

Course Syllabus

THE 5132: Theology of Peacebuilding

Instructor Contact Information

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Course Description

Peacebuilding denotes the work of churches, NGOs and people of faith to diffuse tensions to prevent war and to restore bonds of community after the wreckage of war. In the twenty-first century it is a large and growing field of study and practical application. It grows out of classical Christian discussions about war and peace, which came to a head in the twentieth century as churches confronted tyranny and the threat of nuclear annihilation.

Closely related to this is the issue of sources of peace. We can speak of the things that make for inner peace—peace with God and peace within the soul. There's the role of the family, where Rev. Moon's teachings stands tall. Freedom and human rights figure into this, as does the value of human life, of which the Catholic Church has long been a champion. For societies to be peaceful, they must extend value and rights to all, otherwise a social environment that seems peaceful may actually be a place of hidden violence. In this regard, we will examine the teachings of two leading 20th century faith-based peacemakers who changed society by non-violent means: Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

We will begin examining the theological basis for building peaceful societies and a peaceful world with the teachings of Jesus, then move to Christian reflections on war and peace, on standing up to tyranny, on forgiveness and reconciliation. We will also look at some of Rev. Moon's teachings on this topic, as well as those of the world's religions, using *World Scripture* as a resource. As the class moves on, we will look at strategies of faith-based peacebuilding as practiced by peacebuilders in conflict zones or confronting injustice at home.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will:

1. **Knowledge:** Explain theological principles for peace building as taught by their proponents
2. **Context:** Describe and analyze socio-cultural and historical context as an underlying theological concern in conflict and peace building
3. **Theological construction:** Discuss their own theology of peacebuilding and explains its basis in scripture and tradition
4. **Reflection on practice:** Reflect on how they practice peacebuilding in their personal life, family life, church and/or community life.

Required Textbooks:

You will need the following textbooks for the course. Those with links are available online.

- Yoder, John Howard. *The Politics of Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994. ISBN: 0802807348 \$13.00
- Helmick, Raymond and Peterson, Rodney ed. *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy and Conflict Transformation*. Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation, 2001. ISBN: 189015184X \$23.00
- Lederach, John Paul. *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington: US Institute of Peace, 1997. ISBN: 1878379739 \$10.00
- Niebuhr, Reinhold. [Moral Man and Immoral Society](#). New York: Scribners, 1932. ISBN: 0664235395 \$19.00 **There is an assignment on this book in the early part of the course, so please acquire a copy (or borrow the e-book from the library) ASAP.**
- *World Scripture and the Teachings of Sun Myung Moon*. Tarrytown, NY: Universal Peace Federation, 2007. ISBN: 1930549571 \$35.00. **Available to download:** [World Scripture II Text.pdf](#)

There is a **Book Report** due on March 17, on a book to be selected from the following list. I suggest that you select your book and order it now, so that you will have it ready at hand when it is time to do the assignment.

- Peter Block, *Community: The Structure of Belonging* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2008);
- Juanita Brown, *The World Café: Shaping Our Futures through Conversations that Matter* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2005).
- Gary Harper, *The Joy of Conflict Resolution: Transforming Victims, Villains and Heroes in the Workplace and at Home* (Gabriola Is: New Society, 2004)
- Gerry Johnstone and Daniel W. Van Ness, *Handbook of Restorative Justice* (Portland, OR: Willan Publishing, 2007)
- Adam Kahane, *Power and Love: A Theory and Practice of Social Change* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2010)
- John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2003)
- Donald Shriver, *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics* (Oxford, 1995).
- Sidney Simon and Suzanne Simon, *Forgiveness: How to Make Peace with Your Past and Get on with Your Life* (New York, Warner Books, 1990).
- Lewis B. Smedes, *The Art of Forgiving* (New York: Ballantine, 1996);
- Lewis B. Smedes, *Forgive and Forget* (Harper, 2007);
- Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* (Image Books, 2000)
- Dudley Weeks, *The Eight Essential Steps to Conflict Resolution* (New York: Tarcher-Putnam, 1992);
- Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2002)

Course Requirements:

- Students are expected to log in to Canvas several times a week. Though work can be completed according to each student's schedule, it is important to be present throughout the course week. It is not acceptable to do everything in one session and ignore the course for the rest of the week (missing the chance to interact with others and potentially missing important communications). In particular, students are expected to participate in all discussions within a week of the due date.
- Students must practice proper netiquette in all course communications.
- Students must have access to the Internet, a (real) computer, and Microsoft Word. iPads and similar devices allow you to perform many, but not all, of the required activities
- Students must have the proper hardware/software (video camera, microphone, etc.) to record presentations.
- Late assignments will be penalized, particularly discussions which will not be accepted after 3 weeks.

