

SYLLABUS

URB790: The Church in Reconciliation
Nazarene Theological Seminary
Fall Semester 2009
Class Location: Various Venues
Class Time: See Below

Professor: Fletcher L. Tink, Ph.D, with special presentations by Lisa Harper
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Meeting Times: Tuesdays, from 6-9:30 beginning on September 15th.
Location: At NTS
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This seminar packaged will examine the theological impetuses for reconciliation, and historical and contemporary models of "reconciliation" in an urban world in which civility and cooperation is so often lacking. Disparate and natural antagonistic groups will be used as case studies, such as those representing contrasting socioeconomic communities (i.e. the rich and the poor), generational, gender and racial hostilities, disparate religious institutions within Christianity and between Christians and others, the relationship between the Christian Church and their immediate physical communities. The need, process and results of "reconciliation" will be presented, along with examples of where reconciliation has failed. Conflict resolution and "restorative justice" will be two special features of the seminar.

Lisa Harper, the Grimaud Lecture Series speaker for this fall will present the mechanism of racial tension and reconciliation will be making special presentations on September 22-23 that will address issues of this seminar. In the readings and extra sessions, resources and additional relevant themes will be presented.

Ms. Harper is a graduate of the USC School of Theatre's MFA Playwriting class of 1995. Ms. Harper co-founded the Heart Of Los Angeles (HOLA) Youth Theater, "Laugh & Learn" a youth-based improvisational comedy troupe, and the USC School of Theatre Neighborhood-Turn Project (now a flag-ship program of the USC School of Theatre). Having worked with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship as an Arts Specialist and the Greater Los Angeles Director of Racial Reconciliation, Ms. Harper helped develop the Ethnic Reconciliation tool "Race Matters" and co-wrote the "Race Matters" Handbook. She conducted ethnic reconciliation training conferences, wrote analyses of and consulted with IVCF campus movements throughout Southern California. She also conducted staff training in ethnic reconciliation through Intervarsity's National Institute of Staff Education and Training (NASET) and spoke for students throughout the U.S. Ms. Harper earned her masters degree in Human Rights, with a concentration in Religion & The Media, from Columbia University in New York City in 2006. She currently is a featured op-ed writer for the prolific web-based community, FaithfulDemocrats.com. She is also a featured journalist for the national Study Circles Resource Center. Ms. Harper has spoken for a diverse body of churches and Christian organizations throughout the U.S. Her Shalom Talk Series has catalyzed Christian ethnic reconciliation and justice movements in California, Nevada, New Mexico, Indiana, Michigan, Virginia, New York City, and Boston. Ms. Harper is the co-founder and executive director of NY Faith & Justice, a budding movement of churches, organizations and individuals dedicated to following Christ, uniting the church and ending poverty in New York through spiritual formation, education, and direct advocacy. Ms. Harper's book, [Evangelical Does Not Equal Republican ... Or Democrat](#) (The New Press) is one of the texts required for this seminar.

COURSE SETTING:

The seminar will meet on Tuesday evenings but will require several engagements with Lisa Harper throughout her presentations on September 22-23, times to be announced.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand the character of Biblical “reconciliation”
2. To articulate a theological position on “reconciliation”
3. To determine what “reconciliation” means in a complex, diverse culture
4. To identify antagonistic relationships and groups
5. To examine historical Christian models of reconciliation
6. To cite faulty or incomplete definitions of “reconciliation”
7. To adopt the vocabulary and theories associated with the study of “reconciliation” and “conflict resolution”
8. To understand the process of reconciliation
9. To examine personal attitudes that impede the role of “reconciler”
10. To become a “reconciler”
11. To recognize the limitations of the “reconciling” role
12. To engage the Church as a center of “shalom”

ASSIGNED TEXTS

DeYoung, Curtiss Paul, *Beyond Rhetoric: Reconciliation as a Way of Life*

Emerson, Michael and Christian Smith: *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*

Harper, Lisa: *Evangelical Does Not Equal Republican . . . or Democrat*

Phillips, Oliver R., ed. *E Pluribus Unum: Challenges and Opportunities in Multicultural Ministry*

A Reconciliation Reader, compiled by Professor Tink

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance at all agreed-on sessions unless excused by the professor in advance.
2. Participation in “special” opportunities or learning activities that will be scheduled.
3. The reading of four texts and the critical review of three of these. Two of these books may be substituted by approved selections directly related to the research papers that each student will write.
4. The reading of three articles and the oral reviewing with the other seminar participants of two of these, related to contemporary theories of reconciliation, or themes pertinent to the seminar topic
5. Interviews with disparate/hostile groups (both sides) to understand “identity-based” versus “issue-based conflict. These interviews should be written up as “verbatim” with critical reflection in a concluding page or two.
6. A personal narrative paper that discusses areas of conflict or tension in one’s life, in the presence of groups or individuals who hold different values or represent alternative perspectives about life. This paper should include the following elements: 1. What is the nature of your differences with this group? 2. Why do you suppose you feel as you do? 3. What informs your feelings? 4. What is the Christian role of “reconciliation” in this relationship? 5. What are its limits?
6. How would you proceed to be a “reconciler,” or “peacemaker in this relationship?”
7. What are the theological implications of your “reconciling” activity?”

GRADING

A.	Participation in assigned and special activities:	10
B.	Readings and report of readings of texts:	15
C.	Reviews of texts:	15
D.	Reviews (both written and oral) of articles:	15
E.	Interviews:	25
F.	Personal Narrative Paper:	20
	Total:	100%

GRADING SCALE

A	90s
B	80s
C	70s
D	60s
F	59-