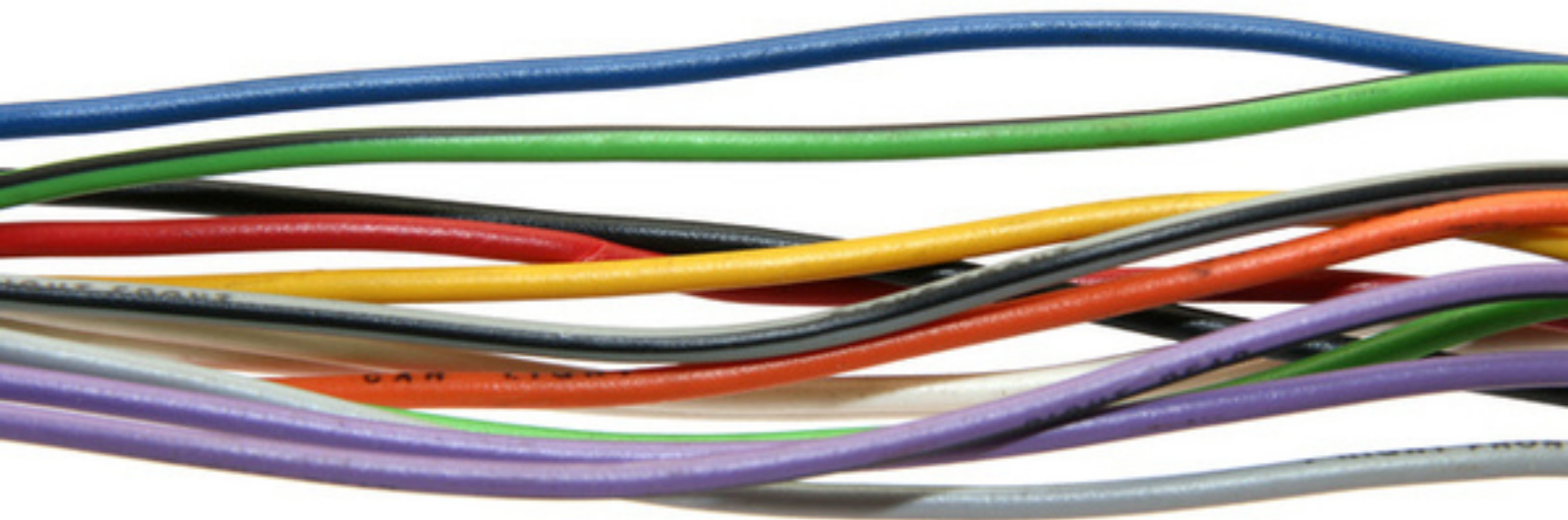


# Linking Classrooms

Guide to using online resources in teaching and learning  
about religious diversity with university students



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## 1

Use a video as part of a class lecture. Videos can be used to introduce a new theme, provide an example, or start a discussion. View the video links (<http://religionanddiversity.ca/projects-and-results/linking-classrooms/videos/>) or browse the Sociology & Religious Diversity Channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/SOCI1593?feature=mhee>).

## 2

Include a link to a video in a PowerPoint presentation and use it as part of a class lecture. [Click here to see an example.](#)

## 3

Include a link to the videos on your course page for Learning Management System, ie, Blackboard, WebCT, Desire2Learn, etc.

## 4

Include assignments that require students to access and evaluate online resources on religion. For example, students in our Introduction to Sociology of Religion course had the option of choosing an assignment in which they were required to visit the RAVE Project (<http://www.theraveproject.org/>) website a minimum of 5 times over the period of several days.



Each time they were expected to search through the site for a minimum of 20 minutes and provide feedback (using the option on each page of the site) at least twice per visit. Students then wrote a 2-3 page, typed response about their experience of using the site where they were asked to include a series of suggestions as to how this educational resource could be improved. Students were given a list of suggested questions/issues to address:

- Do I find the site visually appealing?
- Was it easy or difficult to navigate through the site?
- Was there material I expected to find that I could not locate?
- Was the presentation sensitive to both the needs of religious leaders and victims/survivors who might need assistance?
- What suggestions could I offer for improvement in terms of additional content?
- What suggestions could I offer for improvement in terms of innovative features?
- Were there things on the site that stood out as being very helpful?
- Were there things on the site that seemed irrelevant or unnecessary?
- The five things I like best about the website are...
- The five things I like least about the website are...
- If I was a victim of violence, I think I would find this site...
- If I were a police officer dealing with a religious victim of domestic violence, these are some of the things that would be helpful to add...
- If I were a youth leader attempting to help a young person whose mother was being abused, these are some of the things that would be helpful to add...

## 5

Click here for an amalgam of the variety of submissions we have received over the years. This kind of assignment can be done with the *Religion and Diversity Project* site (<http://religionanddiversity.ca/>) or their student Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Religion-and-Diversity-Project-Student-Caucus/171764062871786>) in relation to using them as a resource for learning about religious diversity.



## 6

Another example of requiring students to evaluate online resources involves asking students to select a video of a particular religious tradition/issue to present to the class for discussion. When the issue of whether or not the niqab could be worn while testifying in Ontario court occurred, we asked our students to find an online video that helped them to better understand the issue and to bring the link to the following class. An hour was spent during a tutorial in which students first introduced their videos by explaining why they thought the video was helpful, then several different videos were watched, and the last part of class was spent discussing the pros and cons of the videos.

## 7

Include online writing as part of course assignments. This is designed to help students understand that scholarly research and writing on religion is a process in which diverse perspectives and methodologies come together in critical conversation. We created blogs that were only open to members of the class, including an instructors' blog (<http://soci1593instructors.blogspot.ca/>). Through regular posts, we tried to model to students the interaction between texts, observations, personal perspectives, and required assignments. Students were required to post assignments and read and respond to the posts of their classmates. Small groups of "blogging buddies" were formed in class so that students could get to know each other and increase trust.

Here is an example of an assignment on the RAVE Project website that was written on a student blog:

- Student 1: File 1, File 2, File 3

Here is another example of an assignment that was blogged, this time featuring an observation of religion in the media:

- Student 2: File 1, File 2, File 3, File 4



Link with a religion-related course at another university. Using webinar software provided by our university (Elluminate) we were able to link graduate students in the Sociology Department at the University of New Brunswick with graduate students in the Faculté de théologie et de sciences des religions at the Université de Montréal. This takes some planning but is rich and gives students a direct experience in dealing with diversity on a variety of levels. To read about our joint seminar experience, [click here](#).

Please contact Nancy Nason-Clark at [nasoncla@unb.ca](mailto:nasoncla@unb.ca) or Cathy Holtmann at [h4w1p@unb.ca](mailto:h4w1p@unb.ca) for additional information on the Linking Classrooms project.



**Start linking your classroom!**

