

TR 536 Ethics of Reconciliation
United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities

Fall 2008, Tuesdays 8:15-11:30am

Professor: Sharon Tan
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:30-2:30pm, Fridays 12:30 am-1:30pm. Other times by appointment.

Course Description

We will explore together reconciliation as a theological-ethical process through a variety of exercises, readings, discussions, lectures, and presentations. We will discuss reconciliation as a multi-step process involving justice, forgiveness and renewed relationship, and as a multi-level process involving the personal, community and political.

Course Objectives

1. To learn and discuss the theological foundations of reconciliation.
2. To become familiar with the reconciliation as a personal, social and political process.
3. To develop some constructive proposals for reconciliation in an aspect of personal relationship or society that the student selects.

Course Requirements

1. Regular and timely reading of the assigned material, regular attendance in class, and thoughtful participation in class discussions.
2. Seminar paper, on the readings assigned for the week. 30% of grade
3. Presentation, in which some outside research will be involved, that focuses on a particular issue in reconciliation or a particular population or group in the process of reconciliation. This presentation may be individual or group and may reflect the issues or topics you are working on in your final paper. 20% of grade.
4. Final paper. This 12-15 page paper can be either an academic research paper, or a topical paper that explores a particular problem and proposes constructive solutions. Paper topics are subject to approval by the instructor. This paper MAY NOT be a repeat of your presentation, but MAY be on a topic or issue that you encountered there, which you want to explore further. 50% of grade.

General Class Structure

The weekly classes will include exercises, lectures, presentations, and discussion.

Course Texts

Required:

1. Miroslav Volf, Exclusion and Embrace

2. John Paul Lederach, The Journey to Reconciliation
3. Jon Sobrino, The Principle of Mercy Ch. 2 and 4 (on reserve)
4. Glen Stassen, ed. Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War
5. Lisa Sowle Cahill, Love Your Enemies
6. Eric Yamamoto, Interracial Justice
7. Randall Robinson, The Debt

Recommended reading:

1. Martha Minow, Between Vengeance and Forgiveness
2. Curtiss Paul DeYoung, et al., United by Faith.
3. Desmond Tutu, No Future Without Forgiveness.
4. Thomas Merton, ed., Gandhi on Non-violence.

Course Policies

Please treat this course, your instructor, and your fellow students with respect by attending class and participating thoughtfully in the discussions. In fact, attendance and participation in class are required to pass this course. More than two unexcused absences will result in a penalty of one grade level per absence. Coming to class late or leaving early may count as an absence.

Papers are to be double-spaced, and typewritten. I will not accept emailed papers or exams, but you may fax papers addressed to me at 651-633-4315. Late papers will be penalized at one grade level per day. I will not (indeed, cannot by UTS policy) accept any papers after the last day of class.

All work submitted must be your own, and done specifically for this course.

Please see the seminary-wide policies on academic integrity, inclusive language, and sexual harassment, articulated in the student handbooks.

Course Schedule

Week:

1. 9/9/2008 Introduction

Theoretical and Theological Foundations

2. 9/16/2008 Theological foundations 1
Reading: Lederach, *The Journey into Reconciliation*
Seminar paper
3. 9/23/2008 Theological foundations 2
Reading: Volf, 3-56; Sobrino, chs. 2 and 4
Seminar paper

4. 9/30/2008 Theological foundations 3
Reading: Volf, 57-190
Seminar paper

War, Peace, and Reconciliation

5. 10/7/2008 Just War and Crusade
Reading: Cahill, 1-148
Seminar paper
6. 10/14/2008 Pacifism
Reading: Cahill 149-246; Volf 275-306
Seminar paper
- 10/21/2008 Reading Week – no class
7. 10/28/2004 Peacemaking
Reading: Stassen, Just Peacemaking
Seminar paper

Racial Justice and Reconciliation

8. 11/4/2004 Interracial Justice
Reading: Yamamoto, 1-152; Volf, 193-231
Seminar paper
- * Election Day – class will start at 9:15am to give you a chance to vote before coming in.
9. 11/11/2004 Interracial Justice
Reading: Yamamoto, 153-278; Volf, 233-273
Seminar paper
10. 11/18/2004 Reparations
Reading: Robinson, The Debt
Seminar paper

Further work

11. 11/25/2004 Presentations and discussion of final papers
12. 12/2/2004 Presentations and discussion of final papers
13. 12/9/2004 Wrap up; final paper due

Instructions for Papers and Presentations:

Seminar paper:

This paper, to be no longer than 8 pages double spaced, should summarize the main arguments and/or themes of the reading for the day and suggest several questions to guide discussion. It is due at the beginning of the class period for which the reading is assigned.

Presentation:

Your presentation should be on a topic or issue within your chosen field. You may work either individually or in a group. You can use as a resource the books on the recommended reading list; in addition, you will need to do some outside research to help you frame the issue, fill out the presentation, etc. I do not want simply a presentation of your final paper, although you may certainly discuss it and why you are interested in the issues in it; what I do want to see and hear is a topic in reconciliation of interest to you, theological and ethical perspectives on this subject that are gleaned from this course and texts, and some creative problem-solving.

Final Paper (12-15 pages):

You can select either a topic paper or a research paper.

Topic papers: Focus in depth on an issue you encountered in the class or in your preparation for the presentation. Present the factual background of an issue or situation, and the various ideas or values in conflict. Do this as neutrally as possible, presenting the arguments of each side as persuasively as you can. Then suggest some constructive processes that could bring about reconciliation in the situation.

Research papers: This is more traditional paper is aimed at allowing you to explore an academic topic. Possibilities include issues in methodology or practice, or a more in-depth analysis of a topic or author you encountered in class. For this paper, you would need to articulate your thesis, and structure your paper to support your thesis.