

Crossing Boundaries: Bridging the Racial Divide – South Africa

Taught by Rev. Edwin and Organized by Melikaya Ntshingwa

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a *contextual theology* course based on the South African experience of *apartheid, liberation* and *transformation*, or in the terms of our course: theological discourses from South Africa on “bridging the racial divide”. The course has developed over years – its origins go back to the Desmond Tutu Peace Centre of which the course founder, Dr Judy Mayotte was a Board member. We will look first at the South African experience of Apartheid and try to understand how it was that Christians came to develop such a patently evil form of governance as was Apartheid. We will explore several themes that relate to Apartheid, such as *origins, identity, experience, struggle and separation*. Then you will have a chance to examine your own theology, where it comes from and how you arrived at your current theological position. In this regard the course also contains sources that deal with Catholic approaches to identity and race. Together we shall then explore issues relating to your own *genesis, identity, experience, struggle and separation* – all issues common to humankind! All of this we will do by seeking to answer various questions. Each question leads to discussion in class and provides the basis for the work you will be required to do. In the course we examine the nature of *separateness* (apartheid being an ideology based on a *theology* of separateness). We will explore the origins of separateness and see how it effects even ourselves at a most basic and elementary level. We also examine the nature of *wholeness* – looking at this from several points of view – from theology, science, philosophy, coming to see it in terms of the *ubuntu* theology of Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the *ubuntu* political philosophy of former South African President Nelson Mandela. (The notion of *ubuntu* emphasizes that a person is a person only in relation to other persons). This world view values affirmation and acceptance of the other, interdependence, participation, openness and concern for the common good. A good question to deal with would be: Is this an African or a Christian philosophy, or something of both? At the centre of this course will be the basic Christian notions of *reconciliation* (with God, the neighbor and the self); *forgiveness* (living from grace and extending grace); *liberation* (from evil, oppression, ideology, patriarchy, sexism, corruption, poverty, hopelessness, etc.); *justice* (restitution, restorative justice, amnesty in exchange of truth, social transformation, development) and *humanity* (being a Christian in order to become human again, Ubuntu).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through readings, films, guest lectures, visits to Robben Island, the District 6 Museum, reflection sessions, classroom discussions, debates, and conversations you will:

1. Reflect on the theology of Apartheid (created by Christians and opposed by Christians!) and explore the process of truth, reconciliation and justice that took place.
2. Reflect upon the theology of forgiveness and reconciliation (e.g. as expounded by Desmond Tutu and John de Gruchy, and as implemented through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission or TRC).
3. Reflect upon your own theology, rediscover aspects of your theology and develop theological notions you could take forward in your work, study or life, seeking to understand yourself, others and the world about you.
4. Compare Catholic, Anglican and Reformed notions of justice and reconciliation as applied to racist and divisive situations in the world.

PRESCRIBED COURSE TEXTS

Each student will participate in one group assignment together with three - four others for such group assignments. Groups are required to prepare a 30minute presentation on a selected text. Following the presentation, rest of the lecture focuses on the prescribed text. Everyone is expected to read the selected texts prior to each lecture.

- The Belhar Confession (1986) and □ The Kairos Document (1986) - whole section
- John W. de Gruchy: Reconciliation: Restoring Justice – Reading whole book

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- Desmond Mpilo Tutu: No Future Without Forgiveness – selected chapters
- John Allen: Rabble Rouser for Peace (Tutu biography) – selected chapters
- Bryan Massingale: Racial Justice and the Catholic Church) – selected chapters
- Emmanuel Katongole: The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa – selected chapters

Recommended Reading (selections from these sources):

- Francis Wilson: *Dinosaurs, Diamonds and Democracy – A short, short history of South Africa*
- Richard Elphick & Rodney Davenport: *Christianity in South Africa*, chapters 25
- Nelson Mandela: *Long Walk to Freedom*
- Kairos Southern Africa: *The 2012 Centenary Celebrations of the African National Congress*–Arrison
- Antjie Krog: *Country of my skull*
- James H Cone: The Cross and the Lynching Tree

