

Syllabus

*Subject to revision
Last updated January 13, 2020*

PAX/REL 252 Forgiveness and Reconciliation

DePaul University

Winter 2020

M/W 2:40–4:10pm

Arts and Letters Hall 207, Lincoln Park Campus

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About this Course:

Course Description:

In a world filled with conflict, forgiveness and reconciliation are essential elements in the work of building peace. This course combines the perspectives of religious studies and peace, justice, and conflict studies to examine forgiveness and reconciliation and their role in conflict resolution and the creation of just and peaceful societies. The course explores: 1) religious, ethical, and psychological understandings of forgiveness and reconciliation; 2) religious methods and approaches to the pursuit of reconciliation between individuals and groups; 3) the role of forgiveness and reconciliation in nonviolence and peacebuilding; and 4) applications of these concepts, methods, and approaches to case studies involving both personal and group dynamics.

Course Rationale:

The *Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies* program at DePaul seeks to introduce students to “strategies for resolving interpersonal, communal and international conflicts peacefully, as well as tactics that promote the common good in a way that addresses the structural origins of violence.” This class focuses on forgiveness and reconciliation as two such strategies. It addresses how they can be applied in diverse settings to help individuals and groups resolve conflict, recover from it, and prevent its reoccurrence.

The *Religious Studies* program at DePaul “challenges students to encounter the traditions of the world in all their rich diversity.” This class will explore how forgiveness and reconciliation are understood differently in different religious communities and examine the ways in which political, social, and economic forces shape religious communities’ understandings of and engagement these practices. In doing so we will seek to better understand the complexity and diversity of religious traditions and the practical impact of different religious beliefs and practices on individuals and communities that have experienced conflict and violence.

Course Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

1. Develop an understanding of forgiveness and reconciliation and related concepts including justice, revenge, repentance, apology, reparations, and healing.

2. Explore the dynamics of forgiveness and reconciliation in both interpersonal and intergroup contexts, including through the use of case studies, with particular attention to the role of religion and cultural context.
3. Consider how forgiveness and reconciliation can play a role in nonviolent activism, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding.
4. Study how different religions, particularly the Abrahamic traditions, converge and diverge in how they understand and practice forgiveness and reconciliation.
5. Analyze the impact of religion and religious narratives on efforts to bring reconciliation.
6. Reflect on their perspectives on forgiveness and reconciliation, the various sources informing their perspectives, and the ways in which class materials challenge and expand their thinking.

Religious Dimensions Learning Outcomes:

Students who successfully complete the Religious Dimensions requirement will be able to:

1. Explain beliefs and practices of one or more religious traditions in their specific social and cultural contexts. In courses in which the focus is on one religious tradition, describe the diversity of strands within the tradition and explain with significant depth the modes of interpretation of the world the tradition offers both to adherents and to others.
2. Identify religious modes of thinking, acting, and feeling such as: myth and narrative, symbol, ritual, law, doctrine, ethics, religious experience.
3. Analyze the impact of religion on personal as well as communal dimensions of human life, including for example the relationship between religion and power, social integration, social transformation, and social justice.

Types of Instruction:

This course uses dynamic, interactive, and collaborative modes of instruction. Classroom time will be focused on actively engaging with the course content in order to develop a deeper understanding of the core questions of the class. The majority of content delivery will occur through the assigned readings, not classroom lectures. Discussions and activities during class will build on what you have read to help you retain, apply, and transfer what you have learned.

Content Notice:

As this course focuses on forgiveness and reconciliation, it also necessarily involves discussion of violence, trauma, and the other terrible acts people commit against each other that precipitate the need for forgiveness and reconciliation. These will include a wide variety of violence and harm, including violent crime, murder, genocide, war crimes, sexual violence, familial violence, racial violence, and numerous forms of abuse. This material can be disturbing and traumatizing, especially to those who have experienced similar forms of violence and trauma. Discussions of such topics requires care and solemn recognition of the deep impact of violence. When engaging in discussions of violence and trauma, I ask you to be careful how you speak, keeping in mind that there may be others in the classroom who have had experiences like those being discussed and who may be deeply impacted by the discussion. I also invite and encourage you to contact me to discuss potential triggers or your reactions to the course content.

Required Readings:

Tutu, Desmond. *No Future without Forgiveness*. New York: Doubleday, 1999. [Available as a hardcover, paperback, audiobook, and ebook and in Chinese, Danish, French, Indonesian, Italian, Korean, Norwegian, Spanish, and Swedish versions]

Additional readings are posted on D2L and listed in the course schedule below.

