

Crossing Boundaries: Bridging the Racial Divide – South Africa

Marquette University South Africa Service Learning Programme

PRESCRIBED COURSE TEXTS:

Each student will participate in ONE group assignment together with four others (there will thus be 4 such group assignments). Each of these assignments will be in the form of a discussion of questions that deal with one of the following prescribed texts. Everyone is supposed to read these texts which will be the focus of our lecturing periods. These assignments will be briefly discussed in the first lecture (on 11 August) and will be allocated in the second class (on 18 August):

- The *Belhar Confession* (1986) - lecture 1
- *The Kairos Document* (1986) - Rev Edwin Arrision's guest lecture
- John W. de Gruchy, *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice* – lecture 2 (1st group)
- John W. de Gruchy, *Confessions of a Christian Humanist* – lecture 3 (2nd group)
- Desmond Mpilo Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* – lecture 4 (3rd group)
- John Allen, *Rabble Rouser for Peace* (Tutu biography) – lecture 5 (4th group)
- Bryan Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*- lecture 6 (5th group)
- James H Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* – lecture 6 (self-study)

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* – Arrision
- Antjie Krog, *Country of my skull*

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, the Apartheid Museum, Constitution Hill, Soweto, classroom discussions and debate, conversations and stays with South Africans 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.*

COURSE ASSESSMENT:

1. Readings, group class presentations (20%):

See the 'course texts' on page 1. You would be wise to have delved into the John De Gruchy text/texts before you spend the weekend at Volmoed with him.

During the "Lecture" periods each student will participate in preparing one of five group assignments on a selected reading. This aspect of the work (readings and presentations) will contribute **20%** to the final mark (See lectures 2-6 in the Programme). 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 class mates. The group will present their work during the first hour, allowing for discussion, and then a lecture and discussion will follow in the second hour.

2. Selected Journal entries (20%):

Based on your readings, lectures, class and field experiences, you should write throughout the course a series of "**reflections**" on selected sessions/visits/classes. Two journal entries will be compulsory: The one dealing with the visit to Robben Island and the other with the visit to the District Six museum. You will receive a list of questions you need to reflect on – of course you may add to the list! Then you need to do two more journals, of your own choice: 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, or a reflection on any of the guest lectures you attended. These entries should be two pages (circa 500-600 words) each. *Included in the Journal assignment will be a short reflective quiz on the books of Mandela and Cone.*

[The Journal entries will also help you to start working towards your portfolio: see point 5 below]

3. 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). Work on the essay as we proceed, and hand in between the 8th and 15th of May. 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. (Discuss this with the lecturer).

5. Portfolio and Final Reflection (20%):

As you move through the semester, you will be creating a **Portfolio** (see above under 2 on the Journals). For your **final presentation of circa 7 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 friends and family receiving you back at home, your lecturers and other facilitators in South Africa, and friends you have made in South Africa. (You thus need to give a neatly polished presentation with a minimum of “inside” jokes or references: speak clearly in such a way that also those “back home”, who did not share your experiences, but who know you, will follow the new nuances of your mind). 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 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, which obviously should have a South African feel to it – in colour, design and form. Be creative and be messy – 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.

“Body mapping” can also form part of the reflection on your experiences here, but is optional. In the final presentation you can, if you find it useful, “body map” your experiences visually for the group (what the head thought, what the heart experienced, what the arms and hands did, where the feet went, etc.), and/or then you can refer to your **reflections** and **visual diary**. This reflective rounding off of your appropriation of the module and your experiences will count **20%** of the final mark. In whatever format it is done, your Portfolio must be on display during the day of the final presentation, to give those who are assessing your work enough time to have a close look at all your efforts!

GRADING (Summary):

Readings and Group Presentations (5 persons in each group)

Each student will choose a reading to prepare and present in class 20%

Journal entries (1 and 2. on Excursion to Robben Island/District Six Museum plus 3 and 4:

Entries of your own choice) 20%

Final Reflections based on one theme from your Portfolio (“Visual Diary”):

20%

Theological Essay (Your theological reflection on reconciliation and justice, circa 2000 words, due date: 24 November, digital copy to clombard@uwc.ac.za)

40%

VENUES:

This specific module will be presented at ISD, the School of Governance, UWC, B1, Fridays 12:00 – 14:00, or in the New Arts Building, D111, unless otherwise announced.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to change: Work in one of five groups (with 4 members each), to prepare a joint presentation for lectures 2-6.

