



**THEO 6334: Peace, Justice, and Restorative Practices**

North Park Theological Seminary  
Spring 2022, Monday 4:45-7:30pm  
3 credit hours

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course explores the theological and ethical foundations of justice ministries. Careful study of biblical themes probes the grounds of the claim that “justice is central to biblical religion.” Such study seeks to distinguish the definition of justice that is rendered by the biblical tradition from the classical Greek notion and examines Jesus as a prophet of justice. The course is a theological grounding for intrapersonal, interpersonal, communal, and societal/political/ecological justice.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Through the course students will be able to:

1. Critically consider theological approaches to peace, justice, and restorative practices;
2. Analyze and articulate various theological anthropologies and their impact on daily life;
3. Integrate theological foundations into own spiritual journey and self-reflective ministry.
4. Practice grounded listening and develop culturally humble and creative communication skills.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

1. Bible
2. Gutiérrez, Gustavo. 1991. *The God of Life*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. 189 pp.
3. Lebacqz, Karen. 1987. *Justice in an Unjust World: Foundations for a Christian Approach to Justice*. Minneapolis: Augsburg. 214 pp.
4. Brueggemann, Walter. 2001. *Peace*. St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press. (selections)
5. *Course Reader* selections to be distributed:
  - Douglass, Frederick. 1845. "Slaveholding religion and the Christianity of Christ." Pp. 77-82 and 118-25 in *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, An American slave*. Boston: Anti-Slavery Office.
  - Grassi, Joseph A. 2004. "An Upside-down World: Peace and the Priority of Little Ones." Pp. 117-26 in *Peace on earth: Roots and practices from Luke's gospel*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.
  - Grassi, Joseph A. 2004. "Women of Peace and Courage." Pp. 105-16 in *Peace on earth: Roots and practices from Luke's gospel*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.
  - Groody, Daniel G. 2007. "A Social Crisis, a Liberating Theology." Pp. 182-211 in *Globalization, spirituality, and justice*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
  - Haga, Kazu. 2021. "We Need to Build a Movement that Heals our Nation's Traumas." *Fellowship*, Summer 84(1), 13-17.



- Hamman, Jaco. 2014. "The Capacity to Be Alone." Pp. 114–44 in *Becoming a pastor: Forming self and soul for ministry*. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press.
- Hansen, Ryan L. 2015. "On Trying to Praise the Mutilated World: Reading Revelation in the Midst of Ecological Crisis." Pp. 285–312 in *Reading the Bible in an age of crisis: Political exegesis for a new day*, edited by B. Worthington. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Harris, Melanie L. 2017. "Ecowomanism 101: Method and Approaches." Pp. 17–32 in *Ecowomanism: African American women and earth-honoring faiths*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Hill, Johnny Bernard. 2007. "Exploring the Meaning of Reconciliation and Community." Pp. 13–50 in *The theology of Martin Luther King Jr. and Desmond Mpilo Tutu*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- McBride, Jennifer M., and Thomas Fabisiak. 2020. "Bonhoeffer's Critique of Morality: A Theological Resource for Dismantling Mass Incarceration." Pp. 89–109 in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, theology, and political resistance*, edited by L. B. Hale and W. D. Hall. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Pounder, Sadie. 2008. "Prison Theology: A Theology of Liberation, Hope and Justice." *Dialog* 47(3):278–91. doi: [10.1111/j.1540-6385.2008.00402.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6385.2008.00402.x).
- Sheppard, Phillis I. 2008. "Mourning the Loss of Cultural Selfobjects: Black Embodiment and Religious Experience After Trauma." *Practical Theology* 1(2):233–57. doi: [10.1558/prth.v1i2.233](https://doi.org/10.1558/prth.v1i2.233).
- Sheppard, Phillis Isabella. 2015. "Building Communities of Embodied Beauty." Pp. 97–111 in *Black practical theology*, edited by D. P. Andrews and R. L. Smith, Jr. Baylor University Press.
- Swinton, John. 2012. "From Inclusion to Belonging: A Practical Theology of Community, Disability and Humanness." *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health* 16(2):172–90. doi: [10.1080/15228967.2012.676243](https://doi.org/10.1080/15228967.2012.676243).
- Theoharris, Liz, and Willie Baptist. 2015. "Reading the Bible with the Poor: Building a Social Movement Led by the Poor as a United Social Force." Pp. 21–52 in *Reading the Bible in an age of crisis: political exegesis for a new day*, edited by B. Worthington. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Usog, Carmelita. 2010. "Women's Spirituality for Justice." Pp. 255–66 in *Hope abundant: third world and indigenous women's theology*, edited by Kwok Pui-lan. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