A list of **recommended texts** is posted on D2L. It may be useful for exploring the topics discussed in this class in more depth and for your reconciliation research paper.

Course Requirements:

First Week Survey (5% of your course grade)

This short survey is designed to help me get to know you better in order to best facilitate your learning. It is **due Wednesday, January 8** by 10pm on D2L.

Class Attendance and Participation (15%)

Active engagement in class is central to the learning process. You are expected to come to each class session on time and ready to engage in discussion of the assigned readings. Short in-class writing assignments will also be included in this part of your grade.

Forgiveness Letter (20%)

Choose one of the following options and write a **3–5 page** (double-spaced) letter in response. Your letter should integrate what you have learned about forgiveness so far in this class. Your letter will be graded according to the **rubric** included with the submission folder on D2L. It is **due Friday, January 31** by 10pm on D2L.

- **Option 1: Write a letter to someone who has harmed you**, either offering forgiveness or indicating steps that would help you come to be able to forgive. Explain how the other person made you feel. Try to imagine their perspective, how they felt and why. Briefly recount what led up to the event, but focus primarily on the person/people who harmed you. What might have been going on in their life at the time? How do you imagine they felt about the wrong afterward? What needs to change in your relationship for you to be able to forgive? Can you imagine reconciliation with the person?
- **Option 2: Write a letter to someone you have harmed**, asking for forgiveness. Think carefully about what led up to the event, what was going on in your mind at the time, and how you felt afterward. Imagine how the other person might have felt. Briefly describe what happened, but focus on the other person's thoughts and feelings. Avoid trying to justify your actions. If you can, express your sorrow and write an apology.
- **Option 3: Write a letter as one of the characters in one of the real-life stories below**, offering forgiveness, indicating steps that would help you come to be able to forgive, or asking for forgiveness. You may choose to situate the letter at any point in time in their story.
 - www.theforgivenessproject.com/stacy-bannerman
 - www.theforgivenessproject.com/marian-partington
 - www.theforgivenessproject.com/mathew-shurka

A note for the forgiveness letter on confidentiality and mandated reporting: I always keep assignments confidential, with one exception: if what you write gives me reason to believe a child *currently* under the age of 18 may have been subjected to physical or sexual abuse, may be at risk of physical or sexual abuse, or is being deprived of the proper or necessary care I am required by law to report that information to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. My responsibility under Title IX to report what I learn about incidents of sexual or relationship violence does *not* apply to written assignments, though it may apply if you discuss the content of your assignment with me face to face. See the descriptions of my mandatory reporter status in the course policies, below.

Reconciliation Research Paper and Presentation (50%)

In this **8–10 page** research paper, you will study the reconciliation process in a particular context of intergroup conflict. You may choose one of the contexts in the **paper writing guide on D2L** or choose your own with my permission. This is a research paper, which means you will need to do substantial research using scholarly sources available through the library. The goal is to develop a clear and focused thesis about one or more efforts toward reconciliation during or after the conflict. You will also give a short, five-minute presentation about your paper in class. There are **grading rubrics on D2L** for the presentation and paper final draft.

You will turn in work at multiple stages of the writing process.

1. **Presentation context/date survey** – due **Friday, February 7** at 10pm
(on time completion factored into class participation grade)
2. **Preliminary thesis and bibliography** – due **Monday, February 10** at 10pm
3% of course grade (Do you have *at least* four quality scholarly sources? Was it on time?)
3. **Paper draft** – due **Sunday, February 23** at 10pm
4% of course grade (Did you submit a complete draft at the required length and on time?)
4. **Meet with a writing fellow about your draft** – March 2–8
3% of course grade (Did you meet?)
5. **Paper final draft** – due **Tuesday, March 10** at 10pm
35% of course grade (see rubric)
6. **Presentation** – in class **March 4, 9, or 11**
5% of course grade (see rubric)

Final Reflection Paper (10%)

Write a **2–3 page** reflection paper engaging *any* of the following questions:

- What is the most impactful or important thing you learned in this class?
- How has your understanding of forgiveness and/or reconciliation developed as a result of this class?

Your reflection paper will be graded according to the **rubric** included with the submission folder on D2L. It is due **Monday, March 16** by 10pm on D2L.

Course Policies:

Office Hours

I will hold office hours Mondays 11:45am–12:45pm in 2352 N. Clifton Ave. 150-25. You are welcome to stop by my office during my office hours or email me to set up an appointment.

