Course Description

Biblical Global Justice explores the second petition of the Lord’s Prayer: “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” (This course was student-initiated as an advanced seminar following SE632, “Christianity and the Problem of Racism.” Students take this course without having been in SE632, but may consider going on to serious discussion of racial, ethnic and class reconciliation.) The themes of this class (SE735) are Biblical justice, global injustice, global reconciliation, reform and development. The course requires rigorous reading, viewing of disturbing and challenging videos, small group discussions, and personal soul searching.

Course Objectives

(Fulfillment of these objectives will be measured by class discussion, your personal journals, quizzes and critical papers.)

1. To be able to preach and teach justice as God’s righteousness, justice as a vital part of the Gospel, social action as inextricably linked to evangelism—no evangelism without social concern, no social action apart from evangelism, as measured by class discussion and written assignments.

2. To be able to discuss justice as fulfilling the mandates of Jesus Christ, the OT prophets, our GCTS Mission Statement, and a universal longing for justice and peace. From course readings, lectures and class participation, to become more committed to living justly and prepared also to preach and teach social concern, as evaluated from discussions and written work.

3. To be able to think critically and feel emotionally about the exceedingly complex and divisive political, economics, and social issues of our times. To be able to express emotions of compassion, anger and hurt. To be able to dialogue and work together for Kingdom values and the Common Good with more conservative or more liberal Christians, those of other religions, as well as with secularists in pluralistic societies. To begin this process by being able to “agree to disagree” with other members of the class—trying both to appreciate and respect others’ stories and varied perspectives. All this will be evaluated from class discussions and written work, especially in Personal Journals.

4. To explore issues of distributive, retributive, and restorative justice, individual and corporate guilt, repentance and redemption, and to plumb the depths of forgiveness and reconciliation in a world bent on survival and revenge. To develop, in all this, a deeper sense of compassion through course readings, class videos, lectures and discussions. Videos will provide us with case studies in the application of justice to extreme situations in our world.

5. To consider how our personal gifts and calling will be worked out in different situations.
Course Emphases

1. This course will consider various cultural views of justice along with its primary study of the Scripture’s concepts of justice. It will also consider how churches can be faithful to evangelism and justice.

2. Included in this course are considerations of our racial divisions, the slave trade, the Holocaust, and the assassination of Archbishop Romero who championed the poor, and possibly the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide.

3. Biblical Global Justice will encourage students to make an active, personal investment in seeking justice for a contemporary problem.

Required Texts
(in order in which they should be read)

Handouts: To begin the course you will be given three short essays (or selections). Joseph Barndt’s “The Happiness Machine,” a selection on “Theocapitlaism” by McLaren, and Vanity Fair’s “Of the 1%, by the 1%, for the 1%.” (You are asked to respond in writing to these three readings in 1-2-pages.)

Enrique Nardoni (2001) Rise Up, O Judge: A Study of Justice in the Biblical World, BakerAcademic, 368pp. ISBN 978-0801047282. This is a vast study of pre-biblical justice, and justice throughout the Scriptures. (Or, as an alternative along with brief reading of Nardoni:)


Eric Metaxas (2007) Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery, HarperOne, 304pp. ISBN 978-0061173004. This is our main case study of political reform from an Evangelical perspective. It describes one person’s persistent stand, one strategy for social change, one long struggle that helped change our world.

Highly Recommended Reading

(Here are three almost required texts; I hope you will read or peruse at least two of them. The *Little Book* is a fine introduction to this course; the latter two excellent applications.)


* Mae Elise Cannon (2009) *Social Justice Handbook: Small Steps for a Better World*, IVPress, 302pp. Foreword by John Perkins. Here is our most practical book. Thoroughly conservative and Evangelical, it presents a myriad of social justice issues and gives clear practical steps that churches and individuals can take in response. Issues such as abortion, AIDS, sex trafficking, domestic violence, living-wage initiatives, homelessness, environmental stewardship and much more. This was almost chosen as a text for this course.


