams. The seminar courses require, in addition, the writing of a research paper.

Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) in Ecumenical Studies

Intended for students who have completed a university Master's degree, preferably in Christian theology or in a closely related discipline. Running from mid-September till end of June. Accredited with 60 ECTS credits by the University of Geneva, according to the following modules:

FIRST SEMESTER [MID-SEPTEMBER – END OF JANUARY]

Core Course on the History of the Ecumenical Movement (6 ECTS credits)
Offers an overview of the development of the modern ecumenical movement as well as an introduction to selected contemporary themes and challenges for the churches.

Workshop on Intercultural Biblical Studies (3 ECTS credits)
Gives an opportunity to deepen exegetical competence and learn about the ecumenical relevance of traditional, modern, contextual and confessional interpretations of the Bible through practical exercises.

Workshop on Practical Ecumenical Theology (3 ECTS credits)
Provides time for reflection on experience of communicating and translating theology practically into prayer, and the possibilities and difficulties of praying together.

Ecumenical Study Visits (2 ECTS credits)
Provides an opportunity to reflect on practical insights into the practice, organization and spiritual life of the major different Christian traditions. Usually the study visits include: the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy (CH), the Vatican, the Taizé Community and local parishes of the Reformed Church in Switzerland.

Seminar on Research Methodology (8 ECTS credits)
Offers the possibility to deepen knowledge in research techniques, conventions and methodologies and helps students to apply these to practical research work.

SECOND SEMESTER [MID-FEBRUARY – END OF JUNE]

Research Fellowship (12 ECTS credits)
Gives students the opportunity of exposure and focussed insights into the practical work of an ecumenical organization.

Research Workshop (4 ECTS credits)
Addresses specific questions and challenges of the research process and offers a regular and qualified accompaniment in the student's individual research design and drafting process.

Thesis (14 ECTS credits)
A thesis (10 000 words) is written in one of the academic disciplines offered at the Ecumenical Institute and is defended at the end of the study period.

The study modules (except workshops and study visits) are evaluated through exams. The seminar courses require, in addition, the writing of a research paper.
Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) in Ecumenical Studies

Intended for students and professionals who are interested in ecumenical studies and have a suitable level of theological literacy. Running from mid-September till end of January. Accredited with 25 ECTS credits by the University of Geneva under the Swiss Higher Education programme for Continuing Education in accordance with the requirements of the Rector’s Conference of the Swiss Universities, according to the following study modules:

OBLIGATORY MODULES

Core Course on the History of the Ecumenical Movement (6 ECTS credits)
Offers an overview of the development of the modern ecumenical movement as well as an introduction to selected contemporary themes and challenges for the churches.

Workshop on Intercultural Biblical Studies (3 ECTS credits)
Gives an opportunity to deepen exegetical competence and learn about the ecumenical relevance of traditional, modern, contextual and confessional interpretations of the Bible through practical exercises.

Workshop on Practical Ecumenical Theology (3 ECTS credits)
Provides an opportunity for reflection on the experience of communicating and translating theology practically into prayer, and the possibilities and difficulties of praying together.

Ecumenical Study Visits (2 ECTS credits)
Provide an opportunity to reflect on practical insights into the practice, organization and spiritual life of the major different Christian traditions. Usually the study visits include: the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy (CH), the Vatican, the Taizé Community and local parishes of the Reformed Church in Switzerland.

Intensive Thematic Seminar (3 ECTS credits)
Offers space for a critical analysis and in-depth study of a question of contemporary ecumenical relevance determined and designed specifically for each academic year.

MODULES OF CHOICE (ONE)
The students have to choose one among the following seminar courses (8 ECTS credits each)

Ecumenical Biblical Hermeneutics: Introduction and study of exegetical research with regard to the vision of reconciliation and human unity in general and the vision of the Christian churches in particular.

Ecumenical Missiology: Introduction and study of theology of mission and research on reflections concerning mission in the ecumenical movement.

Ecumenical Social Ethics: Introduction and study of areas which pertain to the challenges arising from the complexity and plurality of globalized societies and the exploration of ecumenical ethical responses.

Ecumenical Theology: Introduction and study of ecumenical theological research on the search for ecclesial communion.

The study modules (except workshops and study visits) are evaluated through exams. The seminar courses require, in addition, the writing of a research paper.
Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) in Interreligious Studies

Intended for an international audience of young people (ages 20-35) interested and engaged in interreligious dialogue, religious leaders, students, lay persons and professionals with a suitable level of religious literacy and/or experience in the field of interreligious dialogue and engagement, especially among the three Abrahamic religions. Accredited by the University of Geneva under the Swiss Higher Education Programme for Continuing Education in accordance with the requirements of the Rectors’ Conference of the Swiss Universities (CRUS) with 10 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) credits to be achieved during a period of 6 weeks (3 weeks distance learning, 3 weeks residential) normally during July/August.

STUDY MODULES

Core Course on Judaism, Christianity and Islam (5 ECTS credits)
Offers an introduction to Christianity, Islam and Judaism: the history, the different traditions and streams, basic elements and teachings, the holy scriptures. A particular theme is explored each year from the Christian, Jewish and Muslim points of view seeking possible areas of intersection between the three Abrahamic religions.

Thematic Workshops (3 ECTS credits)
Give an opportunity to discuss contemporary challenges with reference to the theme chosen for the year.

Practical Interreligious Workshops (1 ECTS credit)
Provide a reflected experience on historical-cultural modes of transmission and communication of religion in practice.

Interreligious Study Visits (1 ECTS credit)
Provide an opportunity to gain a reflected practical insight and overview on the way of practice, organization or spiritual life of the work of the three Abrahamic religions and selected institutions in the local Swiss context - places of prayer of the Abrahamic religious communities in Geneva (church, mosque, synagogue), the Ecumenical Centre, Fondation Martin Bodmer, the United Nations Geneva headquarters.

Intensive English Summer Course

An intensive Summer Course in the English language is offered to enhance the English proficiency of students who have been admitted to one of the study programmes.

Doctorate in Theology (Ecumenical Studies)

The Doctorate in Theology (Ecumenical Studies) is conducted jointly under the supervision of the Autonomous Faculty of Protestant Theology of the University of Geneva and the Ecumenical Institute Bossey. It intends to offer qualified students the opportunity to acquire specialized research competencies in the field of ecumenism.
For more information on:
- How to apply
- Prices
- Financial assistance
See: www.bossey.ch  (click Ecumenical Institute)