Grading

This class uses a standard grading scale:

A	93–100	B–	80–82	D+	67–69
A–	90–92	C+	77–79	D	63–66
B+	87–89	C	73–76	D–	60–62
B	83–86	C–	70–72	F	0–59

Late Work

All students are expected to turn in work on time. I may choose to accept late work, but your grade will be affected unless you receive prior approval for an extension. Extensions will be granted only for extraordinary circumstances. You should contact me before the assignment due date if you have reason to seek an extension.

Absences

Students who are going to be absent from class should inform me ahead of time via email. While I understand that there are occasionally legitimate reasons to be absent, repeated absences will affect your attendance and participation grade. Missing more than half of the class sessions will result in an automatic “F” in the class.

Withdrawing from the Class: No Ghosting the Professor

If you plan to withdraw or stop participating after the first week of classes I ask that you email me or meet with me to discuss your reasons before you officially withdraw. You can stop by during my office hours or email me at j.meyers@depaul.edu to set up a meeting. You can drop a course via Campus Connect without penalty (and without meeting with me) through Jan. 17. Between Jan. 17 and Feb. 21, you may withdraw and receive a grade of “W.” If you stop participating after Feb. 21, you will receive a grade based on the work you completed.

Technology in the Classroom

Students should use laptops and tablets in class for class-related purposes only. Technology can be a helpful tool in the classroom, but it can also be a distraction. Students are expected to regulate your technology use and avoid personal uses such as checking email or visiting social media websites. Cellphones should not be used in the classroom unless I give explicit permission for a particular activity. Failure to abide by this policy will affect your participation grade.

Writing Fellows

Writing is a central part of this course. Because writers improve by sharing their work with others and individual pieces of writing improve through a process of drafting and revision, each of you will work with a Writing Fellow on a draft of your reconciliation research paper. Your

Writing Fellow will provide written feedback and meet with you—either face-to-face or online in real time—to work on making real and substantive revisions to your draft. The goal of this process is to help you make smart, significant revisions to your papers before the papers are turned in for a grade. Overall, your Writing Fellow will help you to learn more about the standards for written products in this course and about the process of writing and revision.

Disability Accommodations

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities, enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist your success. Students registered with the Center for Students with Disabilities should contact the professor within the first two weeks of the quarter to discuss accommodations.

Academic Integrity

DePaul is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Please refer to the Student Handbook or visit <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu> for further details. Software that assists the professor in checking for plagiarism will be used in this course.

Sexual and Relationship Violence

As the DePaul community, we share a commitment to take care of one another. Classroom relationships are based on trust and communication. Sometimes, material raised in class may bring up issues related to sexual and relationship violence. In other instances, you may reach out to faculty as a source of help and support. It is important for you to know that faculty are required to report information reported to them about experiences with sexual or relationship violence to DePaul's Title IX Coordinator. You should also know that disclosing experiences with sexual or relationship violence in course assignments or discussion does not constitute a formal report to the University and will not begin the process of DePaul providing a response. Students seeking to report an incident of sexual or relationship violence to DePaul should contact Public Safety (LPC: 773-325-7777) or the Dean of Students and Title IX Coordinator (LPC: 773-325-7290 or titleixcoordinator@depaul.edu). Students seeking to speak confidentially about issues related to sexual and relationship violence should contact a Survivor Support Advocate in the Office of Health Promotion & Wellness for information and resources (773-325-7129 or hpw@depaul.edu). More information is available at studentaffairs.depaul.edu/hpw/shvp.html.

Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect

The Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act mandates that all university personnel who have reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 18 known to them in their professional or official capacity may have been subjected to physical or sexual abuse, may be at risk of physical or sexual abuse, or is being deprived of the proper or necessary care immediately report such mistreatment to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

Course Schedule:

1. Mon, Jan 6: Introductions

While there are no assigned readings for today, I would recommend starting to read Desmond Tutu's No Future Without Forgiveness.

2. Wed, Jan 8: Defining Forgiveness and Reconciliation

First Week Survey due on D2L by 10pm

Read before today's class:

Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, chapters 1–2

Schreiter, Robert. Excerpt (pages 18–27) from: *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992.

3. Mon, Jan 13: Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Conflict

Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, chapters 3, 5

de Gruchy, John W. Excerpt (pages 171–80) from: “The Art of Reconciliation.” In *Reconciliation: Restoring Justice*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002.

