



Course Syllabus Wycliffe College Toronto School of Theology

Course Identification

Course Number: WYP2507HF
Course Name: Forgiveness and Reconciliation in the Church and in the World
Campus: Wycliffe College

Instructor Information

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Course Prerequisites or Requisites

There are no prerequisites or requisites for this course.

Course Description

Forgiveness and reconciliation are central to the gospel message, and virtues that mark Christian maturity. Recognizing them as virtues does not automatically translate into an ability to embody them ourselves, nor does it enable us to help others in their efforts to do so. Beyond that, there are additional layers of complexity when it comes to understanding what it means to forgive in the wake of a random act of violence, and what it means to seek and offer forgiveness or engage in reconciliation efforts after systemic oppression or persecution. We will look at this through the specific lens of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Course Methodology

This course looks at those layers of complexity through readings, class discussions, personal journaling exercises, student presentations, and essay writing.

Course Outcomes

COURSE OUTCOMES	COURSE ELEMENT	PROGRAM OUTCOMES
By the end of this course, students	This outcome will be demonstrated through these course elements:	This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Will have gained an understanding of the complexities of forgiveness from a number of different perspectives, with particular attention to those that are most germane to a Christian worldview	Lectures 1 through 11; class discussion; and the Scholarly Essay and Christian Education Unit assignments	MTS: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2 MDiv: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.3,
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Will have acquired some basic understandings about how forgiveness and reconciliation might be fostered between people in their most significant, close relationships	Lectures 1 through 5; class discussion; and the Journaling assignments	MTS: 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 MDiv: 2.1., 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Will have considered the differences between fostering forgiveness and reconciliation in close relationships and those encountered in local communities, within nations, and between nations	Lectures 6 through 11; and class discussions	MTS: 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 MDiv: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1., 3.2, 3.3

Course Resources

Required Course Texts and Readings (Texts that will be available for purchase in the Crux Bookstore have been **bolded**)

Baker, M. (2008). Self-Forgiveness: An empowering and therapeutic tool for working with women in recovery. In W. Malcolm, K. Belicki and N. DeCourville (eds.). Women's Reflections on the Complexities of Forgiveness. New York: Taylor and Francis.

Jones, L.G. (1995). **Embodying Forgiveness: A Theological Analysis.** Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Kraybill, D.B., Nolt, S.M., & Weaver-Zercher, D.L. (2007). **Amish Grace: How forgiveness transcended tragedy.** San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Lamb, S. (2002). Women, Abuse, and Forgiveness: A Special Case. In S. Lamb and J. Murphy (eds.). **Before forgiving: Cautionary views of forgiveness in psychotherapy** (155 – 171) New York: Oxford University Press.

Landman, J. (2002). Earning forgiveness: The story of a perpetrator, Katherine Ann Power. In S. Lamb and J. Murphy (eds.). **Before forgiving: Cautionary views of forgiveness in psychotherapy** (232 – 264) New York: Oxford University Press.

Metatawabin, E. (2014). **Up Ghost River: A chief's journey through the turbulent waters of native history.** Toronto: Knopf Canada.

Tangney, J.P., Boone, A.L., & Dearing, R. (2005). Forgiving the self: conceptual issues and empirical findings. In E. L. Worthington Jr. (Ed.). **Handbook of Forgiveness.** New York: Routledge.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (2015). **Honoring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.** www.trc.ca

Wiesenthal, S. (1997). **The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness.** New York, NY: Schocken Books.

Wolochatiuk, T. Director. (2012). **We Were Children.** National Film Board of Canada.

Additional Recommended Readings (depending on the focus of your essay and/or Christian Education Unit)

Andrews, M. (2000). Forgiveness in context. **Journal of Moral Education**, 29(1), 76 – 86.

Bazemore, G. (1998). Restorative justice and earned redemption. **American Behavioral Scientist**, 41, 768-813.

Casey, K. L. (1998). Surviving abuse: Shame, anger, forgiveness. **Pastoral Psychology**, 46(4), 223-231.

DeCourville, N. (2007). Subjective experiences of forgiveness in a community sample: Implications for understanding forgiveness and its consequences. In W. Malcolm, N. DeCourville & K. Belicki (Eds.). **Women's reflections on the complexities of forgiveness** (1- 20). New York: Routledge.

Exline, J. J., & Baumeister, R. F. (2000). Expressing forgiveness and repentance: Benefits and barriers. In M. E. McCullough, K. I. Pargament, & C. E. Thoresen (Eds.), **Forgiveness: Theory, research, and practice** (133-155). New York: The Guilford Press.

Gordon, K., Baucom, D., & Snyder, D. (2005). Forgiveness in couples: divorce, infidelity, and couples therapy. In E. L. Worthington Jr. (Ed.). **Handbook of Forgiveness** (407 – 422). New York: Routledge.

