

A Spirituality of Restorative Justice
General Theological Seminary
Easter/Spring 2017

COURSE INFORMATION

ET 155 A Spirituality of Restorative Justice
Thursdays, 6:15pm to 9:15pm

INSTRUCTOR

Prof. Michael Battle
Office Hours: (Mon, and Thurs.
1:30-2:30pm; or by appointment)
Cell Phone: (626)-993-5384
Email: battle@gts.edu

Course Description

What We Are About. In this course we investigate a Christian spirituality of peacemaking, justice and reconciliation in which God's aim for creation is not destruction—rather, restoration. This course will help ministers realize their agency to move faith communities to participate consciously in what God is already doing to redeem the world. Students will take seriously the meaning of Christian spirituality in this endeavor as themes of neighbor, prayer, forgiveness, violence, recidivism, public square, and spiritual disciplines make sense of how God uses persons for restorative rather than retributive justice. And yet, the difficult questions of justice and reparation will also be taken seriously as we wrestle with appropriate responses to injustice and sin. In our investigations, we will use both theological texts and current literature written from a wide range of perspectives. We will also engage provocative media with the intention to learn from and critique interpretations of justice in light of our participation in God's restoration of creation.

Learning Outcomes, students will:

- Deepen individual skills to create and foster restorative justice
- Deepen agency in spiritual communities to practice restorative justice
- Increase capacity to impact others through social media
- Demonstrate an ability to teach restorative justice.

Why this course for Pastoral Leadership? Unfortunately, religious leaders have often directly contributed to violence or implicitly blessed the perpetuation of various oppressions through ignorance and inaction. Such leaders have even quoted Jesus for their excused behavior (Matthew 10:34). Instead of pushing this world over the cliff of destruction, we need Pastoral Leadership capable of restoration rather than destruction. Such spiritual leadership is vital in the cause and effect of helping others move toward restoration of self, other and world.

Required Texts:

- Johnstone, Gerry. (2011). *Restorative Justice: Ideas, Values, Debates*. New York: Routledge.
- Myers, Ched and Elaine Enns. (2009). *Ambassadors of Reconciliation, Volume 1: New Testament Reflections On Restorative Justice And Peacemaking*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.
- Myers, Ched and Elaine Enns. (2009). *Ambassadors of Reconciliation, Volume 2: Diverse Christian Practices of Restorative Justice and Peacemaking*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.
- Tutu, Desmond. (2009). *No Future without Forgiveness*, New York: Doubleday.

Course Requirements

You are to enter a covenant with me and your colleagues to undertake the strenuous and joyful demand of reading, creating, writing and discussion. There will be no exams in this course: your final grade will be determined by your thoughtful and careful writing, class participation (including keeping up with reading), and social media project. You are to select a public conflict to follow during the duration of the course (e.g, Divorce Rate, Muslim/Christian/Jew, Racial Profiling, Abortion, Death Penalty, Reparation for African American Slavery, Same Sex Marriage, Occupy Movement, Sexual Misconduct in Roman Catholic Church, etc). You are then required to reflect on selected topic in light of the course through both a paper and social media project. The design of this course invites formation learned in residential community as well as interaction with material from readings, multimedia, worship, the faculty, your organization/ congregation, and your peers. By the course conclusion, you will have created a written reflection paper as well as a social media project.

Writing Guidelines

Use the Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers. The basic rules for these style formats may be found at the following websites:
http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html(CMS website)

Student Responsibilities And Evaluation

In this course evaluation will be based on the following dimensions:

- Demonstration of reading the course material, absorbing media presentations and discussing with peers how restorative justice is measured and effective.
- Referencing accurately patterns, concepts, and theory derived from readings, lectures, media, and classroom conversation.
- Timely presence and active participation in all sessions and presentations;
- Paper and Social Media Project turned in on time.

Grading Criteria

30% Class Participation and Consistent Presence
30% Paper
40% Social Media Impact

Participation, Paper and Social Media Project Description

Class Participation: For each class, designated students, signed up ahead of time, will present the context from which she or he will approach a Christian spirituality of restorative justice. The methodology of the presentation is as follows. 1) Students in their own words provide a brief description of the conflict. 2) Students invite the class into the conflict through the use of media (e.g., YouTube, film clip, audio, music, etc). 3) The class engages the student presenter with their own questions. 4) Depending upon how many students are in class, I anticipate each student will have about 20 minutes for these presentations. So, students need to be assigned ahead of time for afternoon time slots for these presentations.

The reflective paper is intended to help you apply spiritual and theological distinctions, contextual choices and strategies for restorative justice. The length of this paper should be between 10 to 15 pages, double spaced. During this course you should keep in mind and heart your particular conflict so that this paper is not “busy work” but something that you will make applicable. When you finish this reflection paper it should display strategies of a Christian spirituality of restorative justice that points toward lasting reconciliation for your particular conflict. Your particular issue of conflict is important because it will provide a reference point for the entire class to link patterns of violence and conflict that may be in common. Therefore, in this paper provide possible ways you can apply insights and strategies of restorative justice to your specific issue. You can also educate me and the class as to other strategies that work or have not worked to ameliorate your conflict. Share with me and your class why these other strategies work or are not working. As an example of how you might want to write this paper, you could use the following methodology:

1. Context and Introduction: three to four page description of the conflict and why you chose it.
2. Three to four page definition of a spirituality restorative justice. What is the antithesis of restorative justice? What do you mean by spirituality as it relates to restorative justice? Description of challenges or problems you anticipate encountering when you think about solving this conflict with a spirituality of restorative justice.
3. Three to four page discussion of why your conflict remains. What are the strategies that continue to fail in solving your conflict? (Hint: Einstein said the definition of insanity is doing something the same old way expecting a different outcome).
4. Three to four page discussion of how a spirituality of restorative justice may be controversial but may provide a more lasting solution
5. One to two page conclusion of what you learned and hope to accomplish beyond your written reflection.