COURSE ASSESSMENT

1. **Theological essay on reconciliation and justice (40%):**

Since this is a theology course, you are expected to write a proper theology essay, based on your readings and reflections, and in the form of a referenced essay of circa 2000 words, with bibliography, introduction, conclusion and appropriate ‘chapters’ or ‘paragraphs’ (with headings). The essay will contribute **40%** to the final mark. It should be based on your reading of a good number of texts, but it should also reflect something of your own theological journey, and the application of “reconciliation” in your own everyday life experience. Essays can also concentrate on themes or books we have covered, e.g. James Cone, Bryan Massingale, Long Walk to Freedom, De Gruchy, books by Desmond Tutu, etc.

2. **Readings, group class presentations (20%):**

During the lecture periods each student will participate in preparing one of three -five (depending on total student number) group assignments on a selected reading. This aspect of the work (readings and presentations) will contribute **20%** to the final mark. Your presentation should be both a good summary of main points and an imaginative presentation with prompts for further thinking. It may be a good idea to prepare a short handout for the benefit of your classmates. The group will present their work during the 30 minutes of the lecture, allowing for discussion, and then a lecture and discussion will follow in the next hour. After the presentation, provide three-page reflection of the reading, the presentation and the evaluation of the presentation. (**Presentation 10%, reflection/evaluation paper 10%**)

3. **Selected Journal entries (10%):**

Based on your readings, lectures, class and field experiences, you should write throughout the course a series of “**reflections**” on selected sessions/visits/classes. You are required to write 5 journal entries for this course. Four journal entries will be compulsory: These journal entries will focus on Robben Island, District Six Mary Burton and Ntobeko Peni. Finally you have one of your own choice entry; a reflection on something special that happened, or something you read, heard or experienced, or a theme that struck you through your South African experience. You will receive a list of questions you need to reflect on (prompts)– of course you may add to the list! These entries should be **two pages (circa 500-600 words)** each.

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4. Portfolio and Final Reflection (20%):

Visual Diary Considerations

- Tourism focus (pictures, etc) = Negative
- Programme participant/staff focus= Negative
- No visual aids = Negative
- Social Justice theme = Positive
- Impact on your own journey = Positive
- How personally you connect to your visual diary – Positive
- Pictures/drawing, something visual– Positive
- Story line coherence – positive

As you move through the semester, you will be creating a **Portfolio**. For your **final presentation of circa 10 minutes** you should choose a central theme or event or text or image (from the rich and random variety taken up in your portfolio); a theme that captures the essence of something very meaningful that struck you during your South African stay. You need to choose from all the many impressions something essential which you wish to convey to your audience and the intended audience would ideally be a mix of your lecturers and other facilitators in South Africa. You may spend a few minutes of your time to share a “visual or audio diary” (highlights!), but more than half of your time should deal with your central theme (with social justice context) or central insight, reflecting meaning or sense making of your experience. The final reflection should be a reflection of the entire semester as brought together in your portfolio – a compilation of notes, pictures, artworks, doodles, poems, photocopies, newspaper clippings or headlines, letters and or emails, ANYTHING graphic and representative of your experiences during the semester with a South African context – in colour, design and form. Be creative and make it look the way you feel from time to time – representing your moods, struggles, joys and sadness; your aspirations and lessons learnt. Remember to give attention not just to “what happened” but how the meaning of events, readings, encounters have impacted on your own thinking, existentially, and choose one topic or theme or image to capture the essence of something close to your heart. This reflective rounding of your appropriation of the module and your experiences will count **20%** of the final mark. The essay component of this is **10%** and the actual presentation is **10%**. The essay component is expected to be at minim 600 words. The presentation part should be an overview or summary of the essay. Focus on a social justice/theological theme excluding all tourism elements.

5. Monday Tutorial/Reflection Sessions (05%)

As part of your ongoing theological journey, we will have five sessions from 6-8pm. These can typically go to 8:30pm. These sessions will be facilitated in a form of guest lectures, group reflection and short films/documentaries on issues of theological journey, reconciliation and forgiveness. For the reflection part, a group of 3-4 will facilitate a session on a selected theological topic. It is expected that each group submits an outline of the session a week in advance. A two-page essay is then expected a week after each session. This essay should summaries the session focusing on lessons learnt and how a theological journey was enhanced. The facilitation session including the essay component will count 5% towards your final mark. As part of “own journal”, a journal entry can be extracted from these lectures.

