

### **SM101-3: Transforming Seminary Education**

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

August 11-22, 2014

Instructors: Susan R. Garrett and Carol J. Cook

#### **Description:**

This course will provide a foundation for your seminary education and an intensive introduction to the richness of the theologically reflective life. You will engage in critical reading and reflection and a variety of short writing projects. To begin, we will consider the nature of Christian community and explore skills and strategies for fostering and maintaining strong and healthy associations. We will move on to consider two theological topics that take us into various Christian understandings of creation and creationism, and christology. Each topic will be approached from different disciplinary perspectives, including critical biblical study, systematic theology, and pastoral theology. The *multidisciplinary approach* will facilitate observation of the dynamic character of all theological interpretation and reflection, while the engagement with *controversial issues* will underscore how crucial mutual understanding (if not mutual agreement) is for life together in Christian community.

#### **Student Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course, students will have demonstrated ability to:

1. Use biblical knowledge and classic theological doctrines in critical engagement with contested issues in the church and in the culture;
2. Reflect critically and theologically on secular works pertaining to leadership in communities and assess the usefulness of such knowledge for leadership in the church;
3. Begin to communicate their understanding of “participation in the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ in the world” for a global and ecumenical church in a world of religious difference; and
4. Utilize appropriate skills for listening generously and engaging in respectful dialogue around differences, such as ways of reading the Bible, denominational identities, and cultural/ethnic identities.

#### **Assignments and Evaluation**

This course will be graded pass/fail. In order to receive a passing grade, students must participate fully in all activities of the course, including several in-class and written assignments. These are described fully in an appendix at the end of the syllabus.

#### **Attendance and participation:**

1. Prepared, thoughtful, and engaged attendance at all sessions of the course is expected.
2. Students should complete reading and writing assignments prior to the classes for which they are intended.
3. Class discussion should reflect mutual respect for the experiences and views of other class members, a willingness and ability to listen to one another, and a willingness to express one’s own perspectives.
4. If serious illness, a family emergency, or (in unusual circumstances, which must be discussed in advance) a prior commitment requires your absence, be in touch with one of the instructors as soon as possible—preferably before the class you will miss.

5. More than one unexcused absence will necessitate a conference with the instructors and may result in a failing grade.

**Class meetings:**

8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. weekdays, beginning Monday, August 11 and ending Friday, August 22.

*Note that on Friday, August 15<sup>th</sup> the class will be taking a field trip to the Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky; our estimated time of arrival time at the museum is 10:00 a.m. with return to Louisville between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m. (departing museum between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m.).*

**Books suggested for purchase:**

1. Craigo-Snell, Shannon, and Shawnthea Monroe. *Living Christianity: A Pastoral Theology for Today*. Fortress Press, 2009. (Focus will be on the first two chapters.)
2. Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Living Jesus: Learning the Heart of the Gospel*. HarperOne, 2000.
3. Patterson, Kerry; Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler. *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High*, Second Edition. McGraw-Hill, 2011. *Will be discussed throughout the course.*

*All other readings noted in the schedule will be available online, through the CAMS portal.*

One of our hopes for TSE is for all participants to learn to listen generously and engage in respectful dialogue around differences, including differences of culture and race, denomination, and theological perspective. Mutual respect and attentiveness are critically important if we are to live our common life in a way that both reflects and edifies our diverse community. To prepare for our conversation, please read (or listen to) an interview of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, formerly Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth and author of the book *The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition; Bloomsbury Academic, 2003). This interview, by Krista Tippet, host of the radio show *On Being*, encapsulates key themes from the book. The audio file and transcript are available at <http://www.onbeing.org/program/dignity-difference/transcript/4836>.

As you consider this interview, we would like you to make note of points that struck you as significant or challenging: both points with which you agree, and points with which you disagree. Where did you find Rabbi Sacks articulating your prior convictions and where did you find him stretching you toward deliberative reflection? You might also consider whether and how the conversational skills introduced in the book *Crucial Conversations* (see above) could be used to support the interests or agenda that Rabbi Sacks advocates.

## Schedule of Class Activities and Assignments

*Please Note: Readings are to be completed **before** the class for which they are assigned. Note also that due dates for written assignments will be strictly observed.*

### COMMUNITY

#### Monday, August 11<sup>th</sup>

##### *Course Overview*

- Opening prayer and introductions
- Review syllabus and assignments
- Why should we listen to those with whom we disagree?