Donald W. Shriver (1998) *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics*, Oxford Univ. Press, 368pp. A vision of reconciliation politics reaching back to Thucydides, the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, Reformation and Enlightenment up through modern times, with analysis of cycles of violence and revenge—our human reluctance to offer forgiveness. Shows how our biblical faith can be expressed.

Miroslav Volf (1996) *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 336pp. A deep and penetrating analysis “us/then,” how we human beings exclude and how we must be able to embrace the other. Extra credit will be given for reading and reflecting (4-6 pp.) on this profound book.

Miroslav Volf (2011) *A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good*, Brazos Press of Baker Pub. Group, 174pp. How are we to strive for justice in the public sphere with the pluralism of other faiths and secularists? How have Christians been dysfunctional in the world? How can we be true to our faith and serve the common good of society? Profound response to complicated questions from a notable Christian theologian.

Course Format and Assignments

This class will consist of lectures and class discussions about Biblical and secular conceptions of justice and case studies (Wilberforce, the assassination Archbishop Oscar Romero, the Holocaust, and possibly reconciliation in Rwanda). From here the class considers Reconciliation, Relief and Development as implications of social justice.
I. Prompt Class Attendance and full-hearted participation, without computer multi-tasking, is very important for the subject matter of this class and appreciation of all your classmates. Your attention and reactions are very important to me. I want to see you giving respect and patience to the expression of any view from your classmates.  

II. A Personal Journal (in 3 parts) will help evaluate your comprehension and growth. Class meetings will assume careful interaction with the assigned texts (according to schedule in this Syllabus) and your in-class participation will be factored into the final grade.

Your Personal Journal will acknowledge your own internal questions, opinions, debates, struggles and possible blessings you receive from this course. It’s to be written before your Lord, and for my eyes only. I will respond to you as a professor, pastor and frank counselor. There is no page specification here; each of the three chapters may be a couple of pages or longer. Your work will be judged on its authenticity and holistic quality.

Chapter One will contain a bit of your life background in regard to social issues, then your reasons for taking the course, your first impressions, particularly any difficulties you experienced (perhaps because of who you are and where you come from, your home, etc.), and further comments on your initial reading and class discussions.  

Chapter Two will continue along the same lines as Ch. 1. How are you feeling about this course and its issues? How have you been affected by the videos shown? How has your small group responded to video(s) you selected—primary response and questions or critiques? How are you reacting to classmates and professor? Are you gaining new insights about yourself?—becoming aware of any personal hurts from the past and need for inner healing? How do you see yourself growing? Will this help you pastor others? What are you main questions or comments about the contents of this course? How are you thinking about Justice and Gospel?  

Chapter Three How have video or other discussions outside of class helped you begin to be a witness for justice. Then, evaluate this course in terms of your own personal, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual growth. How will you integrate this course into your future personal, married/family, and secular life? How will it affect your ministry in the church?  

III. Response to three Essays in Handout (1-2 pp. critical paragraphs, hand in Feb. 13, 5%))

IV. Study Question answers to Nardoni  

Because of the scope and exegetical details of this book, I give you two sets of Study Questions under Assignments. The first, shorter version, is to be answered in a written paper of four to six pages. The second, longer version (with “Added” in title) is for your personal help as you read along—this needs no written response. (Due Feb 27, 10% grd.)

V. Outside Class viewing of Videos. Somewhere outside of class, with other classmates/friend, you are asked to view one or more of the following videos and respond to these in your Personal Journal and perhaps in class. Our theme: “Response to Injustice”  

“The Corporation”  

“In Debt We Trust”
“Inside Job”
“The Dark Side of Chocolate”
“Hotel Rwanda”
“Africa and the Bible: A Three-Part Series,” from Day of Discovery
“A Time for Burning,” a film by Bill Jersey
“The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton & Susan B. Anthony,” PBS Home Video
“Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Pacifist, Nazi Resister” A documentary by Martin Doblmeier

VI. Quizzes (mostly short multiple choice, T/F questions on author & main ideas of texts)

Part One of Class/Readings (Feb 27)
Part Two of Class/Readings (Apr 17) (Average of 2 quizzes: 10% of grade)

