

**Religious Studies 258**  
**RELIGION AND RECONCILIATION**

**Syllabus, Fall Semester, 2004**  
**Mon/Wed/Fri, 10:00-10:50 a.m.**  
**Palmer 208**

Professor Joseph A. Favazza  
213 Palmer, x3907  
Home: 843-3907 (before 9:00 p.m.)  
Office Hours: Tues and Thurs, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and by appointment

**Required Texts**

**Listed on the Schedule as:**

<i>The Sunflower</i> , Simon Wiesenthal	Weisenthal
<i>Reconciliation Restoring Justice</i> , John W. de Gruchy	Gruchy
<i>Forgiveness and Reconciliation</i> , Raymond G. Helmick, S.J. & Rodney L. Petersen (eds)	Helmick
<i>A Human Being Died That Night</i> , Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela	Gobodo-M
Other readings to be distributed electronically	

**Course Learning Objectives**

The course requires that you read (texts), do (field work, research), write (papers) and tell (class discussions and presentations). Each activity requires personal reflection, both to connect the activity to your experience and connect each activity to the others. Through the interplay of these activities, I hope that by the end of the course you will have the ability to:

- Identify forgiveness and reconciliation discourse and performance in interpersonal, religious, and political life
- Identify how forgiveness and reconciliation are defined in religious discourse and ritual practice
- Analyze forgiveness and reconciliation strategies in selected religious groups
- Compare and contrast theories of forgiveness and reconciliation in selected authors
- Analyze theories of forgiveness and reconciliation in a socio-political context
- Analyze forgiveness and reconciliation strategies through one central case study: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa
- Evaluate the South African experience in light of course readings/discussions and provide an informed critique of the process.

**Course Requirements**

1. Active Class Participation and Attendance (20%)

Readings on the attached schedule are to be completed prior to each class. Students are expected to come to each class with a copy of the text, having actively read the material and prepared to discuss it. Reading primary or theological texts is never an easy undertaking. Adequate time must be budgeted to successfully complete reading assignments. Questions and puzzles should be brought to the class's attention. Periodically, you may be asked to complete in-class writing assignments. While these assignments will not be individually graded, they will serve as a tool for determining the level of class preparation. Attendance, classroom participation, and in-class writing assignments will account for 20% of the final grade.

Attendance is expected. Permission to be absent will not be given and should not be sought. If you miss class for any reason, including a College-sponsored activity, you should inform me and make up all missed work. Excessive absence (more than nine classes) will result in a failing grade for the course regardless of other course work.

As part of their participation grade, students will be asked to work with a partner and make a 10-15 minute “point and counterpoint” class presentation on Wiesenthal’s *The Sunflower*. Each student will take a different side of the question: Should the one who asks for forgiveness be forgiven? Each student must find one respondent in *The Symposium* (the second part of the book) that is used to support his/her argument. As part of your argument, you will need to consider the rights and responsibilities of the injured party as well as the rights and responsibilities of the wrongdoer. It may be that the partners decide to discuss two or three key issues (i.e., Who can forgive and when? Does forgiveness negate or advance justice? Is forgiveness the same as or distinct from reconciliation?) and then provide different answers to the questions. The Point and Counterpoint presentations will occur on September 10, 13 and 15.

2. Papers (20% each)

**a) Paper One: Research a Religious Group on Alienation and Reconciliation (8-10 pages)**

Students will be asked to select a religious group and discuss how the group names forgiveness and reconciliation in its religious discourse and practice. (It is recommended that the student select a group with which he or she already has some familiarity.) For example, if “God” language is used by the group, is God forgiving? How? For what offenses? Are there limits to God’s forgiveness? Can others forgive besides God? How? If “sin” language is used, what is it? How is it removed? Does everyone sin or not? How is justice understood? Does the group distinguish between forgiveness and reconciliation in its language? What ritual activities are practiced to address sin and forgiveness? Has there been historical development in the group’s understanding of God, sin, forgiveness, etc.? Can one distinguish between what the group believes/professes about sin/forgiveness and what the group practices? How central to the group’s identity is its beliefs and practices about alienation and reconciliation? Students will discuss these (and other) questions in their papers using three sources of information:

- 1) Studying primary texts of the group (one secondary text about the group also could be used)
- 2) Attending at least one ritual of the group
- 3) Interviewing at least one member of the group, preferably a member with some depth of knowledge about the groups’ history and theology.

Due: 10:00 a.m., Friday, October 8, 2004 (at the beginning of class)

**b) Paper Two: Research on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa (10-12 pages)**

This paper will require the student to research one of the three objectives of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Students may choose one of the following topics:

- To establish the truth about human rights violations
- To grant amnesty to perpetrators in return for truth
- To grant reparations to victims

The paper must connect the topic to the larger discussion about the process of forgiveness and reconciliation. In other words, the paper should argue why this aspect of the work of the TRC was important to advancing forgiveness and/or reconciliation in light of our larger class discussion. In addition, the paper must render a critical assessment in light of class reading/discussion. [Remember,

critical does not always mean negative; it simply means having the competence to make an informed judgment.] I have placed a number of books on reserve in the library will important resources for this paper.