The Social Media Project is meant to build from your reflective paper. Often in the western world, students feel as though they do deep reflection only in private or in the isolation between teacher and student. The Social Media Project is meant for you to take the necessary next step beyond deep reflection into deep and responsible action. So, instead of simply writing your paper for yourself or for academic credit or simply for the professor, I want you to make your spiritual and academic work perform in social circles. Your Social Media Project requires you to use your paper to teach and mobilize your social circles around the conflict you have chosen throughout the course. In addition, you are to challenge your social circles to think more deeply about your application of restorative justice to your conflict. For the purposes of this course, you are asked in this project to help your social circles imagine their own participation in restorative justice in your particular conflict. So, the suggested methodology for your Social Media Project is as follows:

1. Use a social media means to present your paper to your social circles (e.g. Church newsletter, Facebook, Twitter, blogging sites, email, etc.);
2. Let your social circle know this is part of your course of study and ask for permission to quote their responses in this project.
3. Create a means to receive feedback from your social circles. Ask for feedback and a conversation thread;
4. After creating this organic conversation thread, discern together in your social circles what next steps should be if any (e.g., a specific action you want from your community).
5. Coalesce this organic conversation thread as a written document (displaying at least 10-15 thoughtful responses to your paper).
6. Send your Social Media Project to me contained in one document. (Hint: I'm more interested in how you impact your social circles concerning your insights for a Christian spirituality of restorative justice in your conflict).

See Schedule Below

Class Assignments and Schedule

Thurs, Feb. 2

15 Greeting

Introduction to each other

Introduction to the course

Part One: Understanding Justice as God's Nature

Reading Assignment : Myers, Ched and Elaine Enns. (2009). *Ambassadors of Reconciliation: New Testament Reflections On Restorative Justice And Peacemaking, Volume 1*

Lecture Presentation

Small Groups (Discussion Groups) meet with Prof. Battle

Thurs, Feb. 9

Part Two: Understanding Justice as Humanly Practiced

Reading Assignment : Ched Myers, and Elaine Enns. (2009). *Ambassadors of Reconciliation: Diverse Christian Practices of Restorative Justice and Peacemaking, Volume 1*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.

Lecture Presentation

Small Groups

Seminar Discussion of Chosen Conflicts

Presenter(s): _____

Thurs, Feb. 16

Part Three: Understanding Justice as Debated in the World

Reading Assignment : Ched Myers, and Elaine Enns. (2009). *Ambassadors of Reconciliation: Diverse Christian Practices of Restorative Justice and Peacemaking, Volume 2*, Maryknoll,NY: Orbis.

Lecture Presentation

Small Groups

Seminar Discussion of Chosen Conflicts

Presenter(s): _____

Thurs, Feb. 23

(No Class)

View Film on Library Reserve: Long Night's Journey into Day
Assignment: 2 page reflection due

Thurs, March 2

Part Three: Understanding Justice as Possible between God and the World

Reading Assignment : Ched Myers, and Elaine Enns. (2009). *Ambassadors of Reconciliation: Diverse Christian Practices of Restorative Justice and Peacemaking, Volume 2*, Maryknoll,NY: Orbis.

Lecture Presentation

Small Groups

Seminar Discussion of Chosen Conflicts

Presenter(s): _____

Thurs, Mar. 9

Part Three: Understanding Justice as Possible between God and the World

Reading Assignment : Gerry Johnstone, (2011). *Restorative Justice: Ideas, Values, Debates*. New York: Routledge.

Lecture Presentation

Small Groups

Seminar Discussion of Chosen Conflicts

Presenter(s): _____

Thurs, March 16

No Class, Spring Break

Thurs, Mar. 23

Part Three: Understanding Justice as Possible between God and the World

Reading Assignment : Gerry Johnstone, (2011). *Restorative Justice: Ideas, Values, Debates*. New York: Routledge.

Lecture Presentation

Small Groups

Seminar Discussion of Chosen Conflicts

Presenter(s): _____

Thurs, Mar. 30

Part Three: Understanding Justice as Possible between God and the World

Discussion of Reading Assignment : Desmond Tutu, (2009). *No Future without Forgiveness*, New York: Doubleday.

Lecture Presentation

Small Groups

Seminar Discussion of Chosen Conflicts

Presenter(s): _____

Thurs, April 6

(No Class)

View Film on Library Reserve: Facing the Truth

Assignment: 2 page reflection due

Thurs, Apr. 13

No Class, Maundy Thursday

Thurs, Apr. 20

Part Three: Understanding Justice as Possible between God and the World

Discussion of Reading Assignment : Desmond Tutu, (2009). *No Future without Forgiveness*, New York: Doubleday.

Lecture Presentation

Small Groups

Seminar Discussion of Chosen Conflicts

Presenter(s): _____

Thurs, Apr. 27

Part Three: Understanding Justice as Possible between God and the World

Discussion of Reading Assignment : Desmond Tutu, (2009). *No Future without Forgiveness*, New York: Doubleday.

Lecture Presentation

Small Groups

Seminar Discussion of Chosen Conflicts

Presenter(s): _____

Thurs, May. 4

Part Three: Understanding Justice as Possible between God and the World

Discussion of Reading Assignment : Desmond Tutu, (2009). *No Future without Forgiveness*, New York: Doubleday.

Lecture Presentation

Small Groups

Seminar Discussion of Chosen Conflicts

Presenter(s): _____