Holeman, V. (2007). Repentance in intimate relationships. In W. Malcolm, N. DeCourville & K. Belicki (Eds.). **Women's reflections on the complexities of forgiveness** (253 – 292). New York: Routledge.

Holmgren, M. R. (1998). Self-forgiveness and responsible moral agency. **The Journal of Value Inquiry**, 32, 75-91.

Malcolm, W. Warwar, S. & Greenberg, L.S. (2005). Facilitating forgiveness in individual therapy as an

approach to resolving interpersonal injuries. In E. L. Worthington Jr. (Ed.), Handbook of Forgiveness (379 - 392). New York: Rutledge.

Course Website

- Blackboard <https://weblogin.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Blackboard for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT portal login page at <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Blackboard-based courses. (Your course registration with ROSI gives you access to the course website at Blackboard.) Note also the information at <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>. Students who have trouble accessing Blackboard should ask Thomas Power for further help.

Class Schedule

WEEK 1 (SEP 14)

Topic: Introduction to the Course

Readings: Course Syllabus

Topic: Joseph and His Brothers: Is this a story of forgiveness?

Readings: Genesis 37 – 50

WEEK 2 (SEP 21)

Topic: Understanding the Big Picture about Forgiveness and Reconciliation

WEEK 3 (SEP 28)

Topic: Six Faith Based Assumptions about Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Assignment Due: Reflection Exercise #1

WEEK 4 (OCT 05)

Topic: Dr. Kathryn Belicki, Brock University

WEEK 5 (OCT 12)

Topic: Why Forgive?

Readings: Embodying Forgiveness, Chapters 1 & 2
Women, Abuse, and Forgiveness: A Special Case.

Topic: The Case for and against Self-Forgiveness

Readings: Earning forgiveness: The story of a perpetrator, Katherine Ann Power
Self-Forgiveness: An empowering and therapeutic tool for working with women in recovery
Forgiving the Self: Conceptual issues and empirical findings

Assignment Due: Reflection Exercise #2

WEEK 6 (OCT 19)

Topic: The Theology of Forgiveness, Part I

Readings: Embodying Forgiveness, Chapters 4 & 5

WEEK 7 (NOV 02)

Topic: The Theology of Forgiveness, Part II

Readings: Embodying Forgiveness, Chapters 6 & 7

Assignment Due: Reflection Exercise #3

WEEK 8 (NOV 09)

Topic: Forgiveness in the Wake of Random Acts of Violence

Readings: Amish Grace
Embodying Forgiveness Chapters 3 & 8

WEEK 9 (NOV 16)

Topic: Truth and Reconciliation Efforts in the Wake of Systemic Persecution and Oppression

Readings: The Sunflower
Embodying Forgiveness, Chapter 9

Assignment Due: Scholarly Essay

WEEK 10 (NOV 23)

Topic: Truth and Reconciliation Efforts in the Wake of Systemic Persecution and Oppression. We will watch the movie *We were Children*, and have a discussion during class time.

Readings: Up Ghost River: A chief's journey through the turbulent waters of native history.

WEEK 11 (NOV 30)

Topic: Truth and Reconciliation Efforts in the Wake of Systemic Persecution and Oppression

Readings: Honoring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Assignment Due: Reflection Exercise #4

WEEK 12 (DEC 07)

Topic and Assignment Due: Christian Education Unit Presentations and Display

Evaluation

Requirements

1. **Personal reflection exercises (30% of final grade).** It would be inconsistent to promote forgiveness and reconciliation for others without having any experience in working through one's own issues around interpersonal hurtfulness. Students will therefore submit four self-reflection assignments that focus on their own efforts to forgive and restore safe and trustworthy

relationships.¹ Each assignment is worth 7.5% of the final grade, and is earned by handing the reflection exercise in. Marks will only be deducted (a) if an assignment is handed in late, as per the information under *Policy on Assignment Extensions* (p. 7 of this document), and/or (b) if the instructor has reasonable grounds to believe that a student has not taken the exercise seriously, in which case a failing grade will be assigned to the assignment in question.

2. **Essay (30% of final grade).** Students are to choose a controversial aspect of forgiveness or reconciliation, review a representative subset of *academic, pastoral and popular* literature about the controversy, and write an essay that
 - a) Describes the controversy,
 - b) explains why it exists (i.e., recognizes and describes both/all sides of the controversy respectfully and fairly), and
 - c) Presents an argument for the position the student believes is a valid and appropriate Christian response to the controversy. This argument is to be an integrative one that draws on sound theological, scriptural, philosophical, political/sociological, and psychological thinking on the issue.