VII. Critical Reviews:
Mott, 3-5 page review (Due Mar. 20th: 10% of grade)
Metaxas, 2-3 page Justice Teaching Plan (Due Apr 3: 10% of grade)
Preparing to teach it, develop 3-4 Questions and your Answers

VI. Your Evaluation of EYS (Encyclopedia of Center for Youth Studies)
For future use for discussions of Justice

I want you to become thoroughly acquainted with the CYS website (www.centerforyouth.org). This site should provide you many resources for future ministry, and you will be benefitting from the contributions of your classmates. Having spent an hour or so on this site, write up a critical evaluation of it as a resource for ministry. Of course I expect you to give special attention to the Topic “Justice” in the Encyclopedia, and then, the many related justice issues (Environment, Trafficking, etc.) [Critique of CYS, Due Apr 3rd, 10% of grade]

VII. Final Project on some aspect of a social Justice Issue

Notice the nine possibilities for a topic in EYS: Overview, Articles, Book Reviews, Research Reviews, Resource List, Method for Discussion, Method of Intervention, Case Studies, and Model of Programs. We call the last four our methodologies. You are to take one of the topics in CYS, research and write up a Model of Program, Case Study, or Method of Intervention for that topic. For an alternative project, please get permission. [Due Apr 24 with final work, 15% of grade]

Helpful Magazines

The Week “All You Need To Know About Everything that Matters,” a fine distillation of controversial events and politics giving both sides, www.theweek.com. We can get you a subscription for classroom use at $.77 a copy—see bottom of their home page.
The Economist, the magazine is considered one of the best summaries of global news and issues. www.economist.com

Dollars and Sense: Real World Economics, a progressive take on our economic woes and struggles. http://www.dollarsandsense.org/
Further Bibliography


Shane Claiborne (2006) The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical, Zondervan, 368pp. This book has created buzz and a little controversy, but it is an important challenge.


Shane Claiborne (2006) (The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical, Zondervan, 368pp. It should be obvious how important this book is for this course. Its born out of a growing spirit among your generation that gave rise to this class. It is contemporary prophecy and suggested life style (The Simple Way), run parallel to the student initiative that created Biblical, Global Justice here at GCTS. Our challenge may be more complicated than this message (see ironies, inconsistencies and extremes noted in Amazon reviews), but our motivation must be based on placing our culture under the scrutiny of biblical justice.

Chap Clark & Kara Powell (2008) Deep Justice in a Broken World: Your Kids: Helping Your Kids Serve Others and Right the Wrongs Around Them, Zondervan/Youth Specialties, 244pp. Where are we to really dig in if not with the rising generation? Here are some basic and practical ideas for all Christians.


Abacus, 246pp. Are we to work with other religions to promote global peace? An example of what we will find and perhaps blessed.


Charles Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, “Revivals are hindered when ministers and churches take wrong ground in regard to any question involving human rights.”


Mark Hatfield, *Not So Simple* and *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, Reflections from a Christian politician, the long-time, former Senator from Oregon. Here is the poignant and clear story of what carrying biblical justice and social concern into Washington politics looks like.


Carl F.H. Henry (1947, 2003) *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, Eerdmans, 89pp. This was the first public rebuke of Fundamentalists, or early Evangelicals, for their disregard for biblical justice and neglect of social action. This concern of Carl Henry and Harold Ockenga was largely theoretical and very slowly came to any real fruition.


Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon (1989) *Resident Aliens: A provocative Christian assessment of culture and ministry for people who know something is wrong*, Abingdon Press, 175pp. Rather than an Activist Church, more concerned about building a better society than reforming the church or a Conversionist Church, forgetting social structures to work only for inward change, the Confessing Church is a radical alternative whose main task is worshiping Christ in a way that counters and challenges culture.


Robert Hughes (1993) *Culture of Complaint: The Fraying of America*, NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 210pp. This book does more than call us to civil discourse; it “is a call for the reknitting of a fragmented and over-tribalized America.” The author affirms Vaclav Havel’s vision of politics “not as the art of the useful, but politics as practical morality, as service to the truth.”


