

School of Theology & Ministry
Seattle University
Seattle, WA 98122-1090
Winter Quarter, 2010

Course Information:

STMA 563: Reconciliation: Memory, Justice,
and Forgiveness
Credits: 3
Wednesdays: 9:00-11:50 a.m.
Hunthausen, Room 100

Instructor:

Flora Wilson Bridges, Ph.D.
Office: Hunthausen, Room 214
Office Hours: Wednesdays:
1:30-4:30 and 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, WI: 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.
Schreier, 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: Ampelton Publishing: 2006.
Dallen James. *The Reconciling Community: The Rite of Penance*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003.
De Gruchy, John. *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2003.
Gunton, Colin. *Theology of Reconciliation*. New York, NY: Continuum International, 1997.
Meninger, William A. *The Process of Forgiveness*. New York, NY: Continuum International, 1993.
Soyinka, Wole. *The Burden of Memory, The Muse of Forgiveness*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999.
Watts, Fraser & Guilliford, 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: Harper Collins 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, nations, etc. 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—plays 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, films, reflections, class discussions and assignments to do *critical theological reflection* on the process of reconciliation in the following ways:

- 1) The role of *memory* as an empowering way of looking back on suffering—whether our own or that of others (including the earth)—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.

- 2) 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.
- 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.

Learning Outcomes for the Course:

- Ability to reflect theologically on reconciliation as a central theme of the Christian tradition
- Knowledge of the interaction of religious/spiritual experience and culture in their ecumenical, multicultural, and inter-religious dimensions
- Ability to articulate a personal and ecclesial theology of reconciliation
- Ability to do theology of reconciliation to inform ecclesial leadership
- Awareness of one's own social location/assumptions/hermeneutics as you engage the course material in your own life, your community, and the larger world
- Ability to use biblical tools and resources as a way to inform your own exegesis for the purpose of doing the ministry of reconciliation
- Ability to articulate one's relationship with God, as it is informed by theological reflection on reconciliation
- Ability to draw critically and constructively on the Christian moral tradition of reconciliation to lead toward a more just and sustainable world
- Ability to be a responsive, discerning listener who can engage in the process of reconciliation

Instructional Methods to be Employed:

This is essentially a seminar based course. It engages an eclectic mix of pedagogical techniques that include class worship, class discussion, Scripture, lectures, films, poems, prayers, and oral presentations in the form of case studies that will help us better understand and engage in the ministry of reconciliation. A feminist pedagogical instructional methodology will be employed:

1) The course seeks to promote collaborative learning. “Because the aim of collaborative learning is for students to construct and share knowledge, the collaborative classroom is built around the strategy of interdependence. Group activities and group reports are the common methods teachers use to organize the construction of knowledge...Group work requires students to claim authority in and take responsibility for their participation in classroom activities. In turn, the teacher’s role shifts from being a disseminator of information to being a facilitator of student groups, providing to students the resources necessary to ensure a group’s success (*Innovative Feminist Pedagogies in Action*, edited by Maralee Mayberry and Ellen Cronan Rose, page 4).”

2) Collaborative learning environments however “do not necessarily provide students with an adequate model of critical thinking” (Mayberry and Rose, page 5) that will help them transform the social context. Therefore the teaching and learning environment will also encourage students to critique the unequal social relations embedded in our relationships, society, and world and ask why these circumstances exist and what we can do about them as an essential part of the ministry of reconciliation. This pedagogical technique will empower students to apply their learning to social action and transformation to help create a more humane social order as they work to change not only themselves but also the broader social world.

Criteria and Methods for Evaluation and Grading:

Attendance and Class Participation: 40% of Grade: Students are required to attend all classes. Please note that much that determines your grade is dependent upon mutual discussion and interaction. You must demonstrate effective group skills by prayerfully, actively, compassionately and critically contributing to class discussions. This includes attendance (see above), punctuality, participation, and using constructive peer feedback that includes honesty, challenge, and mutual respect. Each missed class will result in a lowering of your grade by one-half of a letter grade (i.e. from an “A” to an “A-”). This does not include absences due to illness. Missed classes require additional assignments. Please consult with me about formulating an additional assignment if you must miss class. However, your grade will still reflect the absence.

The grading criteria also includes the necessity for lively discussion and timely reading of the assigned texts that reflect *critical* cultural, theological, and biblical assessment that lead to practical applications in your life and 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 other class interactions.