## ASSESSMENTS AND GRADING SCALE

**Participation (25%)** Course engagement is dependent on class discussion, triad work and conversation, attentive listening to others, offering insight based on experience and course material, and demonstrating critical reading of texts. This includes creating space for others to offer insight and invitational posture to one another. For those who speak much to hold times of silence; for those who speak little to input your voice. Presence and participation are crucial to course outcomes. Come to class having done the reading and prepared to discuss material. Plan to take notes with paper/pencil or pen and demonstrate intellectual curiosity! Looking forward to your insight into developing your ministry.

**Reading Log (10%)** Each student at the end of the semester will provide a simple written log with the author and weekly date of works read, indicating an approximate percentage of the reading accomplished, and one intriguing theme that emerged from the reading.

**Critical Reflection 1 (20%)** In three-five written pages (2500 words maximum), describe your theological method to approaching peace, justice, and restorative practices. How do you utilize and synthesize biblical and religious tradition, lived experience, and context?

In part 2 of your paper, offer a concrete case study of injustice, peace-building, or restorative practice. Demonstrate how your method engages with analyzing the case and prepares for a ministerial response. Reflect on contextual matters such as gender, race, economy, or political practices along with a biblical theme(s) that interact with the case. Why does this case require a religious response with visions of peace, justice, and restoration? What are some ministerial practices that can be offered in the case?

Include a description of the case but remove any identifying features such as actual names or places. Cases can examine individual or structural levels but must be understood to be inclusive of both macro- and microanalysis (more on this in class). You may choose from any of the following examples if you wish not to provide your own: a) A family whose teenage daughter was raped by an acquaintance at a high school party; b) A family whose young son was a victim of a school shooting; c) a group of tenants being evicted without proper notice by a developer; d) a group of veterans seeking recourse from being exposed to toxic chemicals while on tour. Due Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Theological Anthropology (25%)** In four-five written pages (2500 words maximum) offer a working theological anthropology. Utilize course material, biblical themes and passages, and lived experience in offering a robust account of humanity and the human condition. This should be a critical reflection based on course discussion, triad work, readings, and self-reflection. Cite at least three non-biblical sources that you draw from or contest with. Dwight Hopkins (2005) asks, "What does it mean to be a human being—a person who fulfills individual capabilities and contributes to a community's well-being? And what connects that individual person and community to an ultimate vision, a spirituality, or God? These questions invite investigations into, arguments for, and construction of a theological anthropology." Due Mar. 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Critical Reflection 2 (20%)** a. You will examine a pressing justice issue affecting society and the Church. b. You will informally present your essay in class for discussion. c. You will write a theological essay for your topic of 4-5 pages that includes:

1. what you have become aware of in reflecting on the topic;
2. the theological significance/meaning of the issue;
3. the theological implications of the issue for the Church.
4. The topics to be addressed are (other potential topics may be discussed with instructor):
  - Violence as a theological concern;
  - Economic disparity/poverty and the Church's economic commitments;
  - Gender bias;
  - Sexuality and the Church's theology and response to LGBTQIA persons;
  - Race, ethnicity and diversity;
  - The relationship between Environmental justice, gender, and racial/ethnic restoration and justice.
  - Labor and workplace justice
  - Mass incarceration, addiction, and/or mental health and social services accessibility

Due May 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Grading Scale** is based on the North Park standard below:



**A: Superior work (A = 95–100; A- = 93–94)** This grade applies to exceptional work, the quality achieved through excellence of performance, not merely the fulfillment of the course requirements.

**B: Above average (B+ = 91-92; B = 88-90; B- = 86-87)** This grade applies to meritorious work, definitely above average, applied to more than the fulfillment of requirements.

**C: Average (C+ = 84-85; C = 80-83; C – = 78-79)** This grade applies to average work that still fulfills the course requirements.

**D: Unsatisfactory (D+ = 76-77; D = 72-75; D – = 70-71)** This grade, while indicating the student has completed a course, is to be understood as reflecting below average work. Course work receiving this grade will not be counted toward a degree.