GRADING (Summary):

Theological Essay	40%
Visual Diary Essay and Presentation	20%
Readings and Group Presentations (3-4 persons in each group)	20%
Journal Entries	10%
Course Participation	05%
Monday Session Reflection Presentation	05%

For every day late 1% off

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SEMESTER SCHEDULE

Thursday, 06 February	Museum Visits – Robben Island and District Six
Friday, 07 February	Contextual Overview - South African History, colonial history with apartheid realities through the context of District Six and Robben Island. Presentation Preparatory: Documentary on District Six History and Documentary on Robben Island and Constitutional Hill.
<i>Monday, 10 February</i>	District Six Museum Journal Entry
<i>Thursday, 13 February</i>	Robben Island Museum Journal Entry
Friday, 14 February	Understanding the church defiance: The Belhar Confession and the Kairos Document. The role of Church in Apartheid South Africa. Reading: The Kairos Document (1986) and The Belhar Confession (1986).
Monday, 17 February	Guest Lecture/Reflection Session
Friday, 21 February	Geo-historical framework for understanding South African realities: Apartheid boundaries and the need for liberation and reconciliation. Reading: De Gruchy: <i>Reconciliation</i> -Chapter 1, 5 and 6. [Own reading: Francis Wilson: <i>Dinosaurs, Diamonds, Democracy</i> ; Elphick and Davenport, chapters 1 & 8]. Group 1. Everyone must read the whole book.
Monday, 24 February	Guest Lecture/Reflection Session
<i>Thursday, 27 February</i>	Presentation Summaries Due.
Friday, 28 February	Tutu's biography (Chapter 13-16). John Allen, <i>Rabble Rouser for Peace</i> . Reading: Francis Wilson: <i>Dinosaurs, Diamonds, Democracy</i> ; Elphick and Davenport, chapters 1 & 8]. Group 2.
Monday, 02 March	Guest Lecture/Reflection Session
<i>Thursday, 05 March</i>	Presentation Summaries Due.
Friday, 06 March	The struggle against apartheid and for human dignity. De Gruchy: <i>Confessions of a Christian Humanist</i> (Reading: Elphick and Davenport, ch 25). Group 3.
Monday, 09 March	Guest Lecture/Reflection Session
<i>Thursday, 12 March</i>	Presentation Summaries Due.
Friday, 13 March	The understanding and the review of my theological journey.
Monday, 16 March	Guest Lecture/Reflection Session

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<i>Thursday, 19 March</i>	Visual Diary Outline Due.
Friday, 20 March	Midsemester Break – No class
Friday 27 March	Midsemester Break – No class
<i>Monday, 30 March</i>	Past Visual Diary Presentation Viewing session.
Friday, 03 April	Catholic notions of reconciliation and justice. Massingale: <i>Racial Justice and the Catholic Church</i> . Group 4. [Also: Send in a one page concept of your <u>Portfolio</u> , as well as the topic and a brief outline of your Theological <u>Essay</u> (Send a digital copy of these to Melikaya).
Friday 17, April	Lecture with Prof. John de Gruchy on Reconciliation: Restoring Justice. The church and the personal journey. Focus on theology of reconciliation. Preparatory reading – Whole book – Restoring Justice.
<i>Thursday, 16 April</i>	Presentation Summaries Due.
Friday 17	Laying Ghosts to rest by Mamphela Ramphele. The overview of the role of apartheid in society and post-apartheid realities Group 5.
<i>Thursday, 21 May</i>	<i>Journal Entry Due</i>
Friday, 22 May	Forgiveness and reconciliation efforts in post-apartheid era. Guest Speaker – Ntobeko Peni. Preparatory: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMSC3-Muw2A https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bp-FPtcCl2U .
Friday, 24 April	The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa by Emmanuel Katongole. Readings: Introduction, chapter 1, 4 and 6.
<i>Thursday, 30 April</i>	<i>Ntobeko Peni Journal Entry Due,</i>
Friday, 01 May	Public Holiday – Workers Day
Friday, 08 May	The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa by Emmanuel Katongole. Group 6.
Friday, 15 May	Lecture of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. An overview by with invited guest from the TRC. Mary Burton.
<i>Thursday, 21 May</i>	Presentation Summaries Due.
Friday, 22 May	The silence of the church: Focus on the church and gender-based violence.
Thursday, 28 May	<i>Mary Burton Journal Entry Due</i>
Thursday, 04 June	Visual Diary Presentations (dependent on final exam schedule).