Students are strongly encouraged to meet with the professor to discuss their paper prior to selecting a topic. Papers are to be pledged, typed (double-spaced, one-inch margins) and carefully proofread prior to submission. Other writing requirements for the paper will be distributed by way of a separate handout.

Topic and one-page outline due at 10:00 a.m., Friday, November 12  
 Paper due at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, December 11

3. Two tests (20% each)

While tests will require students to have given thoughtful reflection to reading assignments and class materials, the emphasis of the tests will be on application. Students will be asked to write an essay response to a specific situation based on the insights of course readings and discussion. Student performance will be evaluated on their ability to frame key issues of the situation and to bring course materials into conversation with these issues. Test dates are noted on the schedule below. Each test is worth 20% of the final grade.

**Grading**

The final grade will be determined based on the following ratio and scale:

Attendance/participation:	20%	Grading Scale:	A = 90 -100
Paper One:	20%		B = 89 - 80
Paper Two:	20%		C = 70 - 79
Test One:	20%		D = 60 - 69
Test Two:	20%		F = the rest

**Schedule of Topic and Readings**

**August-September**

MONDAY	TU	WEDNESDAY	TH	FRIDAY
23	24	25	26	27
		Introduction  Opening Class Assignment		Reconciliation: Interpersonal, Theological or Political Discourse?  Gruchy, 10-43
30	31	1	2	3
The Dilemma of Forgiveness and Reconciliation I  Weisenthal, 3-43		The Dilemma of Forgiveness and Reconciliation II  Weisenthal, 43-75		The Dilemma of Forgiveness and Reconciliation III  Weisenthal, 76-98 <b>Students pair up and sign up for point and counterpoint presentation</b>

## September-October

MONDAY	TU	WEDNESDAY	TH	FRIDAY
6  <b>LABOR DAY RECESS</b>	7	8 The Symposium  Pick two respondents from The Symposium and be prepared to discuss.	9	10 Point and Counterpoint Presentations (1-3)
13 Point and Counterpoint Presentations (4-6)	14	15 Point and Counterpoint Presentations (7-9)	16	17 Reconciliation Discourse in the Christian Tradition: Paul and the Gospels  Gruchy, 44-56
20 The Evolving Theology of Reconciliation  Gruchy, 57-76	21	22 The Christian Practice of Reconciliation  Gruchy, 79-95	23	24 “Sacraments” of Reconciliation  Gruchy, 96-112
27  <b>TEST ONE</b>	28	29 Reconciliation: Jews, Christians and Muslims I  Gruchy, 113-127	30	1 Reconciliation: Jews, Christians and Muslims II  Gruchy, 127-143
4 The Process of Reconciliation: What is Forgiveness?  Helmick, 3-25	5	6 Forgiveness and Embrace  Helmick, 27-49	7	8 Divine and Human Forgiveness  Helmick, 51-78
11 The Practice of Reconciliation: Truth-telling  Gruchy, 147-164  <b>PAPER ONE DUE</b>	12	13 The Practice of Reconciliation: Forgiveness as Freedom  Gruchy, 164-180	14	15 The Practice of Reconciliation: Guilt and Repentance  Gruchy, 181-198
18  <b>FALL RECESS</b>	19 <b>R E C E S S</b>	20 The Practice of Reconciliation: Justice I  Gruchy, 199-213	21	22 The Practice of Reconciliation: Justice II  The Kairos Document (to be send electronically)

## October-November-December

25	26	27	28	29
Reconciliation, Social Conflict and the Role of Religion  Helmick, 81-95		Reconciliation, Identity Construction and the Role of Religion  Helmick, 129-149		<b>Test Two</b>
1	2	3	4	5
Reconciliation in a Political Context: South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission  Reading to be announced		Video: <i>Long Night's Journey into Day I</i>  Helmick, 247-267		Video: <i>Long Night's Journey into Day II</i>  Helmick, 247-267 (REREAD)
8	9	10	11	12
A Story of Forgiveness and Reconciliation in South Africa I  Gobodo-M (pages to be announced)		A Story of Forgiveness and Reconciliation in South Africa II  Gobodo-M (pages to be announced)		A Story of Forgiveness and Reconciliation in South Africa II  Gobodo-M (pages to be announced)  <b>Paper Topic Due</b>
15	16	17	18	19
A Story of Forgiveness and Reconciliation in South Africa IV  Gobodo-M (pages to be announced)		A Story of Forgiveness and Reconciliation in South Africa V  Gobodo-M (pages to be announced)		The Critical Reflection on Forgiveness in Social Reconciliation  Helmick, 161-182
22	23	24	25	26
SPECIAL SESSION DAY  Topic to be announced.		<b>THANKSGIVING RECESS</b>		<b>THANKSGIVING RECESS</b>
29	30	1	2	3
Focusing on Relationships in Social Reconciliation  Helmick, 183-193		A Case Study: Gandhi's Vision of Social Reconciliation  Forgiveness, 295-318		A Christian Proposal for Peacemaking  Helmick, 219-243
6	7	8	9	10
A Final Word: Conversion and Social Reconciliation  Helmick, 373-399		Review and Reflection Day		<b>SECOND PAPER DUE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11 11:00 a.m., 213 PALMER</b>