**F: Failure (69 and below)** To receive credit in the subject, the course must be repeated.

**I: Incomplete** This course is counted as an F in the calculation of GPA until the student's work is completed and submitted. A grade of incomplete or I is granted only when a student can demonstrate sufficient cause for not completing the course work on time. Such cause includes illness, disability, emergency and/or unforeseeable circumstances. Incompletes are not intended as ordinary extensions of time to complete a course, but granted only under extraordinary circumstances. The professor is not obligated to grant the request for an incomplete.

### **ADDITIONAL COURSE GUIDELINES**

This course is highly dependent on course discussion, group work, and participation. Attendance is expected and desired for a robust learning environment. If absent, the student is responsible in reaching out to fellow class members for notes and information. Late submissions will be accepted up to one week after the due date with a full-grade deduction. Extenuating circumstances such as illness, restrictions, or conflicting responsibilities will be taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis. Turning work in to the SRA TA on-time helps in maintaining participation, communication with course instructor, and timely grading and return of comments. As a practice of justice, we will use inclusive language as much as possible in written work and class discussion. Please see the inclusive language policy in the [Student Writing Handbook](#).

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating will receive a failing grade on the assignment and are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion. Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another's work as one's own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another's answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one's answers or work.
4. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.

For additional information, see the [Seminary Academic Catalog](#), pp. 25–27.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS**

Your experience in this class is important to me. North Park is committed to creating inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established your accommodations, please share your accommodation letter with me so we can discuss how your accommodations will be implemented in this course. If you have not yet established services and have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations, please email the

Disability Access Specialist or contact by phone (773-244-5737). Student Engagement facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations.

## TITLE IX

Students who believe they have been harassed, discriminated against, or involved in sexual violence should contact the Title IX Coordinator (773-244-6276 or [TitleIX@northpark.edu](mailto:TitleIX@northpark.edu)) for information about reporting, campus resources and support services, including confidential counseling services.

As members of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students, and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty are legally obligated to share information with the University's Title IX coordinator in certain situations to help ensure that the student's safety and welfare is being addressed, consistent with the requirements of the law. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of sexual assault, relational/domestic violence, and stalking.

Please refer to North Park's [Safe Community](#) site for reporting, contact information and further details.

## INCOMPLETE GRADES

If, due to extenuating circumstances (specifically, pregnancy, illness, personal and family issues, military assignment, etc.), a student anticipates they will be unable to complete course work within the allotted time, that student may request a grade of incomplete from the course instructor before the last week of class clearly stating the reason(s) for this request. Overscheduling and/or lack of self-discipline are not considered extenuating circumstances. If the request is timely and meets the criteria, student and instructor will submit the incomplete grade form and the grade for that class will be listed as "I" until the last day of the following semester. If coursework is not submitted by the last day of the following semester the listing of "I" will automatically be changed to "F." For the full policy, see page 15 of the [Seminary Academic Catalog](#).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

| Date | Readings   | Topic  | Activity   Assignment   |
|------|--|--|---|
| 1/23 | Douglass "Slaveholding Religion and Christianity of Christ;"<br><br>John 14.27   | What do we mean by peace, justice, and restorative practices?<br><br>Course Expectations | <i>In class:</i> Introductions, review syllabus, discuss concepts and approach to course topics<br><br><i>To submit:</i> N/A                      |
| 1/30 | Usog, "Women's Spirituality for Justice;"<br><br>Shepherd, ""Mourning the Loss of Cultural Selfobjects: Black Embodiment and Religious Experience After Trauma." | Spirituality, injustice, and culture<br><br>Gender, race, and trauma                     | <i>In class:</i> Triad discussion of spirituality and injustice.<br><br>Spiritual autobiography and mapping exercise<br><br>(cont'd on next page) |