##### *Living in Community in the midst of difference*

- *Readings:*
  - Bendis, Debra. “No Longer Strangers: Ministerial Group Bridges Left-Right Divide.” *Christian Century*, March 19, 2014. Pp. 22-25.
  - Ariarajah, S. Wesley. *Not without My Neighbor: Issues in Interfaith Relations*. Geneva: WCC Publications. 1999. Pp. 11-25.
  - Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. Edited by Geoffrey B. Kelly and F. Burton Nelson. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990. Pp. 340-58. [Note: This article will be re-read at the end of the course, and is included on CAMS with materials for the final class session.]

**\*\*THREE-PAGE ESSAY ON LIVING JESUS DUE IN CLASS\*\***

#### Tuesday, August 12<sup>th</sup>

##### *How to get along? The Structure of Belonging*

- *Readings:*
  - Oshry, Barry. *Seeing Systems: Unlocking the Mysteries of Organizational Life*. Second Edition, Revised and Expanded. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2007. Pp. xii-xx, 63-68, 101-119 198-209.
  - Block, Peter. *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2009. Pp. xi-xiii, 29-36, 63-72, and 123-43.
  - Howells, Kerry. *Gratitude in Education: A Radical View*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2012. Pp. 45-59. *In Gratitude in Education, educator Kerry Howells argues that teaching and learning improve when teachers and students deliberately practice gratitude. As you read this chapter, pay attention to ways that Howell’s ideas overlap with Block’s notion of “the gifts conversation” (Block, pp. 139-42).*

##### *How to get along? Crucial Conversations*

- *Readings:*

- Patterson, Kerry; Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler. *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High*, Second Edition. McGraw-Hill, 2011.

### Wednesday, August 13<sup>th</sup>

#### *Imaging God*

- *Readings:*
  - Neuger, Christie Cozad. “Image and Imagination: Why Inclusive Language Matters.” Pp. 153-165 in *Engaging the Bible in a Gendered World*. Edited by Linda Day and Carolyn Pressler. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006.
  - Wren, Brian. *What Language Shall I Borrow? God Talk in Worship: a Male Response to Feminist Theology*. New York: Crossroads, 1989. Pp. 75-83; 102-110; 241-48
  - Garrett, Susan R. “The New Testament and Inclusive Language.”
  - van Wijk-Bos, Johanna. *Reimagining God: The Case for Scriptural Diversity*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995. Pp. 23-34.

**\*\*SECOND WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS (SEE APPENDIX)\*\***

### **CREATION**

### Thursday, August 14<sup>th</sup>

#### *Studying the Creation Narratives*

- *Required Readings:*
  - Craigo-Snell, Shannon, and Shawnthea Monroe. *Living Christianity: A Pastoral Theology for Today*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009. Pp. vii-xix; 1-26.
  - Ostling, Richard N. “The Search for the Historical Adam.” *Christianity Today* (June 2011): 23-27.
  - Numbers, Ronald L. “Creationism since 1859.” in *The History of Science and Religion in the Western Tradition: An Encyclopedia*. Edited by Gary B. Ferngren et al. New York: Garland Publishing. 2000. Pp. 313-319.
  - Ruppel, Emily. “The Bible, Evolution and Grace.” The Bio-Logos Forum, June 21, 2013. Online: <http://biologos.org/blog/the-bible-evolution-and-grace>. [Note that in the preface to a reprint of the article in the Louisville Courier-Journal on August 11, 2013, Ruppel wrote, “If those who champion evolution and consensus science over biblical teachings on origins are going to influence individuals who prize their relationship with God over material things, then we (I include myself in this category) should be aware of how Bible-based belief systems affect these individuals’ ability to accept evidence-based ideas, rather than ignoring those commitments in favor of hammering out stats and figures indefinitely.” The subject of the interview is Grace Buchanan, who moved from rejection of evolution and the old age of the earth to acceptance of the conclusions of modern science regarding both.]
- *Recommended Readings:*
  - “No Adam, No Eve, No Gospel.” *Christianity Today* (June 2011): 61.

- Van Till, Howard J. "Creationism." *Encyclopedia of Science and Religion*. Edited by J. Wentzel Vrede van Huyssteen. New York: Macmillan Reference, 2003. Vol. 1, pp. 187-190.