Friday, 09 Feb - **Lecture 1: Introduction:** Getting to know each other; the Belhar Confession; the Kairos Document (handouts)

(You will receive questions for reflection on the ****Educational Excursion 1 to Robben Island** ; there will also be another **Excursion 2: to District Six Museum** – details from Melikaya)

Friday, 16 Feb - **Lecture 2: Geo-historical framework for understanding South African realities: Apartheid boundaries and the need for liberation and reconciliation**

Group 1: De Gruchy: *Reconciliation*

[Own reading: Francis Wilson: *Dinosaurs, Diamonds, Democracy*; Elphick and Davenport, chapters 1 & 8]

Friday, 23 Feb - **Lecture 3: The struggle against apartheid and for human dignity.**

Group 2: De Gruchy: *Confessions of a Christian Humanist* (Own reading: Elphick and Davenport, ch 25)

Friday, 02 March - **Guest lecture/excursion**

Friday, 09 March - **Guest lecture/excursion**

>> VOLMOED WEEKEND WITH PROF JOHN DEGRUCHY: **Guest lecture**

Friday, 16 March - **Lecture 4: Tutu's biography. Group 3:** John Allen, *Rabble Rouser for Peace*

Friday, 23 March - **Robben Island and District Six Museum Visits**

Friday, 06 April – Ms. Mary Burton

Friday, 13 April – **Lecture 5: Desmond Tutu's theology of reconciliation**

Group 4: Desmond Tutu: *No future without forgiveness*

Friday, 20 April - **No class but send in a short reflective take-home quiz on Mandela and Cone (handed out on 13 April: it will count towards your Journal mark).**

Friday, 27 April – No class - **Public Holiday**

Friday, 04 May - **Lecture 6: Catholic notions of reconciliation and justice**

Group 5: Massingale: *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*

[Also: Send in a one page concept of your Visual Diary, as well as the topic and a brief outline of your Essay (Send a digital copy of these to clombard@uwc.ac.za)]

Friday, 11 May - **All four Journals to be sent in one file to clombard@uwc.ac.za!**

Also: Hand in your Essay! (send it digitally to clombard@uwc.ac.za)

Friday, 18 May – Guest Lecture/Visual diary 1-1 reviews

Friday, 25 May ► Guest Lecture/Visual diary 1-1 reviews

Friday, June 1 - Guest Lecture/Visual diary 1-1 reviews

June 8 – Visual Diaries/Advocacy Presentations – Depending on final exam schedule.
No work accepted after this date.

GUEST 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.

Antjie Krog is one of South Africa's leading writers. She was already known as an excellent Afrikaans poet when she also served as a critical journalist in various capacities, including covering the daily work of the TRC, sharing with the nation the extreme trauma coming from the Commission's work. Her presentation is always very thought provoking since she speaks with great passion about the legacy of apartheid, ongoing white ignorance and arrogance, and the gifts of Ubuntu philosophy to the people of Southern Africa.

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.

Rev Mpho Tutu, the daughter of Desmond and Leah Tutu, is an Anglican priest, and Curator of the Desmond and Leah Legacy Foundation. We trust that she can share her dreams about reconciliation and the aims of this important Trust with our group, and that her slot will become a fixture on the programme.

Elizabeth Petersen is Director of the South African Faith and Family Institute (SAFFI), an organization deeply involved in family violence, violence against women and children, and the pervasive culture of sexual and gender violence still rampant in South Africa. She has a Social Work background and is busy with her PhD at UWC. She has extensive experience in the nongovernmental world of civil society and nonprofit organisations and is also helping the Department of Religion and Theology at UWC with programmes attached to the Desmond Tutu Chair in Ecumenical Theology and Social Transformation.

Christo Lombard has been teaching Biblical Studies, Religion, Philosophy, Theology and Ethics at UWC (1975-1983), at the University of Namibia (1984-2003), and since 2005 again at UWC. He has also been Director of the Ecumenical Institute for Namibia (1993-2003), and has been involved in the struggle for Namibian Independence and human rights problems related to that history.

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