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|      | Haga, "Movement that Heals Our Nation's Traumas"<br><br><i>Optional:</i> Grassi, "Women of Peace and Courage"   |   |  |
| 2/6  | Harris, "Ecowomanism 101: Method and Approach"<br><br>Groody, "A Social Crisis, A Liberating Theology"<br><br>Theoharris & Baptist, "Reading the Bible with the Poor" | The "how to's" of practical theology: Choosing our methods and approaches.<br><br>How are we reading the bible for theological themes? Christian tradition? | <i>In class:</i> In triads, select and discuss biblical texts, religious tradition, and spiritual practices to explore peace, justice, and restorative practices.<br><br>Moving Toward an understanding of contextual theologies of justice; locating ourselves in relations to justice; and theological reflection as experience, awareness of contextual issues; theological reflection and action.                                      |
| 2/13 | Lebacqz "Preface" & "Part One Jeopardy"   | Lived experience, reign of injustice, and complicity  | <i>In class:</i> Triad review spiritual autobiography/mapping in light of Lebacqz discussion of violence and gender.<br><br>How is injustice embodied in the social fabric of a community? The guiding questions: what is the author's theological understanding in how God is understood? How is Justice understood? How does the view of God and Justice "line-up" with the courses in the seminary/SRA? What is the role of the church? |
| 2/20 | Lebacqz "Part Two: Justice"   | Righteousness & Resistance  | <i>In class:</i> Triad and class discussion on the theological foundations of justice. Is justice political, economic, or spiritual?<br><br><i>To submit:</i> Critical Reflection 1  |
| 2/27 | Grassi: "An Upside-down World: Peace and the Priority of Little Ones"<br><br>Hansen, "On Trying to Praise the Mutilated World: Reading                                | Theological Anthropology I: Humanity, Earth, & Restoration  | <i>In class:</i> Triad work on ecowomanist environmental memory and ecological justice.<br><br>Use Harris' method to consider humanity's connection to the environment and God via your personal or communal memory.   |



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|      | Revelation in the Midst of Ecological Crisis”  |  |   |
| 3/6  | Sheppard, “Building Communities of Embodied Beauty”<br><br>Swinton, ““From Inclusion to Belonging: A Practical Theology of Community, Disability and Humanness.” | Theological Anthropology II: Humanity, Embodiment, & Community | <i>In class:</i> Triad discussion of personal theological anthropology<br><br>Discuss sexuality, ability, and community in context and envisioning peace, justice, and restoration. |
| 3/20 | Brueggemann, “The Shalom Person”<br><br>Hamman, “The Capacity to be Alone”<br><br>2 Corinthians  | Self and Ministry of Restoration                               | <i>In class:</i> Self-reflexivity, listening to self to listen to others, injustice within and injustice outside—series of journal, drawing, and triad practices.                   |
| 3/27 | Lebacqz “Part Three: Jubilee”<br><br>Hill, “Exploring the Meaning of Reconciliation and Community.”  | Practices of Reclamation, Redress, and Restoration             | <i>In class:</i> Audiovisual exercise on practices of redress and restoration (Janelle Monáe)<br><br><i>To submit:</i> Theological Anthropology                                     |
| 4/3  | Gutiérrez, “Introduction” & “Part I: God is Love”  | God of Life: Thinking and Feeling Scripture                    | <i>In class:</i> Triad discussion of faith, economics, and politics. Who is God? What does a flourishing life mean? Are peace and justice neutral?                                  |
| 4/10 | Gutiérrez, “Part II: The Kingdom of God is Among You”  | Envisioning a Reign of Righteousness and Justice               | <i>In class:</i> What is the Church’s role in justice and society? What does the conception of “reign of heaven” mean for your ministry?  |
| 4/17 | Gutiérrez, “Part III: Inspiration of the Spirit”<br><br>Luke 1.46-55<br><br>Brueggemann, “Preface” & “Part One: A Vision of Shalom”                              | Envisioning Peace<br><br>Feminization of Poverty               | <i>In class:</i> Triad work—identify theological and cultural markers of peace. How does Gutiérrez’s study of Mary bring together gender and poverty?                               |
| 4/24 | Brueggemann, “Part Two: A Vision of Freedom” & “Part   | Stories of <i>Shalom</i>                                       | <i>In class:</i> Triad discussion on developing a theory and practice of spiritual transformation.  |





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|     | Three: A vision of Order”  |                              | How does Resurrection relate to conceptions and practices of restoration? How is this reflected in your ministry? How are people and communities brought into restoration/healing?                     |
| 5/1 | McBride & Fabisiak, “Bonhoeffer’s Critique of Morality”<br><br>Pounder, “Prision Theology” | Peace, morality, and prison  | <i>In class:</i> Triad work on peacebuilding and restoration in contextual ministry.<br><br>Present on chosen topic for reflection 2<br><br><i>To submit:</i> Critical Reflection 2<br><br>Reading Log |
| 5/8 | Leviticus 25.8-12<br>Isaiah 49.14-16<br>Matt. 18.21-35<br>Luke 4. 16-21                    | Jubilee and Reign of Justice | <i>In class:</i> Presentations continued<br><br>Course reflection/evaluation   |