Case Studies: 50% of Grade: Consult the hand-out on the format for Case Studies distributed in our first class. This assignment consists of the presentation of two Case Studies on reconciliation (see assignments by name below). One Case Study will be presented by you *individually* on an issue of reconciliation that presents itself in your own life. Be prepared to present for 20 minutes each including discussion.

The other Case Study is to be presented in a *small group* (four students for each group; see assignments by name below) format. This group Case Study will engage larger societal issues of reconciliation (i.e. race, class, gender, religion, nation, environment, etc.).

Please provide a copy of the Case Study (individual and group) to me and each student at the beginning of the class session. The individual Case Study should be no more than three single-spaced pages. The group Case Study should be no more than eight single-spaced pages. The group Case Study must be accompanied by a Power Point presentation to be shown in class. Be prepared to present for 20 minutes for each group including discussion.

Class Leadership on Assigned Readings: 5% of Grade: This involves students in groups of two (see assignments by name below) engaging the class in discussion on the critical themes raised in our texts. It does not mean summarizing the text. Please distribute an outline of your discussion to me and each student at the beginning of the class session. This exercise should be no more than thirty minutes.

Worship Leadership: 5% of Grade: Consult the hand-out distributed in our first class on worship assignments. Students in groups of two (see assignments by name below) will open class for worship. The Scriptures, music, readings, and other worship components selected must be about reconciliation. This exercise should be no longer than ten minutes.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Wednesday, January 6, 2010

1. Opening Worship (Genesis 47-50: Matthew 5: 38-48; 7:1-15)
2. Introductions and Review of the Syllabus
3. Why are you taking this class?
4. The Role of Memory in Reconciliation: in class viewing of the film *Rashomon* (individual reconciliation)
5. Class Discussion of the film

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Dannette Allen and Mark Blindheim lead the class opening worship and discussion of reading.

Reading: *On Apology*, Chapters 1-6

Be prepared to answer the following:

- 1) What challenges you in this reading?
- 2) Why?
- 3) What do you see as the strengths and/or weaknesses of Lazare's presentation?
- 4) What, if any, personal implication does the subject matter have for your life and ministry?

Wednesday, January 20, 2010

Nancy Bock and Stephanie Davis lead the class opening worship and discussion of reading.

Reading: *On Apology*, Chapters 7-12

In class viewing of the film: *Banished: American Ethnic Cleansing* (group reconciliation)

Wednesday, January 20, 2010

Susan Fairo and Linda Ferguson lead the class opening worship and discussion of reading.

Reading: *Embodying Forgiveness*, pages xi-162

4 Personal Case Studies: Dannette, Mark, Nancy, Stephanie

Wednesday, January 27, 2010

Janet Fisher and Kathryn Fynn lead the class opening worship and discussion of reading.

Reading: *Embodying Forgiveness*, pages 163-302

4 Personal Case Studies: Susan, Linda, Janet, Kathryn

Wednesday, February 3, 2010

William Graves and Theresa Henson lead the class opening worship and discussion of reading.

Reading: *Exploring Forgiveness*, Chapters 1-6

4 Personal Case Studies: William, Theresa, Karen, Michelle

Wednesday, February 10, 2010

Karen Kennell and Michelle Majors lead the class opening worship and discussion of reading.

Reading: *Reconciliation*, Chapters 1, 2

4 Personal Case Studies: Maitland, Jane, Kevin, Theresa

Wednesday, February 17, 2010

Maitland McKenzie and Jane Nabakaawa lead the class opening worship and discussion of reading.

Reading: *Reconciliation*, Chapters 3, 4

I. Group Case Study: Dannette, Mark, Nancy, Stephanie

Wednesday, February 24, 2010

Kevin Neill and Teresa Tremper lead the class opening worship and discussion of reading.

Reading: *Political Forgiveness*, Chapters 1-5

2. Group Case Study: Susan, Linda, Janet, Kathryn

Wednesday, March 3, 2010

Father Willybard Lagho leads the class opening worship and discussion of reading.

Reading: *Political Forgiveness*, Chapters 6-Conclusion

1 Personal Case Study: Father Lagho

3. Group Case Study: Bill, Theresa, Karen, Michelle

Thursday, March 4, 2010, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Class Attends: Speghar-Halligan Lecture: "A Syncopated Song of Welcome"

Wednesday, March 10, 2010

Discussion on Speghar-Halligan Lecture led by anyone who has missed a class.

4. Group Case Study: Maitland, Jane, Kevin, Teresa, Father Lagho