Robert C. Linthicum (2006) *Empowering the Poor: Community Organizing Among the City’s “Rag, Tag, and Bobtail,” Authentic and World Vision*, 348pp. Defining “power” as the capacity, ability and willingness to act, this book explains how local churches can use power to transform their cities. Provides specific power strategies in the spirit of Jesus.


Joseph Marryat (1816) *Thoughts on the Abolition of the Slave Trade, and the Civilization of Africa with Remarks on the African Institution, and the Examination of the Report of... Slaves in the British West Indies Islands*, Cornell University Library, 242pp. This book should be of great interest in showing how ideas of that time regarding slavery and Africa were so different from our contemporary perspectives.

Charles Marsh & John Perkins (2009) *Welcoming Justice: God's Movement Toward Beloved Community*, IVPRESS, 140pp. Focusing on the Civil Rights Movement, the authors show that this was an important episode in a larger movement toward justice and a reconciled community. The authors' experiences enable them to provide tangible illustrations of reconciled, integrated communities.


William McDonough and Michael Braungart (2002) *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*, NY: North Point Press. Proposes the need for a new industrial revolution. Rather than natural resource to product to use and then landfill (cradle to grave), science should be able to give us a more sustainable pattern of recycling.


Stephen Charles Mott (1993) *A Christian Perspective on Political Thought*, Oxford Univ. Press, 352pp. A well-researched, scholarly consideration and critique of contending political views. Though most Americans want to make political choices on the basis of right and wrong, they lack a sound sense of justice in taking political their political stands.


Reinhold Niebuhr (1932) *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 284pp. It is very important to take some principle ideas from this classic and to recognize Niebuhr’s perspective and manner of thinking.


H. Richard Niebuhr (1951) *Christ and Culture*, Harper&Row, 259pp. A classic historic sketch and diagram of five Christian approaches to secular (or pagan) society. Critically important for considering the Christian, justice and social change. For a quick summary of the book, see Ch. 4 of my *When Kumbaya Is Not Enough*.

Henri Nouwen (1998, 2008) *Compassion*, Darton, Longman & Todd, Ltd. 160pp. As Stephen Mott and others have demonstrated the basis of justice in love, Nouwen sees compassion as the antidote for competition in a world dominated by principles of egocentric power and destructive control.

Marvin Olasky (1992) *The Tragedy of American Compassion*, Washington, DC: Regnery Pub. 299pp. Reviewing 300 years of America’s help for the poor, Olasky criticizes neither our giving too much or too little to the poor, but failing to be with them and understand the help they really need. Recommended by Newt Gingrich, Charles Colson, Anthony Evans, and Cal Thomas.


Peter J. Paris (1985) *Social Teaching of the Black Churches*, Fortress Press, 162pp. We know that Black Churches have been much more faithful to biblical gospel of justice than white churches in general. This book describes the “historical development of its black ethic and highlighting its fundamental principle, which enabled a people to survive, address the difficult moral dilemmas, and strive for freedom and justice as Christians in America.”


Ruby K. Payne (2006) *Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities*, aha! Process, 293pp. I’d like to see you use this after/with Myers’ *Walking with the Poor*. It brings his principles back to our urban and rural situations, explaining why middle class attempts to help the poor fail or are marginalized. It also has its Workbook which will help in using Payne’s valuable insights in training. This is a hopeful book suggesting effective strategies and outcomes.


Wilbert Rideau (2010) *In the Place of Justice: A Story of Punishment and Deliverance*, Knopf, 384pp. An amazing and powerful story, an example of restorative justice through the most adverse circumstances. The book also uncovers the way racism (personal and systemic) permeates social systems (like the criminal justice system) of the U.S. Here is a ray of hope.


Michael J. Sandel (2009) *Justice: What’s the Right Thing To Do?* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 308pp. One of the most popular and noted secular professors of justice deals with the biggest and most vexing issues of political and personal social life, including the place of religion in American life.


Stephen Sizer  *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armegeddon?* Has Evangelical justice for Israelis led to injustice for Palestinians?