Readings

You are encouraged to do the week's readings before listening to the lectures. Familiarity with the readings will give you insights to share in discussions with others in the class. It will also prepare you to do well on the Term Paper.

Lectures

There are 22 assigned lectures covering specific topics in the course, about 2 lectures each week. Every lecture is graded and requires a submission. Submissions should take the form of brief 1-2 paragraph reflections on the lecture, giving you the opportunity to respond immediately to the material presented. They are graded Complete/Incomplete (a grade of Incomplete indicates that the student didn't watch the lecture).

Discussions

Almost every week there is a threaded discussion. The instructor posts a question, and each student posts a response. Once you have answered the instructor's question, you can see other students' answers and comment on them as much as you like. Your participation in the discussions is graded, so your answers should be substantial and well considered. Each discussion will be open for a specific window of time, after which it will be closed.

Every participant is expected to post a primary comment and to respond to others, thus generating a (potentially endless) thread. Posts are expected to contain observations, additional information, commentary and/or open-ended, critical thinking questions on the topic assigned by the instructor. Primary posts need to offer real substance for discussion by applying one or more of the above criteria. Participants have ample freedom in deciding what exactly they want to offer - as long as it has constructive value for the discussion (though it may of course be critical of any statement or element of the course).

Short Written Assignments

There two short written assignments.

The first is an essay on Christian Pacifism vs. Christian Realism, especially the latter based on the writings of Reinhold Niebuhr. It is due on February 17, at the end of Week 3.

The second is a book report on a book selected from the list in the **Textbooks** (above); Select your book on March 2; the book report is due on March 17.

Seminar on Conflict Resolution in Practice

On Week 6 there will be a seminar on conflict resolution. Students will select a chapter in Helmick and Peterson, *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy and Conflict Transformation*. Students will prepare a summary and reflection on their chosen chapter either in writing (2500 words) or as a video, and upload it so that the entire class can read or view it. It is due April 11.

Further, students will automatically be assigned another student's presentation to review. Students will submit a 300-word review or response to their assigned student by April 14.

Term Paper

Study a peacebuilding or social action initiative of a church or non-profit organization that you are familiar with, and elucidate its theology in practice. Since this is a class on the theology of peacebuilding, do not write a narrative history of the project. Rather, the focus of the paper should be to describe and analyze that initiative theologically, describing the theological principles that are foundational to that initiative and their application in a real-world setting.

In discussing theological principles, keep in mind that they often are not be the same as the church's overt teaching. Sometimes these principles are implicit and not stated explicitly. I am looking for the particular principle(s) that guide the peacebuilding initiative in practice.

Each paper should:

1. Describe the peacebuilding initiative including its purpose and goals. Describe its context—the individuals, families, community, society, etc. in which or for which the initiative is being carried out.
2. Explain the theological principles for peacebuilding that undergird the initiative, whether or not they are explicitly taught.
3. Demonstrate the application of these theological principles in practice, identifying both effective application and shortcomings
4. Evaluate this peacebuilding initiative and suggestions *from a theological standpoint* on how it could be improved—in theory and/or practice.
5. Demonstrate an educated standpoint by including relevant ideas from the readings in this course.

Papers are due on May 18. Length: 3,000 words. Papers will be evaluated based upon the degree to which they demonstrate thorough research and careful analysis.

Evaluation

A letter grade will be assigned based on:

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| 1. Regular participation by viewing the lectures | 17% |
| 2. Discussions | 30% |
| 3. Short assignments | 9% |
| 4. Seminar on conflict resolution | 17% |
| 5. Term paper | 27% |

Grades for each assignment are recorded by letter, and are understood as follows:

- A Excellent
- B Good
- C Acceptable
- D Acceptable, but below expectations
- F Failure

Assignments submitted more than one week late may be penalized with a lower grade. Failure to submit an assignment will result in an F for that assignment.

