Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
FALL 2016
Thursdays, 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:00 – 4:00 PM; Thursdays 10:00 AM – 12:00PM and by appointment

Course Description
Reconciliation is a term and a process that is often misunderstood and minimized to deal solely with race. Yet, there are many more intersectional areas that demand individual, institutional, congregational reconciliation. Dr. Brenda Salter McNeil suggests, “Reconciliation is an ongoing spiritual process involving forgiveness, repentance and justice that restores broken relationships and systems to reflect God’s original intention for all creation to flourish” (Roadmap to Reconciliation, 22). Beyond learning about the historical, theological, cultural and sociological necessity for reconciliation, this course challenges students to emerge as leaders in the Project of Reconciliation.

Course Textbooks
ISBN 978-0195147070


ISBN 978-0830844425


ISBN 978-080701029-7

Course Objectives
The student who successfully completes this course should be able:
1. To engage in the vital importance of developing a theological understanding of the challenges of vertical and horizontal division.
2. To develop a working knowledge of the origins and history of racism and other horizontal division within and beyond the Church.
3. To effectively read, understand, learn from and engage texts in theological studies.
4. To have a deeper appreciation for theology as it relates to preparation for ministry in the context of the local church, the global church, and the broader contemporary culture.
5. To make a personal commitment to the project of reconciliation.
Course Requirements

Attendance/Class Participation – a course of this nature relies heavily on student participation. In fact, the course relies on the student’s “presence,” (physical presence as well as emotional, theological and spiritual “presence”). Our classroom is a safe space for introverts as well as extroverts.

Assigned Readings – assigned readings are prerequisite for each lecture. Although not all of the reading will be covered in the lecture, the lecture will be based on the fact that students have already accomplished the assigned reading.

Book Reflection Assignments – rather than using a traditional reading log, students will respond to each of the five (5) required texts. All papers will be submitted on time using 12-point font (Times New Roman is preferred but not mandatory) with 1-inch margins, double-space and free of any glaring grammatical or spelling errors.

1) Reflection on Howard Thurman’s Jesus and the Disinherited (due in class 9/22)
   In 112 pages, Thurman offers a poignant prognosis of the very question he raises in the preface, “Why is it that Christianity seems impotent to deal radically, and therefore effectively, with the issues of discrimination and injustice on the basis of race, religion and national origin?” (n.p.). In 5 pages (more is fine, less is not) share your thoughts on the effectiveness of Thurman’s inquiry and indicate whether you find his musings effective or not. In addition, share your own thoughts, reflections and/or analysis on the book as a whole. What did you glean, discern or gain from the book? Feel free to also share your criticisms, dislikes or disagreements as well.

2) Reflection on Emerson & Smith’s Divided By Faith (due in class 10/6)
   In 172 pages, Emerson and Smith use sociological methodology to assert that Evangelicals for generations have turned a blind-eye towards justice, equity and thus, reconciliation. They write, “Evangelicals usually fail to challenge the system not just out of concern for evangelism, but also because they support the American system and enjoy its fruits. They share the Protestant work ethic, support laissez-faire economics, and sometimes fail to evaluate whether the social system is consistent with their Christianity” (22). In 5 pages (more is fine, less is not) share your thoughts on the effectiveness of Emerson and Smith’s data and indicate whether you find their analysis effective or not. In addition, share your own thoughts, reflections and/or analysis on the book as a whole. What did you glean, discern or gain from the book? Feel free to also share your criticisms, dislikes or disagreements as well.

3) Reflection on Soong-Chan Rha’s The Next Evangelicalism (due in class 10/20)
   In 5 pages (more is fine, less is not) how might you best articulate Rah’s vision for the next Evangelicalism. In addition, share your own thoughts, reflections and/or analysis on the book as a whole. What did you glean, discern or gain from the book? Feel free to also share your criticisms, dislikes or disagreements as well.
4) Reflection on Deborah Jian Lee’s *Rescuing Jesus* (due in class 11/3)

Lee’s analysis of conservative evangelicalism and vision for progressive evangelicalism are bold, courageous and uncomfortable for many. In Lee’s words, “Once I started asserting my whole humanity, including my ethics as a Chinese American woman with LGBTQ friends, I felt sidelined, my loyalty to the faith questioned.” (13). In 5 pages (more is fine, less is not) share your reflection on Lee’s analysis and vision. In addition, share your own thoughts, reflections and/or analysis on the book as a whole. What did you glean, discern or gain from the book? Feel free to also share your criticisms, dislikes or disagreements as well.

5) Reflection on Brenda McNeil’s *Roadmap to Reconciliation* (due in class 11/17)

More than a textbook, this is an actual Roadmap. In 5 pages (more is fine, less is not) what did you learn about yourself? Whether you formally or informally engaged in the “Getting Practical” exercises, what thoughts, reflections, and/or ah-ha moments did you experience as a result of engaging in McNeil’s process? Feel free to also share your criticisms, dislikes or disagreements as well.

**Personal Reconciliation Paper** – assessing your state of awareness and/or engagement of issues related to vertical and horizontal challenge at the beginning of the course, how have you grown, changed or matured in your thoughts, personal theology and/or active engagement of “shalom” throughout the semester? Has anything shifted, intensified or diminished? Compose a 10-page (minimum, not maximum) essay/personal log on your personal growth as a result of assigned readings, lectures, conversations and fellowship throughout your engagement with this course.

**Group Project (Presentation/ Paper)** – students will self-assemble into groups of 2 or more in order to engage in the development of a roadmap, blueprint or path towards reconciliation for a real or fictitious individual/community in need of healing. Students will work together to diagnosis the deep wound, assess the potential for healing, and to engage in developing a path towards reconciliation. Each group will give a formal presentation during the final two days of the class and will compose a paper that shares the “behind the scenes” of their process of engagement with each other that might include personal narratives of challenge, healing and perhaps even reconciliation (internal and/or personal). The paper can take any shape but must be a minimum of 10 pages (inclusive of title page, bibliography, etc.).