***Reading the biblical creation narratives***

- Guest lecturer: Dr. Tyler Mayfield
- *Readings*
  - Genesis 1–3
  - Robert S. Kawashima, "Sources and Redaction." Pp. 47-70 in *Reading Genesis: Ten Methods*. Edited by Ronald Hendel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pay special attention to pages 47-51 (reviewing one aspect of critical biblical scholarship), pages 51-56 (dealing with the creation stories), and pages 61-66 (dealing with the creation stories again). Note the theological and literary differences between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2–3 that warrant scholarly theories about different authorship and compositional date as well as ways in which the accounts can be read together.

**Friday, August 15<sup>th</sup>**

***Field Trip to Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky***

- Estimated time of departure from Louisville 8:00 a.m.; arrival at Museum 10:00 a.m.
- Estimated time of departure from Museum 3:00 p.m.; arrival in Louisville 5:00 p.m.

**Monday, August 18<sup>th</sup>**

***Creationism: Wrap-Up***

- Discussion of participants' experiences at the Creation Museum.

***Theology and Science in Dialogue***

- Guest Lecturer: Dr. Loren Townsend
- *Readings:*
  - Throntveit, Mark A., and Alan G. Padgett. "Reading the Bible after Darwin." *Word & World* 29:1 (2009): 39-46.
  - Polkinghorne, John. *Science and Theology: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: SPCK/Fortress, 1998. Pp. 4-24, 128-133.

**\*\*THIRD WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS (SEE APPENDIX)\*\***

***CHRISTOLOGY***

**Tuesday, August 19<sup>th</sup>**

***The historical Adam and the historical Jesus***

- *Readings:*
  - Romans 5

- Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Real Jesus: The Misguided Quest for the Historical Jesus and the Truth of the Traditional Gospels*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco. Pp. 29-56.
- Martin, Dale B. *Sex and the Single Savior: Gender and Sexuality in Biblical Interpretation*. Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 2006. Pp. 91-102.

**Wednesday, August 20<sup>th</sup>**

***Systematic Christology***

- Guest Lecturers: Dr. Shannon Craigo-Snell; Dr. Michael Jenkins
- *Readings:*
  - Craigo-Snell and Monroe, *Living Christianity*. Pp. 27-68.
  - Jenkins, Michael. *Invitation to Theology*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2001. Pp. 94-123.
  - Richard Mouw. “Why *Christus Victor* Is Not Enough.” *Christianity Today* (May 2012): 28-31.

**Thursday, August 21<sup>st</sup>**

***Contemporary Discussions of Christology***

- *Readings:*
  - Bediako, Kwame. “Jesus in African Culture: A Ghanaian Perspective.” Pp. 93-107 in *Liberating Eschatology: Essays in Honor of Letty M. Russell*. Edited by Margaret A. Farley and Serene Jones. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999.
  - Braxton, Brad R. “‘Every time I feel the Spirit’: African American Christology for a pluralistic world.” In *Radical Christian Voices and Practice: Essays in Honor of Christopher Rowland*. New York: Oxford University Press, Forthcoming 2012.

**Friday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>**

- ***Wrap-Up: Significant Learnings***

*Readings:*

- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. Edited by Geoffrey B. Kelly and F. Burton Nelson. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990. Pp. 340-58.

***Closing Worship***

**\*\*FOURTH WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS (SEE APPENDIX)\*\***

## APPENDIX 1 – DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

**First assignment: On thinking theologically.** *The purpose of this assignment is to introduce you to key elements of theological reflection and biblical interpretation and to invite you to re-examine your own theological premises. Due on the first day of class, Monday, August 11<sup>h</sup>.*

*Description of assignment.* Please prepare a three-page essay on Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Living Jesus*. The first half should be a summary of key points. The remainder of the paper should offer your own reflections on the work: for example, what especially appealed to you about Johnson's way of discussing the risen Jesus? Was some aspect of his discussion problematic for you, and why? You may think of other questions in response to this open invitation to engage this reading.

**Second assignment: On leadership in Christian communities.** *The purpose of this assignment is to give you an opportunity to reflect critically and theologically on secular works pertaining to leadership in communities and to assess the usefulness of such knowledge for leadership in the church. Due on Wednesday, August 13<sup>th</sup> (bring hard copy).*

*Description of assignment.* In his book *Life Together*, German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer reflected on communal existence in an underground seminary that he led during the Nazi regime. In this passage Bonhoeffer discusses the difference between genuine Christian community and false illusions thereof:

A community which cannot bear and cannot survive [such] a crisis, which insists upon keeping its illusion when it should be shattered, permanently loses in that moment the promise of Christian community. Sooner or later it will collapse. Every human wishful dream that is injected into the Christian community is a hindrance to genuine community and must be banished if genuine community is to survive. Those who love their dream of a community more than the Christian community itself become a destroyer of the latter, even though their personal intentions may be ever so honest and earnest and sacrificial. . . .