4. Wed, Jan 15: Interpersonal Forgiveness

Coleman, Paul W. “The Process of Forgiveness in Marriage and the Family.” In *Exploring Forgiveness*, edited by Robert D. Enright and Joanna North, 75–94. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998.

Waldron, Vincent R. and Douglas L. Kelley. Excerpts (pages 127–43, 151–52) from: “Practicing Forgiveness.” In *Communicating Forgiveness*, 127–52. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008.

“Forgiveness Isn’t All It’s Cracked Up To Be.” *Tell Me More. NPR News*. March 11, 2013. www.npr.org/2013/03/11/174016256/forgiveness-isnt-all-its-cracked-up-to-be. (Audio and transcript available; 18 minutes)

Monday, January 20 – Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: No Classes

5. Wed, Jan 22: Forgiveness and Conflict Transformation

Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, chapter 6

Bole, William, Drew Christiansen, and Robert T. Hennemeyer. “Understanding Forgiveness in Politics.” In *Forgiveness in International Politics*, 41–60. Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2004.

Shriver, Donald W. “Forgiveness: A Bridge Across Abysses of Revenge.” In *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy, and Conflict Transformation*, edited by Raymond G. Helmick and Rodney L. Petersen, 151–67. Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001.

6. Mon, Jan 27: Forgiveness and Justice

Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, chapter 4

Wolterstorff, Nicholas. “Does Forgiveness Violate Justice?” In *Justice in Love*, 191–206. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.

7. Wed, Jan 29: Forgiveness in Religious Peacebuilding

Appleby, R. Scott. Excerpt (pages 167–71) from: “Reconciliation and the Politics of Forgiveness.” In *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation*, 167–204. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000.

Gopin, Marc. “Forgiveness as an Element of Conflict Resolution in Religious Cultures: Walking the Tightrope of Reconciliation and Justice.” In *Reconciliation, Justice, and Coexistence: Theory & Practice*, edited by Mohammed Abu-Nimer, 87–99. Lanham: Lexington, 2001.

Dobkowski, Michael. “Forgiveness and Repentance in Judaism after the Shoah.” *Ultimate Reality and Meaning* 27, no. 2 (June 2004): 94–107.

Friday, January 31: Forgiveness Letter due on D2L by 10pm

8. Mon, Feb 3: Case Study: South Africa

Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, chapters 7–8

Godobo-Madikizela, Pumla. “Forgiveness is ‘the Wrong Word’: Empathic Repair and the Potential for Human Connection in the Aftermath of Historical Trauma.” In *Alternative Approaches in Conflict Resolution*, edited by Martin Leiner and Christine Schliesser, 111–23. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

9. Wed, Feb 5: Review of Forgiveness

Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, chapters 10–11

We are skipping chapter 9 of No Future Without Forgiveness because we do not have enough room in the schedule. You are welcome to read it anyway.

Friday, February 7: Reconciliation Research Paper context / presentation date survey due on D2L by 10pm

10. Mon, Feb 10: Reconciliation and Conflict Transformation

Reconciliation Research Paper preliminary thesis and bibliography due on D2L by 10pm

Assefa, Hizkias. “The Meaning of Reconciliation.” In *The Contemporary Conflict Resolution Reader*, edited by Tom Woodhouse et al., 236–43. Malden, MA: Polity, 2015.

Chan, Victor, and the Dalai Lama. “The Man from Derry.” In *The Wisdom of Forgiveness: Intimate Conversations and Journeys*, 45–58. New York: Riverhead, 2004.

Rigby, Andrew. “Toward a Culture of Reconciliation.” In *Justice and Reconciliation: After the Violence*, 183–92. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001.

11. Wed, Feb 12: Reconciliation and Healing

Halpern, Jodi and Harvey M. Weinstein, “Rehumanizing the Other: Empathy and Reconciliation.” *Human Rights Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (August 2004), 561–83.

“Rape and Reconciliation: Megan Flamer Reminds Us That Healing Is Possible.” *Together*. December 11, 2017. Podcast. <http://together.guide/podcast/rape-and-reconciliation>. (61 min)

12. Mon, Feb 17: Reconciliation in Islamic and Christian Thought

Saritoprak, Zeki. "Reconciliation: An Islamic Theological Approach." In *Reconciliation in Interfaith Perspective: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Voices*, edited by Reimund Bieringer and David J. Bolton, 75–92. Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2011.

Schreiter, Robert. Excerpt (pages 50–56) from: *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992.

Volf, Miroslav. Excerpts (pages 99–105, 111–127) from: *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996.