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Course Contact Breakdown

1. Friday lectures – 120 minutes per session
2. Monday Guest Lectures/Reflections – 10hrs total
3. De Gruchy lectures – Friday – Sunday 9hrs
4. Visual Diary Presentations – 3hrs. total

Key Project Due Dates

Visual Diary

- Monday, 01 May Visual Diary Outline Due - Send us one-page concept note and a brief outline of essay
Friday, 08 May Visual Diary Draft – Provide a draft **concept** of your visual diary.

Friday, 15 May Visual Draft **Concept** Peer Reviews Due

- Friday, 18 May Visual Dairy Essay –
Friday, 22 May Visual Diary Presentation – Group 1
Monday, 25 May Visual Diary Presentation – Group 2

Theological Paper

- Friday, 04 May Theological Paper Outline Due
Monday, 15 May Theological Paper Draft Due
Monday, 25 May Theological Paper Draft Peer Reviews Due
Monday, 01 June Theological Final Paper Due

Group Presentation Summaries

1. 28 February Rabble Rouser
2. 06 March Reconciliation
3. 03 April Confessions of a Christian Humanist
4. 06 April Racial Justice and the Catholic Church
5. 17 April Laying Ghosts to rest
6. 20 April The Sacrifice of Africa

Journal Entries

1. Mr. Ntobeko Peni
2. Ms. Mary Burton
3. Robben Island
4. District Six
5. Own choice entry

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LECTURE BACKGROUND

Rev Edwin Arrison is an Anglican priest in the Hermanus region. He has been deeply involved in the struggle against Apartheid and the United Democratic Movement. He is currently busy with a Masters degree in Theology at UWC. He is Chairperson of the Board of the Centre for Christian Spirituality in Cape Town and he has taken the initiative to establish Kairos South Africa, a civil society organization involved in justice issues (collaborating e.g. with Kairos Palestine). This new movement has produced various comments on dilemmas faced by post-Apartheid South Africa, including strong letters of prophetic critique against the ANC government.

Mary Burton: has been active in civil society and the protection and fostering of human rights, through engagement in a number of organizations, chiefly the Black Sash. The Black Sash is an organization of women, founded in 1955 and still working today to “Make human rights real”. Although it changed its structure and focus after the country’s first democratic elections in 1994, its values remain firm: justice, dignity, women’s rights, integrity, nonviolence, rigour, independence and courage, volunteers and civil society. In 1995 she was appointed to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and served on its Committee for gross Human Rights Violations until it completed its task and presented its report to then President Mandela in October 1998.

Prof John de Gruchy is a retired academic who taught Theology at UCT for many years, and who has written many groundbreaking theological books and articles, including *The Church Struggle in South Africa* and *Reconciliation*. He is currently theologian in residence at the Volmoed Retreat Centre close to Hermanus and a weekend visit there has become a fixed and inspiring event on the programme.

Easy Nofemela/Ntobeko Peni with Mrs. Biehl of the Amy Biehl Foundation. What an event to listen to the story of these two gentlemen who were found guilty of the murder on Amy Biehl, the American exchange student who became heavily involved in the antiapartheid struggle in Cape Town (but also in Namibia). The reconciliation that took place between them and Amy Biehl’s parents is legendary, especially with the outcome of the Amy Biehl Foundation and its inspiring work of getting people together and spreading the word and reality of reconciliation.

Contact information

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