School of Theology and Ministry
Seattle University
901 12th Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98122
Fall Quarter, 2007

Course Information
STMA 593- Reconcilation: Memory, Justice and Forgiveness
Room: Hunthausen, 100
Meeting Day: Thursdays
Meeting Time: 9:00-11:50 a.m.

Instructor
Flora Wilson Bridges, Ph.D.
Office: Hunthausen, 214
Phone: 206 296-5337
Tuesdays, 1:00-3:30 p.m.
or by appointment
Email: fwb@seattleu.edu

Required Texts:
Daye, Russell. *Political Forgiveness: Lessons from South Africa*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004.
Enright, Robert D. & North, Joanna, Editors. *Exploring Forgiveness*. Madison, WS: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994.
Jones, Gregory L. *Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis.* Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Press, 1995.
Lazare, Aaron. *On Apology*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004.
Okholm, Dennis. *The Gospel in Black & White: Resources for Racial Reconciliation*. Madison, WS: InterVarsity Press, 1997.
Schreiter, Robert. *Reconciliation: Mission & Ministry in a Changing Social Order*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1992.

Recommended Texts:
Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics Vol 4.1: Doctrine of Reconciliation-The Subject-Matter and Problems of the Doctrine of Reconciliation; Jesus Christ, the Lord as Servant*. Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1980.
Coulter, Leah. *Rediscovering the Power of Repentance and Forgiveness: Finding Healing and Justice for Reconcilable and Irreconcilable Wrongs*. St. Louis Park, MN: 2006.
Dallen, James. *The Reconciling Community: The Rite of Penance*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991.
De Gruchy, John. *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2003.
Gunton, Colin. *Theology of Reconciliation*. New York, NY: Continuum International, 2003.
Meninger, William A. *The Process of Forgiveness*. New York, NY: Continuum International, 1997.
Soyinka, Wole. *The Burden of Memory, The Muse of Forgiveness*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999.
Watts, Fraser & Gulliford, Liz. *Forgiveness in Context*. New York, NY: Continuum International, 2005.
Winbush, Raymond A., Editor. *Should America Pay? Slavery and the Raging Debate on Reparations.* New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003.

Course Description

This course seeks to address the three-fold problem of human estrangement from God, self, and others as it stems from our inability to forgive, do justice, and be reconciled to each other as individuals, communities, religious groups, and nations. We will explore the biblical notion of forgiveness as the necessary *precondition* for reconciling all broken relationships within Creation. This will include humankind's relationship to the earth. The course will be guided by our reflections on several important questions:

Why is it so difficult to forgive? What role does memory—whether personal, familial, tribal, or national-- play in personal and political forgiveness? Why do some efforts at forgiveness heal while others fail—and even offend? Is the ability to forgive a sign of strength or weakness? In what way is public forgiveness different from private forgiveness? What is the relationship of confession and apology to forgiveness, justice, and reconciliation? Can apology pave the way for structural changes in the relations between human beings who have committed offenses against others? What role, if any, does the notion of justice as reparations play in the reconciliation process? Does the lack of confession, apology, forgiveness and justice as reparations block the process of human reconciliation?

Course Objectives

This course seeks to encourage students toward a sense of personal and social responsibility for bringing about forgiveness, justice, and reconciliation to stave off the rapid and often brutal disintegration of ourselves and our world. In order to accomplish this task, students will be guided by our readings, prayers, reflections, class discussions and assignments to do *critical theological reflection* on the process of reconciliation in the following ways:

1) The role of *forgiveness* as an avenue to find healing and deliverance from the estrangement and alienation that do violence to the human spirit and our world.
2) The role of *memory* as an empowering way of looking back on human suffering—whether our own or that of others—as an effective path toward confession and apology in order to ensure that the mistakes of the past will never be repeated. This objective is captured in a moving litany from the Quaker tradition used by the Western Cape Peace Centre in South Africa. It reads as follows:

A Litany for Healing and Reparation

Before You, in anguish and shame, we bring the polars of our
society—oppressor and oppressed, victim and offender--
and we pray for an end to alienation,
for healing and reparation.

Congregation: Hear our prayer.

We looked into the eyes of our children and were overwhelmed.
We looked into the eyes of our parents and were dejected.
We looked into each other's eyes and turned away.

Congregation: We desire peace.

Merciful God, we confess that we never believed what had happened.
We tried to escape from reality.
We never really listened or heard.
We allowed a wedge to be driven between us.
Forgive us.
We pray for forgiveness.

Congregation: Hear us by your grace.

3) The role of *justice* as a liberating way —when applied in an enriching rather than self-destructive manner—that can eventually heal torn personalities and communities.
4) The role of *reconciliation* as the main key upon which theology is posited.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Class Participation. Students are required to attend all classes. Absences will lower your grade by one half of a letter grade per absence. In other words, if your grade is an "A" in the course, an absence will lower your grade to an "A-." Please note that much that determines your grade for the course is dependent upon mutual discussion and interaction. Attendance therefore is crucial. Please do not call, email, or personally ask me to excuse any absences during this quarter.

You are required to demonstrate effective group skills by prayerfully, actively, compassionately, and critically contributing to class feedback and discussions. This includes your attendance (see above), punctuality, participation, and using constructive peer feedback that includes honesty, challenge, and mutual respect.

This course also requires timely reading and relevant discussion of the assigned texts that reflect *critical* intellectual assessment that leads to practical applications in ministry. We will not spend a great deal of time summarizing the assigned readings in class. The demonstration of how well you have read and digested the readings should be reflected in our discussions and class interaction.

1. **Class Leadership: 50% of Grade:** See hand-out distributed in first class. Please note that all Scriptures selected for your presentations must be about reconciliation.
2. **Class Participation: 35% of Grade:** See above.
3. **Small Reflection Papers: 15% of Grade:** See hand-out distributed in first class. Please note that a reflection paper of two pages, typed and single spaced, is due for each class session on the assigned reading for the day's text. Please print it back-to-back on one sheet of paper.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Thursday, September 27, 2007

I. Prayer and Meditation: *9:00-9:15 a.m.*

II. Introductions and Review of Syllabus, Assignment Instructions: *9:15-9: 45 a.m.*

III. Scripture: *9:45-10:00 a.m.*

Please read Genesis 47-50: Matthew 5: 38-48; 7: 1-5

Class Break: 10:00-10:20 a.m.

IV. Discussion: *10:20-11:50 a.m.*

1) Read the first half of *On Apology* by today's class. Paper due.
   a. What challenges you in this reading?
   b. Why?
   c. What do you see as the strengths and/or weaknesses of Lazare's presentation?
2) Be prepared to reflect on the following:
   a. Why are you taking this class?
   b. What, if any, personal implication does the subject matter have for your life and ministry?

**Jessica and Beth*: Lead the October 4th class. Let us know your Scriptures today.

2. Thursday, October 4, 2007: Led by Jessica and Beth

I. Prayer and Meditation**:** *9:00-9:15 a.m.*

II. Scriptures: *9:15-10:00 a.m.*

Class Break: 10:00-10:20 a.m.

III. *10:30 a.m.*: CLASS DISMISSED FOR MASS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
Read the second half of *On Apology* by today's class. Paper due.

IV. Wrap-Up: Flora Wilson Bridges: *11:00-11:50 a.m.*

**Marcella and Susan*: Lead the October 11th class. Let us know your Scriptures today.

3. Thursday, October 11, 2007: Led by Marcella and Susan

I. Prayer and Meditation: *9:00-9:15 a.m.*

II. Scriptures: *9:15-10:00 a.m.*

Class Break: 10:00-10:20 a.m.