In calculating the final grade for the course, letter grades for assignments are converted into the following numerical equivalents, and the total is then converted back to a letter grade:

A	97	A-	91.5	B+	87
B	82	B-	77	C+	72.5
C	67.5	C-	62.5	D+	57.5
D	53	D-	50	F	0

This scale severely penalizes Fs. Therefore, it is better to hand in a poorly done assignment than not to hand one in at all.

There is no grade of "Incomplete" on account of failure to hand in assignments. After a grace period of several weeks, incomplete assignments will be assigned a grade of F. Thus, students who have not submitted work may suddenly see their grade drop.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is a form of dishonesty that occurs when a student passes off someone else's work as their own. This can range from failing to cite an author for ideas incorporated into a student's paper, to cutting and pasting paragraphs from different websites, to handing in a paper downloaded from the Internet. This includes buying or submitting a paper written by a third party. All are considered forms of "plagiarism" and a violation of the Seminary's academic integrity policy. Instances of plagiarism may be reported to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for disciplinary action. Possible disciplinary actions include probation, suspension or withdrawal.

The first instance of plagiarism in this course, the student must repeat the assignment. If the student plagiarizes again, the student will receive an F for the course.

Netiquette

When posting online or by email, you need to follow the same ethical standards and laws as you would in face-to-face communications. Your language should be respectful of faculty members and fellow students. Do not post private or confidential information about anyone, and do not provide personal information that could put yourself at risk. The Seminary's LMS has robust security measures to protect communication between teacher and student. Yet please be aware that anything that you post in discussions and groups in which other students participate can be retrieved by others and copied.

Do not download and share course materials without permission of the instructor, as this may violate copyright. UTS reserves the right to delete postings on UTS maintained sites that are considered insensitive, harassing or illegal. Language that is illegal, obscene, defamatory, threatening, infringing of intellectual property rights, invasive of privacy, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing abusive, hateful or embarrassing to any person or entity, or otherwise, is a violation of the Student Code.

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Tue Jan 31, 2023	Discussion Topic Introduce yourselves!	due by 11:59pm
Thu Feb 2, 2023	Introduction: Towards a Theology of Peace	due by 11:59pm
Mon Feb 6, 2023	Lecture Pacifism	due by 11:59pm
Tue Feb 7, 2023	Lecture Crusade	due by 11:59pm
Wed Feb 8, 2023	Lecture Just War	due by 11:59pm
Thu Feb 9, 2023	Discussion Topic Discussion: Crusade or Just War?	due by 11:59pm
Mon Feb 13, 2023	Lecture Jesus and Arguments for Pacifism	due by 11:59pm
Tue Feb 14, 2023	Lecture Critiques of Pacifism	due by 11:59pm
Thu Feb 16, 2023	Discussion Topic: Christian Pacifism vs. Christian Realism	due by 11:59pm
Fri Feb 17, 2023	Written Assignment on Niebuhr	due by 11:59pm
Mon Feb 20, 2023	Lecture Individual at Peace	due by 11:59pm
Tue Feb 21, 2023	Lecture Family the School of Peace	due by 11:59pm
Thu Feb 23, 2023	Discussion Topic: Foundations for Peacebuilding	due by 11:59pm
Mon Feb 27, 2023	Lecture Value of the Feminine for Peace	due by 11:59pm
Wed Mar 1, 2023	Discussion Topic: Women and Peacebuilding	due by 11:59pm
Thu Mar 2, 2023	Book Report: Select Your Book	due by 11:59pm
Mon Mar 6, 2023	Lecture Cain and Abel	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
Tue Mar 7, 2023	Lecture Parental Heart in Peacebuilding	due by 11:59pm
Thu Mar 9, 2023	Discussion Topic Which Paradigm Do You Choose?	due by 11:59pm
Mon Mar 13, 2023	Lecture Mediating Conflict	due by 11:59pm
Tue Mar 14, 2023	Lecture Forgiveness	due by 11:59pm
Thu Mar 16, 2023	Discussion Topic: Forgiveness	due by 11:59pm
Fri Mar 17, 2023	Submit Your Book Report	due by 11:59pm
Mon Mar 20, 2023	Lecture Human Rights	due by 11:59pm
Tue Mar 21, 2023	Lecture Abortion Controversy	due by 11:59pm
Wed Mar 22, 2023	Discussion Topic Abortion	due by 11:59pm
Thu Mar 23, 2023	Lecture Human Value	due by 11:59pm
Mon Mar 27, 2023	Lecture Strategies for Peacebuilding	due by 11:59pm
Wed Mar 29, 2023	Discussion Topic: Strategies for Peacebuilding	due by 11:59pm
Fri Mar 31, 2023	Chapter Selection for the Seminar	due by 11:59pm
Tue Apr 11, 2023	Discussion Topic Seminar on Religion and Peacebuilding	due by 11:59pm
Tue Apr 18, 2023	Lecture Gandhi's Principles for Social Change	due by 11:59pm
Fri Apr 21, 2023	Submit Topic for Term Paper	due by 11:59pm
Tue Apr 25, 2023	Lecture Martin Luther King and His Theology	due by 11:59pm
Thu Apr 27, 2023	Discussion Topic : Gandhi and King	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
Mon May 1, 2023	Lecture Peaceful Societies 1: Economy	due by 11:59pm
Wed May 3, 2023	Lecture Peaceful Societies 2: Government	due by 11:59pm
Mon May 8, 2023	Lecture Peaceful Societies 3: Religion	due by 11:59pm
Tue May 9, 2023	Lecture Religion and Peace	due by 11:59pm
Thu May 11, 2023	Discussion Topic : Building a Society of Peace	due by 11:59pm
Tue May 16, 2023	Term Paper Presentation	due by 11:59pm
Thu May 18, 2023	Submit Term Paper	due by 11:59pm