Glen Stassen, ed. (1998) *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War*, Cleveland OH: The Pilgrim Press, 209pp. Scholars from Fuller Theological Seminary and elsewhere took serious time to bring together thinking, not only on “just war” but on how we can reduce global conflicts.


Charles J. Sykes (1992) *A Nation of Victims: The Decay of the American Character*, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 289pp. Witty, provocative and persuasive, this is another look at a “culture of complaint, litigation and excessive entitlement that are ignoring the public, common good for personal advantage. Some examples in here will offend you, regardless of your perspective.

Stanley W. Carlson-Thies & James S. Skillen (1996) *Welfare in America: Christian Perspectives on a Policy in Crisis*, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 582pp. “Should welfare be abolished because it fosters dependency, or should it be expanded to offer more effective help? Are people poor due to their own irresponsibility or as a result of injustice? Is the key welfare problem non-work or illegitimacy? Should government help the poor, or is aid a job for the church?” If you’re going to discuss welfare, and you should, you need to look into the discussion of these questions in this book by Christian scholars who have made justice and public policy their focused research.

Paul Tillich (1954) *Love, Power, and Justice*, London: Oxford Univ. Press. Explores the relationship among love, power and justice arguing against the notion that love can be divorced from justice. “… constructive social ethics presuppose that one is aware of the element of love in structures of power and of the element of power without which love becomes chaotic surrender.” (p.12)

Desmond Tutu (2000) *No Future Without Forgiveness*, Image, 304pp. This powerful personal memoir of the Archbishop’s experience as Chairman of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission is an important complement to Shriver’s *Ethic for Enemies* and Volf’s *Exclusion and Embrace*.

Desmund Tutu (1994) *The Rainbow People of God*, NY: Bantam Doubleday Dell, 281pp. “At home in South Africa I have sometimes said in big meetings where you have black and white together: ‘Raise your hands!... Move your hands!... Look at your hands—different colors representing... the rainbow people of God…. The rainbow in the Bible is the sign of peace....’” This book includes powerful, poignant, and helpful documents from the struggle against apartheid.


Muhamad Yunus (2nd ed. 2003) *Banker to the Poor: Micro-Lending and the Battle Against World Poverty*, PublicAffairs, 312pp. A powerful memoir explaining the birth of micro-credit and the Grameen Bank… how $27 to a poor Bangladesh woman spread to 42 women making stools from bamboo, and then others with only 2% defaulted loans.

**Organizational Resources**

World Vision (helped establish this course, [www.worldvision.org](http://www.worldvision.org)) One of the best known and respected global relief and development organization—turn to this site for articles, podcasts, blog, and Email updates (use at least one of these Email services for this course).

Center for Public Justice (CPJ, [www.cpjustice.org](http://www.cpjustice.org)) An independent organization for policy research and civic education whose mission is to equip citizens, develop leaders, and shape policy.

Sojourners faith, politics, culture ([www.sojo.net](http://www.sojo.net)) Mission: to articulate the biblical call to social justice, inspiring hope and building a movement to transform individuals, communities, the church and the world.

Christianity Today ([www.christianitytoday.com](http://www.christianitytoday.com)) free Email of relevant articles and more.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC, [www.mcc.org](http://www.mcc.org)) Seeks to demonstrate God's love by working among people suffering from poverty, conflict, oppression and natural disasters... addresses peace and justice issues.


International Social Justice Commission of the Salvation Army (Google its name or find under [www.salvationarmy.org](http://www.salvationarmy.org)) Mission: to advocate and advise on social, economic and political issues giving rise to the perpetuation of social injustice in the world.

Christian Community Development Association (CCDA, [www.ccda.org](http://www.ccda.org)) Mission: to inspire and train Christians who seek to bear witness to the Kingdom of God by reclaiming and restoring under-resourced communities.


Justice Mapping ([www.justicemapping.org](http://www.justicemapping.org)) Specializes in computer mapping (Geographic Information Systems, GIS) to help partners better understand, evaluate and communicate criminal justice and other social policy information. Mapping studies are used by legislators, government agencies, research institutes, technical assistance providers and the media.