13. Wed, Feb 19: Case Study: Israel/Palestine

Ashrawi, Hanan. "How the 1967 War Came Home to Me." *The New York Times*. June 5, 2017. www.nytimes.com/2017/06/05/opinion/how-the-1967-war-came-home-to-me.html

Oren, Michael B. "Israel's 1967 Victory Is Something to Celebrate." *The New York Times*. June 4, 2017. www.nytimes.com/2017/06/04/opinion/six-day-war-arab-israeli-anniversary.html

Furman, Frida Kerner. Excerpts (pages 125–139, 143–145, 148–150) from: "Bereavement, Storytelling, and Reconciliation: Peacebuilding Between Israelis and Palestinians." *Peace and Conflict Studies* 20, no. 2 (November 2013): 125–51.

Hirschfield, Brad. "Vengeance, Forgiveness, Justice, and Mercy: Recognizing the Sacredness of All of our Feelings." In *You Don't Have to be Wrong for Me to be Right: Finding Faith Without Fanaticism*, 83–103. New York: Three Rivers, 2007.

Sunday, February 23: Reconciliation Research Paper Draft due on D2L by 10pm

February 24 – March 1: Writing Fellows provide written feedback on your draft

14. Mon, Feb 24: Review of Reconciliation

Kang, Namsoon. Excerpt (pages 81–85) from: *Cosmopolitan Theology: Reconstituting Planetary Hospitality, Neighbor-love, and Solidarity in an Uneven World*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2013.

Liechty, Joseph. "Putting Forgiveness in its Place: The Dynamics of Reconciliation." In *Explorations in Reconciliation: New Directions for Theology*, edited by Joseph Liechty and David Tombs, 59–68. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2016.

Surk, Barbara. "In a Divided Bosnia, Segregated Schools Persist." *The New York Times* (December 1, 2018). www.nytimes.com/2018/12/01/world/europe/bosnia-schools-segregated-ethnic.html.

15. Wed, Feb 26: Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Nonviolence

Choose one set of readings (indicate your choice on D2L by Monday, February 24 by 10:30pm)

Option 1: Catholic Peacemakers

Francis (pope). "Nonviolence: a Style of Politics for Peace." Message for the 50th World Day of Peace, December 8, 2016. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20161208_messaggio-l-giornata-mondiale-pace-2017.html.

Merton, Thomas. "Blessed are the Meek." In *Faith and Violence: Christian Teaching and Christian Practice*, 14–29. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968.

Excerpt (pages 124–28) from: “Declaration of the International Meeting of Latin American Bishops on ‘Nonviolence: A Power for Liberation’, November 28–December 3, 1977.” In *Christ in a Poncho: Testimonials of the Nonviolent Struggles in Latin America*, edited by Charles Antoine, 118–34. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1983.

Option 2: Protestant Peacemakers

Muste, A. J. Excerpt (pages 176–88) from: “What the Bible Teaches About Freedom.” In *The Way of Peace: A. J. Muste’s Writings for the Church*, edited by Jeffrey D. Meyers, 171–88. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2016.

Wink, Walter. “Practical Nonviolence.” In *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium*, 112–27. New York: Doubleday, 1998.

Option 3: Protestant Civil Rights Leaders

King, Martin Luther, Jr. “Nonviolence and Racial Justice.” In *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr.*, edited by James M. Washington, 5–9. New York: HarperOne, 1986.

Thurman, Howard. “Love.” In *Jesus and the Disinherited*, 79–99. Boston: Beacon, 1976.

March 2–8: Writing Fellows meet with you to discuss your draft

16. Mon, Mar 2: Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Nonviolence

King, Martin Luther, Jr. “Loving Your Enemies.” In *Strength to Love*, 47–55. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981.

Lewis, John. “Reconciliation and the Beloved Community.” In *Roads to Reconciliation: Conflict and Dialogue in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Amy Benson Brown and Karen M. Poremski, 167–74. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2005.

Volf, Miroslav. “A Cup of Coffee.” In *Against the Tide: Love in a Time of Petty Dreams and Persisting Enmities*, 186–88. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.

17. Wed, Mar 4: Student Presentations

18. Mon, Mar 9: Student Presentations

Tuesday, March 10: Reconciliation Research Paper due on D2L by 10pm

19. Wed, Mar 11: Student Presentations

Monday, March 16: Final Reflection Paper due on D2L by 10pm

We will not meet during our scheduled final exam period