Assessment of Student Learning

Learning Outcomes Rubric

Learning Outcome	Novice	Approaching	Proficient	Advanced
Knowledge: Explain theological principles for peace building as taught by proponents	Lack of familiarity with theological issues pertaining to peacebuilding	Describes several theological principles that pertain to peacebuilding	Explains theological principles of peacebuilding, referencing one major proponent presented in the course	Explains and compares several theological principles of peacebuilding, referencing their major proponents
Context: Describe and analyze socio-cultural and historical context as an underlying theological concern in conflict resolution	Does not describe socio-cultural and historical context as a factor in conflict	Recognizes socio-cultural and historical context as a factor in peace and conflict	Explains socio-cultural and historical context a theological concern when analyzing conflict and as factor for conflict resolution	Places socio-cultural and historical context squarely within a theology of peacebuilding, citing authorities and/or examples in the analysis
Theological construction: Discuss their own theology of peacebuilding and explain its basis in scripture and tradition	Student's own theology does not specifically address social conflicts	Discusses elements of scripture and tradition that can be utilized for peacebuilding	Discusses his/her own theology of peacebuilding and explains its basis in scripture and tradition	Discusses his/her own theology of peacebuilding, explains its basis in scripture and tradition, and critically contrasts it with other theologies.
Reflection on practice: Reflect on how they practice peacebuilding in their personal life, family life, church and/or community life.	Describes peace efforts and practice in one's own ministry or personal life	Describes peace efforts and practice, identifies the underlying theology	Explains the theology that underlies peace efforts and how it is applied in practice	Explains the theology that underlies the peace efforts, its application, and assesses its adequacy to the task of peacebuilding

Map of Course Assignments to Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome	Book Reports	Weekly Assignments & Discussions	Seminar on Religion and Conflict Res.	Term Paper
Explain theological principles for peacebuilding as taught by their proponents	X	X	X	X
Describe and analyze socio-cultural and historical context as an underlying theological concern in conflict and peace building			X	X
Discuss their own theology of peacebuilding and explains its basis in scripture and tradition		X		X
Reflect on how they practice peacebuilding in their personal life, family life, church and/or community life.		X		X

Supplemental Bibliography

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Sacks, Jonathan. *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations*. London: Continuum, 2002.

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