The essay must cite a minimum of ten (10) different publications that are properly referenced in Turabian² style. ***At least six (6) of these publications are to be scholarly sources from the fields of theology, biblical studies, philosophy, political science, and/or psychology.*** In addition, not including the title page or bibliography, the essay is to be no fewer than 2500 words (10 pages) and no more than 3750 words (15 pages) in length, double spaced, 12 pt font, with standard margins (3.17cm left and right; 2.54 cm top and bottom) and a running head with your name and page numbers. The essay is due by end of day on November 12th.

3. **Christian Education Unit [CEU] (30% of final grade).** Students are to prepare a Christian Education Unit for adolescents or adults, or a Sunday school lesson for middle school children. The material must be age appropriate, engaging and helpful to the target audience. Students may draw on the reading and content of their essay, but the CEU must show that students can take their own academic work and present it in a form and language that is accessible to their target audience. Resources like movie clips or quotations from popular theatre and writing may be drawn on for this assignment. As a group, students will create a classroom display of their CEUs for perusal on the last day of classes. At the beginning of that class, each student will present a 5 minute summary of their CEU. This presentation is to include a succinct description of: (a) the topic addressed in the CEU, (b) the target audience, (b) the medium (passive lecture, interactive discussion, experiential activities, etc.) and context in which it is to be used (Bible Study with discussion questions, PowerPoint slide Presentation, Sermon, Sunday School lesson, etc.), and (c) the student's reasons for making those choices. After each person gives their 5 minute summary, there will be an opportunity to look at one another's CEU displays and provide written feedback to some or all of their classmates.
4. **Class participation (10% of final grade).** This component of the grade reflects the importance of active engagement in class discussions.

¹ Students who do not wish to submit self-reflection papers for grading may instead submit reviews of four books and/or movies that focus substantively on forgiveness and/or reconciliation. Permission to carry out this alternate set of assignments is given at the discretion of the instructor, and must be arranged in advance.

² See Writing Style under the section on Policies

Grading System

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalents	Grade Point	Grasp of Subject Matter
A+	90–100%	4.0	Profound & Creative
A	85–89%	4.0	Outstanding
A-	80–84%	3.7	Excellent
B+	77–79%	3.3	Very Good
B	73–76%	3.0	Good
B-	70–72%	2.7	Satisfactory
FZ	0–69%	0	Failure

Grades without numerical equivalent:

CR	Designates credit; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value
NCR	Designates failure; has no numerical equivalent, but has a grade point value of 0 and is included in the GPA calculation
SDF	Standing deferred (a temporary extension)
INC	Permanent incomplete; has no numerical equivalent or grade point value
WDR	Withdrawal without academic penalty
AEG	May be given to a final year student who, because of illness, has completed at least 60% of the course, but not the whole course, and who would not otherwise be able to convocate; has no numerical equivalent and no grade point value

Policy on Assignment Extensions

Basic Degree students are expected to complete all course work by the end of the term in which they are registered. Under **exceptional circumstances**, with the written permission of the instructor, students may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An extension, when offered, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. An SDF must be requested no later than the last day of classes of the term in which the course is taken. The request form is available on the college website or from the Registrar’s office.

One percentage point per day will be deducted on the course grade if an extension has not been requested by the stated deadline.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor’s college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf>) or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>), a student who plagiarizes in this course. Students will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges (http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm).

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

Writing Style. The writing standard for the Toronto School of Theology is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, 8th edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), which is available at Crux Books.

Bibliography

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- Augsberger, D. (2000). The new freedom of forgiveness. Chicago: Moody press.
- Berecz, J. (2001). All that glitters is not gold: Bad forgiveness in counseling and preaching. Pastoral Psychology, 49, 253-275.
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- Davenport, D. S. (1991). The function of anger and forgiveness: Guidelines for psychotherapy with victims. Psychotherapy, 28 (1), 140-144.
- Dillon, R. S. (2001). Self-forgiveness and self-respect. Ethics, 112, 53-83.
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- Enright, R. D., & Zell, R. L. (1989). Problems encountered when we forgive one another. Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 8, 52-60.
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- George, T., & Smith, R., Jr. (Eds.). (2000). A mighty long journey: Reflections on racial reconciliation. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- Helmick, R. G. & Petersen, R. L. (Eds.). (2001). Forgiveness and reconciliation: Religion, public policy, and conflict transformation. Philadelphia:
- Hill, E. W. (2001). Understanding forgiveness as discovery: Implications for marital and family therapy. Contemporary Family Therapy, 23(4), 369-384.
- Holeman, V. T. (2003). Marital reconciliation: A long and winding road. Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 22(1), 30-42.
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- Hughes, P. M. (1994). On forgiving oneself: A reply to Snow. The Journal of Value Inquiry, 28, 557-560.
- Klenck, M. (2004). The psychological and spiritual efficacy of confession. Journal of Religion and Health, 43(2), 139-150.
- Konstam, V., Chernoff, M., & Deveney, S. (2001). Toward forgiveness: The role of shame, guilt, anger, and empathy. Counseling and Values, 46, 26-39.
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