In the first half of your three-page paper, explain what you think Bonhoeffer meant by “genuine community” in contrast to “human wishful dreams.” What dreams do you have about life in community at Louisville Seminary? How might these prove to be a hindrance to community? Does Bonhoeffer mean that it is wrong to envision how a particular community (in this case, the LPTS community) might be enhanced? In the second half of your paper, identify and discuss some particular insights into the challenges of building community that you gained from one or more of the assigned readings on systemic aspects of community (Oshry and Block) or on crucial conversations (Patterson *et al.*). Do these secular ways of approaching community-building support Bonhoeffer's perspective, or conflict with it?

**Third assignment: On creation and creationism.** *The purpose of this assignment is for you to use biblical knowledge and classic theological doctrines in critical engagement with contested issues in the church and in the culture. Due in class Monday, August 18<sup>th</sup> (bring hard copy).*

Write an essay responding to one of the following prompts. Be sure to draw on assigned readings as relevant. Maximum length: 1000 words, including notes.

- 1- Some creationists argue that if a literal reading of the story of Adam's transgression is abandoned, the Christian doctrine of salvation will collapse. In your paper, describe the major points in this creationist insistence on a literal reading of the Adam account. Also offer counters to the argument, drawing on the readings and class discussion.
- 2- Describe the rise of "creation science" and explain the underlying epistemological assumptions that make this sort of response seem appropriate and necessary to some Christians. You may want to distinguish between the interpretive views of old earth and new earth creationists. Then describe at least one other model for making theological sense of Genesis in light of the theory of evolution.
- 3- Imagine yourself in conversation with a church member whose embedded theology around the topic of creation is radically different from your own. Summarize key elements in the other person's point of view, and then explain those aspects of your own view that you would most want your conversation partner to understand, even if you doubt that he or she will ever come to agree with you.

**Fourth assignment: On Christology.** *The purpose of this assignment is for you to reflect on the implications of your own participation in the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ in the world for a global and ecumenical church in a world of religious difference. Due in class on Friday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> (bring hard copy).* Analyze one of the assigned articles on Christology (by Kwami Bediako or Brad Braxton). In your analysis, use the categories provided either in the atonement-theory typology in Craigo-Snell and Monroe, *Living Christianity*, 27-68, or in the discussion of the historic Christological debates in Michael Jinkins' *Invitation to Theology*, 106-16. Address the following questions: (a) How does Braxton's or Bediako's Christology address the needs of the author's particular cultural context as he understands it? (b) What resources does the author draw upon to develop his Christology? (c) Which of the atonement-theory or Christological categories described in Craigo-Snell/Monroe or Jinkins is most fully reflected in Bediako's/Braxton's work? (d) What do you find helpful or problematic in Bediako's or Braxton's approach?

## Appendix 2 – Course Policies

1. **Computers and Cell phones.** All cell phones must be turned off in class except under exceptional circumstances, cleared with the instructors ahead of a given class session. Computers may be used in class; however, email, web surfing, and social networking are prohibited during class time.
2. **Attendance Policy:** Students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students should notify the instructor of a necessary absence either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Two or more absences from class could result in a failing grade.
3. **Use of Inclusive Language:** In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. For further assistance, see



<http://lpts.libguides.com/content.php?pid=469569&sid=4083885>.

4. **Academic Honesty:** All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others (including from online sources) must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Failure to document sources properly constitutes **plagiarism**, and will be handled in accordance with the Seminary policy. Repeated occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For the Seminary policy, see The Student Handbook, pp. 16-18 (<http://www.lpts.edu/docs/guides-policies-handbooks/student-handbook-rev-12-13-13.pdf?sfvrsn=2>).
5. **Special Accommodations:** Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center ([kmapes@lpts.edu](mailto:kmapes@lpts.edu)) at the beginning of the course and should speak with the instructors as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.
6. **Citation Policy:** Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:

*The Chicago Manual of Style: the Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers*. 16th Edition. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2010.

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *\*A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.