III. Discussion on Lazare*: 10:20-11:00 a.m.* Read the first half of Enright and North by today's class. Paper due.

IV. Discussion on *Exploring Forgiveness*: *11:00-11:50 a.m.*

**Leanne and Mary*: Lead the October 18th class. Let us know your Scriptures today.

4. Thursday, October 18, 2007: Led by Leanne and Mary

I. Prayer and Meditation: 9:00-9:15 a.m.

II. Scripture: *9:15-10:00 a.m.*

Class Break: 10:00-10:20 a.m.

III. Discussion on *Exploring Forgiveness: 10:20-11:00 a.m.* Read the second half of Enright and North by today's class. Paper due.

IV. Wrap-Up: Flora Wilson Bridges: *11:00-11:50 a.m.*

**Shelby and Jerry*: Lead the October 25th class. Let us know your Scriptures today.

5. Thursday, October 25, 2007: Led by Shelby and Jerry

I. Prayer and Meditation: *9:00-9:15 a.m.*

II. Scripture: *9:15-10:00 a.m.*

Class Break: 10:00-10:20 a.m.

III. Discussion on *Embodying Forgiveness: 10:20-11:00 a.m.* Read the first half of Jones by today's class. Paper due.

IV. Wrap-Up: Flora Wilson Bridges: *11:00-11:50 a.m.*

**Paula and Ron:* Lead the November 1st class. Let us know your Scriptures today.

6. Thursday, November 1, 2007: Led by Paula and Ron

I. Prayer and Meditation: *9:00-9:15 a.m.*

II. Scripture: *9:15-10:00 a.m.*

Class Break: 10:00-10:20 a.m.

III. Discussion on *Exploring Forgiveness: 10:20-11:00 a.m.* Read the second half of Jones by today's class. Paper due.

IV. Wrap-Up: Flora Wilson Bridges*: 11:00-11:50 a.m.*

**Kelly and Maria:* Lead the November 8th class. Let us know your Scriptures today.

7. Thursday, November 8, 2007: Led by Kelly and Maria

I. Prayer and Meditation: *9:00-9:15 a.m.*

II. Scripture: *9:15-10:00 a.m.*

Class Break: 10:00-10:20 a.m.

III. Discussion on *Reconciliation: Mission & Ministry in a Changing Social Order: 10:20-11:00 a.m.* Read the first half of Schreiter by today. Paper due.

IV. Wrap-Up: Flora Wilson Bridges: *11:00-11:50 a.m.*

**Sophia and Bruce*: Lead the November 15th class. Let us know your Scriptures today.

8. Thursday, November 15, 2007: Led by Sophia and Bruce

I. Prayer and Meditation: *9:00-9:15 a.m.*

II. Scripture: *9:15-10:00 a.m.*

Class Break: 10:00-10:20 a.m.

III. Discussion on *Reconciliation: 10:20-11:00 a.m.* Read the second half of Schreiter by today. Paper due.

IV. Wrap-Up: Flora Wilson Bridges: *11:00-11:50 a.m.*

**Lilyan and Michael:* Lead the November 29th class. Let us know your Scriptures today.

9. Thursday, November 29, 2007: Led by Lilyan and Michael

I. Prayer and Meditation: *9:00-9:15 a.m.*

II. Scripture: *9:15-10:00 a.m.*

Class Break: 10:00-10:20 a.m.

III. Discussion on *The Gospel in Black and White: 10:20-11:00 a.m.* Read the first half of Okholm by today. Paper due.

IV. Wrap-Up: Flora Wilson Bridges: *11:00-11:50 a.m.*

**Sian and Rebecca:* Lead the December 6th class. Let us know your Scriptures today.

10. Thursday December 6, 2007: Led by Sian and Rebecca

I. Prayer and Meditation: *9:00-9:15 a.m.*

II. Scripture: *9:15-10:00 a.m.*

Class Break: 10:00-10:20 a.m.

III. Discussion on *The Gospel in Black and White: 10:20-11:00 a.m.* Read the second half of Okholm by today. Paper due.

IV. Read *Political Forgivenes*s. No paper due on this book.

V. Wrap-Up and Evaluations: Flora Wilson Bridges: *11:00-11:50 a.m.*