**Warning on Plagiarism:** Helpful guidelines on plagiarism can be found here: [http://www.gordonconwell.edu/hamilton/current/documents/hamreg_plagiarism.pdf](http://www.gordonconwell.edu/hamilton/current/documents/hamreg_plagiarism.pdf). This document has the official recognition of the Gordon-Conwell faculty and provides very helpful tools to guide you as you prepare for your assignments. If a student is caught plagiarizing, the student will receive the consequences of this act according to the process established by the seminary.

**Grading Policy**

Student grades will be determined as follows:

- Attendance/Class Participation: 10%
- Book Reflection Assignments (5): 50%
- Personal Reconciliation Paper: 25%
- Group Project: 20%
The following letter grades and their achievement equivalents are used by the instructor to reflect a student’s performance in the course:

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<thead>
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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
<th>Quality Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>Work of exceptional quality</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Work of outstanding quality</td>
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<td>95-93</td>
<td>3.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>92-90</td>
<td>3.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>89-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>85-83</td>
<td>2.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>82-80</td>
<td>2.30</td>
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<td>C</td>
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After all the requirements of the course have been completed, the instructor will use the following rubric for the assignment of grades, based on the overall performance of the class. The grades assigned will represent the instructor’s interpretation of the following standard:

A = Outstanding mastery of the subject – excellence is evident in preparation and participation in class sessions; unusual ability to retain, analyze and synthesize the material; a positive attitude; consistent productive contributions both within and beyond the classroom.

B = Superior mastery of the subject – sincere effort in preparation and participation in class sessions; mastery of the essential aspects of the material; a positive attitude; mostly consistent in making productive contributions both within and beyond the classroom.

C = Basic mastery of the subject – inconsistent effort in preparation and participation in class sessions; engagement with the material but difficulty in grasping some of its aspects; positive attitude; occasional contributions both within and beyond the classroom.

D = Inadequate mastery of the subject.

F = Failure – course must be repeated.
Course Schedule

WEEK 1 (September 15, 2016) – Making the Case for Reconciliation

Assign Reading:
Thurman – *Jesus and the Disinherited*

*Topics for Discussion:*
+ Introduction to the Class
  * Review of the Syllabus
  * Terminology
  * Exploring Our Own Personal Narratives
+ Jesus, the Cross and Vertical & Horizontal Challenges

WEEK 2 (September 22, 2016) – Making the Case for Reconciliation

Reflection on Howard Thurman’s *Jesus and the Disinherited* due in class

Assign Reading:
Emerson & Smith – *Divided by Faith*

*Topics for Discussion:*
+ Biblical Anthropology and Imago Dei
+ Doctrine of Discovery
+ America’s Great Compromises

WEEK 3 (September 29, 2016) – Making the Case for Reconciliation

Assign Reading:
Emerson & Smith – *Divided by Faith*

*Topics for Discussion:*
+ Ecclesiology and the Homogeneous Unit Principle
+ Personal Piety vs. Neighborly Love
+ #BlackLivesMatters, #BlueLivesMatters, #AllLivesMatters and other #’s

WEEK 4 (October 6, 2016) – Making the Case for Reconciliation

Reflection on Michael O. Emerson & Christian Smith’s *Divided by Faith* due in class

Assign Reading:
Rah – *The Next Evangelicalism*

*Topics for Discussion:*
+ unjust, inequitable and non-inclusive Worship
+ Doxological Implications of oppressive theology
+ Taking another look at HIS(story)

WEEK 5 (October 13, 2016) – READING WEEK

Please spend time resting, praying, reading and working on personal and/ or group projects.
WEEK 6 (October 20, 2016) – Developing a Vision for Reconciliation

Assigned Reading:
Lee – Rescuing Jesus

Topics for Discussion:
+ God the convener, you the participant and we the beneficiaries
+ Dealing with “me” so we can get to the “we”

WEEK 7 (October 27, 2016) – Developing a Vision for Reconciliation

Assigned Reading:
Lee – Rescuing Jesus

Topics for Discussion:
+ Cultural Competency and White Privilege
+ White Guilt and “the least of These”

WEEK 8 (November 3, 2016) – Developing a Vision for Reconciliation

Reflection on Deborah Jian Lee’s Rescuing Jesus due in class

Assigned Reading:
McNeil – Roadmap to Reconciliation

Topics for Discussion:
+ Repentance, Reparations and Restorative Justice
+ Shalom

WEEK 9 (November 10, 2016) – READING WEEK

Please spend time resting, praying, reading and working on personal and/ or group projects.

WEEK 10 (November 17, 2016) – Taking the Journey Towards Reconciliation

Reflection on Brenda Salter McNeil’s Roadmap to Reconciliation due in class

Topics for Discussion:
+ Unity, Inclusivity and Harmony
+ Changing the way we Worship

WEEK 11 (November 24, 2016) – Taking the Journey Towards Reconciliation

Topics for Discussion:
+ Grace, Mercy, Justice and Hope
+ Changing the way we Fellowship

WEEK 12 (December 1, 2016) – Taking the Journey Towards Reconciliation

Personal Reconciliation Paper due in class

Topics for Discussion:
+ Daily Bread, Forgiveness and Deliverance from Evil
+ Changing the way we Pray
WEEK 13 (December 8, 2016) – Taking the Journey Towards Reconciliation

_Individual/ Group Project Presentations_

WEEK 14 (December 15, 2016) – Taking the Journey Towards Reconciliation

_Group Project Papers due in class_

_Individual/ Group Project Presentations_
Highly Recommended Books:


