

**AP/ MC 687: Bible and Race**  
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (Jacksonville Campus)  
Spring 2019

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March 18-22 from 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

Office Hours: Before and after class

**Course Description**

The story of humanity (thus far) is a complex narrative that cycles through riveting victories while also plagued with the vicious wounds of sin. From the days of the Old Testament into the New Testament and beyond, humanity has challenged itself with racism and ethnic division. This course will challenge students to explore the history and theology of race with an eye towards the historical, theological, cultural, sociological and spiritual necessity for reconciliation.

**Course Textbooks**

Carter, J. Kameron. **Race: A Theological Account**. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN: 9780195152791

Emerson, Michael O. and Christian Smith. **Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America**. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001. ISBN: 9780195147070

Hawkins, J. Russell and Phillip Luke Sinitiere (editors). **Christians and the Color Line: Race and Religion After Divided by Faith**. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2013. ISBN: 9780199329502

Jennings, Willie James. **The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origin of Race**. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011. ISBN: 9780300171365

**Course Objectives**

The student who successfully completes this course should be able:

1. To articulate a theological understanding of the challenges of racial and ethnic division.
2. To survey the origins and history of racism and ethnic division within and beyond the Church.
3. To effectively read, understand, learn from and engage texts in theological studies.
4. To have a deeper appreciation for theology as it relates to preparation for ministry in the context of the local church, the global church, and the broader contemporary culture.
5. To make a personal commitment to the project of reconciliation.

## Course Requirements

Attendance – Class participation is essential for successful completion of this course. Attendance and active participation are required for all class sessions.

Book Reflection Assignments – Please read and respond to the Carter and Jennings texts prior to the week long intensive using the prompts below. After the week long intensive please choose between the Emerson & Smith or the Hawkins & Sinitiere for the final reflection assignment. Complete the reflection assignments using 12-point font (Times New Roman is preferred but not mandatory) with 1-inch margins, double-space and free of any glaring grammatical or spelling errors.

**1) Reflection on Carter’s *Race: A Theological Account* (due by 3/18)**

In Carter’s massive work he sets out on a course uncharted by most to theologize Race. In 5 pages (more is fine, less is not) share your thoughts on the effectiveness of Carter’s discussion Race as theological discourse rather than as a historical or sociological problem. In addition, share your own thoughts, reflections and/ or analysis on the book as a whole. What did you glean, discern or gain from the book? Feel free to also share your criticisms, dislikes or disagreements as well.

**2) Reflection on Jennings’ *The Christian Imagination* (due by 3/18)**

In 384 pages, Jennings challenges readers to explore a deep, perhaps dark historical interrogation of the late Medieval influence on Christianity while exploring the importance of Christian Imagination. In 5 pages (more is fine, less is not) share your thoughts on Jennings’ use of the phrase “Christian Imagination.” Also share your thoughts on why Christianity seems to have turned away from an emphasis on “neighborly” or “Christ-like love,” in contemporary expressions. Finally, share your own thoughts, reflections and/ or analysis on the book as a whole. What did you glean, discern or gain from the book? Feel free to also share your criticisms, dislikes or disagreements as well.

**3) Reflection on Emerson & Smith’s *Divided By Faith* (due by 4/30)**

In 172 pages, Emerson and Smith use sociological methodology to assert that Evangelicals for generations have turned a blind-eye towards justice, equity and thus, reconciliation. They write, “*Evangelicals usually fail to challenge the system not just out of concern for evangelism, but also because they support the American system and enjoy its fruits. They share the Protestant work ethic, support laissez-faire economics, and sometimes fail to evaluate whether the social system is consistent with their Christianity*” (22). In 5 pages (more is fine, less is not) share your thoughts on the effectiveness of Emerson and Smith’s data and indicate whether you find their analysis effective or not. In addition, share your own thoughts, reflections and/ or analysis on the book as a whole. What did you glean, discern or gain from the book? Feel free to also share your criticisms, dislikes or disagreements as well.

- 4) Reflection on Hawkins & Sinitiere’s **Christians and the Color Line (due by 4/30)**  
In 5 pages (more is fine, less is not) how might you best articulate the overall goal of this collection of writings? For students who have read the Emerson & Smith, is this text an effective follow-up? In addition, share your own thoughts, reflections and/ or analysis on the book as a whole. What did you glean, discern or gain from the book? Feel free to also share your criticisms, dislikes or disagreements as well.

Class Panel Experience – Effective leadership in the church demands prayer, preparation and the courage to have difficult conversations with grace, compassion and love. As a part of our preparation for effective leadership (which we should always strive towards no matter how much leadership experience we have had), we will endeavor to have course participants serve on a panel facilitated by the professor. Due to the number of students in the course we may have multiple panels. Each panel conversation will focus on the question: ***Does the Bible support or discourage racism?***

Personal Response Paper – assessing your state of awareness and/ or engagement of issues related to vertical and horizontal challenge at the beginning of the course, how have you grown, changed or matured in your thoughts, personal theology and/ or active engagement of “shalom” throughout this course? Has anything shifted, intensified or diminished? Compose a 10-page (minimum, not maximum) essay/ personal log on your personal growth as a result of assigned readings, lectures, conversations and fellowship throughout your engagement with this course. **This paper is due by 4/30.**

Late Assignments – Late assignments will be accepted only if you notify the professor in advance to arrange an agreed upon revised due date. Please do not wait until 2/28 to schedule a revised due date. **All assignments are due by 4/30.**

**Warning on Plagiarism:** Helpful guidelines on plagiarism can be found here: [http://www.gordonconwell.edu/hamilton/current/documents/hamreg\\_plagiarism.pdf](http://www.gordonconwell.edu/hamilton/current/documents/hamreg_plagiarism.pdf). This document has the official recognition of the Gordon-Conwell faculty and provides very helpful tools to guide you as you prepare for your assignments. If a student is caught plagiarizing, the student will receive the consequences of this act according to the process established by the seminary.

### **Grading Policy**

Grades will be determined as follows:

Attendance/ Class Participation	5 %
Book Reflection Assignments (3)	45 %
Personal Response Paper	40 %
Class Panel Experience	10 %

The following letter grades and their achievement equivalents are used by the instructor to reflect a student's performance in the course:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Achievement</b>	<b>Quality Points</b>	
A	100-96	<i>Work of exceptional quality</i>	4.00
A-	95-93		3.70
B+	92-90		3.30
B	89-86	<i>Work of commendable quality</i>	3.00
B-	85-83		2.70
C+	82-80		2.30
C	79-76	<i>Work of acceptable but minimal quality</i>	2.00
C-	75-73		1.70
D+	72-70		1.30
D	69-66	<i>Substandard and barely passing work</i>	1.00
D-	65-63		0.70
F	62-below	<i>Failure</i>	0.00

After all the requirements of the course have been completed, the instructor will use the following rubric for the assignment of grades, based on the overall performance of the class. The grades assigned will represent the instructor's interpretation of the following standard:

A = Outstanding mastery of the subject – excellence is evident in preparation and participation in class sessions; unusual ability to retain, analyze and synthesize the material; a positive attitude; consistent productive contributions both within and beyond the classroom.

B = Superior mastery of the subject – sincere effort in preparation and participation in class sessions; mastery of the essential aspects of the material; a positive attitude; mostly consistent in making productive contributions both within and beyond the classroom.

C = Basic mastery of the subject – inconsistent effort in preparation and participation in class sessions; engagement with the material but difficulty in grasping some of its aspects; positive attitude; occasional contributions both within and beyond the classroom.

D = Inadequate mastery of the subject.

F = Failure – course must be repeated.

## **Course Schedule**

### **Monday (March 18, 2018) [8:30 AM – 4:30 PM]**

- The Challenge of Race in the Bible and Beyond
- Course Overview
- Biblical Anthropology
- Imago Dei

### **Tuesday (March 19, 2018) [8:30 AM – 4:30 PM]**

- A Theology of Race
- Doctrine of Sin
- Dealing with Challenging Historical Moments from the OT, NT and Beyond
- Jesus, the Cross & Vertical + Horizontal Challenges

### **Wednesday (March 20, 2018) [8:30 AM – 4:30 PM]**

- Wrestling with the Personal and Social Reach of the Gospel
- Doctrine of Discovery
- Personal Piety &/or Neighborly Love

### **Thursday (March 21, 2018) [8:30 AM – 4:30 PM]**

- Ecclesiology
- Reconciliation as Worship
- The Theological, Socio-political, Cultural and Spiritual implications of Shalom
- #BlackLivesMatter

### **Friday (March 22, 2018) [8:30 AM – 4:30 PM]**

- Cultural Competency & Privilege
- Guilt and Fragility

❖ *Class Panel Experience: Does the Bible support or discourage Racism?*

### **Highly Recommended Books:**

- DeYoung, Curtiss P., Michael O. Emerson, George Yancy, Karen Chai Kim. **United by Faith: The Multicultural Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race.** New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004
- Gilbreath, Edward. **Reconciliation Blues: A Black Evangelical's Inside View of White Christianity.** Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008
- Kidd, Colin. **Forging the Races: Race and Scriptures in Protestant Atlantic World, 1600-2000.** Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2006
- López, Ian F. Haney. **Racism on Trial: The Chicano Fight for Justice.** Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2004
- Oden, Thomas C. **How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind.** Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 2010
- Rah, Soong-Chan. **The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity.** Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009
- Rodríguez, Rubén R. **Racism and God-Talk: A Latino/a Perspective.** New York, NY: New York University Press, 2008
- Shelton, Jason E. and Michael O. Emerson, **Blacks and Whites in Christian America.** New York, NY: New York University Press, 2012
- Steel, Shelby. **White Guilt: How Blacks and Whites Together Destroyed the Promise of the Civil Rights Era.** New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 2007
- Unander, Dave. **Shattering the Myth of Race: Genetic Realities and Biblical Truths.** Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2000
- Wallis, Jim. **America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America.** Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2016
- Williams, Jarvis J. **One New Man: The Cross and Racial Reconciliation In Pauline Theology.** Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010
- Wise, Tim. **White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son.** Berkeley, CA: Soft Skull Press, 2011
- Wu, Frank. **Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White.** New York, NY: Basic Books, 2003
- Zia, Helen. **Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People.** New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001